

ABSTRACT

Individualism and Identical Twins: A Unique Perspective on Individuality

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As prominent theory in Western culture, individualism has several implications for personal development. One example of those implications lies in its necessity for individuals to act independently in order to be considered unique. Consequently, individualism serves as a dilemma for identical twins, both because they have genetic similarities, and because their close relationship constitutes a unique part of their identity. This thesis examines the implications of individualism for identical twins and contrasts individualistic living with the theological vision for communal identity.

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Individualism and Identical Twins: A Unique Perspective on Individuality

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INTRODUCTION

As prominent theory in Western culture, individualism has several implications for personal development. One example of those implications lies in its necessity for individuals to act independently in order to be considered unique. Consequently, individualism serves as a dilemma for identical twins, both because they have genetic similarities, and because their close relationship constitutes a unique part of their identity. This thesis examines the implications of individualism for identical twins and contrasts individualistic living with the theological vision for communal identity.

In our thesis, we will examine the consequences of individualism through its effects on identical twins. As identical twins, we extol the beauty of embracing community. However, this thesis does not merely defend the twin relationship on personal grounds. Rather, it serves as a conversation about individualism from the perspective of people born into community, and in our case, born *as* community. Identical twins provide unique insight into personal development because of their unique biological and relational constitution. Therefore, we will argue that embracing community enhances, rather than diminishes, individuality.

In the first chapter, we begin by discussing the prevalence of individualism in modern American society. To give a cultural view of twinning, we will discuss some examples of individualism in the popular culture throughout the first half of the chapter. We will then trace the origins of common misconceptions about identical twins. These assumptions have greater impact on twins' personal development as they become adults,

which we will explore in greater detail. To provide a personal perspective of twinning, we will narrate our experiences at Baylor University in the second half of the chapter. We begin by explaining why we decided to attend Baylor and then share our experience with the Baylor community. We will reflect on the most difficult parts of our Baylor experience. This thesis is written in part to reflect on these experiences.

In the second and third chapters, we examine Joan Friedman's arguments on twins' personal development. In the second chapter, we will outline Friedman's arguments on twin individuality by referring to her cultural view of twinning. She calls American society's portrayal of twins "the twin mystique" and argues that the twin mystique depicts an unrealistic picture of the twin relationship. We end the chapter by identifying several misconceptions about twins and how they affect twins' personal development. In the third chapter, we will highlight specific aspects of Friedman's arguments for twins' personal development. We begin by discussing Friedman's belief that individuals exist for themselves. Then, we explain Friedman's advice for twins when it comes to caring for their twin sibling. She believes that twins need to have a healthy balance between caring for themselves and their twin sibling. We conclude this chapter by expounding upon Friedman's beliefs about twin individuality.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, we introduce theology into the discussion on twin individuality. As the basis for our theological arguments, we examine the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas' arguments on personhood in community. In the fourth chapter, we will discuss Zizioulas' arguments on personal identity, biological uniqueness, and individualism. We end this chapter by explaining his communion ecclesiology in which he unites theology, philosophy, and the Church in his discussion of personhood

and communal living. In the fifth chapter, we will discuss Zizioulas' perspective on individual identity. We begin with the historical roots of individualism from the Reformation to highlight that individualism is not a modern issue. Then, we explain the urgency of discussing individualism in American society. We conclude this chapter with a scenario about asceticism to provide a metaphor for Zizioulas' perspective on individuality.

In chapter six, we will examine Friedman's and Zizioulas' arguments on individualism. After having discussed each author's perspective over the course of a few chapters, we briefly summarize their arguments. To begin, we note the differences in their approaches to individualism. After describing these differences, we discuss the influence of individualism on Friedman's perspective of twinness and contrast it with Zizioulas' emphasis on community in personhood. To conclude, we provide our critique on Friedman's arguments by arguing that she creates an individualism mystique when refuting "the twin mystique."

In the final chapter, we will share our perspective on individualism and twinness. We begin by discussing the dangers of individualism and then provide another scenario about friendship to explain individual uniqueness. Having spent much time analyzing their perspectives, we then examine how Friedman and Zizioulas have informed our perspective on individualism. Finally, we conclude our thesis by reflecting on our experience writing the thesis together. Included in this section are the lessons we have learned and the lessons that can be learned from the twin relationship. By ending with an analysis of twin relationships, we argue that twins are born in community and therefore have a unique way to experience community.

