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REDISCOVERING THE ROLE OF SHAME IN MORAL CHARACTER FORMATION

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Dedication

The family: the first community of moral character formation.

Acknowledgments

This work certainly adds to my academic achievements. This and all my previous achievement help me appreciate more the inspiring words of the 11th century monk named John of Salisbury:

> We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more things that are more distant than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours (*Metalogicon* 1159).

I cannot mention all the giants of my life, yet it is inevitable to single out some of them. The gift of my dear parents, The department of theology, and the Jesuit Community of the University of Scranton for the offer of a scholarship and the diocese of Scranton for according me residence at the parish of St. John Neumann in Scranton. I am grateful to the Rev. Emmanuel Katongole who initiated this process, the Most Reverend Mathias Ssekamanya, Most Reverend Joseph Martino, Rev Michael Bryant, Dr. Maria Johnson and Dr. Charles Pinches who followed its actualization.

I thank all parishioners of St. John Neumann parish for their love, tolerance and acceptance. Gerald and Carol Smurl, thank you for opening to me the doors of your home.

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Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout this work, we compare modern and traditional societies, looking at how they go about moral formation and how their individuals observe and adhere to societal norms. From this comparison, we are able to identify clear-cut differences between the two societies, and from these difference we are able to identify some problems. A prominent concern is that individuals in modern day society are weaker in adherence to what society demands of them morally. For instance, Ronald Snider's *Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* demonstrates that when it comes to divorce, racism, domestic abuse, greed, and sexual promiscuity, there is no significant difference between Christian behavior and that of our secular peers.[1] Arguably, more prevalent are what one might call "weak and unstable moral characters," people who are "free-floaters" or "cafeteria individuals" who select which moral norms to follow based on convenience. Whatever we are to make of them, these people are those for whom the community's needs and concerns have little, if any, claim. The community, in fact, has little affect on who they are, the kinds of choices they make, the what and how of what they do, and who they love.

While such persons could be found in older, more traditional society, they were undeniably rarer. When and where such "characters" existed in traditional settings, they were the exception not the rule. While exploring the factors responsible for this, we shall argue that this happened largely because of two factors: first, society held a very large stake and claim on the individual, and second, society employed shame and honor as the bases for the formation of its people. Apparently, traditional society knew very well that the inherent fear of shame and the desire for honor drive individuals to follow/ observe the moral codes/norms of behavior.

[1] Kirk, Cowell, "Narrative Formation: Alasdair Macintyre and the Need for a Narratively Grounded Christian Ethic", Ronald, Sider J, The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience. Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World? Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005 (http: //www.kirkcowell.wordpress.com).

We mean to suggest that today's modern society is lacking in stable, morally virtuous characters largely because of the separation of the individual from the community. This thesis suggests a recovery of the community's stake in the individual's life. It is in this context that recourse to shame in forming individual characters makes sense. In so doing, we attempt to articulate what shame is, why it is good, and how (also) it needs to be qualified in the realization of our hopes for stable moral characters.

We start with a discussion of the nature of shame: its social and personal aspects and how each influences individual human behavior. Of particular interest is the social aspect that restrains the individual from doing those acts others do not approve of. Considering that shame appeals to the secular and religious, traditional and modern backgrounds, we look at its formative role in light of these traditions or backgrounds. We therefore discuss the Aristotelian, Thomistic, Biblical and modern views of shame. It emerges that all traditions attest to the formative role of shame. This background material about shame helps us begin a careful investigation of how it works, and to begin to imagine why and how it functions as a key part of moral formation.

Aristotle affirms shame's role as something akin to a virtue, which enables humans to do good acts. Shame is a virtue only in a "quasi" sense. This is because it happens out of the fear of people we hold in a high esteem as well as the fear of loss of honor/dignity. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, regards shamefacedness to be "inconsistent with perfection, because it is the fear of something base, namely of that which is disgraceful."[2] Hence, it cannot be a full virtue. Yet as he also notes, taken in a broad sense, shamefacedness is "*sometimes* called a virtue since

[2] ST II-II, 144, 5.

it is a praiseworthy *passion*"[3] (my emphasis). Aquinas therefore regards shame as a virtue but only "sometimes" because it is not "an elective habit" (something or an act a person has a choice about). Instead, shame is something that happens "from an impulse of passion", the fear of "baseness or disgrace and reproach."[4]

A look at the Biblical tradition reveals its eloquence on shame and guilt. First, the Bible shows it to be a human reaction to sin. Secondly, the scriptures also hold on to the social nature of shame and its formative nature, particularly as something used to call people to holiness and sanctification.

We also consider the close relationship between shame and guilt that tempts some to use the two concepts synonymously. We therefore discuss guilt with the express aim of showing that indeed the two are different and arise in different contexts. Whereas both arise from one's failure to live according to a certain standard, guilt is more of an internalized feeling while shame is an externalized feeling. Guilt arises with one's realization that one has acted contrary to what one ought to do and shame arises with one's realization of one's failure to behave as expected by those around him. What emerges from this distinction is that each of these tends to arise more prominently in different contexts: guilt in individual-oriented societies and shame in community-oriented societies.

Because shame arises more in community-oriented societies than individual oriented ones, the second chapter looks at the contextualization of shame in the African traditional

[3] ST II-II, 144, 5

[4] ST II-II, 144,5

society. By so doing we intend to affirm that shame finds its right place and role in shaping people's moral characters in societies where the individual is accountable to others (the community). We also discuss that the moral truths that society teaches and demands of the individual's adherence are not anyone's invention; rather they are those values that have stood the test of time in that society; they are society's tradition. Thus, we discuss the two types of tradition, showing the difference between - African tradition and - Western tradition. We show that whereas Western society largely holds a liberal understanding of tradition, the African society holds a conservative one. The former takes Reason as "capable of telling us what we need to know to live morally worthy lives," while the latter being historical, holds the truths and values of any society as not existing in isolation but deriving from a community that upholds them. Essentially, while the African understanding holds the preeminent authority of the community in arriving at moral truths and passing them on to individuals, the Western one holds individual Reason as an authority in itself at arriving at the same truths. These varied understandings of tradition will be helpful at clarifying why the two traditions differ in their understanding of the source and role of authority and authority's insistence on obedience to the same authority. In fact, this difference in understanding is equally to blame for the lack of "stable moral characters" in both traditions.

The third chapter focuses on a different society—Western, American society—where there is clear-cut distance between the individual and the community. We look at its distinguishing characteristics: the elevation of freedom as autonomy, technology, and individualism. Of these, we identify individualism as the most prominent one. We then delve into some of the philosophies that facilitated this characterization. Because it is an individualistic society, we also show how guilt looms large there. In the discussion about individualistic

societies we also argue that individualistic societies survive on an erroneous view of personhood and consequently of human freedom (as autonomy). Its benefits notwithstanding, we decry the excesses of individualism, particularly the glorification of individual achievement and the resultant isolation and alienation of the individual from society. The key concern here is that individualism of this sort makes the individual, by virtue of his rationality, not only his own authority but also a determinant of his destiny. Thus, it challenges any other forms of tradition and authority, including that of the community.

Because of individualism's challenge to any form of authority, the fourth chapter, drawing on pro-community philosophers and theologians, argues for the indispensability of the authority of the community. We deepen this argument by considering the individual as essentially a being-with-others. We show that a recovery of this truth is essential to a recovery of shame's formative role. We essentially suggest that effective moral formation that employs shame will only happen within the context of community in which there is an acknowledged interdependence between the individual and community. Since shame depends on our social nature, it (shame) requires those institutions that promote the sense of community. A return to shame therefore suggests a strengthening of those institutions. We suggest the family and church as the two communities capable of resisting the threat of individualism. They foster the common good and in them individuals participate as they search for their autonomy and dignity. Nevertheless, we are not oblivious of the fact that today's church and family are far from fully resisting individualism.

Having earlier argued that effective moral formation happens within the context of communities, in the fifth chapter, we look at Buganda (a community-based society), as one in which shame has and continues to form individuals. In other words, the example of Buganda

serves to prove that our project or proposal is not an exercise in futility or a merely theoretical endeavor. We point out the details of what we consider strong moral characters, and what those charged with the duty of formation need to do or be clear about as they form such characters. We also suggest those standards, principles or criteria that need to be followed in the course of forming individuals: the fear of God, the importance of authority, and the value of modesty (for its loss is the basis for shamelessness). Despite the strong claim that it is within community-oriented societies that shame can best play its formative role, we warn how shame can backfire. We illustrate certain features of individualized cultures that are good and worth imitating even within community-oriented cultures, thereby pointing to the good that is in individualistic societies. In advocating for the importance of the community to the individual, we are not oblivious of the fact that sometimes the community errs, and that the community will can easily stifle the individual efforts and ambitions. Hence, drawing inspiration from Christianity we show that there are times when the individual can rise above their particular community and look to a wider community of persons. While acknowledging that both Western and Baganda societies need shame in forming individuals of strong character, we suggest that people be taught how to be ashamed in the right way and measure.

In this work, what we consider a "strong character" a person who behaves consistently according to certain inescapable frameworks, according to certain principles, and according to socially acceptable conventions, whose violation cause shame and dishonor. It is to act/behave with the right motives, to act without any fear of contradiction; it is to be the same good person despite the changing circumstances. To act virtuously is to believe and observe these conventions without feeling burdened or constrained in their observance. It is to look at these communal conventions as part of who we are as persons.

Chapter 1

1.0 THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SHAME

This chapter will discuss shame and show how it develops in the individual and manifests in various shades—as personal and social shame. These distinctions will enable us to pursue the argument of the importance of having at least one of these two types of shame. Aristotle and Aquinas' discussion of shame will greatly inform our discussion. We shall also make conceptual connections between shame and honor while making a distinction between shame and guilt.

1.1 Etymology of Shame

Kurt Riezler, twentieth-century German-American social theorist and philosopher, discusses the etymology of shame. He argues that because of the capacity for self-transcendence inherent in every human being, the human person becomes aware of his finitude, and how vulnerable he is, that is, "in need and danger, moved and acted upon."[5] Shame arises from this awareness and its function is to "cover and conceal the vulnerable spots and protect man against himself and against others." He argues the etymology of shame arises from these *covering* and *concealing* aspects. As he points out,

[5] Kurt Riezler, "Comment on the Social Psychology of Shame," in Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying, ed. Amy Kass and Leon Kass (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 181.

"shame comes from the Gothic word *schama* which signifies cover."[6] German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche called this "cover" a *mask* that everyone, every profound spirit, wears to protect its vulnerability.[7]

1.2 Various Shades/Types of Shame: Personal and Social Shame

Jungian analyst Mario Jacoby eloquently discusses shame in its various manifestations. Shame entails "not only feelings of inferiority and humiliation, but also shyness, inhibition, embarrassment and so forth."[8] These feelings arise even without the affected person's awareness. Also included in Mario's discussion is what he calls "shame anxiety." It is essentially "the fear of being ashamed, through one's own fault, one's own carelessness, adverse circumstances, or coming on too strong to others."[9] From these variations of shame arise shame's various shades.

H.B Lewis convincingly explains the concept of shame as "an acutely painful emotion that is typically accompanied by a sense of shrinking or of 'being small' and by a sense of worthlessness and powerlessness."[10] Shame arises because the self has been exposed to the gaze of others. However, as Tangney and Dearing argue, the exposure is not necessarily to an actual presence of the public. Sometimes the public can be imaginary, within the self itself. Lewis discussed this as "a split in self-functioning in which the self is both agent and object of observation and approval. An observing self

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[6] Kass 182.

[7] Robert Albers, Shame: A Faith Perspective, (New York: The Haworth Press 1995), 9.

[8] Mario Jacoby, Shame and the Origins of Self-Esteem, (New York: Brunner- Routledge Group 1994), viii.

[9] Jacoby,viii.

[10] Tangney and Dearing, Shame and Guilt, (New York: Guilford Press 2002), 18.

witnesses and denigrates the focal self as unworthy and reprehensible."[11] From this observation by Lewis, it becomes apparent how shame can appear as private (personal) and social.

The private aspect of shame highlights the individual's inherent capacity to have shame without someone else's observation or knowledge.[12] The social aspect of shame, on the other hand, ties shame with one's social context. It "revolves around the question of what respect I enjoy in others' eyes and on what effect they have on my sense of worth as a person."[13] It is about how the gaze, presence and even observation of others cause shame. It is also, about how the individual conceals his fears from others' knowledge and about the anxiety that arises when someone else sees our fears. Under the social aspect, we are able to see how the presence of social moral codes relates to shame. Because of this aspect, we are able to appreciate how society uses shame to form and/or control the behaviors of its members.

The two aspects of shame relate in human acts or behavior. By the social aspect of shame, the individual will refrain from doing acts he would otherwise desire to do. What motivates him is that society frowns upon their performance and punishes whoever disregards it. When one does those acts, one feels shame, which arises because of others' knowledge of one's undesirable behavior. This kind of shame has its own problems: it limits the possibility of one's capacity to feel shame. Because shame happens with others knowing my behavior, this implicitly suggests the possibility for moments when one may

[11] Tangney and Dearing, 18.

[12] Kass, 180.

[13] Jacoby, viii.

not feel shame – as long as no one notices or knows. Hence, this is where the personal (discretionary) shame comes in handy. With it, the individual can have shame, even by merely imagining an observer to whom the self's transgressions or violations get disclosed. Personal shame therefore tames the individual's latent permissiveness, and creates in him a sense of discretion to avoid doing certain acts even in "private." By personal shame, the individual protects his privacy.

1.3 The Classification of Shame in Aristotle and Aquinas

1.3.1 Aristotle on Shame

Aristotle's discussion of virtue is helpful in understanding his views on shame. He discusses virtue vis-à-vis the end of human life, which he calls *eudemonia* or happiness. The virtues are acquired by doing repeated good acts. They are habits that dispose us to act well. Yet merely acting well, the mere exhibition of good behavior, does not necessarily mean attainment of a virtuous character. Instead, one has to learn to act with the right motives. Virtue, in short, is associated with a stable character that one has acquired through time. It is on this account that he does not regard shame as a virtue.

According to Aristotle, shame is more of "a feeling than a state of character;" it is a feeling that arises when one has done disgraceful things, things that cause one to blush. It only arises out of a certain fear. As he says, it is merely "a mental picture of disgrace, in which …we only care what opinion is held of us because of the people who form that opinion."[14] Thus, since shame arises because one has done disgraceful things, shame in itself cannot be a virtue; after all, as he suggests, the sense of disgrace is not even characteristic of a good man, since it is a

[14] Rhetorics 2.6

consequence of one's bad actions. No good men are supposed to do disgraceful actions. Nonetheless, shame is a good thing for the youth in whom it naturally arises as a praiseworthy passion. Shamelessness, on the other hand, is "indifference about the things that bring a person into disrespect."[15] For Aristotle, shame is good as it makes a person hate doing bad actions. But this cannot fully qualify it as a virtue.

In *Rhetorics,* Aristotle suggests that shame appears both on a personal and social level. It starts as "a mental picture of disgrace" which arises from our concern about the opinions others have of us because of our disgraceful actions. He seems to imply that shame is pronounced more on a social level than a personal one. Most importantly, he further shows that one's disgraceful acts bring shame not only to him but also to those others to whom the person is directly related or connected, such as "those who take us as their models; those whose teachers or advisors we have been; or other people like ourselves whose rivals we are."[16]

In relation to honor, he argues that shame arises for fear of loss of one's honor: "people feel shame when they suffer such things that contribute to dishonor and censures[17] and shame is imagination about a loss of reputation."[18] This is an important point because shamelessness is the negative - the opposite of which is positive shame

Aristotle's ideas about shame help us begin a careful investigation of how it works, and also to begin to imagine why and how it functions as a key part of moral

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[15] Rhet. 2.6.2 , in Jerome Neyrey, Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew, (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1998)

[16] Rhet. 2. 6.6

[17] Rhet.2.6.13

[18] Rhet.2.6.14.

formation. A look at the theology of Thomas Aquinas carries us further. His work also illustrates the influence of Aristotelian philosophy on western theology and philosophy. In the next sub-section, we shall look at Thomas Aquinas' ideas on shame.

1.3.2 Aquinas on Shame

Born in the 13th Century, Thomas Aquinas rose to prominence for his eminent scholarship as professor in universities in France and Italy. His most significant contribution was the *Summa Theologica* that earned him the "Angelic Doctor" title. Following the Aristotelian tradition, Thomas Aquinas also devotes some time in Question 144 of the *Summa* to discuss what he calls "shamefacedness."