CHAPTER I

Individualism in Modern America and Our Story

Individualism, the theory that emphasizes the individual's role in finding personal autonomy, is prevalent in the American culture. Its premise holds that the individual is important for personal liberation. In this chapter we aim to accomplish two objectives: provide a cultural view of twinning and narrate our account of twinning. Therefore, we will discuss how individualism affects twins and present some examples of twin representation in popular culture to provide a cultural narrative of twinning. The second half of this chapter includes our story as identical twins in order to complement and contrast the cultural view of twinning.

Individualism and Its Effects on Twins' Lifestyles

To provide a cultural view of twinning, we will discuss the prevalence of individualism in American popular culture and its implications for twins and their lifestyle choices.¹ Identical twins often question their personal identity because while their parents and peers encourage their close companionship, pop culture offers a contrasting perspective through television shows and films.

¹ Segal, *Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior*, 3. Singletons comprise most the human population, with identical twins comprising 0.4% of all births.

Pop Culture

One might begin by considering the portrayal of identical twins Hallie and Annie in *The Parent Trap* and its consequences for identical twins. Known primarily as a humorous portrayal of cute twins, *The Parent Trap* is a popular Disney film that has significant implications for how identical twins are imagined in our culture. Hallie's and Annie's actions suggest that identical twins are perceived as one unit of uniquely-gifted pranksters.² Perceived as adorable twins, Hallie and Annie use their wits to bring their parents back together, since their parents had divorced earlier in their childhood. Focused on creating an amusing film, Disney seems to have not considered the film's implications on identical twin girls. For example, Hallie's and Annie's naughty behavior suggests that identical twins enjoy pranking others. One example of the twins' tricks is during their annual family camping trip. The girls perform various tricks on Meredith, their soon-to-be stepmother, in response to their father's upcoming marriage. One trick is placing a lizard on Meredith's head to scare her. When their father approaches the girls to inquire about the incident, Hallie and Annie respond, "What did we do, father? We were right behind you." In the film, Hallie and Annie laugh in response to people's confusion over identifying the girls, suggesting that twins find entertaining others' misidentification. For most people, this confusion highlights the immensely similar appearance of the identical twins, but twins might perceive things differently— perhaps ignorant, unrealistic, and even offensive.

In addition to the naughtiness portrayal, Disney paved the road for future portrayals of identical twins in Hollywood. Instead of casting identical twins to play the

² *The Parent Trap*, directed by Nancy Meyers (Walt Disney Pictures, 1998), film.

roles of Hallie and Annie, Disney casted one actress, Lindsay Lohan.³ On one hand, *The Parent Trap* was filmed in 1998, where promoting diversity in Hollywood had less emphasis than it does today. On the other hand, Hollywood continues this trend today. For instance, Jeremy Irons, in the film *Dead Ringers*, portrays identical twin gynecologists Elliot and Beverly Mantle.⁴ This horror drama film interestingly reveals important questions about personal identity, given how the twin doctors are portrayed as working in the same practice, living in the same apartment, and conducting intimate affairs with the same women. Throughout the film, the audience feels itself treated to an insider's view of the shared life of twins. The twins' lives are not easy, for trouble arises when Beverly, the meeker twin, falls in love with one of their patients named Claire Niveau, a drug-dependent actress. Too emotionally dependent on her brother to address her feelings, Beverly enters a downward spiral, becoming a drug addict and eventually dealing with insanity. In the end of the film, the twins die in each other's arms, despite Elliot's attempts to help her brother. The director David Cronenberg utilized special effects to have one actor, Jeremy Irons, portray both twins.⁵ Cronenberg used a computer technology called moving splits, in which the position and movement of the screen splits simultaneously. This technology enabled Cronenberg to capture Jeremy Irons' movement. The captured image was duplicated, resulting in both twins appearing in one scene. Moving splits is one example of technological effects for portraying twins.

³ Lindsay Lohan was a young girl during the film. She is also known for her roles in *Mean Girls*, *Freaky Friday*, and *Herbie: Fully Loaded*.

⁴ *Dead Ringers*, directed by David Cronenberg (20th Century Fox, 1988), film. The movie is based on the novel "Twins" about identical twin doctors Cyril and Stewart Marcus published in 1977. The twins died in 1975.

⁵ *Dead Ringers*, directed by David Cronenberg (20th Century Fox, 1988), film.

In *The Social Network*, two actors play identical twins Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss, real-life antagonists of Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook.⁶ The film is an biographical treatment of how Mark Zuckerberg began Facebook during his undergraduate studies at Harvard University. Once Facebook begins, Zuckerberg is sued by Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss, who claim that Zuckerberg stole their idea from ConnectU and used it to create Facebook.⁷ Director David Fincher faced a dilemma—how will he find two identical, blonde, and equally athletic men? Fincher asked two actors, Armie Hammer and Josh Pence, to act out scenes together once, swap roles, and film the scene again. Fincher then digitally grafted Hammer’s head onto Pence’s body.⁸ The advantage of casting two actors is that motion can be captured simultaneously, which is better than having body doubles or split screens for one actor.⁹ However, both methods of representation have implications for how identical twins are culturally imagined. Hollywood promotes the assumption that identical twins are so similar that they are essentially the same person. By overemphasizing twins’ identical appearance, directors

⁶ *The Social Network*, directed by David Fincher (Columbia Pictures, 2010), film. This movie is adapted from Ben Mezrich’s book *The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook: A Tale of Sex, Money, Genius, and Betrayal*.

⁷ Ibid. ConnectU, originally called HarvardConnection, was a social networking website created by Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss and their Harvard colleague Divya Narendra. In 2004 they sued Zuckerberg for \$65 million for stealing their idea of Facebook from their ConnectU. The twins got \$20 million in cash and \$45 million in Facebook shares. The settlement was reached in 2008. Other than their relationship to Zuckerberg, the twins are known for rowing, in which they competed at Harvard and won first place at the 2004 Intercollegiate Rowing Association Regatta national championship. In 2011, the Winklevii, as Zuckerberg called them, decided not to try out for the London 2012 Summer Olympics to pursue business ventures. They started a venture capital firm called Winklevoss Capital that funded start-up companies focused on technological innovation.

⁸ Ibid. Ironically, Pence’s face is never shown in the film. This creates a unique identity problem when discussing her role in the film, since her identity is not clearly conveyed to the audience.

⁹ Ibid.

minimize identical twins' individuality. With this cultural perspective of twinning on board, we conclude this portion of the chapter by providing our accounts of twinning.

Our Story. We are identical twins who are Honors Program students at Baylor University. We have the same interests, enjoy being together, and are extremely close friends. We are both majoring in Management Information Systems. In this section, we discuss why we chose to attend Baylor along with the bullying we have experienced to provide a personal narrative of twinning given the cultural characterization of twins discussed in the previous section.

Why We Chose to Attend Baylor University. Our primary reason for enrolling at Baylor University was its emphasis on the Christian faith. Baylor University focuses on helping its students prioritize their faith before academics, service, and leadership.¹⁰ Unlike other nationally-recognized universities, Baylor encourages students to support its Christian mission.¹¹ Its commitment to Christian values impressed us because as Christians, we wanted to remain committed to our faith during our college career. Baylor University emphasizes the importance of faith to all its students, not just Christians, and welcomes students who do not believe in Christianity. Therefore, Baylor University fulfills its Christian mission to proclaim Christ's love to the student body and successfully integrates Christian beliefs in every aspect of its student life.

¹⁰ "Mission." *Baylor University*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Our second reason for choosing to attend Baylor University was its rigorous academic curriculum. Baylor University is nationally recognized for its strong curriculum. As aspiring business majors, we were pleased with the curriculum of Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business because it gave students adequate exposure to all business fields while allowing them to concentrate on their major field of study. Baylor University also offers an Honors Program for students who aspire to be further challenged apart from the standard curriculum. As ambitious students, we wanted to challenge ourselves academically, so we joined the Honors Program and have not regretted that decision.