He closely follows Aristotle in his discussion of shame. First, he is very hesitant to consider shamefacedness as fully a virtue. As he shows, this hesitation derives from his perception of virtue, which he considers in a broad and strict sense. For him, strictly, virtue is perfection and broadly "virtue denotes whatever is good and praiseworthy in human acts or passions."[19]

Hence, in a strict sense, Aquinas does not regard shamefacedness as a virtue. This is because it is "inconsistent with perfection, because it is the fear of something base, namely of that which is disgraceful." However taken in a broad sense, shamefacedness is "**sometimes** called a virtue since it is a praiseworthy passion"[20] (my emphasis). Aquinas does not reject this use—it points to the good in shame. But shame is not "an elective habit" in the same sense as is a

[19] ST II-II, 144,5

[20] ST II-II, 144,5

virtue in the narrower (and more technically correct) sense. Shame is something that happens "from an impulse of passion", the fear of "baseness or disgrace and reproach."[21]

Like Aristotle, Aquinas believes shame plays a role in -virtue formation. For instance, he argues that shamefacedness "fosters honesty by removing that which is contrary thereto."[22] There is more to learn to attain the virtue of honesty; but shame can provide a beginning. Being frequently ashamed opens us to the habit of an acquired virtue whereby one avoids the disgraceful things which are the object of shamefacedness, without continuing to be ashamed in their regard.[23] Put in another way, and using the conditional, when one has acquired virtue, "such a person would be more ashamed if confronted with a matter of shamefacedness."[24]

Like Aristotle, he argues that one is most likely to be ashamed in the presence of "those among whom they have done nothing amiss; by those of whom they ask something for the first time; by those whose friends they wish to become."[25] It is in the presence of those wise and virtuous men that "man is more desirous of being honored and by whom he is brought to a greater sense of shame."[26] Aquinas thereby makes a relation of shame to honor, whereby shame happens before those whose honor one desires. In this regard, though shame can arise before one's peers, it is less likely to happen if those peers are not more virtuous than he is. As he shows, "[m]an is not made ashamed of his sin by those whom he knows to be guilty of the same

[21] ST II, 144,1

[22] ST II-II, 144. 1

[23] ST II-II, 144. 1

[24] ST II-II, 144. 1

[25] Rhet. 2. 6

[26] ST II-II, 144

sin."[27] Even then, to evoke shame in us, those virtuous people must be close enough to us "since they are better acquainted with our deeds." Thus "strangers and persons entirely unknown to us, who are ignorant of what we do, inspire us with no shame at all."[28]

1.3.3 Evaluation

The above discussion of Aristotle and Aquinas serves to show the anomaly that shame presents both thinkers with. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle begins with "it is not right to call shame a virtue" –then says it is **more like** a feeling than a passion—which suggests that it is also like a virtue in other respects. And Aquinas begins his *Summa Theologica* II-II 144 with the assertion that shamefacedness is not a virtue, but then at the end of the first question says that it might be called so in "the broad sense of virtue" since it is praiseworthy (especially among the youth) to have it.

What emerges from the two thinkers is that shame is unique; it combines in a package features that are usually held apart. First, shame is related to something we do, not what happens to us, so it is associated with action, but not as a virtue which disposes us to act but rather as what arises after we act. Second, shame as a feeling that arises in us is therefore perhaps better called an emotion (or passion); even causing us to blush. On the other hand, we think shame is good to have—we praise people (especially the young) for having it in the right circumstances (and this later description is more like what we say of a virtue). However, our praise is also muted by at least two factors: (1) we do not praise shame in older folks—and this links shame to

[27] ST II-II, 144. 3

[28] ST II-II, 144. 3

the young and (2) shame always arises in response to - something we have done wrong, and of course it is not praiseworthy to do something wrong.

Aristotle and Aquinas remain ambiguous as to whether (and to what extent) shame is a virtue or not. In his translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Sir William David Ross reconciles Aristotle's and Aquinas' ambiguity by naming shame a "quasi-virtue."[29] By so doing, he seems to agree with both Aristotle and Aquinas that it is not good to feel shame, because it is not good to have done something about which to be ashamed, but to do something wrong and not feel shame is the ultimate proof of a wicked character. This observation is helpful to our thesis. The epithet suggests something that is not fully virtuous, but nonetheless approaches it. Shame, in effect, puts us on the way toward virtue, which suggests the significance of training. Or, put another way, when someone does something shameful, but lacks shame, we think that he/she has not been morally trained well. Following Ross, we will call shame a quasi-virtue.

Aristotle's and Aquinas' designation of shame as a "praiseworthy passion" among the youth informs our conviction in this thesis that moral formation can have recourse to shame- in forming the youth. Moreover, both thinkers see in it the potential of making a good person hate doing bad actions. Furthermore, as we shall see ahead, Aristotle's consideration of shame as not good for the old folks strengthens our argument that we can only form the youth to have so much of it. We show that having too much shame is not helpful, just as having none at all does not help either.

Furthermore, Aristotle's and Aquinas' perspective on shame as a social reality is also helpful in our later argument that shame is likely to arise in individuals whose sense

[29] Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 104.

of community is strong. After all, Aristotle suggests that humans can only fully acquire the virtues in the context of "a rightly organized community."[30] For, as they both suggest, one's disgraceful acts cause shame not only to the individual but also to those others around the person, whether they are related to the person or not. It also further helps vindicate our argument about the problem of individualism as it isolates the individual from others.

Yet Aristotle's argument that shame arises before the eyes of others whose opinion one highly regards may need some revision. To argue that shame arises before the others' eyes seems not to give enough room for internalization. For, in fact, we can feel ashamed alone, regardless of whether or not "those whose opinions one highly regards" see and/or know the wrong that we did. One ought to be ashamed (even with himself), whenever one's behavior falls below the mark, or whenever one "acts beneath one's dignity." This is part of the argument of this thesis. Nevertheless, Aristotle's discussion helpfully shows us how shame originates in the community. For, therein, we feel the others' eyes on us, and we can feel this without them present, imaginatively: what if so-and-so could see me now?

1.4 Shame in the Biblical Tradition[31]

The Bible is eloquent on shame, and also guilt. First, it shows both to be human reactions to sin, which is the failure to live according to some expected norms or

[30] Richard Regan, Aquinas: On Law, Morality and Politics, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co. 2002), xxiii.

[31] Glen Francis makes an interesting observation about shame and guilt in the Bible. "The word guilt or guilty occurs only twenty-seven times, while the word shame or ashamed occurs 225 times in the Old and New Testaments." (Glen Francis, "The Gospel for a Sin/ Shame-Based Society," Taiwan Mission Quarterly, Oct 01, 1992, (http://members.aol.com/taimission).

standards. Secondly, the scriptures firmly hold on to the social nature of shame and role in calling people to holiness and sanctification; hence, the formative nature of shame.

The Old Testament shows shame and guilt to be as old as humanity. In the story of the Fall, one notices that shame arises out of a fear, which is the fear of exposure of one's disobedience. In the story of Adam and Eve, it is the fear of being seen as naked.[32] We also see that what accompanies this exposure is the person's desire to hide from the authority (God) and from one another.[33] The hiding is a reaction to the experience of both shame (before God) and guilt [in each one of them].[34] As we shall more thoroughly discuss later, while Adam and Eve seem to feel them both, shame is social in nature while guilt is more personal.

In the prophetic tradition, we notice the social nature of shame and its use in reminding Israel of their identity as the people of Yahweh, their duty to obey and follow their part of the covenant. Jeremiah and Hosea, for instance, reminded Israel that they would avoid shame if they would obey Yahweh. They reminded Israel of how their failure to obey Yahweh would result in judgment from God, with shame as the consequence.[35] The same prophets also showed Israel how Yahweh used shame to correct them and even call them to repentance. Because of Israel's disobedience, Yahweh exiled Israel thereby exposing their sinfulness creating in them a desire, and longing for Yahweh's restoration. Thus, Yahweh used shame as a means of calling Israel back to

[32] Genesis 3:7

[33] Genesis 3:8

[34] Genesis 3:17

[35] Jeremiah 48:13, Hosea 4:18

Yahweh.[36] He used shame to humble and yet sanctify them. Ezekiel shows how by putting Judah to shame, Yahweh would lead them to true humility.[37] Similarly, when the Passover was celebrated in King Hezekiah's time, the priests and Levites were put to shame, so that they might sanctify themselves. [38]

In the Old Testament, shame is a feeling that arises on both the personal and social levels. Individual Israelites and the entire Israelite community felt it whenever they lived below Yahweh's expectations of them. Yahweh uses shame to call Israel to restoration, forgiveness and sanctification. Because of shame's positive role, the prophets deplored shamelessness. That is why Jeremiah is horrified that the people are not ashamed at having committed idolatry.[39]

The New Testament understanding of shame and guilt is in continuity with the Old Testament's. Sin is the basis of shame and guilt. In his parables, Jesus highlights the social character of shame. He also adds the private nature of shame. He taught that God punishes people for their shameful deeds regardless of whether they did them publicly or secretly. The gospel of Matthew is replete with such examples: the parable of "the man without the wedding garment the wicked servant (24:51), the unprepared maidens

[36] Jeremiah 50:2; Ezekiel 32:30

[37] Ezekiel 16:54, 59-61

[38] 2 Chronicles. 20:15

[39] Jeremiah 3:3; 6:15

(25:12), the unprofitable retailer (25:26) and the goats who did not show justice to the needy (25:41, 46).[40]

In Paul, shame still claims the communal context it has in the Old Testament; it is something that affects the entire body of Christ. As John Paul II points out, Paul shows how respect for one's body springs from shame.[41] He does this by his metaphor of the body in which he calls on the Corinthians to have respect for those least of their members -- "the unpresentable parts" of the body.[42] Failure to respect these is bound to evoke shame in them. The Book of Revelations urges for the same: "the shame of your nakedness should be covered."[43] Paul refers to shame as act inducing, as something one deliberately employs to cause some desired effect in other. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul uses shame to call their attention to knowledge of God.[44] He eloquently deplores any acting without shame such as selfishness.[45]

In scripture, as far as it is a feeling that arises because of others' knowledge of one's transgression, there is a big connection of shame to the community. Shame has largely been an undesirable feeling worth avoiding, although shamelessness when one has acted wrongly is far worse. We should fear shame, and this fear induces to good acts,

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[40] Neyrey, 31.

[41] "Hence it can be said that from shame springs respect for one's own body, respect which Paul, in First Thessalonians (4:4), urges us to keep." [John Paul II, Male and Female He Created Them: The Theology of the Body, trans. Michael Waldstein, (Boston: Pauline Publications, 2004)].

[42] 1 Corinthians 12: 23

[43] Revelations 3:18

[44] 1 Corinthians 15: 34

[45] Jude 1:12

moral living, and indeed holiness. Against this backdrop, this thesis holds onto a strong belief that today's society can use the fear of shame to form individuals into people of morally strong character. Shame is better suited for this purpose than guilt because guilt takes a more personal nature. The problem is not that people do not feel guilty, but that many lack a sense of shame.

1.5 Shame and Guilt

Having clarified the concept of shame, we also need to clarify guilt and thereafter establish a relationship between the two. A number of psychologists have researched this concept.[46] John McKenzie gives the basis of guilt feelings as primarily the existence in every individual of "an Ego-Ideal, an image of the kind of person we are expected to be and with which we have identified ourselves."[47] Guilt feelings therefore, as he further points out, arise whenever "by thought or act we come short of that ego-ideal."[48] The origin of guilt is a certain anxiety "experienced even by the infant,"[49] that all humans grow up with. What McKenzie seems to suggest is that guilt essentially has little to do with moral and religious teaching; it is mainly about the person in whom resides the "ego-ideal" which is actually the source of guilt feelings. He nonetheless argues that guilt exists on the objective and subjective levels. Objectively guilt is that "punishable conduct: the state of having broken a law; crime; wickedness"[50], while the subjective

[46] On this subject, see particularly John McKenzie, Guilt: Its Meaning and Significance, (New York: The Abington Press 1962), 22; and Tangney and Dearing, 18.

[47] McKenzie, 22.

[48] McKenzie, 22.

[49] McKenzie, 29.

[50] McKenzie, 21.

nature of guilt takes it as the "sense of wrong-doing, an emotional attitude, generally involving emotional conflict, arising out of real or imagined contravention of moral or social standards in act or thought."[51] McKenzie further shows us that guilt can be realistic or unrealistic; the fundamental difference between the two is that unrealistic guilt is subjective while realistic guilt is objective. Finally, McKenzie makes an unconvincing attempt at relating shame to guilt, pointing out how it is guilt feelings that evoke feelings of "regret, shame and remorse."[52]

Before we explore the relationship between guilt and shame, it is important to clarify the theological understanding of guilt. Theologically, there is a close relationship between guilt and sin. Guilt is that feeling that arises because of one's transgression of the commandments of God. This feeling arises largely because one has a conscience whose role is to "judge (the individual's) particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil."[53] In other words, an individual would not feel guilty if it weren't for the existence of conscience in him. Hence, to feel guilt one must be faithful to his/her conscience which, as the Catechism further points out, is "a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey."[54] In this sense, guilt has meaning that is not merely psychological: despite what we feel, we are guilty if we break God's law.

[51] McKenzie, 22.

[52] McKenzie, 23.

[53] Catechism of the Catholic Church, (Washington: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), no. 1777.

[54] Catechism, 1776.

Yet conceived in their different psychological senses, Mario Jacoby draws out a rather straightforward relation between guilt and shame:

> In feelings of shame the demands of the ego-ideal make themselves painfully known, while in feelings of guilt the painful signals derive from our conscience – our so called 'super-ego'. Feelings of shame are linked with the fantasy that I have been exposed to degradation, that I have been scorned by others and/ or myself. The operative motif behind feelings of guilt, by contrast, is that I have done something that was not right.[55]

One does not need to agree with all Mario says to see the significance of his point. That is, guilt arises with one's realization that one has acted contrary to what one ought to do, whereas shame arises with one's realization of one's failure to behave as expected by others. This also causes one disgrace or scorn, which similarly originate in the views of those around me.

Similarly, and following the work of mid 20th century anthropologists June Price Tangney and Ronda Dearing in their *Shame and Guilt,* there is a sort of "public – private" distinction between shame and guilt. Accordingly, "shame is seen as arising from public exposure and disapproval of some shortcoming or transgression, whereas guilt is seen as a more private experience arising from self-generated pangs of conscience."[56]

H.B Lewis adds another dimension. According to her, the difference between the two is in terms of intensity of the pain that accompanies each. Guilt is less painful and

[55] Mario Jacoby, 3.

[56] Tangney and Dearing, 14.

devastating because unlike shame, "in guilt our primary concern is with a particular behavior, somewhat apart from the self."[57] Nonetheless, she argues that guilt can be as painful because "guilt involves a sense of tension, remorse and regret over the bad thing done."[58] Her description of people in guilt is informative: "People in the midst of guilt experience often report a nagging focus or preoccupation with the transgression – thinking it over and over, wishing they had behaved differently or could somehow undo the deed."[59] That description portrays the nagging sense of tension and regret that is so characteristic of guilt. It also reveals how guilt usually ends up in the desire and even urge towards confession, reparation and apology. Interestingly, on the other hand, feelings of shame "are more likely to motivate a desire to hide or escape the shame-inducing situation."[60]

In a rather different way, Robert Albers connects guilt to community, showing how guilt arises from one's violation of the accepted communal code of conduct that consists of "precepts of moral or ethical propriety"[61] regardless of whether or not someone else or an authority declares the other as guilty. Hence, the mere violation of the "precepts of moral or ethical propriety" is enough to evoke guilt. Albers' perspective is important because it points us to another difference between shame and guilt, which also relates back to the biblical perspective.

[57] Tangney and Dearing, 19.

[58] Tangney and Dearing, 19.

[59] Tangney and Dearing, 19.

[60] Tangney and Dearing, 19.

[61] Robert Albers, 190.

Guilt is a feeling, but also is tied to another sense of the word that is not about how we feel. We don't decide if we are guilty by feeling; a just judge somewhere (who varies from one community or belief to another) does. For one to be guilty some form of authority (God, the Law, or the community) must pronounce one as such. This seems to suggest that shame tends to be more subjective than guilt is, or, perhaps better put, in all senses shame is about how we feel (or, conversely, shamelessness is always the lack of feelings of shame), while guilt, at least in one sense, is objectively determined. So it makes sense to say: "You may feel guilty but you are not." This is not to say we sometimes feel shame when we need not feel it. It makes sense to say: "you need not feel shame about that." But in all cases shame is what is felt or ought to be felt about who I am in relation to what I have done, whereas guilt includes reference to an objective standard or behavior. As Albers draws out the implication, "phenomenologically, guilt is a behavioral violation of one's value system; whereas shame is an ontological violation of one's essentiality or identity as a person."[62]

The distinction between shame and guilt leads us to wonder if modern individuals feel more shame or more guilt. Perhaps modern society produces more individuals capable of guilt but not shame. If the above description of guilt holds true, guilt feelings arise mostly depending on the capacity of authority to pronounce individuals as such. But suppose this authority fails in this role or ceases to have the force it once had? Guilt might yet be felt, but remains internal, having no objective standard to pin itself on. Shame, by contrast, is tied to the community, which forms the individual. Considering the difference between the two and the different contexts on which they arise, one

[62] Albers, 22.

wonders, then, whether we need to form people capable of feeling shame more than guilt or seek to form in them a balance between the two.

These questions notwithstanding, I think Tangney's and Pitt-Rivers's conclusions about the two emotions is worth adopting here as we conclude this section. Tangney sees the difference between the two emotions as one of "self versus behavior." "Shame involves fairly global negative evaluations of the self (i.e., who I am). Guilt involves a more articulated condemnation of a specific behavior (i.e., what I did)." Quoting R.R. Marret's *The Beginnings of Morals and Culture*, Pitt-Rivers beautifully suggests that shame "relates to external moral sanctions" while guilt relates to internal moral sanctions or conscience."[63] As he continues to say, "Shame is the regard for the moral values of society, for the rules whereby intercourse takes place, for the opinions which others have of one. … [I]t involves restraint of individual desires, the fulfillment of social obligations, altruism within the family, personal virtue and social good."[64] Shame is therefore about the person's behavior and its effect on others while guilt is about one's behavior and its effects on the self.