Our final reason for choosing to attend Baylor University was its social environment. From the first campus visit, we were welcomed into the student body. The admissions officer joined our parents in discussing the pleasant experiences unique to identical twins by sharing her experience with living with identical twin roommates. Assuring us that twins were embraced for being together, we believed we would find many friends who appreciated our twin relationship. From the friendly professors to the amicable students that say hello to others on the sidewalk, Baylor has a warm campus culture that welcomes prospective students. As students of Baylor University, our interactions with students and professors confirmed what we believed. We had no difficulty becoming friends with students in the Honors Residential College and enjoyed participating in events together. Our professors did not disappoint, for after experiencing the initial confusion of distinguishing us on the first day of class, professors became eager to know us personally. Spending several hours in office hours with professors made us appreciate Baylor University's commitment to hiring professors who care for their

students personally and academically. Therefore, we are confident that we attended the university that best accommodated our desires to grow spiritually, be academically challenged, and develop new friendships with professors and students.

Our Baylor Experience. Despite the incredible experiences we have had, we have faced severe bullying, most of which has occurred in person and online. When most people hear the word bullying, they imagine children beating up one another or saying negative words. Although that description is often accurate, that does not fully define our experience with bullying.

Our Rise to Fame. Although we fully embrace our twin identity, we could not have imagined that we would become Baylor celebrities—or “the Baylor twins” by which we are known—because we dress the same and walk in step. The Baylor community, especially the student body, often stared at us in awe, wonder, and even frustration. Despite the presence of many twins at Baylor, we became one of the most popular. Our fame likely caused much of the bullying we experienced.

Physical Encounters and Online Encounters. At first, we did not know who our bullies were. It was easy to identify them personally, but finding them behind hidden computer screens was more challenging. The bullying escalated once people began harassing us online on social media—such as Reddit, Twitter, YikYak, and Facebook.

These social media platforms are where the cyberbullying occurred.¹² Although we were bullied for two years, the most intense trials occurred during our sophomore year.

Freshman Year. Throughout the year, we recognized a strange pattern of questioning from Baylor students, and occasionally some faculty. We were accustomed to general inquiries about twin life, but we did not expect to be questioned regularly about our individuality. Prior to such questions, we were unaware of the generalization that identical twins who are always together lack individuality. However, we were not bothered by the questioning, since it occurred occasionally. Eventually, Baylor students talked about us so much that they gave us a nickname: “The Baylor Twins.” Initially, it did not disturb us, but over time it became problematic. With the rise of “The Baylor Twins” came our new status as on-campus celebrities. Towards the end of the year, our friends wondered whether we were being cyberbullied, for they told us that students were taking pictures of us and talking about us on social media. We were oblivious to what our friends had told us until we discovered that students took pictures of us on our way to classes and as we ate in the dining halls. The cyberbullying culminated to a point where, during the second semester, our friends told us that some students made untoward comments about us, encouraging us to investigate the matter. We realized that we constantly appeared on social media websites as subjects of discussion. Thus, these online conversations created our celebrity status around campus, sometimes positive but often negative. We looked at Reddit.com and saw a post from a Baylor student that had

¹² Cyberbullying is more commonly used to describe bullying that occurs on the Internet.

several inappropriate comments.¹³ The post said the following: “There are these twins on my college campus that dress the exact same way everyday, take the exact same classes as each other, and don’t do anything without the other. I finally got a good picture of them today.”¹⁴ The image is a picture of us from behind walking on Fountain Mall. The comments from this post include the following:¹⁵

“This is weird, right? Like, adults behaving this way is . . . strange.”

“Considering this at Baylor, I'm going to go ahead and assume this is also a product of a helicopter mom. Right?? I think if you make it to middle or high school still in twin uniform you have an issue....a parent created issue..”

“No. Adults doing this is not normal. Not having your own identity--having to share one with another person, specifically-- can not be healthy.”

“I'm a twin, I think this is unhealthy.”

“As a twin, this is my version of hell. To be stuck as an adult tethered to my brother and dressing exactly like...every...single...day.”

“It's so they can eventually get away with murder. If you can't prove exactly which twin did the deed, then they both get to walk away free. I'm pretty sure that's how our legal system works.”

“They have some serious identity and other psychological issues, I can tell you that. It's all their parents doing... kids don't do this on their own.”

“Spooky...”

¹³ The Baylor Twins. Reddit post. 2015.
https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/2j4yq7/there_are_these_twins_on_my_college_campus_that/.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

“As a triplet myself, this is disturbing. I am bothered by people trying to lump us together, and actually find it annoying when twins or multiples do things like this. Although you may have the same genetics and appearance, you do have the ability to be your own person. That is why you are born, utilize it.”

“Not saying that twins have to separate or have different interests, but this dressing identically and taking every class together... that's a bit extreme. Also, twins die an average of ten years apart (scary, I'm trying not to think about this). Will the other be nonfunctional when one dies?”

“This is cute when you're a toddler, but once you get older its just creepy to do everything the same and dress the same.”

“Is that like a pathological thing?... Identical twins who act like this always creep me out. They always seem to be touching each other and communicating secretly. Makes me think of the documentary about The Silent Twins. One of them had to even die before either of them could have a healthy, normal life.”

“Shouldn't college be where they develop their own identities?”

“Oh my God I went to school with these girls, I recognize them by their haircut. Glad me and my friends weren't the only people to think they were creepy as . . .”¹⁶

Evidently, the post was read by some of our high school classmates. Reading that worsened the pain, because we felt like bullying was following us. We also noticed a fake Twitter account about us called The Baylor Twins (@LookItsTheTwins).¹⁷ The person

¹⁶ The Baylor Twins. Reddit post. 2015. https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/2j4yq7/there_are_these_twins_on_my_college_campus_that/.

¹⁷ The Baylor Twins. Twitter post. January 2015. <https://twitter.com/lookitsthetwins?lang=en>.

who wrote posts on this Twitter account created a hashtag—#BaylorTwins—that appeared at the bottom of each post.¹⁸ Some examples of posts include the following:¹⁹

“Even our tears flow in sync. #FinalsSuck

-Twin #2

#BaylorTwins #Baylor #FinalsWeek #Sicem”

“.@Disney You should remake the parent trap with us. We would look more identical than @lindsaylohan did with herself.

-Twin #1

#BaylorTwins”

“It's finally the last night of #sing2015. Now the focus of campus can go back to us.

-Twin #2

#BaylorTwins @Singreview15 #BaylorSing”

Although we had heard that the constant discussions in which Baylor students talked about us on YikYak, we did not know about the hashtag—#TwinTracker—that Baylor students had created to discuss our whereabouts on campus until one of our friends told us about it. Our reactions were disappointment, anger, and fear. Yet, we were yet to face the worst parts of cyberbullying which would come during the next academic year.

Sophomore Year. Our second year at Baylor we experienced intense bullying as we were taunted, victim of inappropriate remarks, and cat-called regularly. These events

¹⁸ The Baylor Twins. Twitter post. January 2015. <https://twitter.com/lookitsthetwins?lang=en>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

escalated after September, during which an ordeal at the first home football game changed the way we regarded the remainder of the year. The incident began when we were standing with the Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) group at their student tailgate tent. A drunk male student approached us, saying that he wanted to take a picture with us. We responded by telling him that we were not interested. He then added that he is a triplet and wanted to show his triplets a picture of us. When we refused to take a picture with him, he immediately grabbed our shoulders and tried to coerce us to cooperate. Three sorority girls tried to take pictures of us while surrounding us. We instinctively ran and grabbed their cell phones to prevent them from taking more photographs. They complained that we were unfairly taking their personal property, to which we repeatedly asked them to leave us alone. We eventually returned their phones. Unfortunately, after initially leaving, the drunk student approached us a second time. We walked from the RUF tailgate to the one for the Honors Residential College (HRC). This time, he gave us a different story. He told us to take a picture because he was paid to be in a commercial with us. We noticed a girl was standing behind him, and we again told him we did not want to take pictures with him. Reacting quickly, we ran to the girl, took her cell phone, and ran back to our friend at the RUF tailgate. The three sorority girls and drunk student followed us back to the RUF tailgate. Because we were worried about our safety, we reported the incident to some security officers. Fortunately, we had assistance from HRC senior staff and students, who identified the students.