1.6 Conceptual Relationship of Shame with Honor

However, the shame/guilt relation is parsed, shame clearly relates with honor, although evidently the relation is complex. A look further at the traditional understanding of honor may help give further insights. In traditional societies, honor could be either ascribed or acquired. Every traditional society had a criterion for according honor based on one's

[63] Pitt-Rivers, "The People of the Sierra," in Kass, 344.

[64] Kass, 347.

origins, nurture and training, accomplishments and deeds. Hence, it mattered where and to which family one was born in, the kind of education one received, where and at whose instruction. Acquired honor is one that one received or achieved after one's efforts, doing certain things that society considered worth doing.

Many societies hold honor in very high esteem; consequently every member fears (or at least is expected to) dishonor. This is why Wyatt Brown also notes that "behind society's emphasis on honor (i.e. living and dying with it) is a certain fear: the fear of public humiliation."[65] He defines honor as *"inner feelings of self-worth, gentility, and high-mindedness, public repute, valor for family and country, and conformity to community wishes."*[66]

A look at traditional African society reveals how it held to an intimate relationship between honor and gender. For example, society defined and allotted particular roles to specific sexes and rewarded honor for their faithful and thorough execution. Hence, acting contrary to these gender expectations occasioned dishonor. This sense of dishonor is evidently connected to shame, based as it is on how others perceive our behavior. For instance, bravery and courage, loyalty to one's family and friends, practice of self-control, were societal expectations of maleness; whereas showing obedience and submission, characterized the female sex.

This structure of honor can stabilize and order a society. Writing about ancient (Greek) society Neyrey shows how honor cultures need to depend less on punishment

[65] Betrand Wyatt-Brown, Honor and Violence in the Old South, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), viii.

[66] Wyatt, 4 (my emphasis).

since these "social constructions," expectations and roles socialize and form. In a culture where honor and shame are not accentuated, the external forces will need to be more coercive and more explicitly formulated in laws and bureaucracies. As Neyrey writes, from these social constructions

> draw a code of behavior expected of males and females, and so become part of the set of social controls developed by the ancients to enforce the code. This gender code became part of the package of group values and ideas into which individual males and females were socialized from birth. … it became part of the evidence used by the various publics to evaluate the individual: is this male acting like a man or a woman (with the presumption that the social group possesses a clear idea of what befits a male)? And so individuals were assessed by neighbors and peers as to whether they know and appropriate the code of gender expectations. The public in turn either declared them worthy if they respected these expectations or withheld a grant of good repute if they failed.[67]

The proper relation between thought and speech has always been a source of honor for the individual, thereby prompting families to ensure that children learn to think and converse well. As Neyrey well articulates, "an honorable man was intimately related to how he used his tongue."[68] In his *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle also describes his magnanimous man partly by how he speaks. The prominence of Greek rhetoric and grammar schools illustrates this point.

[67] Neyrey, 30.

[68] Neyrey, 33.

Among the Baganda, the dominant tribe in central Uganda where I was raised, prominent families sent their children to royal courts and palaces to learn the art of speaking well. Among these were some of the young men who died as the Uganda Martyrs. The ability to speak well brought a great deal of honor for the individual (and family) concerned, while the utterance of obscene words was unacceptable and an object of dishonor and scorn on the individual (and family).

Equally of note is how traditional societies typically honored one's appearance. One's external bodily appearance was a source of honor because it was an outside sign of one's undisclosed achievements. To be fat, for instance, among the Baganda (and in many tribes of Africa), portrayed one's wealth and hence was a cause for one's respect and honor; yet being small and short was not only unattractive but also brought one disrespect because it usually was taken as a sign of laziness and poverty.[69]

Societies always accorded honor to the individual for adhering to the norms, and indirectly punished his contrary behavior with the shame and the dishonor that accompanied it. Essentially, two things promoted the individual's adherence: the capacity to feel shame at both its social and private levels, and the realization by the individual that he lives "with and in relation with others."[70]

[69] Nevertheless, the attachment of honor to one's appearance remains the case even for today's modern society considering the sensitivity people have towards one's size. The only difference seems to be that modern society rewards having slim bodies and treats fatness with disrespect. One might here want to consider the popularity of fitness gyms, or the consideration given in beauty contests to other factors such as one's bodily size and wit. The massive use of perfumes and deodorants (by men and women) equally portrays how modern society puts much premium on one's appearance that traditionally was a thing of the women. Note that the fact that both traditional and modern societies take seriously the honor that comes from one's appearance does not suggest, in any way, similarities between the two societies.

[70] Arguably, the former cannot be had without the latter. Thus, if we do not have a sense that we live with others, shame is threatened at its root.

Wyatt Brown's "intimate relation" of honor to shame is particularly instructive. He points out that honor is having "a healthy sense of shame"[71] and shamelessness an expression of a disregard for honor and disgrace. His point that we need "a healthy sense of shame" reminds us that while shame is essential in moral formation, it can also go awry, turning unhealthy in some way. Writing about honor societies, Wyatt Brown also warns us of how society's emphasis on honor can sometimes have a negative side to it. His argument is that honor assumes and affirms an inferior side to reality whose association one must seek to avoid to be considered living honorably. Sad to note, as his example about slavery shows, this "inferior side to reality" can be human beings. Slavery runs on this same assumption "that some people ought to be inferior to others in whose servitude they must always belong."[72] Alexis Tocqueville alludes to the same point in his famous *Democracy in America.* He argues that the practice of attaching or rewarding certain actions with honor developed in Aristocratic societies. He writes: "that honor or shame should be attached to a man's actions according to his condition was a result of internal constitution of an aristocratic community."[73] Accordingly, he argues, honor, or at least its rules, are less distinct in democratic societies than they are in aristocratic ones where "a people are divided into castes." In American culture, men have glimpses of the rules of honor, but they seldom have time to fix attention upon them, because in America "all men are in constant motion and society is transformed daily by its own operations, changes its opinions together with its wants." Tocqueville takes this as a good point about American society, and to some degree we can agree. However, if honor and shame are

[71] Wyatt, 83.

[72] Wyatt, 87.

[73] Alexis Tocqueville, Democracy in America, (New York: A.S Barnes & Co., 1851) Bk. 1 Ch. 1

entirely loosened by constant change, moral formation may become more difficult, as we shall see later as we probe the modern dynamics of American society more deeply.

1.7 Conclusion

People sometimes tell others: "shame on you!" Or, occasionally we may hear someone exclaiming "Oh, I am ashamed of myself!" We also hear parents asking their children: "are you not ashamed?" These typically happen when someone has behaved in a certain way that violates etiquette or has lived outside others' expectations of her. This chapter has discussed the concept of shame, establishing its meaning and relation to guilt and honor. We examined its origins and were able to establish that it is a feeling that comes from both without and within an individual, although it is also true that it might not be internalized—something that is conveyed when we speak of the individual as capable of having and not having shame (hence shamelessness).

Shame is also a feeling that society can train the individual not to avoid, but rather to have in the right measure or way. This is very important because as Albers further helps us see and understand, there are devastating effects of being wrongly ashamed.

> [T]he individual possessed by a shame perspective and perception believes there is no way back to the mainstream of life. He feels there is no way he can get back to the mainstream. The natural inclination of a shame-based person is to fearfully and anxiously hide, to cover up so that the shame will not be seen.[74]

[74] Albers, 23.

Regarding the distinction between guilt and shame, it has emerged from our discussion that they are largely related but also distinct emotions. The distinction mainly has to do with the source of each of the feelings. As Harwas Napierala concludes, "guilt seems to be a more intensive, longer-lasting experience, usually accompanied by a feeling of bad or wrong behavior, with a general tendency to be coped with in privacy and rather consciously. In the case of the feeling of guilt, it is the individual in question who is his/her own judge (inner source), whereas in the case of shame judgment seems to come from the outside (i.e. other people)."[75]

It seems plausible that we need both shame and guilt. Yet as distinct from guilt, shame is especially tied to honor, and honor can have more or less force in different kinds of societies: more in traditional societies, less in modern ones. Yet shame's importance in character formation highlights the urgency for society to form individuals capable of it. Traditional African society employed it in its formation of individuals. The next chapter will labor to show how this happened, with an eye towards how it might be preserved, even if in a somewhat altered form. Despite its dangers, shame needs to be recovered, even (or perhaps especially) in modern culture where the formation of strong characters is increasingly difficult.

[75]Harwas Napierala, Some Psychological Aspects of Shame and Guilt in School Children. (Poznan: Institute of Psychology Adam Mickiewicz University, 2002), 251-4.

Chapter 2

2.0 SHAME IN AFRICAN TRADITION

This chapter gives an overview of the moral context of traditional African society with particular interest in showing how the Baganda employ shame to form individuals. Located along the northern and western shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, the Baganda are the largest tribe in Uganda. We shall use their society as a representative case of how Africans used shame in moral formation. We shall briefly discuss, the secular and conservative understanding and use of the term tradition. We shall also show that the Baganda employment of shame in formation relates well with their conception of the individual, the purpose of the individual's life, her position in relation to society and society's conception of itself. A clarification of the two terms – "community" and "tradition" will be very important. It will help to show that there is a marked difference between the Western and African (Baganda) understanding of the two.

2.1 Personhood, Community and Tradition in African and Western Traditions

Jean Jacques Rousseau's "social contract theory" is helpful to one's understanding of the Western concept of community. Therein "community" is principally a collection of self-interested persons, each with his private set of preferences. Community arises when they gather to accomplish those things they cannot accomplish alone. This is what Harvard-based scholar of African philosophy Ifeanyi Menkiti calls the "additive approach."[76] Basing on what he calls the "three senses of human grouping," Menkiti makes a strong case for the difference between the African and the Western understanding of community. He writes, "It is possible to distinguish

[76] Ifeanyi Menkiti "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," eds. Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye, Person and Community, (Washington: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies Council for Research in Values Philosophy, 1992), 179.

three senses of human grouping, the first of which I shall call *collectivities* in the truest sense; the second of which might be called *constituted* human groups; and the third of which might be called *random* collections of individuals."[77] From the descriptions he firmly asserts, "the African understanding of human society adopts the usage in description number one above, whereas the Western understanding would fall closer to description number two."[78] Since the West understands society as constituted of individuals, their view of human society is more of an association than a community. The African view instead, asserts the ontological independence of human society whereby everything begins with society and moves to the individuals. In the Western view it all begins with the individuals and moves to society.

Such an understanding of both societies opens us to appreciate why the African moral vision deviates from the Western vision—for instance, why Africans emphasize duty more than rights, as are emphasized in Western society. Menkiti argues for why that is the case.

> In the African understanding, priority is given to the duties that individuals owe to the collectivity and their rights, whatever these may be, are seen as secondary to their exercise of their duties. In the West, on the other hand, we find a construal of things in which certain specified rights of individuals are seen as antecedent to the organization of society; with the function of government viewed, consequently, as being the protection and defense of these individual rights.[79]

Connected to this is African society's view of the relationship of the person to community. Hence, one is first a person by virtue of his belonging to the community. The same

[77] Menkiti, 180.

[78] Menkiti, 180.

[79] Menkiti, 180.

community then confers on him this status (in its entirety) when he adheres to the expectations that this belongingness brings.

In African tradition, human existence never happens in isolation; instead, it is an interaction of the several powers in the universe. These powers constitute what we shall later discuss as the "hierarchy of being." The harmonious existence or "blending of these powers" indeed make life possible.[80] Among the Africans (Baganda), the sole purpose of existence is "to seek life, to see to it that human life continues and grows to its full capacity."[81] Accordingly, African society firmly holds that individuals need others to realize this purpose. As Laurenti Magesa asserts, "[O]ne cannot ensure full enhancement of life by oneself. One's life force depends on the life force of other persons and other beings including those of ancestors and ultimately, God."[82] Thus society expects the person to live in solidarity not only with fellow living human beings but also with the other members in, what most African scholars refer to as "the hierarchy of being."[83]

In African society, the individual exists as a member connected in a network of relationships in the hierarchy of being. The hierarchy of being is comprised of God, other spirits and mediums, human beings and other inanimate things. The gods, headed by a "high God" whose names vary according to tribe,[84] are on top of the hierarchy, followed by the ancestors,

[80] Laurent Magesa, African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 50.

[81] Magesa, 52.
[82] Magesa, 52.

[83] For an extended discussion of this, see for example, John Mbiti, and Laurent Magesa and Eboussi Boulaga.

[84] For an extended and perhaps clearer discussion of this, see Sundkler, Bantu Prophets in South Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 20 and Aylward Shorter, African Culture and the Christian Church (New York: Orbis Books, 1974), 53-56.

also known as the "living dead."[85] Ancestors are "the revered dead human progenitors of the clan or tribe;"[86] "spirits of the departed that become guardian spirits of their descendants"[87] or as Shorter calls them, "the creators of society (who) are thought to be in a permanent relationship with the living."[88] Mediums, priests and diviners, who interpret and pass on the will of the ancestors, are next in the hierarchy; and at the bottom are the family and the individual. Society therefore expects the individual to live in a way that ensures harmony in the hierarchy of being. For instance, prosperity and wellbeing come to the individual who acts in accord with the will of the ancestors because society considers them to be in close contact with God. Ancestors have a special relationship with God as well as with humanity. Because of this, they intrude in the life of humans with specific intentions. The goal or purpose of one's life and end of his actions is to perpetuate and preserve the harmony in the hierarchy of being. In fact, this is what "morality" or living well consists in. As Shorter clearly shows, "in African traditional societies, morality is seen to be in an intimate relationship with the ontological order of the universe. Any infraction of this order is a contradiction in life itself and brings about a physical disorder that reveals the fault.[89]

This helps explain why African morality lacks any separation between being and doing: "for the African, the ontologically good is the ethically good."[90] This stems largely from the non-separation of the sacred from the secular, or religion from life that characterizes African society.

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[85] John Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 50-56.

[86] Magesa, 35.

[87] Sundkler, 21.

[88] Shorter, 60.

[89] Shorter, 62.

[90] Magesa, 58.

This arises from the widespread belief Africans have in God that leads to an inseparable relationship between religion and morality. Magesa points this out: "African religion forms the African people's ethical consciousness as a whole united system wherein each factor influences the other."[91]

Since we have hitherto been discussing tradition, it is necessary to distinguish the African and Western notions of "tradition." Western society largely holds what Gerald McKenny calls a liberal understanding of tradition while the African one is a conservative one. A version of the liberal understanding of tradition holds the view that reason is "capable of telling us what we need to know to live morally worthy lives."[92] A conservative understanding of tradition, on the other hand, is historical. Without undermining the role of reason in arriving at moral truths, it holds that the truths and values of any society do not exist in isolation but rather derive from a community that upholds them. These truths and values actually hold the community together and serve as the basis of moral truth to which any pursuit of the common good ought to adhere. A conservative concept of tradition, unlike a liberal one, considers the individual as a participant in "an order that both transcends human reason and … is accessible to human reason."[93]

The above distinctions of the two societies lead to the discussion about the two traditions' view of personhood. In the Western tradition, personhood goes beyond being merely an innate quality or a matter of "whoever has a soul, or rationality, or will, or memory"[94]; it is rather

[91] Magesa, 58.

[92] Gerald McKenny, "Moral Disagreement and the Limits of Reason: Reflections on MacIntyre and Ratzinger," in Lawrence S. Cunningham ed. Intractable Disputes About the Natural Law: Alasdair MacIntyre and Critics (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 199.

[93] McKenny, 222.

[94] McKenny, 222.

something that one enhances or attains by one's fulfillment or achievement of some expectations. The same is largely true in the African tradition. Western tradition, however, takes the liberty of denying personhood to someone especially when they do not exhibit certain "traits of personhood" or live up to certain standards or criteria.[95] As Menkiti shows, African tradition is in some respect similar to the Western. Menkiti writes,

> Personhood is attained in direct proportion as one participates in communal life through the discharge of the various obligations defined by one's stations. It is the carrying out of these obligations that transforms one from the *it*- status of early childhood, marked by an absence of moral function, into the person-status of later years, marked by a widened maturity of ethical sense – an ethical maturity without which personhood is conceived as eluding one."[96]

[95] Such a view clearly comes out in the debate on abortion, particularly, on the viability of the fetus. William F. May elaborately discusses this in his views on the 'anthropology' underlying the justification of abortion. As he shows, there are views behind this justification that all rotate around a denial that human life (and personhood) begins at conception or fertilization. "First, it is denied by those who claim that the being killed by abortion is not even a human being, let alone a person. It is denied also by many who grant that the being killed by abortion is a human being or member of the human species, but who contend that it simply cannot be regarded as a person with rights. Still others adopt one or another variant of the "gradualist view", which holds that at some point during gestation the entity that was conceived becomes human and personal in nature."

May also points out another group in the same debate, who grant the fetus membership in the human species right from conception/fertilization. However, they argue that such a being is so only "in the sense of a living biological member of the human species (but) contend that membership in the human species is not a sufficient criterion for personhood." And this criterion is that "for a human being to be regarded as a person, he or she must have developed … exercisable capacities or abilities for understanding, choice and rational communication." As May shows its key proponents are Michael Tooley, Daniel Callahan, and Peter Singer. Singer "contends that it is far more immoral to torture a kitten than it is to kill an unborn child." (For an extended discussion of this, see William E. May, Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human *Life* (2nd ed.), (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2008), 172- 180.

Mary Anne Warren is another of those people that May decries above. In her "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion", she literally justifies abortion using the concept of personhood. While she agrees that it is wrong to kill a human person, she justifies abortion on grounds of what she considers a lack of those traits of personhood in the fetuses. According to her, to be considered a human person and therefore a subject of the right to life, one must have the following traits: consciousness, reasoning, self-motivated activity, the capacity to communicate and the presence of self-concepts and self-awareness" (See, Marry Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion" Biomedical Ethics. 4th ed. eds. T.A Mappers and D. DeGrazia, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1996) 434-440.

[96] Menkiti, 176.

The difference is that in African tradition, the person is born a person and remains one regardless. Although one's participation and fulfillment of certain social obligations enhances one's status as a person, his failure to do so does not deny him the status of a person. Such a view of personhood is definitely in stark contrast to the Western one, where one's connection to others (the community) may not matter much. A mere possession and exhibition of rationality may be enough to qualify one as a person—which of course also means their absence can disqualify.

Holding exclusively to such a view is likely to lead one to the temptation of thinking that one's failure to live by certain standards or exhibit certain traits denies one the quality of being a person. It certainly is inconsistent with the Christian understanding of personhood. Personhood is a gratuitously given quality that one retains regardless. Nonetheless, one's fulfillment of those moral and human obligations that society preserves as tradition enhances one's personhood while one's non-conformity affects it but cannot alienate it. Hence, the right view of personhood is one that acknowledges its being an inalienable right to all human beings and at the same time one that is enhanced by one's interconnection with other human beings.

The African concept of the hierarchy of being is helpful in countering Western society's views of the person as an entity isolated from society. The hierarchy of being holds onto the view that a person exists in a network of relationships. Such a view creates in the person a sense of accountability for any of his actions or behavior, accountability not just to himself or to his God alone, but to all members of his community. I suspect, in fact, that most of the moral degeneration we witness in modern society (both African and Western), is largely due to a view that takes a person as an isolated entity with little or no need of others. Sad to say the same view has infiltrated the African society as well. The alarming rate at which individuals in government

(especially in African countries) misappropriate public funds for personal uses suggests as much.[97] Coupled with the lack of a point of reference and continuity offered by a (conservative) sense of tradition or community, a person is bound to live only by what one feels is the right thing to do.

If we are to think of morally forming individuals of strong and stable character-, a key concern of this thesis, we must recover both an appreciation of the interconnectedness of persons within society and the importance of society's reliance upon a conservative sense of tradition that can carry it through time. Despite its many other difficulties, African culture has retained both (even if both are also currently threatened). The next section investigates more practically how this operates especially in the context of the Baganda people of central Uganda.

2.2 The Place and Role of Society vis-à-vis the Purpose of Human Life

In the hierarchy of being, society serves as the authority that ensures that the individual behaves in accordance with human life's goal. Society ensures this through those norms and values whose basis is the ancestors. It jealously preserves these as "tradition" from which it draws guidelines for what individuals ought to do to live well morally.

The family is the basic unit of society that draws its authority from the ancestors. In whatever it does, the family is considered as an executive arm of the gods because it passes on the will of the gods for society. It is in the family, particularly through the mother, that the individual (child) first learns of societal norms and values. This usually happens informally

[97] For instance, in 2005 three ministers from the government of Uganda embezzled more than $ 1.5 million from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), a global alliance launched in 2000 to save children's lives and people's health through vaccination (see, Milton Opolot, "How Did Gavi Funds Disappear?" The New Vision May 27, 2007, Nov 20, 2010 (http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/566532). The three were indicted with embezzlement in the courts, but to this day, we await justice to be expedited.

through the simple observation of what the parents or elders (siblings) do. This is the beginning of the socialization process for the individual. In *Putting on Virtue*, Jennifer Herdt (though writing from and of a different tradition) shows that the process happens in three stages. First, it happens when "the child learns that there are some things we do whether we want or not, and others we don't do even if we want to. She learns this because there are certain things her parents or teachers have not given her a choice about, some things she has simply been expected or required to do or not do."[98]

Second, the child also learns through "positive reinforcement of desired forms of behavior."[99] This happens because of the compliments or reproaches the child receives whenever she does or fails to do something good. At this point, through these, the child begins to realize and even distinguish good from bad, right from wrong, what is acceptable from what is unacceptable. He actually starts to take pleasure in or refrain from the things the parents approve of or do not approve of. Thirdly, in line with Aristotle's assertion that "humans are the most imitative animals in the world," the child learns through her interaction with her social and physical worlds. This interaction develops in her "a set of higher order desires and aversions."[100] It is at this stage that the child develops a higher sense of authority, by the realization of the existence of others higher than her, what Wyatt calls "the significant other."[101] This creates in

[98] Jennifer Herdt, Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 25.

[99] Herdt, 25.

[100] Herdt, 26.

[101] According to Wyatt, this includes fathers, mothers, and guardians. When the recognition of the "significant other" becomes internalized at an early age, the child learns shame and guilt. However this internalization "could be dangerous especially if "the significant other" placed sever moral demands upon themselves and expected offspring to do likewise." (See, Wyatt Brown, Honor and Violence in the Old South. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 77.

her a sense of responsibility and accountability for her actions. At this stage she realizes that she exists *in relation to others* (parents, elders, etc.), and that she must conform her behavior to their expectations of her.

The Baganda enhance this awareness of a sense of responsibility, and accountability through a system of rewards and punishments. Society then rewards one's conformity to the norms with honor and blessings and punishes non-conformity (disobedience) with curses and a bad standing in society. Among the Baganda one's punishment usually includes some public recognition and affects not only the individual but also an entire network of people the person is connected to.[102] Because of this, shame accompanies the person's transgression. It also extends to the person's relatives. In this fashion, Baganda society has trained its members to refrain from dishonorable behavior that brings them shame. Baganda society is shame-honor based. Because of their strong sense of community, a particular Muganda's standing in his or her community is very important. Both individual and community make concerted efforts to ensure that this standing is kept at its best.

Jerome Neyrey describes traditional society as *"face-to-face"* and modern society as *"face-to-space."* While there is a "strong regard for the opinion of others" in the former, "individualism and separation from others" characterizes the latter. Individuals in traditional society such as that of the Baganda "take their basic identity from their group (especially their family and kinship network), internalize the expectations of that group, and consider life

[102] For instance, in Buganda *amawemukirano,* which is the shame that happens to the girl and her entire family (especially the mother) when she conceived out of wedlock. Traditionally, when this happened a special ceremony (okutta amawemukirano) was performed to purge the entire family of this curse brought about by what one would rather consider an isolated individual behavior.

successful when they fulfill them."[103] This enables us to see how the individual is able to survive in group (community) oriented society and how this coexistence produces "group oriented behavior and even values." A group-oriented individual develops "the awareness that the group comes before the individual" and "puts the interests of his primary social groups (family and nation) above personal wishes."[104]

Unlike in modern society where an isolated personhood functions as a basis of autonomous entity, Mbiti observes that in traditional African society, personhood or *ubuntu* rotates around the corporate principle "I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am"[105] – rather, of course, than Descartes' notorious "I think therefore I am." He suggests that the individual in African society exists in a universe inhabited by other beings, without whom she cannot fully realize her purpose in life. Mbiti's suggestion is further supported by the African concept of family, how and why it is an extended one. Family among the Baganda includes every member of all the families to whom the child relates either directly or indirectly in a clan and tribe.[106]

Such connections instill in the child an acute awareness that her actions and behaviors have consequences for others as well as for her. Some of the Baganda proverbs clearly illustrate this. For instance, *"Omwana omubi avumya nnyina,"* (means "the mother receives or shares in the blame for her child's bad behavior /character"). As the proverb indicates, Baganda society

[103] Jerome Neyrey, 27.

[104] Neyrey, 27.

[105] Mbiti, 113.

[106] Moreover, etymologically "Baganda" is the plural form of "omuganda," which means "bundle." Hence, literally speaking "Baganda" refers to people bound together in a network of relationships.

takes family moral training very seriously, always ensuring that individuals have regard for the communal consequences of their actions. Mothers do this by way of instilling in children the attitude of "*banaagamba batya?"*("How will my behavior go in the eyes of others?"). Because one's bad behavior affects others, the responsibility of forming a child isn't the exclusive right of the parents. Instead, every adult member of the local community where the child grows up knows that the child is a member and shares in the responsibility of forming the child.

In *Shame, the Arab Psyche and Islam*, Dr. Sanity offers observations about Middle Eastern cultures that parallel Buganda culture. They also help to illustrate our point.

> [W]hat other people believe has a far more powerful impact on behavior than even what the individual believes. [T]he desire to preserve honor and avoid shame to the exclusion of all else is one of the primary foundations of the culture.[107]

The result of this is two-fold: the individual learns how to be responsible for her actions, and society takes a keen interest and responsibility for the actions of its members. Of course, one can anticipate problems in this understanding. Because she is aware of her behaviors as these are on society's radar, as Dr. Sanity observes, when freed from these the individual might easily "engage in wrong-doing as long as no one knows about it, or knows he is involved."[108] Nonetheless, the strong sense of the individual's connectedness highlights the authority of the community. Seen thus authority exists as a safeguard for both individual and societal goods.

When such informal structures of authority are in place, society needs to depend less on formalized structures of authority. In fact, as Magesa argues, traditional societies take these

[107] Sanity, "Shame, the Arab Psyche and Islam," Dr Sanity blog, August 18, 2005, June 18, 2010 (http://drsanity.blogspot.com/2005/08/shame-arab-psyche-and-islam.html)

[108] Sanity

structures for granted because they are part of the universe to which the individual is connected. They indeed constitute what it means to be a human person. They are brought naturally to the person through the family by which the individual learns social values. In fact, such a society needs to rely much less on external means of enforcing its moral codes or norms because following them is part of what it means to be a member of the community. However, here again, shame is a lynchpin, enforcing the accepted patterns of moral behavior with its subtle pressure.

2.3 Conclusion

The culture of the Baganda (and, indeed. virtually all of African culture) is shame-honor based. The acquisition of honor and avoidance of shame are the keys to individuals' motivation. In such a society, the opinions of others in the community influence and largely determine one's behavior. Hence, when society believes the individual behaved inappropriately it punishes with dishonor and shame. It is this arrangement that sustains morality. However, as mentioned earlier, the individual may escape shame when society is unaware of his transgression. In this regard, the internalization of shame is very crucial. One might make two observations: (1) this ought to be made easier by the conception, from the ground up, that "I am also we"; (2) shame cultures may indeed learn something from guilt cultures, wherein the highest authority is God, and not the community—although clearly this is brittle since it can develop toward individualism, and the God at the top can simply disappear. The founding of America is a story like this: the pilgrims' view that they owed allegiance to GOD and not a human sovereign (like the king of England) clearly set the American mood, which was eventually developed in a secularizing way.

Yet there have always been stable and strong characters, among the Baganda, each conscious of their identity in society, who have internalized shame in such a way as to affirm the

good of their people in all aspects of their person. Shame can effectively help in the formation of individuals imbued with both a personal and communal purpose of life. Of course, shameless characters do exist, among the Baganda. However, their existence is the exception not the rule.

Shame seems to have less power in developed Western culture, and shamelessness is more common. Indeed an indicator of the difference between the two societies might be this: the extent to which individuals feel ashamed. "Traditionalists" (i.e., those who adhere to what we have been calling a "conservative" notion of tradition and communal authority) have more capacity for shame than do the modern counterparts. Among the reasons for this is the greater degree to which "traditionalists" feel connected and responsible to their society. The next chapter will delve into examining the difference between the traditional individual and his modern counterpart, with particular interest in how modern society forms adherence to its social codes and norms.

Chapter 3

3.0 WESTERN MORAL TRADITION

The previous chapters examined the concepts of shame, guilt and honor. The second chapter investigated the contextualization of these concepts in the African tradition, thereby confirming how these concepts have a communal focus.[109] It emerged that the individual's non-adherence to social codes evokes feelings of shame while honor is the reward for his/her adherence. It also emerged that in a community where individuals are capable of feelings of shame, it becomes easy to enforce social moral codes because of the formative nature of shame. This chapter will examine Western (principally, American) society with keen interest in the characteristics that distinguish it from African culture, represented in this thesis by the Baganda of central Uganda.

We will proceed by first looking at key tenets or characteristics of Western culture. We will then establish in such a culture the source of authority and the place of the individual, accenting the relationship that exists between these two poles of Western society. Establishing this relationship will be very helpful in distinguishing whether and how shame and honor function in Western society, as well as how this compares to the Baganda society.

[109] While there is usually a tendency to look at "society" and "community" as almost synonymous, they greatly differ. No one makes this difference clearer than does H. Tristram Engelhardt in his *The Foundations of Bioethics*. Therein he makes the following contrast of the two: "Community is used to identify a body of men and women bound together by common moral traditions and/or practices around a shared vision of the good life, which allows them to collaborate as moral friends. Society is used to identify an association that compasses individuals who find themselves in diverse moral communities." Engelhardt's argument is that whereas one belongs to a wider society, one nonetheless belongs or is supposed to belong to a smaller unit, the community that actually gives him his identity. Hence, to take the example of Uganda, whereas one may belong to the wider society of people called Ugandans, one's "primary moral place and identification will be in a particular community", such as the tribe or clan or even religion. In such a community, individuals live as "moral friends" unlike in a society where they live as "moral strangers." (See, Tristram Engelhardt H. Jr., The Foundations of Bioethics, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.

In Western society, the individual holds a preeminent place over the community. This emphasis, rooted as it is in a liberal political philosophy, coupled with technological advancement make it difficult to form people of strong moral character-. This does not imply the two must be utterly discarded, but rather points to a - need to give them their rightful place in society. Moreover, we must consider also how much harder it becomes in the context of these two influences to think of forming individuals of strong character capable of desiring honor and therefore avoiding shame. Noting these points will prepare us to consider the genuine and profound fear and concern that Western culture is already a threat to African culture. The concern of many Baganda is that some questionable values in Western culture will infiltrate their culture and change it for the worse.

3.1 Characteristic Traits of Western Society

Modern technology largely characterizes Western society. Its benefits notwithstanding, there is a two-fold danger posed by modern technology. It creates certain attitudes in the individual as well as diminishing the preeminent position of the individual in society. By his/her discovery and use of technology, the individual may easily be given over to a false sense of self-sovereignty, as if he or she is the center of the universe. Imbued with such an attitude, the individual can easily succumb even to the temptation of considering other people as dispensable for his existence. This creates an artificial barrier between the individual and the others. When that is the case, no appeal to such values as shame can really make much sense since shame implies the individual's acknowledgment of others' role to him/her. This is not to deny that one can feel shame when alone, but this requires the context of community. Shame also has a lot to do with one's acknowledgment of the worth and value of those others, an acknowledgment that

they have a certain "authority" over the individual. In societies where technology is widespread, this is less likely to be the case.

Technology has also eased and increased mobility. However, this has brought with it its own problems; it has particularly contributed to society's fragility. A pattern of mobility means people will rarely settle in one area and the effect is that the individual always finds himself establishing and re-establishing himself in new environments. The individual arguably needs some amount of stability of place by which he would be able to establish the necessary network of relationships on which to depend and be accountable to.

The elevation of liberal notions of individual freedom and autonomy is also prominent in Western society. Here freedom interpreted as autonomy means "being left alone by others, not having other people's values, ideas or styles of life forced upon me, and being free of arbitrary authority in work, family and political life."[110] It implies the individual's ability to "define who you are, what you want out of your life, free as much as possible from the demands of conformity to family, friends and community."[111] Hence, freedom becomes the individual's detachment from one another. So it is that that society provides a fertile ground for the individualism and indifference to others that partly characterizes the Western way of life. Indifference arises when the individual realizes his autonomy from others such that "if she doesn't like what they do or the way they live, her only right is the right to walk away."[112] The

[110] Robert Bellah, et al., Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life, (Berkeley: University of California Press Ltd., 1985), 23.

[111] Bellah, 23.

[112] Bellah, 23.

effect of this, as Robert Bellah notes, is the creation of a world "made up of individuals, each endowed with a right to be free of others' demands."

Such a view of freedom is unfortunately oblivious of the social nature of humans; it isolates the individual. This is because, as Bellah shows, the Western view of freedom is "freedom of each person to live where he wants, do what he wants, believe what he wants, and do what he can improve his material circumstances."[113] Undoubtedly, such a view questions and challenges any form of authority and leaves community ties or bonds very fragile and weak.

Individualism[114] stands out as arguably the hallmark of Western (American) society. No one more clearly illustrates the Western sense of individualism than Bellah when he writes:

> Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not only morally wrong, it is sacrilegious. Our highest and noblest aspirations, not only for ourselves, but also for those we care about, for our society and for the world, are closely linked to our individualism.[115]

Western individualism, as Bellah shows, traces its roots to the "struggle against monarchical and aristocratic authority that seemed arbitrary and oppressive to citizens prepared

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[113] Bellah, 25.

[114] In fact, from individualism also flows liberalism. Stanley Hauerwas, quoting John Rawls notes, "the primary purpose of liberalism is to make society merely "a cooperative venture for mutual advantage", something that exists independent from the story that makes it. Hauerwas points out the self-deceptive nature of liberalism: "it gives the illusion that freedom is more a status than a task." (See Stanley Hauerwas, *"A Story-Formed Community: Reflections on Watership Down,"* The Hauerwas Reader, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 180.