After the shocking experience at the student tailgate, we decided to read the Reddit posts about us. We wanted to confirm our friends' tales to be true, and wondered about reporting the cyberbullying. We found that not only were we discussed on YikYak,

but also on Reddit.²⁰ As we read the website, we stumbled on two malicious posts that devastated us. The second post said the following: “A set of twins at my university do everything the same, even walk in tandem.”²¹ The picture also was of us walking from behind across from the Tidwell Bible building on the sidewalk across from it.²² The comments to the post are like the other Reddit post. They are as follows:²³

“It’s one thing to do this as children but adults... c’mon time to grow up!”

“This strikes me as psychologically unhealthy.”

“Why would they choose to do this?”

“Why . . . are they dressed like that?”

Our naivety about the kindness of others was shattered. We began to develop serious fear and anxiety. Unfortunately, the inappropriate remarks online followed us around campus and began to dominate our daily lives. We frequently encountered students tell us rude comments and take pictures of us on our way to and from classes. Every time we saw fellow Baylor students stare at us for longer than 15 seconds, we would question their motives and immediately feel anxious. We were not comfortable around male students and would always seek the comfort of those we considered safe. Despite what we were encountering, we did not retaliate because we did not want to satisfy our tormentors. We were determined to not allow our difficult circumstances negatively to affect us. Fortunately, our friends and parents were incredibly supportive.

²⁰ Reddit is an anonymous, comment forum-based social media website. Contrastingly, YikYak is a social media app that hosts conversations based on a user’s zip code.

²¹ The Baylor Twins. Reddit post. 2015. https://www.reddit.com/r/pics/comments/2xxznb/a_set_of_twins_at_my_university_do_everything_the/#bottom-comments.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Determined to enjoy our college years, we sought advice from our parents and mentors about how to respond. As matters worsened, we wondered how our traumatic experiences would affect our personal development through the remainder of our college careers.

Our Reflection on Our Baylor Experience. Because of the bullying we experienced at Baylor, we thought it would be more difficult to make friends after college, because people will likely perceive us as not being individuals. The pain hurt especially since we were bullied in high school. We had hoped to have that chapter closed, but to our disappointment, we experienced it again. Although we were bullied in high school for different reasons, the effects of the six years of bullying remained the same. They affected our self-perceptions and those of others around us. For example, before the bullying at Baylor, we had a positive outlook on people. Afterwards, we have a more negative view of people and now believe the Bible's description of the world being a wicked place. In other words, we do not have faith in humanity because we were exposed to the cruelty of the human heart.

Our perspective on Baylor also changed. Baylor University presents itself as a welcoming university in which everyone is accepted. However, based on our experience, we were not as readily accepted. We had high expectations of the student body, for Baylor is known for its warm culture. We thought that since Baylor students were initially friendly to us, they would continue to extend their warm hospitality. In return for our kindness we received judgment and harassment. When we tried to raise awareness about the bullying we faced, the cyberbullying worsened, and Baylor University

continued to remain silent.²⁴ After talking to the Baylor Police and various administrators, we became frustrated with their ignoring our complaints. We felt that Baylor perceived the bullying to be insignificant and tried to silence our voices. The time in which we were bullied coincided with the sexual assault allegations Baylor faced. Perhaps Baylor administrators focused on those major issues, and our situation seemed miniscule in comparison. However, we still like Baylor because we have made wonderful friends with students and faculty. We respect Baylor for its Christian influence, but we do not find it to be as Christian as we initially thought. We believe as a Christian university, Baylor should aim to consider every student's struggles, even when they are complicated to resolve. Therefore, Baylor needs to care for all its students regardless of the trials they encounter to better fulfill its Christian mission.

The main issue is twin individuality. We believe that twins who embrace their unique identity will face cyberbullying and harassment because American society's misunderstandings of the special twin relationship make it more difficult for twins to be accepted for their differences. If more people would know twins, then they would not dismiss twin-related issues, such as twin individuality, as insignificant. They would celebrate the differences between twins and singletons. This thesis explains the unique nature of identical twins for educational purposes. We will argue that identical twins like us can still be unique individuals while choosing to embrace their special relationship.