[115] Bellah, 142.

to assert the right to govern themselves."[116] The influence here of John Locke and the Enlightenment's "individual" is undisputed.[117] The Enlightenment elevated reason to what Gerald McKenny calls the "transcendental moral order" thereby alienating it from any society as the "historical vehicle to make moral truth credible."[118]

Modern individualism seems to thrive partly because of what John Paul II in Veritatis Splendor calls a "spurious liberty grounded in the subject as the source of moral value."[119] Related to individualism is modern society's extreme emphasis on individual rights and autonomy. This, as Bellah notes, arises out of "the fear that society may overwhelm the individual and destroy any chance of autonomy unless he stands against it."[120]

At the heart of individualism is "the insistence that one relies on one's own judgment rather than on received authority in forming one's opinion."[121] However, even in making judgments, one cannot entirely depend on - oneself; one needs others to make one's "judgment." Moreover this reliance on oneself for judgment is not sustainable because, as Bellah notes, "when one can no longer rely on tradition or authority, one inevitably looks to others for confirmation of one's judgments"[122] An individual in such a situation, to echo Tocqueville, unconsciously becomes a conformist. This is what Bellah considers the ambiguous nature of

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[116] Bellah, 142.

[117] According to Locke, the individual in the state of nature always acts to realize his self-interests; he exists prior to society, which only comes up by the voluntary contract of individuals to realize their interests.

[118] Gerald McKenny, 222.

[119] John Paul II Veritatis Splendor Nos. 35-45 quoted by Gerald McKenny, 216.

[120] Robert Bellah, 144.

[121] Bellah, 147.

[122] Bellah, 147.

individualism. The other ambiguity grows as the individual loses certainty about the best he is supposed to make of himself.

> Since there are no fixed standards of behavior which serve to mark status, the only clearly defined cultural standards against which status can be measured are the gross standards of income, consumption, and conformity to rational procedures for attaining ends…[I]ndividuals are left with no standard against which achievement is to be measured except the income and consumption standards of their neighbors, exhibiting anew the clash between autonomy and conformity."[123]

Bellah summarizes the deceptive and contradictory nature of individualism as well as its ambiguities:

> We insist on finding our true selves independent of any cultural or social influence, being responsible to that self alone, and making its fulfillment the very meaning of our lives. Yet we spend much of our time navigating through immense bureaucratic structures – multiversities, corporations, government agencies- manipulating and being manipulated by others."[124]

This "navigating through bureaucratic structures" is what MacIntyre calls "bureaucratic individualism" whereby the "freedom to make private decisions is bought at the cost of turning

[123] Bellah, 149.

[124] Bellah, 151.

over most public decisions to bureaucratic managers and experts."[125] This illustrates the contradictions and inner tensions in individualism.

We can pause here to note that an individualism that asserts the value and worth of the individual is not itself a concern. Individualism in Western culture, however, has by and large extended beyond this affirmation to embrace the illusion that an individual survives better isolated from the community. The truth is that in all societies, the individual finds meaningful existence and fulfillment only in relation to others, the community. It is in here that genuine individuality is found. In solitude, Adam felt an emptiness that was only solved by God's creation of Eve. His reaction at the gift of her aptly explains how empty and meaningless life can be when the individual makes a radical break from others.[126] In Jesus' passion narrative, Judas Iscariot suffered his fate largely because of his separation from the rest of the apostles.

In *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, Josef Ratzinger argues that one's separation from the community is indeed a separation from love itself. This is because the "Christian communion is a fellowship of love; it exists through love."[127] Hence, any form of rebellion (as separation from others) "is not healing but is destructive of love."[128] Moreover, despite the craving for autonomy and a break from community and tradition, there always remains in the human person the need to connect or even "reconnect with others" (although the fear of losing our rightful independence

[125] Bellah, 150 quoting Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 33.

[126] Genesis 2:18, 23

[127] Josef Ratzinger, Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 85.

[128] Ratzinger, 85.

sometimes hinders it). As Bellah notes, "we deeply feel the emptiness of a life without sustaining social commitments, yet we are hesitant to articulate our sense that we need one another as much as we need to stand alone, for fear that if we did we would lose our independence altogether."[129]

In other words, arguing well for the value of individualism involves complexity. We need a language that is capable of expressing it. Yet unfortunately the complexity has been lost in what Bellah believes are the two dominant "languages" of American culture.[130] In Western society, individualism exists as both utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism. Utilitarian individualism advocates that each individual be allowed the freedom to pursue "his own interest from which the social good would then emerge."[131] Expressive individualism, on the other hand, considers genuine freedom as "the ability to express oneself against all constraints and conventions."[132] While not opposed to social structures, expressive individualism insists on how to be oneself in the midst of these structures. Both forms of individualism obscure those social relations that are essential to this fulfillment. The complexity is utterly lost.

3.2 Traditional Western Society and the Shift to Modern Society

The organic society theory, the first form and foundation of the social evolutionary theory, holds that all societies are "really living organisms that undergo many of the same stages

[129] Robert Bellah, 151-2.

[130] Bellah thinks that American lives are better than their talk. He thinks we have lost, or are in grave danger of losing two key "languages" religious language and republican language, that once held a more prominent place. He wants to reclaim these.

[131] Bellah, 32.

[132] Bellah, 34.

and developments that animals and humans go through"[133] The theory seems to suggest that, like African society, Western society has been evolving. The Enlightenment movement, industrialization, and technological advancement are some of the factors that facilitated this change. We shall briefly discuss each of these factors showing how they have largely defined Western society.

Renowned sociologist and commentator on the American family and marriage, Andrew Cherlin aptly shows the effect of industrialization particularly on family life in America. In his *The Marriage Go-Round*, Cherlin shows how industrialization unfortunately facilitated a reversal of the family from its "little commonwealth"[134] status during the colonial times to what it is today. It led to not only the reduction of childbirth but also to the rise of "companionate marriages."[135] Companionate marriage is one where couples mainly view in marriage their emotional security and expression of feelings for marital satisfaction rather than just one's effectiveness at being a good provider, a good homemaker, or a responsible parent. The effect of this was that marriage lost its status as the "ideal commonwealth" to becoming one where one merely seeks one's emotional satisfaction and expression of one's feelings. Moreover, should one find one's feelings not satisfied in this kind of arrangement, one retains the right to pull out

[133]See www.ehow.com/abouttheory-social-evolution.htm

[134] Cherlin uses this phrase to show the eminent role that marriage and family life held then. Referring to New England colonial society, he shows how the family was the school "in which children learned the skills they needed for adult life", a correctional facility whereby "Justices sometimes ordered people convicted of crimes to live in homes of upstanding families" and an orphanage whereby "children whose parents had died were taken in not by orphanages but by other families." (See, Andrew Cherlin, The Marriage Go-Round, (New York: Alfred Knopf 2009) 40.

[135] Cherlin cites research of various historians to give context to the changing view of marriage in the 20th Century. He argues that because of industrialization, "marriage made a transition from the breadwinner – homemaker model that flourished in the 1950s" to one that "adhered to a sharp division of labor where they were supposed to be each other's companions – friends, lovers." Companionate marriage is one that emphasizes the "importance of emotional ties between wife and husband –their companionship, friendship, romantic love and sex life." (See Cherlin, 67-8.)

of it. The effect of this kind of marriage is its undermining of the institution of marriage in its original status. Sad to note, today this seems to be the prevailing attitude about marriage.

In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* Robert D. Putnam narrates the effect of technology on American society. He blames technology for what he calls a "decline of community engagement sense in America." He singles out television and shows how much television is to blame for the prevailing sense of individualism in American society. He writes, "[t]elevision watching is bad for both individualized and collective civic engagement, but is particularly toxic for the things we do together… [J]ust as it privatizes our leisure time, it also privatizes our civic activity, dampening our interactions with one another even more than it dampens individual political activities."[136]

He gives a fascinating description of people who take TV as their primary form of entertainment. He says they

> volunteer and work on community projects less often, attend fewer dinner parties and fewer club meetings, spend less time visiting friends, entertain at home less, picnic less, are less interested in politics, give blood less often, write to friends less regularly, send fewer greeting cards and lesser emails…TV dependence is associated not merely with less involvement in community life, but with less social communication in all its forms – written, oral or electronic.[137]

[136] Robert D Putnam, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Society, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 229.

[137] Putnam, 231.

As earlier mentioned, modern Western notions that couple individualism and autonomy arise from within Enlightenment philosophies whose two fundamental characteristics, Luke Yoder summarizes as (i) "faith in Reason and rationality to reject the tradition and the pre-established institutions and thoughts and, and (ii) the search for the practical, useful knowledge as the power to control nature."[138] Prominent Enlightenment philosophies accent rationalism, empiricism and materialism, among other philosophies. Such thinking evidently facilitated the rise and development of individualism and liberalism that are salient features of Western society.

For our purposes in this thesis, a major effect of technology and the Enlightenment philosophies on Western society has been the elevation of individual achievement and the resultant isolation of the individual from society. Individualism of this sort challenges the force of tradition and authority in morally forming lives. The individual has become not only his own authority but also the determiner of his destiny.

As we earlier implied, a healthier and subtler accent on the good of individual achievement or private human reasoning is available. Yet it cannot be developed devoid of a social context. Even a prominent Enlightenment thinker such as Immanuel Kant recognized that individuals could use their private reason "but only to the extent that it does not conflict with the institutions themselves. For within the institution man is bound by duty and obligation to conform his reason and action."[139] By advocating reason within the institution, Kant does not allow the institution to suffocate reason or the other way round. Instead, he argues, "if people are

[138] Luke J Yoder, "The Case of Human Plurality: Hannah Arendt's Critique of Individualism in Enlightenment and Romantic Thinking," MA Thesis August 2008, (http://www.csudh.edu/phenomstudies/western/lect8.htm).
[139] Luke Yoder " An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment" ed. James Schmidt, What is Enlightenment: Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions, (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1996), 2.

allowed to speak freely and criticize their institutions in the public realm, then they will inevitably enlighten themselves as well as their institutions."[140]

Similarly, G.W.F Hegel warns against making reason alone the basis of everything. For instance, with regard to morality, rather than basing it on reason alone, he demanded some kind of ontological purpose for morality. As Luke Yoder notes, for Hegel,

> [m]oral freedom comes through the individual's connection with a greater universal spirit, whether it is a world spirit that realizes itself in history, or a national spirit that realizes itself in politics. The state is that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys freedom, but on the condition of his recognizing, believing in, and willing that which is common to the Whole.[141]

These points from Kant and Hegel do not exonerate Enlightenment thinking from its negative role in modern Western individualism. However, they illustrate that even they did not suppose the isolating individualism which Western society has largely embraced as tenable. Society is the rightful context in which the individual lives and is even able to exercise his rationality and by which he is able meaningfully to realize the achievements that technology and even industrialization facilitate. The individual is fully individual only through relationship. In fact, it is through relationships, as Reinders argues, that moral responsibility arises.[142] Without this realization, the individual is bound to be lost in an endless search for meaning in his life – as one might suppose has occurred for a great crowd of individuals currently driven in Western culture from one thing to the next, in desperate search of their "individual fulfillment."

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[140] Yoder, 2.

[141] Yoder, 14.

[142] He argues that "moral responsibility … arises from the nature of the moral self that discovers itself within a network of relationship." (See Reinders, "Future of the Disabled," ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Romand Coles, Christianity, Democracy, and the Radical Ordinary (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008) 205.

Yet any notion of individual fulfillment that neglects our deep connection to others is bound to fail. In addition, any society that denies the rootedness of the individual in community is bound to fail in its efforts at the moral formation of a person into its communal values. Indeed, moral formation of virtually any sort – that is, formation that passes on wisdom about the best way to live – is likely to be ineffective in a society where individualism is the norm. Therefore, in order for Western societies (and indeed all societies) to effectively form individuals in any of their moral values, the recovery of a communal sense or at least the appreciation of the rootedness of a person is not a choice but a necessity.

3.3 Conclusion

Because of the developments we have been discussing, in Western society "the individual" has been largely cut loose from the communal umbilical cord upon which his full life depends. He can do little else but define himself in terms of his momentary pleasures, or the things he has accumulated or perhaps his recognized achievements. In this Western culture differs from the Baganda culture (and most of African culture) where individuals are given a clearer road map of what is expected of them. Baganda typically so strongly adhere to societal expectation of them that it becomes their second nature; indeed, it defines for them what it means to be a person. In Western society, the individual by his achievements (rational, economic, etc) instead gives direction to society instead of society doing it. This is what Neville Richardson apparently refers to as "the entrenchment of the moral sovereignty of the individual in Western

consciousness"[143] where personal ambition, not the community, is the measure of what is right and good.[144]

In such an individualistic society, shame becomes unreliable as a formative quasi-virtue. As Aristotle suggested, shame's virtue (or quasi-virtue) rests in its capacity to set us back on track. But this is a track, a way of living well, that we are given by our community, not one that we have made up individually for ourselves. Indeed precisely the trouble that shame is meant to address is that I have for a time pursued a type of behavior that was momentarily attractive to me, but shame has reminded me with the voice of the community that what I have done is shameful. If the logic of individualism is extended so far as to entirely sever morality from community, then shame simply makes no sense. Certainly, it can play no stable role in moral formation.

Of course, within a highly individualized morality, shame might be driven inward, as within an isolated self. But here it becomes inaccessible to the very community upon which its logic depends. Thus, shame can no longer provide any reliable communal standard. Bereft of this essential resource that can mediate between the individual (properly understood) and his society, Western society must depend more heavily (than, say in Buganda culture) on laws and regulations in the enforcement of its moral standards or codes. This is not only hard to do but can

[143] Neville Richardson 1998, 39.

[144] Stanley Hauerwas warns of the dangers of such identification for the individual, in his "Self-Deception and Autobiography: Reflections on Speer's *Inside the Third Reich."* In the example of Albert Speer, a former ally of Hitler in the Holocaust, Hauerwas shows the danger there is in an individual's lack of a "story" or community or larger picture to identify with. He writes, "such people are open to manipulation by anyone who offers a compelling vision of how that skills can be used. A person with no story beyond his or her role yearns to be so placed by another… . [P]ersons with no politics become political pawns, lacking as they do the skills to grasp the shape of their involvement." He therefore suggests, as was the lesson Speer learned, that "becoming a human being requires stories and images a good deal richer than professional ones, if we are to be equipped to deal with the powers of this world" (Hauerwas, 213 - 215).

also be very expensive to run. In this context, it is easy for laws to be understood entirely in terms of their penalties, which individuals presumably wish to avoid. So the reason to obey laws becomes externalized: I obey them not because they help form me better to live with others but because by breaking them I may be less likely to get what I want: my private goods.

Without shame, guilt might remain a moral weapon within such a society, since guilt is "a more private experience arising from self-generated pangs of conscience."[145] But it is also more likely that some individuals may not feel it. After all, for one to feel guilty one must be pronounced as such by some form of authority. Moreover, Western society otherwise accents that the authority is me. Furthermore, by itself the logic of guilt is compatible with a lonely defense, as when one defends oneself even when the whole public believes one is guilty since one's internal and individualistic judgment is what matters most. Hence, when others believe I am guilty, and I believe the same, then I am guilty and punished. But when others believe I am guilty but I believe am not, I protest my innocence and fight the accusation.

There is a way to appreciate an aspect of guilt, even if, shorn of shame, it can lead to significant trouble, especially related to moral formation. As opposed to shame, which has the widely held social view as its point of reference, guilt can make an appeal beyond this to a transcendent truth. Here it is not merely a matter of whether I "feel guilty" but whether I am – and this is in terms of a standard of justice that social groups may sometimes ignore. This perhaps explains why Western culture, as a guilt culture, is primarily concerned with truth, justice and preservation of individual rights.

[145] Dearing and Tangney, 14.

In an honor-shame culture, what other people believe is more powerful. Within such a culture, it is difficult for a particular person to distinguish at any time between what "we believe" and what is true – making cultural critique a quite difficult undertaking. In Western culture, cultural critique is easy, indeed, perhaps too easy, since it has become standard fare. Further, standards of truth become too easy, becoming sometimes like matters of taste: "that I happen to believe."

This leads in Western culture to a trivialization of "truth." Since guilt, unlike shame, can theoretically stand separate from the strong force of what one's culture thinks, in a guilt culture one's belief in such institutions as the judiciary becomes especially weighty. If he finds that his opinion is different from the prevailing one, the individual can always hope for vindication of his private judgment from this institution. However, this also is dangerous since the failure of such institutions can undercut that belief or "faith." Alternatively, one might simply go looking for allies in one's "belief" about what is right or true. As J.S Artherton notes, "in a pluralist society, if my particular sector or reference group think there is "nothing wrong" with, say, driving after drinking alcohol or stealing from one's workplace or cheating an insurance company, it may not exert any influence on my behavior in that respect."[146] Potential gains on the importance of truth in Western culture are thereby undercut by its trivializing tendencies. Conformity, as Tocqueville noticed, creeps in the back door such that the individual's pursuit of truth and justice is swallowed by the ready appeal to what others who are like him seem to believe.

Let me close this chapter with a qualification. I have suggested that, whereas the Ganda culture is honor-shame based, Western (American) society is a guilt-innocence based one. Right

[146] Atherton J. S, "Shame-Culture and Guilt-Culture," Doceo. February 10, 2010, April 6th 2011 (http://www.Doceo.co.uk/background/shame_guilt.htm)

or well founded as this conclusion might be, I do not mean to say the difference is absolute. Shame, or at least the concept of it, is arguably present everywhere–in families, schools and work places—just as guilt is. Our interest here is principally to identify trends or dominant tendencies. At this level, the contrast is clear enough. This chapter has labored especially to show Western individualistic tendencies (tendencies consonant with a guilt-innocence culture), and whence they have arisen. We have also shown how difficult it is for shame to function well in such a society. The next chapter will therefore show that identification with others in any communal form is indeed what it means to truly be human. This can rehabilitate shame as a means to the formation of individual characters, based now on the truthful acknowledgment of the indispensability of the community to the individual. Thus, an account of who we are as social beings is essential to giving a proper place to shame as a quasi-virtue.

Chapter 4

4.0 THE PERSON AS A BEING-WITH-OTHERS: THE CORRELATIVE NATURE OF THE PERSON AND THE COMMUNITY

We have so far endeavored to show both that it is important for individuals to feel shame and that in certain modern societies it is increasingly difficult. Shame is crucial to character formation within community. However, because of its social nature, shame makes more sense in societies that hold onto the intimate and unbreakable bond between the individual and the community. Therefore, the formative character of shame is less likely to hold much significance in highly individualistic societies.

Points so far have been primarily sociological, concerning concepts and functions within different kinds of social arrangements. Yet it would be a mistake to think that the difference between individualistic and communal societies is a theologically or anthropologically neutral point, as if either kind of society fits equally well with the sorts of creatures we are created to be. This chapter endeavors to show the inseparable relationship between the individual and the community. I heavily rely on the works of renowned theologians and pro-community philosophers such as Karl Rahner, Alasdair MacIntyre, John Paul II, and Charles Taylor.

4.1 The Person as Related: Where Individualism Misses the Point.

Karl Rahner's anthropology is very rich in pointing to the related nature of the person or, simply put, the individual's essential need for the other. His anthropology rotates around the historicity and embodiment of the person. He considers the person as "a spirit in-the-world" as

"one who is more than his particularity."[147] The person is always self-transcendent with God as his referent, to whom he is always open and whose union he desires. Mary Catherine Hilkert argues that according to Rahner, the human person exists on two poles: the categorical and the transcendental. The categorical pole consists of those social, tangible and concrete manifestations of one's body, one's relationships, the events that constitute one's history and the world in which one lives. The transcendental pole is the spiritual dimension of one's existence through which the person experiences an invitation to the life of grace.[148] She argues that any separation of the two poles gives a false view of who the person really is. Modern individualist society largely does this.

By insisting that the person is "spirit-in-the-world," Rahner affirms the dual nature of the human person. In so doing, he offers an apt critique of liberal philosophical views of the person as "the unencumbered individual."[149] At the same time Rahner's views, address what Miguel Diaz decries as "the humanistic reductionism that would define persons in purely scientific, social or cultural ways."[150] Individualist societies are prone to making this "reductionism." For in such societies, the individual has an identity that exists prior to and is independent of its social roles and relations. The individual turns out to be the sum of his self- interests. Society then becomes a mere aggregate of such individuals, each endowed with individual rights and pursuing

[147] Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity, trans. W. Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 216.

[148]Mary Catherine Hilkert, Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination, (New York: Continuum, 1997), 31-32.

[149] Sean Sayers, "Identity and Community", University of Kent at Canterbury, (http://www.kent.ac.uk/secl/philosophy/articles/sayers/identity.pdf).

[150] Miguel H Diaz, On Being Human: US Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives, (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 97.

his own conception of the good. Such a view of individuals undoubtedly undermines the importance of community in determining individual identity.

In *Identity and Community* Sean Sayers, in reference to the philosophies of Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel beautifully captures the place and importance of the community to the individual's self-identity.

> All our distinctively human and moral characteristics are constituted socially and historically. Our desires and values, our ability to reason and choose, our very being and identity as human agents and moral selves, are formed only in and through our social relations and roles. There is such a thing as society, and it is prior to and constitutive of the individual. What Taylor calls the `atomic' individual and Sandel the `unencumbered' self of liberal social theory is a myth.[151]

The view of the inseparable relationship between the individual and society largely persists in the so-called "primitive societies." As Sayers further notes, identification with the community is not something the individual chooses. He is born into "a rigid and hierarchical social structure and system of values" in which identity is inseparable from the individual's place in such a structure or system. He has no choice over it; "it is regarded as something naturally determined and unalterably given by birth. The individual is identified and constituted in and through certain of his or her roles ... [I] confront the world as a member of this family, this household, this clan, this tribe, this city, this nation, this kingdom. There is no `I' apart from these."[152]

[151] Sayers, 1.
[152] Sayers, 3.

While these forms of identity remain prominent in the African society, they have largely disappeared in modern Western society. What remains is what MacIntyre calls "a series of fragmentary survivals lacking the context which originally gave them their significance."[153] Morally we are left with this state of affairs: "the language and appearances of morality persist even though the integral substance of morality has to a large degree been fragmented then in part destroyed."[154] When the sense of society is lost, it becomes very easy for such a society to lack an objective way of reaching or even speaking of a shared understanding or way of resolving moral disputes. Every individual pursues his subjective and even arbitrary goals and ends, invoking his moral right to do so. Sayers calls this the predicament of the modern self which, according to MacIntyre, is caused by modern theories such as emotivism and existentialism.[155]" MacIntyre sees "no remedies for the condition of liberal modernity"[156] because the frameworks (of traditional communal life, etc) have been all but lost in the modern world, and there is no possibility of going back.

MacIntyre's pessimism has been challenged. Charles Taylor has argued that even in liberal society shared frameworks still exist, although with the pervasive influence of the liberal idea of autonomy our frameworks have been "debased, distorted and suppressed."[157] Moreover, he argues the transition from traditional frameworks of social relation to modern ones has been

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[153] Sayers, 3.

[154] Sayers, 5.

[155] According to MacIntyre, emotivism views values as merely arbitrary and non-rational preferences. Existentialism pictures the self as isolated, abandoned or condemned to create its own values by and for itself. He actually takes these theories as in some respects true, not as the accounts of the universal, pre-social human nature that they claim to be, but as accounts of the way we have actually become in modern society. (See, Sayers, 3.)

[156] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Specter of Communitarianism" Radical Philosophy 70 (March/April, 1995):35.

[157] Sayers, 7.

to some degree positive. It has led to the replacement of traditional ones by new, different and more pluralistic ones. "The modern self is not merely disencumbered of its old attachments, but takes on new roles and new attachments."[158]

Pessimistic though he sounds, Macintyre offers a remedy for this condition of the self. He suggests a return to "the traditional communal life of the ancient polis or the medieval monastery, and the Aristotelian conception of the virtues."[159] I agree. Yet MacIntyre's thesis seems more theoretical than practical. As this thesis has shown, formation of the strong characters formed in communal life—the sort MacIntyre here speaks of—will also need support from some sense of shame and honor. As we have seen, these can hold only in societies that support the unbreakable relationship between the individual and community.

If we are to use shame in the moral formation of individuals, we ought to be aware of its nature. Because shame depends on our social nature, it (shame) requires institutions that promote the sense of community. A return to shame therefore suggests a strengthening of those institutions, coupled with an awareness of how shame might rightfully work within them.

4.2 The Communal Nature of the Person: The Role of the Family and Church

Individualism would not be bad if it simply promoted the growth, rights and indeed the good of the person. Its difficulty lies in how it has defined this good. In fact, the individual's good finds its full realization in a communal context that actually promotes, fosters and preserves

[158] Sayers, 7.

[159] Sayer 3 quoting MacIntyre's "The Spectre of Communitarianism." MacIntyre develops the same idea in **After Virtue**. According to him, without a proper end (telos) to aim toward, codes of virtuous conduct become merely a list of things humans need to do if they were to be virtuous. As he suggests, this is what has become of modern moral formation. It is not effective because the moral codes are given devoid of their rightful context which he defines as basically the communities to which humans belong. As he points out, one can only answer the question, 'what am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question, 'of what story or stories do I find myself a part?' (p. 216) Therefore he suggests a return to those communities "whose central bond is a shared vision of and understanding of goods" (see, MacIntyre, After Virtue 216, 256, respectively).

it. Rahner points to the same when he suggests, "individuality and an abundance of being occur through intimate unity and mutual participation with an other."[160] Human persons are intrinsically interrelated. They are "in some sense 'for one another'; neither would be what it is if it were not for the other."[161]

In *On the Theology of the Incarnation*, Rahner argues, "man *is* in so far as he gives up himself."[162] As spirit-in-the-world, the human person is essentially open to another in a specific context, which is the community. Moreover, Rahner argues that it is for the sake of establishing community that God created the human person. However, the community cannot take place without persons. Hence, the person and community are correlative yet analogous. He further argues that man's capacity for relationship or self-giving is Christocentric because "Christ has defined human nature as self-gift for, as openness to, and as love of another."[163] Moreover, as he suggests, it was within "the corporeal, concrete, and communal reality of persons that the human-divine encounter (God's self-gift to us in Christ and our self-gift to *an other*, and in and through this other to God) happens/ happened."[164]

Rahner's view of the analogous and correlative nature of the person and community portray his opposition to a separatist and individualist understanding of human interrelatedness. Conversely, he also resists absorption of the person into the collective. As McCool argues, Rahner "seeks to uphold the uniqueness of each person, as that person exists defined within a

[160] Karl Rahner, The Christian Commitment, 77 in Miguel Diaz 99.

[161] Rahner, 76 in Miguel, 99.

[162] Rahner, 110, quoted by Miguel, 99.

[163] Rahner, Foundations of the Christian Faith, 217-222.

[164] Rahner, 217 – 222.

communal context, without falling into individualism and collectivism."[165] Rahner resists the collectivism by arguing that "no two persons are ever the same nor are persons particular instances of a universal reality 'the spatio-temporal nailing down' of some universal essence or idea."[166] He instead underscores the correlative nature of the individual and the community arguing, "the member of the pack or herd finds itself as an individual precisely in its membership."[167]

Although he argues for the community and the relationships that emerge from humans' participation in it, Rahner is not oblivious to the conflicts that can result from such participation. He argues that these usually arise from the discernment of which communal values ought to prevail over individual (private) ones. "Because man is, in himself, this plural reality, it is his valid and difficult task to effect a reconciliation of the individual and universal."[168] The basis of this conflict is the individual's misunderstanding, overemphasis on and even misuse of freedom. This is what the modern individual understands as autonomy. Rahner offers an apt explanation of what true freedom consists of. "Freedom is not merely the capacity to choose this or that historical object but instead is the capacity of the person, as spirit, to decide about his or her entire self."[169] The truth about this entire self is what John Paul II called "the truth of what we are and who we are before God, the truth of our identity as children of God, as brothers and

[165] Gerald McCool, "Person and Community in Rahner" ed. R.J Roth, Person and Community. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1975) 75 in Miguel, 100.

[166] Rahner, "The Christian Commitment" 82-83, in Miguel, 100.

[167] Rahner, 80.

[168] Rahner 95, in Miguel, 100.

[169] Rahner, 95.

sisters in a common humanity."[170] True freedom arises from an appreciation of this truth. "The only true freedom, the only freedom that can truly satisfy, is the freedom to do what we ought as human beings created by God according to his plan."[171]

Such a view of freedom is obscured in individualist societies because of the obsession with the language of individual rights and autonomy. These rights appear as "simply a matter of our immunities from the coercive power of others."[172] Having these "immunities" is certainly important; but it is equally important for the individual to realize that rights exist with responsibility. Individuals living in modern society seem to largely separate the two. As John Paul II notes, true freedom consists not in acting according to our whims or subjective desires as persons but in what we "ought as humans created by God."[173] He therefore dismisses the modern view of freedom as licentiousness, instead calling for a sense of responsibility and accountability for our actions that arises from consciousness of the existence besides us of a higher power (God) according to whose plan we ought to behave or act. Moreover, the awareness of our relationship with one another, as fellow creatures adds to this sense of responsibility and accountability. John Paul II further highlights that true freedom arises with the recognition of authority in its forms of God (from whom we draw our being), the truth (of who we are) and the community (others).[174] As Leo XIII warned in *Rerum Novarum*, "freedom which

[170] George Weigel, A New Worldly Order: John Paul II and Human Freedom, (Lanham: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991), 3.

[171] Weigel, 3.

[172] Weigel, 7.

[173] Weigel, 7.

[174] With regard to community, Hauerwas argues in similar terms. In *Character, Narrative, and Growth in the Christian Life*, he makes a scathing critique of the modern understanding of autonomy as entailing "freeing oneself from all relations except those freely chosen." In fact he warns that such "autonomous freedom can mean slavery to the self and the self's desires." He therefore suggests that the Christian sense of freedom is one that takes

refuses to be bound to the truth would fall into arbitrariness and end up submitting itself to the vilest of passions, to the point of self destruction."[175]

To conclude, there is indeed an essential relationship between the individual and community. Without being reduced to the community, the individual fully finds his identity and realizes his aspirations (such as freedom and rights) only within the context of the community. But if individuals are taught otherwise, if they are taught that they do not need the community, or need it only as it helps them satisfy their own individual desires, the road to this discovery of the true self will be blocked. In response to this false individualism, it is especially important to promote those institutions that foster a sense of community and interrelatedness by which the individual learns to live as someone with "a story." The family, school, church and nation are four of these. They are particularly important for our purposes because they are pervasive; even in modern societies most "individuals" count themselves members in them. I choose them because every human person belongs or ascribes, in many ways, to these institutions. The next section will discuss only the family and church as suitable bases of communal life.

4.2.1 The Family as a locus for Community

In this time and age, any suggestion for a return to the family cannot be oblivious of the challenges that modern culture poses to the family. Yet in the midst of such challenges, the family remains the most appropriate locus for community building. Georgio Campanini

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freedom as realized in the context of relation: "it is the Christian belief that true freedom comes by learning to be appropriately dependent, that is, to trust the One who wills to have us as His own and who wills the final good of all. For the Christian to be perfectly free means to be perfectly obedient." (See, Berkman and Cartwright, The Hauerwas Reader, 224).

[175] Weigel, 4.

elaborately discusses the challenges that modern culture poses to the family, among them the privatization of marriage and the nuclear form of family.

Modern society increasingly blurs the communal aspect of marriage by emphasizing marriage as a purely private matter. As Campanini observes, "the distinction between de facto relations and those which have and seek a public dimension is becoming blurred."[176] Whereas traditionally the entire community took keen interest in the relationships of love between its members, in modern society this role is peripheral. Contemporary culture has relegated love to a purely private sphere; yet as Campanini further notes, "naturally love has a tendency to communicate itself and have itself recognized by others."[177] Therefore, if the family is indeed to play its role as a locus for the recovery of the communal nature of the persons, the task is to "recover marriage's significance as the natural projection of the feeling of love and as an innate stimulus towards manifesting this love and having it recognized by the community."[178]

Another challenge to family life is the transition from the traditional extended view of family to a restricted, nuclear view. This view has found acceptance in the modern world owing to various structures or factors.[179] Its benefits notwithstanding, the nuclear view of family is the breeding ground for the individualism that we decry. Raised in such a setting, children are most likely to look at themselves as exclusively members of this family, and often ending up

[176] Giorgio Campanini "Change in the Family and the Challenges of Contemporary Culture," ed. Lisa S Cahill and D. Mieth, The Family. Concilium 1995/4, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books), 38.

[177] Campanini, 38.

[178] Campanini, 38.

[179] For example, some of these factors include "the wage structure (which enables the nuclear family to enjoy economic autonomy), the mobility required by capitalist business, pensions and social security." (See, Enrique Dussel's "The Family in the Peripheral World," 54).

forgetting their membership to the wider society of the other families of neighbors and friends. In this situation, the school and church may help rectify matters. They give the opportunity for the child to notice that life is made of a network of relationships for which the nuclear family is but the beginning. The school has the capacity to raise in children the awareness that they are a family, an extended one at that.[180]

In modern society, any proposal for the revival of the extended view of family is bound to evoke some derision; modern mobility makes it almost unimaginable. Yet, as one who grew up in a culture that views the family as extended, I cannot agree more with Enrique Dussel's views on the importance of the extended family in the promotion of inter-personal relationships. He argues,

> there is an immense, very complex and highly differentiated variety of family relationships that can be established between men/women, their mothers/fathers (grandmothers/grandfathers), their sisters/brothers (aunts/uncles), their direct daughters/sons and those of their sisters/brothers and of their aunts/uncles (cousins in varying degrees). All these members of the extended family have established functions within it and well defined types of belonging (rights and duties) sacredly carried out (since social customs are generally identified with religious symbols, myths and rites surrounding the memory and veneration of the ancestors).[181]

[180] I deliberately refer to it as merely the "capacity" for; in fact, what occurs in American society is that the school does NOT seem related to family. First, the family is not really much of a community, but simply the owners of the place where you sleep, or do your own thing-. Second, the school is structurally an impersonal institution, where you take refuge with your friends who are all your age. Thus, neither the family nor the school in contemporary America trains you in love.

[181] Dussel, 55.

When it abandons the extended view of the family as outdated, a society leaves behind the vital role it plays in establishing and promoting inter-personal relationships. Modern factors such as industrialization, mobility, and technology make a complete return to this view of family difficult. To advocate for it unconditionally would be to encourage people to merely live in the past. Yet we can reclaim some elements of it.

Modern culture in its various forms has extended its sphere of influence into modern Africa as well. However, the ready adoption of a nuclear view of the family is something that Africa must resist. The resistance ought especially to extend to Western-style capitalism's portrayal of resources as limited, encouraging one family to look at the other as merely a competitor for these resources. More broadly, extended families in Africa ought to teach children to resist the same capitalist view that regards humans as mere economic means and, at the same time, teach them to appreciate the complementary role of humans. They ought to learn what Enrique Dussel calls the "face-to-face" encounter. As he rightly points out, "those who recognize in the other another ethical subject who is the empirical presence of the Absolute cannot turn him or her into a means."[182]

This is consonant with the Christian commandment of gratuitous love of the other (agape) through a Christian praxis realized in community. After all, to move beyond the closed boundaries of one small, nuclear community to a larger, wider one has always been the Christian striving. As the first locus for communal living, the family has the school, church and nation as among those larger communities that help in moral character formation. For Christians, of course, among these Church is prominent. The next section addresses its role in particular.