²⁴ We wrote an article on the Baylor Odyssey online called "Meet "The Baylor Twins": Alexandra and Nicole. To read the article, go to the following URL: <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/meet-the-baylor-twins>.

CHAPTER II

Friedman's Remarks on Twinness

The author of several best-selling books about twin-related issues, Joan Friedman, devotes her books to twins' personal development. In this chapter, we will provide a summary of Friedman's perspective of twinness. The premise of her argument is that American society has painted a beautiful and unrealistic picture of the twin relationship, which causes many twins to struggle with living as individuals; hence she seeks to develop an account of twins as individuals. We begin by identifying common misconceptions of twins and their implications for twin development. These misconceptions include using the words twins and clones interchangeably, naming twins similarly, and labeling twins as good or bad. Then, we explain Friedman's principle of individuation, identity from separation, and the twin marriage. We will conclude this chapter by referring to the twin mystique to expound upon Friedman's belief about the twin relationship.

The Twin Mystique

Many people assume that since twins are similar, they are essentially one person. To counter this misconception, Friedman argues that twins are unique individuals. Friedman understands that twins struggle with identifying themselves apart from their

twin relationship from her experiences with her twin clients. She identifies society's misconceptions about twins as "the twin mystique," which serves as the foundation for her arguments.²⁵ This term contains several assumptions about twins. Some examples include the following: twins being able "to read each other's minds and finish each other's sentences," feeling lost without their twin sibling, living in their own world, sharing a twosome status, and being intensely close soulmates.²⁶

Attempting to portray a realistic picture of twin life, Friedman encourages twins to ignore the mystique's narrative.²⁷ She believes that the twin mystique generalizes all twins' relationships as being the ideal relationship humans can experience. For example, although twins do have an intimate relationship, they oftentimes do not experience the closeness as described in the twin mystique. By showing how unrealistic the twin mystique is, Friedman makes evident that since many twins do not consider themselves to be each other's confidant, twins suffer from being victims of stereotyping and struggle to understand why they disagree with each other. Friedman also argues that twins' shared status as "the twins" diminishes twins' individuality by describing twins as a single entity.²⁸ Because of this, twins feel pressured to measure themselves against their twin sibling and feel obliged to work harder to be individually recognized.

Thus, Friedman advises twins to identify themselves apart from their twin relationship. One way for twins to practice doing so is by completing the self-assessment

²⁵ Friedman, *The Same but Different: How Twins Can Live, Love, and Learn to be Individuals*, 10.

²⁶ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 10-11. Friedman details society's idealistic expectations of twins in the twin mystique. She argues that the mystique is myth rather than fact and encourages twins to refrain from holding themselves to the mystique's high standards.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 11.

exercises she provides at the end of each chapter. These assessments involve answering questions about personal characteristics, feelings about being a twin, and personal interests. She believes her self-assessment exercises positively benefit twins by increasing their self-confidence and by helping them focus on their individual identities. Recent research confirms that the benefits of meditation and mindfulness include increased performance, stress reduction, “the ability to ignore both external and internal distractions, and focusing on the person and the problem in all her complexities.”²⁹ Most importantly, Friedman calls for a change in how people regard twins; instead of people viewing twins as a single duo, they should see twins as two people and as separate people.³⁰ Her first reason for discussing the twin mystique is for twins to know how to have realistic and unrealistic expectations about themselves, their twin relationship, and most importantly their self-identity.³¹ Her principal disagreement with the twin mystique is that it is impossible for twins to live as individuals under the unrealistic image society demands of them. For instance, twins have a complicated relationship, because their souls and bodies are closely knit together, thus creating fragile emotional boundaries. Thus, twins’ sensitivity to their relationship shows that they do not have the simple, perfect relationship described in the twin mystique. Although many twins share an intimate relationship, they crave independence during adolescence and adulthood.³² Her second

²⁹ McCown, “Cognitive and Perceptual Benefits of Meditation,” *Seminars in Integrative Medicine*, 2 (2004): 148.

³⁰ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 10-11.

³¹ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 10-11.