[182] Dussel, 61.

4.2.2 The Church as Community

The church is not only an opportunity for fostering community but also indeed a community capable of resisting the threat of individualism. From her inception as a people of God saved and delivered by Christ's atoning death and resurrection, the church has always had a communal identity of essential theological significance. In *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, Josef Ratzinger attests to the same when he writes:

> God is essentially communion, (and) through the incarnation, Christ revealed the communion between God and Man and thus opens the possibility of a new communion of men with one another. This communion between God and man becomes communicable to others in the Paschal Mystery.[183]

Despite her failure in many ways to live by this identity, she nonetheless retains her communal identity and has the resources to enhance it. The Eucharist and Baptism are such resources.[184] In addition to being the "source and summit of the Christian life," the Eucharist is "the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the people of God by which the Church is kept in being."[185] The unity of members comprises the living members (the Pilgrim Church) the Saints (the Triumphant Church, or "those already in the

[183] Josef Ratzinger, 85 (brackets added).

[184] Speaking of them, Hauerwas considers them as "essential gestures of the church…essential reminders for the constitution of God's people in the world. Without them we are constantly tempted to turn God into an ideology to supply our wants and needs rather than have our needs and wants transformed by God's capturing our attention through the mundane life of Jesus of Nazareth." (See, Berkman and Cartwright, 633). Commenting on the same quote by Hauerwas, Michael Cartwright suggests that through them "we learn the skills to be Christians" (Berkman and Cartwright, 633).

[185] The Catechism of the Catholic Church (hereafter, CCC), (Washington: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), 1325.

glory of heaven") and the Dead "the faithful departed" (the Suffering Church). In the celebration of the Eucharist, the church learns interdependence. This is because the Eucharist occurs in the context of a worshipping community; the community performs the Eucharist together, and in connection with many other communities of worship throughout the world, which, as the universal and catholic the church, partakes in the one body. Eating of the Eucharist itself constitutes the believers into the Body of Christ, which St. Paul eloquently speaks of as made of many yet interdependent parts.[186]

Quoting Jean Marc Ela and William Cavanaugh, Emmanuel Katongole nicely captures another way in which the performance of the Eucharist fosters community. "The performance in which the Eucharist takes place is the very gathering of the people and the transformation of a divided people into the oneness of Christ."[187] As Cavanaugh shows, when believers gather to celebrate the Eucharist, they heal broken relationships as well as affirming their communal identity. Thus, "the Eucharist is much more than a ritual repetition of the past. It is rather a literal *remembering* of Christ's body, a knitting together of the body of Christ by the participation of many in His sacrifice."[188] Hence, participants in the Eucharist not only receive the Body (and blood) of Christ but also are constituted into a community, "a particular community, a visible body of believers, who now become the true Body of Christ." Ratzinger seems to affirm this

[186] 1 Cor. 12: 12-27

[187] Emmanuel Katongole, A Future of Africa: Critical Essays in Christian Social Imagination, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2005), 143.

[188] William T Cavanaugh. Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ, (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 213 in Katongole, 142.

when he calls the Eucharist "the foundation of community,"[189] a community that prefigures a larger community of believers, the communion of saints.

The church therefore is a community and has the resources for the preservation of the sense of community. Its members need the reminder of how much each belongs to and has a responsibility towards the other. Baptism is where this relationship begins. In the Catholic Church's rite of baptism[190], before the priest baptizes the child he first questions the community present of their willingness to receive the child in the community. When they answer in the affirmative, the priest then reminds the community of how the child's growth in the faith is their responsibility. What the rite of baptism emphasizes is that in the church every adult has a parental responsibility to make the gospel known to the children. As Hauerwas points out, "by these vows the church invents the family"[191] as a formative community. The church needs to do more than say these words; it needs urgently to recover their meaning in its act of the formation of the children. To do this is not an option but a responsibility.[192]

If the family and church function in the ways just mentioned, they can largely thwart individualism's attempt to uproot the person (individual) from his roots, the community. Of much concern, and rightly so, is that by and large the church and family are doing little to resist individualism; individualism is winning, at least in Western culture. However, as we have seen in our discussion of Rahner's anthropology, this cannot but have far-reaching implications,

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[189] Ratzinger, 89.

[190] In fact, this is not an exclusively Catholic practice. For instance, in his *Abortion Theologically Understood,* Hauerwas opens our eyes to the same thing happening in the United Methodist Church in their rite of baptism. (See, Berkman and Cartwright, 612).

[191] Berkman and Cartwright, 613.

[192] I use Hauerwas's language, as it appears in his "*Abortion, Theologically Understood*." (See, Berkman and Cartwright, 606).

especially with regard to moral formation. We have shown that the person is a being-with-others, who needs these others to achieve his goal and purpose in life.

Put bluntly, individualism puts us in danger of losing our true humanity. This makes the recovery of the communal sense through such communities as family and church absolutely vital. While Africa is not immune from the influence of individualism, its promise remains in the relative strength of its communities. It is essential that it preserves this strength. Shame is one way this can be done. As we have seen, only in societies that appreciate the individual's need for and reliance on others can shame function in moral formation. The next chapter will closely look at Buganda as one of such societies, particularly showing that, in the midst of rapid social changes, shame has helped and can continue to keep this society together.

Chapter 5

5.0 WORKING SHAME INTO THE MODERN CONTEXT: BUGANDA AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE WEST

This chapter will discuss, albeit briefly, Buganda as a society. We shall begin by showing that a sense of community is rooted in the very etymology of the name given to this society as well as its clan system of organization. In considering Buganda, we intend to indirectly contrast it with Western (American) society, particularly on matters relating to shame. Yet we also hope that despite the evident contrasts between the societies, each society can learn from the other. In short, we suggest that individualistic guilt-based societies and communal shamed-based societies each has something to give to and take from the other. Yet, as has been the argument of this thesis, both Western and Baganda societies need the reality of shame in forming individuals of strong character. Western society needs to recover the value of shame while Baganda society, in the midst of the various influences on it, needs to uphold it as well as drawing value from a guilt culture.

5.1 Etymology of "omuganda"

Baganda is one of the 42 tribes that form the present day Uganda. The British colonialists subtly changed the name by which the Baganda called their land, Buganda, to "Uganda" to encourage a rather artificial unity among the tribes. The word referring to a member of Buganda society is "muganda," which etymologically refers to a collection or bundle. Thus, to be a muganda is in essence to belong to a bundle of people that is the Baganda. There is, in other words, an essential bond that unites such a people; moreover, this bond is not a choice of the

person but what he or she is born into. The strong clan system to which every muganda naturally belongs sustains and fosters this interpersonal relationship (bond).

5.2 Buganda's Clan System[193]

In Buganda, everyone belongs to a clan, a ready- made system that incorporates them from birth. A clan represents a group of people who can trace their lineage to a common ancestor in some distant past. The clan is essentially a large extended family in which all members regard each other as brothers and sisters regardless of how far removed from one another in terms of actual blood ties. Since no one chooses which clan to belong, its authority comes naturally, never forced on the person.

It is through the clan structure that the Baganda trace their ancestry. For instance, a formal introduction of a *muganda* includes his own names, the names of his father and paternal grandfather, as well as a description of the family's lineage within the clan that it belongs to. The clan has a hierarchical structure with the clan leader *(owakasolya)* at the top, followed by successive subdivisions called the *ssiga, mutuba, lunyiriri* and finally at the bottom the individual family unit *(enju).* Every Muganda is required to know where he falls within each of these subdivisions; anyone who cannot relate his ancestry fully is suspect of not being a true Muganda. In sum, the clan system naturally promotes a sense of community, which is essentially tied to what it means to be born in such a society.

[193] I heavily draw on Dr. Kiwanuka E. Ssemakula's discussion of the clan system as it appears on the official Buganda kingdom website. See, http:// www.buganda.com/ebika.htm.

5.3 The Clan and Collective Responsibility

Because the clan functions as a big extended family unit, the success of any member of the clan is considered success for the whole clan. Conversely, disgrace for any clan member reflects negatively on the whole clan. Traditionally this reality was tragically demonstrated when a high official fell out of favor with the king. If the king considered the transgressions serious, he would sometimes take out his vengeance on all members of the culprit's clan regardless of their personal involvement. In some cases, this led to whole clans trying to "disappear" from society. The victims would disavow their clans claiming to be members of other clans. Usually they would return to their real clans once the fury of the king was assuaged or after the king's passing.

The clan system, therefore, ensures both individual and collective responsibility in everyone's behavior and actions. The individual is very careful in how he behaves with the awareness that his actions not only affect him but they also affect an entire network of relationships to which the person is attached and related.

One obvious critique of this clan system is the temptation for a member to think he is responsible and accountable only to his fellow clan members. However, within the system there is a check. For instance, in Buganda a custom known as exogamy requires that one marry outside one's clan or one's mother's clan.

Secondly, among the Baganda, after the birth of a child, the child's immediate and extended family gather to find a suitable name for the child. They call this a naming ceremony, a key step in the rites of passage. The criteria followed in choosing a name for the child further reveals the Baganda's interrelatedness. Because Buganda is a patrilineal society, everyone

automatically takes on his or her father's clan at birth. However, the newborn child is considered a child of the whole clan and not just the individual father/family. Thus, the child does not assume the father's name. Instead, each clan has a pool of names from which they select a name and give it to the child. We must note that, in the midst of this, each family retains its autonomy as a unit; however, it is considered part of the bigger clan family.

Another critique is that the clan system risks stifling individual achievement and efforts. Yet as Ssemakula notes, "individual clan members had individual property rights and they achieved success as individuals. However, it was understood and accepted that the fruits of success would be shared just as tribulations would also be shared."[194] To be sure, the Buganda clan system has greatly helped foster a sense of identity among the Baganda. The identity derives from an allegiance to something that goes beyond the individual or his achievements. For instance, given a choice between their tribe, nationality and religion many Baganda will identify themselves first as Baganda followed by other identifications – including Christians, Ugandans, etc. This certainly has its own implications for politics and religion. For instance, even today there is a political standoff between indigenous Baganda and the nation-state. Baganda seem to have drunk deeply from the waters of their tribe; they seem deeper waters than the waters of Uganda, or even than the "waters of baptism."[195] For the Baganda, the *kabaka* (king) and tribe are so acceptable that their obedience or loyalty to him comes as if by nature. It happens because

[194] http://www.buganda.com/ebika.htm

[195] I borrow this phrase from Emmanuel Katongole's discussion of the events that followed the 1994 Rwanda Genocide. For instance, he shows how the tribe can pose serious challenges even to Christianity: "When Cardinal Etchegaray of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace visited Rwanda on behalf of the pope, he asked the assembled church leaders, "Are you saying that the blood of tribalism is deeper than the waters of baptism?" One leader present answered, "Yes it is." (See, Emmanuel Katongole, "Christianity, Tribalism, and the Rwandan Genocide: A Catholic Reassessment of Christian "Social Responsibility," Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture Volume 8, Number 3, Summer 2005, 67-93.

of what one leader referred to as "*omwoyo gwa Buganda ogutafa"*, (loosely translated, "the undying spirit of Buganda"). This posture of so identifying oneself with something larger than the individual highlights the importance of having a role in an institution in order to really be an individual.

Nevertheless, as just mentioned, when the tribe or community is the highest form of identification, this has implications not only for Christianity but also for nationalism. The immediate implication is a parochialism that easily leads to tribalism. Many politicians erroneously blame tribes for Africa's problems of political instability and underdevelopment. Tribes in themselves would be no problem if it were not for the parochial attitude that leads people to identify themselves only in terms of their tribe. Such a people will find it difficult to internalize Christianity's call for universal membership as children of God in the church. Hence, Christianity's doctrine of the universal kingship and Lordship of Christ may compete with Baganda's loyalty to their K*abaka.* Similarly, the same people would find it hard to pay allegiance to any other human leader save their *Kabaka.*

However, it is also important to note that this same allegiance to one's tribe or community staves off modern views of individual human freedom, especially as this freedom is understood as autonomy. As Rahner earlier on argued, freedom is not "being left alone by others, not having other people's values, ideas or styles of life forced upon me, and being free of arbitrary authority in work, family and political life."[196] Such a view of freedom conflicts with "the truth of what we are and who we are before God, the truth of our identity as children of

[196] Rahner, 23.

God, as brothers and sisters in a common humanity."[197] True freedom arises from an appreciation of this truth: "The only true freedom, the only freedom that can truly satisfy, is the freedom to do what we ought as human beings created by God according to his plan."[198]

Christianity incessantly calls us to this truth of who we are. And it was the witness of the martyrs of Uganda, many of them from the Baganda tribe.[199] They chose to follow God, rather than the king or the tribe. Yet their defiance of their king was not a denial of their connection to their community or tribe; it was rather a witness to a wider outlook to relationships that extend beyond one's tribe or clan. Within the context of community, the individual finds his identity and realizes his aspirations (such as freedom and rights). The martyrs did not believe they could do without the community, something that showed in the solidarity of their deaths, or need it only as it helps them satisfy their own individual desires. In fact, such a belief would have blocked the road to the discovery of their true selves, as ones who were willing to die for another.

Christianity has a role, indeed a mission, to help tribal people appreciate the truth of who they are and what they are called to be. Christianity can open the parochialism of the tribe or clan to a larger, truer vision. It does this in its challenge to parochialism and call to universal brotherhood. Again, the Martyrs of Uganda died in faithfulness to this calling; they saw in the Christian faith a message of something that goes beyond the confines of their tribe or king.

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[197] George Weigel, 3.

[198] Weigel, 3.

[199] The martyrs of Uganda were Christian converts who were murdered for their faith between 1885 and 1887 by King Mwanga of the historical Buganda kingdom, that is now part of Uganda. (See, http:en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda _martyrs)

-As we hope to show below, when one is overly dependent on the community, such as the tribe or clan, problems might arise even for shame itself. The sole reliance on shame in moral formation can have its own problems.

5.4 Shame, Community, Authority, Self-Identity, and Character

The previous section has looked at the Baganda to give credence to our earlier claim that to live with others in community is indeed the human vocation. In this section, without being oblivious to its side effects, we will show how shame is at home in Buganda, how it helps galvanize their communal character and how its internalization by the Baganda has aided their moral and virtuous living thereby shaping their moral character.

The communal spirit so characteristic of Buganda inevitably creates a sense of interdependence among the members. The immediate implication of this to human behavior is that individual actions have an effect on the entire community. Because of this, every *muganda* is careful of what they do lest it affects them and their entire community. The fear of the shame and dishonor that accompanies one's failure to live as expected by others is essentially the reason behind this. Moreover, the community's expectation from the individual is not even necessarily in the form of a written code of norms and values; it is rather something that comes naturally to the individual. Because of this and aided by the fear of shame, Baganda have always been able to form their children in the communal values and virtues such as honesty, modesty, hard work, patience, and faithfulness. A look at how this happens will be highly instructive.

Among the Baganda, there is a connection between the virtues and gender. The community naturally expects men and women to embody certain gender-connected virtues. On this account, men strive to live those virtues that society identifies as proper to them, as do their

female counterparts. Courage, fortitude and hard work are some of the virtues proper to men, just as honesty, modesty and patience are considered female virtues. Moreover, the community passes on these virtues to the children through their parents and the entire extended family. Under this arrangement, mothers and aunties teach girls those female virtues while fathers and uncles instruct the boys in virtues proper to males. Having been thus instructed, one's failure to live accordingly is accompanied with not only shame and dishonor but also disappoints and shames one's gender.

In light of the above, every family in Buganda is careful how they form their children in the virtues. Fathers and uncles raise boys to appreciate and live the virtues of courage, hard work, and fortitude. The boys usually learn these mostly by apprenticeship that happens right from childhood. Fathers have always ensured that they instill in their boys what the society expects of them. For instance, because society expects every man to provide for his household, fathers ensure that their children learn the same by having them involved in every kind of work that will help bring this out of their boys. Hence, if a dad is a cattle keeper or a farmer or a mason, he will always keep his boys close to him as he goes about these chores. My dad being a cattle farmer, I remember (during my childhood) waking up with him every morning to milk and feed the cows while my sister was enjoying her sleep. Hence, fathers taught boys those virtues proper to men.

In the same vein, the community charges mothers and aunties with the responsibility of teaching the girls those virtues proper to women. Modesty, patience, and honesty are some of the most prominent female virtues among the Baganda. Like their male counterparts, women also form the girls by apprenticeship. With regard to modesty, mothers teach girls to have regard for

their bodies, taking care of them, and avoiding improper ways of dress, especially those that reveal certain parts of their bodies. For instance, a *muganda* girl is warned against any kind of dress that reveals parts of her body from the knees up. Similarly, mothers teach their girls how honorable it is to the girl and her family to preserve her virginity until marriage and how shameful and dishonorable the reverse is. Girls also learn how immodest it is for a woman to suggest to a man.

Behind all this formation in the virtues is the fear of shame and dishonor. Moreover, this fear is on both ways: parents fear the shame and scorn that the community would pour on them for failure to raise up virtuous children, and they fear to see the same happening to their children because of their lack of the virtues. In thus forming their children, parents endeavor to explain this fear to the children. Besides, when children seem reluctant to appreciate their parents' fear for them, parents put sanctions and punishments on the children, as a means of enforcing the formation.[200]

Important to note is that this kind of formation in the virtues, despite having a certain amount of fear attached to it, is something that the community ties to one's nature. The community of the Baganda largely appreciates the fact that merely teaching the virtues to an individual is bound to fail if the individual does not feel that these virtues are a part of who he/she is. As MacIntyre rightly notes, the failure to do so makes "the codes of virtuous conduct become context-free "to do" lists—things that humans would do if they were virtuous, which we

[200] At 18 years of age, a boy is considered mature enough to start living independent of the parents in some ways. At this age, one of the requirements is that a boy builds his own house on his plot of land or on his parents'. One's failure to comply was accompanied by the parents' eviction from the home. Moreover, the insults from his peers would be enough to force him to leave his parents' house. Usually boys who depend too much on their parents are labeled as women (and it is such a big insult).

know they aren't, and which we have no particular hope of them becoming."[201] For it to be effective, modern moral formation perhaps needs to recover this aspect of the Baganda kind of formation. Moral formation ought to help individuals first appreciate the kind of persons they are and what God and the community expect of them. This is the *telos* that moral formation ought to clarify. When this happens, formation in the virtues should happen easily. Otherwise, without tying a *telos* to moral values, moral formation will not yield much result.

5.5 Shame in Western Moral Formation

As it does among the Baganda, shame should play a very crucial ancillary role in modern moral formation. The fear of shame should act as a sanction for individuals to follow the moral norms and values on which society runs. Shame has helped foster in the Baganda an amount of self-consciousness for their actions that amounts to self-censorship.[202] Something of the same sort can also happen in Western society. For instance, when they learn of shame and its negative consequences, this in itself would largely restrain children in schools from engaging in any practices that show disrespect for others—such practices as bullying others—and for oneself. One area where shame would play a crucial deterrent role in Western society is with regard to modesty. Children need to appreciate (from an earlier stage) how shameful it is when one engages in such immodest acts as indecent dressing. For this to happen children need to learn and appreciate the connection their bodies have with others'. When one learns that, one's body

[201] Kirk Cowell, "Narrative Formation: Alasdair MacIntyre and the Need for a Narratively Grounded Christian Ethic" (http:// www.kirkcowell.wordpress.com).

[202] In this, custom has played an important role. For instance, before acting in any way, a Muganda considers whether that behavior is consistent with Buganda custom, which is itself a censure. In case of the temptation to act on the contrary, custom will propel them to self-censorship that reveals itself in phrases like "*eyo ssi mpisa yaffe"* (that is not our custom).

goes beyond being "my property"—what I have a right to use whichever way I want. This is one way children will learn modesty and shame.

We cannot deceive ourselves that this will happen easily; it will only happen if in families and schools parents and teachers instill in the children a sense of community that is at the heart of who we are as persons. For as seen earlier about shame, it is an acknowledgement that a human person is in many ways accountable to others for his/her actions. Shame is essentially the fear of their disapproval of my wrong actions. This fear of disapproval fosters both the personal and collective responsibility in behavior that is elusive to some people, especially in individualistic societies.

As the next subsection will show, advocacy for the role of shame in moral formation should not be oblivious of the side effects that may arise in people so imbued with a sense of shame.

5.6 How Shame Can Backfire

Here we look at two ways in which shame can backfire: first as something that affects one's sense of self worth and, second, as something that an individual can choose to have or not to have.

A most obvious side effect of shame is its effect on one's sense of self worth. Shame in its excess can indeed backfire. First, in as far as it "is an acutely painful emotion typically accompanied by a sense of shrinking or of 'being small' and by a sense of worthlessness"[203] shame can backfire and destroy one's self-esteem. As Mario Jacoby pointed out, shame

[203] Lewis, 18.

"revolves around the question of what respect I enjoy in others' eyes and on what effect they may have on my sense of worth as a person."[204] It is dangerous to entirely base one's personal sense of worth on "the eyes of others," (the community) or on one's achievements and possessions (as the individualistic societies seem to suggest). One's worth is innate; the moral choices one makes can only enhance or diminish it. Understood theologically, human dignity and worth is a gratuitous gift from God. Shame should never remove this gift. Moral formation must help individuals to have shame in the right measure. The capacity to strike a balance is what virtuous living is about.

In light of the above point, shame is capable of backfiring when an individual has an excessive sense of self-worth that amounts to pride. For such a person, two things are likely to happen. On the positive side, with regard to shame, the individual might easily feel ashamed of doing those things that are inconsistent with this dignity. However, the same individual might lapse into a sort of pride that comes with his awareness of this gratuitously given and inalienable dignity. What this pride may do is dispense with the reality that the community in which the individual lives contributes to this inner worth. Hence, such a person will care less about anything to do with others, much less shame. Thus, the concern here becomes one of too much or too little. While individuals must appreciate that their inner worth is God given and inalienable, they must also appreciate that it is nonetheless connected to what it means to live with others. It is with others that we live fully and exercise our human dignity.

At the same time, the community must not exert its will on the individual in ways that entirely diminish his/her inner worth. Hence, while living in society and allowing society to

[204] Mario Jacoby, viii.

guide him to his rightful destiny, the individual retains the freedom to choose and determine his destiny. This is where both individualized societies and communal societies need to strike a balance and even learn from each other. With regard to shame, a need for striking a balance becomes of paramount importance. Shame is definitely vital for the moral formation of individuals; individualized societies need it as much as communal societies do. However, too much of it is undesirable, yet a lack of it does not help either.

5.7 Authority, Obedience and Community

Moral formation therefore needs to train individuals who can resist the excesses of the community. This is in spite of the fact that the entire community needs to give the child a sense of identity that includes a relation to the community. However, the same community needs to train the child in a relation to an authority that transcends the community and call the child into that relation. By so doing, the community resists the temptation of considering itself as having the highest and most determinative will. Even then, society ought to train the children for those moments when it might be necessary to disobey the community. Christianity's presence in Buganda helped make this possible, as the example of the Martyrs of Uganda shows.

For the individual to learn to be answerable to authority other than the community or the self is one of the tenets of Christianity. It is in Christianity that we learn to be answerable to this authority higher than the individual (as in individualistic oriented societies) or the tribe (as it is in community- oriented societies). Of course, this is not to be oblivious of Christianity's promotion of individualism, especially when it accentuates a people's cultivation of a personal relationship with God. Christianity gives the name GOD to be the judge or authority that pronounces us as guilty; as the one that indeed defines or sets the standards or norms that all of us have to follow

on the road to moral living. Yet God gives us the freedom of choice, freedom for self - determination that is attained in our realizing that even then we remain creatures subordinate to him. Moreover, even non-Christians have the capacity to know that authority, thanks to the natural moral law written in their hearts.[205] Otherwise, without such an authority clearly defined, named or acknowledged (as is typically true of individualistic societies), man indeed becomes the measure of everything. The truth keeps on fluctuating, or becomes relative from person to person or from one society to another.

Suggesting that the individual adhere to and sometimes resists his community will does not undermine in any way the importance of one's identification with a particular society or tradition. It is from such identification that certain responsibilities naturally arise. Because they are natural, such responsibilities are supposed to come to the person with no need of any artificial mechanisms for their enforcement. For instance, one's membership in a family naturally brings on one a sense of accountability towards the other members without anyone necessarily exerting any external force - it just comes naturally. So are the moral values that moral formation seeks to impart to the individual; when given the right natural context, these values would come naturally to the person.

The failure to recognize the above fact perhaps explains modern moral formation's reliance on using authority to cause the individual's learning of the moral values. The illusion is usually in thinking that a mere existence of authority, in forms such as the law, is enough to ensure individuals' conformity to the societal moral codes. This illusion is largely to blame for the resentment many people have towards authority. People's resentment to authority happens

[205] Romans 1:14-15

largely for two reasons: First is the suspicion that authority exists to stifle individual ambitions. Second is the authority's failure to impress upon the people that it is indeed necessary for them to realize their goals, ambitions, and aspirations.

Equally important and following from the above is the need for a proper understanding of the nature of obedience. Formation that encourages and relies on authority's use of conformity (obedience) as a means of passing on the virtues to the individual requires an appreciation of the meaning of the obedience itself. Requiring too much obedience from the subject is bound to backfire,[206] the most likely consequence being blind obedience, which, though good in some ways[207], "suggests that the human being cannot follow his own inclinations."[208] Hence, as authority seeks to use and demand obedience in formation, it ought to be clear on the difference

[206] For instance, Francis Rochat shows how at times obedience is responsible for the "the performance of callous, brutal and cowardly acts" See, Francis Rochat, "The Dynamics of Obeying and Opposing Authority," Obedience to Authority: Current Perspectives on the Milgram Paradigm, ed. Thomas Blass, (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, inc. 2000) 161.In the 1960s Stanley Milgram made a connection between obedience and authority. His discovery was that one who obeys gets "captured by a mental set that is associated with being an agent of authority…leading them to feel no responsibility for the consequences of their actions" (Blass 163). Before Milgram, Herbert Simon discovered that "all subordinates implicitly understand, from the nature of their subservient role, that they ought to set aside their own personal preferences about their conduct and instead act in accordance with the desires (commands) of the authority. Because it is not in their own preferences that their conduct but those of authority, they are unlikely to feel responsible for the consequences of their actions"(Blass, 163). In Things Fall Apart, Obi Okonkwo, Chinua Achebe's main character is a victim of the kind of formation that exacted too much obedience on the subject (see, Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1958).

[207] For instance, obeying blindly may suggest one approves of the leader's (authority) right and proper judgment when the leader places an order before the subject. It also acknowledges that the leader sees things in a better perspective and more clearly than one can. See, Donum Dei 3, Religious Obedience and the Exercise of Authority,(Ottawa: Canada Religious Conference, 1961), 19.

[208]Rosenbaum does not necessarily rule out the necessity of authority. She argues that since humans tend to get anxious in the face of unlimited freedom, man feels freer when he "experiences a certain order which gives his life a certain system with boundaries for himself, the other and the leader." See, Rosenbaum Max, Compliant Behavior: Beyond Obedience to Authority, (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1983), 101.

between obedience and compliance. As it is, compliance is obeying not out of love or conviction, but rather because he ought to so much so that if there was a way out, he would do otherwise.

Obedience properly understood, on the other hand, happens when the individual willingly surrenders to authority; the one who obeys trusts the authority to be concerned for her good. Hence, obedience and trust go hand in hand. One reason why modern moral formation is not effective is that it happens more in the context of an impersonal "ought" rather than trust. Subjects view the moral codes more as an imposition from an authority with and in whom they have no relationship and trust. While a certain distance between the subject (expected to obey) and authority (who commands obedience) needs to stand, a healthy relationship between the two also ought to prevail. It ought to be a relationship of friendship and trust that nevertheless holds onto the indispensable role of authority.

In its various forms, modern authority largely fails to acknowledge this when it focuses only on obedience from the subject. In addition, the assumption that moral formation is just about someone (authority) passing on a set of moral codes and ensuring their observance explains one key way in which authorities abuse obedience. Formation must equally attend to the need for training subjects in learning trust in authority. For it to be meaningful, this trust ought to be mutual between subject and authority; the subject treated as an agent rather than as one who merely obeys, and, conversely, the authority as one whose existence is necessary, to make the subject freer as he learns to pursue his own full good.

Authority needs to put the law or moral codes before the individual, give or show him/her reasons for the codes' existence and, with the help of the witness of the community (as those that

faithfully embody these codes), leave it up to the individual to accept or leave them.[209] This kind of approach essentially recognizes the quintessential principle that authority can force compliance but cannot force the individual's consent.[210] After all, as Aristotle rightly pointed out, to act with the right motives is what constitutes virtuous behavior.

Moral training is a duty incumbent on the whole community and society. This is especially so in the face of specialization that is threatening this role. As it is among the Baganda, moral formation ought to be a joint effort between society and the parent, the school and home, the church and family. Today modern society (Baganda) witnesses a growing separation of roles in the formation of the individuals. For instance, there is a separation of moral-ethical formation from academic formation. Schools are specializing in academics while the churches specialize in "spiritual" matters. Specialization of this kind also reverberates back to the family since it tends to alienate the parent from the formative role he ought to play. It also reduces him/her to a mere spectator whose only intervention is perhaps one of paying the bills to the school and church[211] that perform the formation.

The boarding school education system further aggravates the alienation of parents from their formative role, especially in the children's formative years. While ignoring the formative

[209] Moses, and the prophets, used a similar approach with the Israelites. What Moses did was essentially put the Law before them, explaining to them the blessings (and curses) attached to its observance and following and, without any coercion, left the choice up to them (Deuteronomy 30:15- 19).

[210] I am grateful to Fr. Rodney J. Copp of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Waltham, Massachusetts for this wonderful insight.

[211] Here by reference to church we have in mind the joint role of the church and family in catechetical instruction of the child. The parents' role has been reduced to one of paying the "stole fees."

effect of parent- child interaction[212], the boarding school system also alienates the wider community from their formative role. This alienation has several effects. It uproots the individual (child) from society, and indeed from any forms of attachment thereby leaving him with a certain amount of anonymity. Faced with the various authority claims on him, the uprooted individual remains unclear of who the legitimate one is and how to coordinate all of them. When this conflict abides in the child, confusion arises with the child remaining confused on what ought to be done and where exactly to put his allegiance.

The above point accentuates further the indispensable role of community in the moral formation of the individual or training in the virtues. Moreover, this has been the consistent claim of this thesis: that it is from and within the community, within "communities of memory" that moral values derive and make their meaning. As Robert Bellah points out,

> [t]he communities of memory that tie us to the past also turn us toward the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with the aspirations of a larger whole and we see our own efforts as being in part contributions to a common good.[213]

It is in the context of such communities that we shall be able to offer effective moral formation. Moreover, here too is the appropriate place for shame. Because of its formative character and because it draws out attention (often by a blush) to what we wish to conceal from

[212]According to data from the 2003 National Survey of Children, 87 percent of parents reported being very close to their children. This close interaction yields "positive outcomes for adolescents, such as better academic performance and fewer problem behaviors." Moreover, the results get better with good communication: "parents who discuss important matters provide their children with knowledge that can help them lead more productive and safer lives" (http://www.childrenstrens.org)

[213]Bellah, 153.

the eyes of others, shame can be a handmaid in the undertaking to stabilize such communities of memory. The point is that moral formation would be more effective if individuals learnt to be ashamed. Surrounded as we are with an individualistic environment, Buganda needs to have recourse to training or forming people capable of a "shame-anxiety"[214] as an open and effective option. We need though, to form them to have shame in the right measure and the right way.

5.8 Self-identity and Character Stability

The task of forming people into the capacity to feel shame is equally a task in forming people into a stable self-identity. This is where the person comes to see himself as the same person, in the past, present and future. This task requires developing in the individual the consciousness that there are particular, given, inescapable frameworks that constitute the self, which the individual can never relinquish. As we argued above, family, church, and nation are such frameworks. These determine[215] (or at least, ought to determine) inescapable identities for the individual. Having a stable character requires that one hold onto some fundamental principles which act as a basis for one's behavior. In a society where such principles are shifting and relative, individuals will less likely have shame. When shame arises, it draws the person toward the need for restoration to that stable state of the self that one ought to identify with. Moreover, shame cannot effectively play its role when the idea of the stable self is weak or non-existent.

[214] I draw this expression from Mario Jacoby's earlier mentioned article.

[215] Because modern society is more fragmented, we cannot deny that these specific frameworks no longer hold as much of their authority of determining inescapable identities for us. They nonetheless remain well entrenched in society and just need revitalizing or energizing.

The kind of people of stable character that we desire every society to have are those that act out of conviction rather than out of the fear of an imperative. These people of strong character- follow the moral codes not necessarily out of fear but rather because of loving obedience to that which is right to do. All societies would want people capable of, for instance, realizing that murder is wrong not because God forbade it but that God did forbid murder because it is wrong. This is the strong character capable of observing society's code of conduct that cuts across the entire spectrum of life, whether it is personal and family relationships, government, etc.; a code that one observes not simply because some authority ordained it but because it is the right thing to do.

The same desire for having individuals who are strong in character does not suggest being emotionally unattached, aloof, and with no desires. After all, to be virtuous is to act consistently well even in the midst of - desires, feelings and emotions. Instead, we suggest that society should form individuals to act in accordance with certain principles, and according to certain socially acceptable conventions whose violation would result in shame and loss of honor. As Bellah suggested, "character is formed when certain social forces, social conventions influence character in persons by causing them to believe certain act-necessitating rules (rules that tell what we must do or not do) that are embodied in the laws and conventions."[216] To act virtuously is to believe and observe these conventions without feeling burdened or constrained in their observance; to look at these conventions as part of who we are as persons.

To have and even be such individuals of strong virtuous character is what I consider the urgent task of everyone in this modern society. We consider this as the direction that modern

[216] Bellah, 173.

moral formation needs to take. Any hope of so doing requires a recovery of a sense of *telos* for morality that happens within the context of community. This was Aristotle's position, which Alasdair MacIntyre fruitfully develops. As Kirk Cowell notes, "there is a power in placing virtues within the framework of the teleological vision that cannot be equaled by contextless virtue lists."[217] Nevertheless, it is not enough to recover the sense of community; modern moral formation needs to build on the people's fear of shame and their desire for honor. Even then, the community of formation must also be clear about its own story; it is this that gives meaning to the kinds of values it passes on to its members in moral and virtuous formation.

[217] www.kirkcowell.wordpress.com

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