³² Segal, *Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior*, xviii. If twins’ relationships were really that complicated, then it would not make sense that twins are often used to develop the themes of interdependence and individuation in classical literature, science fiction, film, and the visual arts. Segal admits that twins’ relationships aren’t always perfect, but she refers to Shakespeare’s

reason for discussing the twin mystique is for twins to know how to have realistic and unrealistic expectations about themselves, their twin relationship, and most importantly their self-identity. Since twin relationships are quite fragile, Friedman believes that twins should not focus on the false hope of a positive relationship with their twin sibling. For this reason, Friedman argues that modern society does not help twins pursue their individual identities, because it continually portrays twins as “hyperconnected” and “indivisible.”³³ She acknowledges twins’ indivisibility in part because identical twins share the same genes and tend to remain alike in behavior and physique as they grow older, “despite nature’s tendency to create contrasts.”³⁴ Friedman does not believe that this perception justifies people’s perceptions of twins always being the same, because every pair of twins is different.

Twins and the Twin Mystique

Because of the twin mystique, twins are conditioned to think that being a twin is “a privilege and a benefit” with a tight, spiritual bond that lasts for a lifetime.³⁵

Friedman’s first purpose in refuting the twin mystique is to prevent every twin pair from feeling strange for not fitting into the twin stereotype. She notes that the twin mystique has several implications for twin development. First, the twin mystique dictates that twins

Comedy of Errors and *Twelfth Night* as two examples for twins being mentioned in literature. Ironically, Shakespeare was the father of opposite-sex twins Judith and Hamnet. Several authors have been fascinated by twins and have incorporated them into their stories for incorporating the themes of individuation and interdependence.

³³ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 5.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 34.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

should be dependent on each other forever.³⁶ In other words, the American culture assumes that twins' relationships will never change. Twins will always have an extremely close, intimate relationship that makes them inseparable, lifelong companions. Unfortunately, as twins mature into adults, they cling to the twin mystique's narrative, so when their arguments become more common they become distressed. Friedman stresses the importance for twins not to expect to be similar to each other in every way. Second, Friedman advises twins not to feel pressured to share everything, for the twin mystique assumes that twins share everything in life, from friends to activities.³⁷ She claims that too much required sharing can interfere with twins' personal development. For twins, who share most of their toys and parents' attention constantly, it is important for them to learn to feel entitled to what is theirs to gain a sense of their individual place in the world. Because of the importance for twins to develop their own sense of self, Friedman advises parents to teach their twins not to share everything from a young age. An example of how to implement this is to have separate birthday parties so each twin has her own party. Individual birthday experiences allow twins to appreciate themselves for their individuality and to receive all the attention individually on their special day. Although celebrating twins' birthday parties together is not wrong in itself, Friedman advises against it because twins tend to feel that they are celebrated as a unit instead of for who they are individually. Since most people do not understand that identical twins and

³⁶ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 66.

³⁷ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins: A New Philosophy for Parenting Two Unique Children*, 111.

fraternal twins have different relationships, identical twins should not base their attachment to each other by society's standards.³⁸

Comparing twins, along with being overly close to twin siblings, only leaves twins "stuck in a relationship... where [they] are prevented from discovering who [they] are."³⁹ Friedman believes that the twin relationship prevents twins from realizing themselves because they do not want to sacrifice their security in identifying themselves by their twin relationship. Friedman encourages twins that their sacrifice is worth the risk because the "feeling...of living more independently from" their twin siblings will help them to grow.⁴⁰ It is often the case that sacrificing personal security results in periods of the most growth for most people's lives.⁴¹ The challenge of shoving aside personal security makes it extremely difficult for twins to want to be individuated, but Friedman assures her readers that separation can help twins to not feel the following consequences: "irritability to anger to depression and, in the case of one interviewee, attempted suicide."⁴² These consequences can occur because of twins' personal insecurities which stem from the twin mystique's high standard of twins.

Twins and Clones. We summarize Friedman's argument on twins and clones by beginning with her contestation of Hollywood portrayal of identical twins. Friedman

³⁸ Segal, *Twin Mythconceptions: False Beliefs, Fables, and Facts about Twins*, xx.

³⁹ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 70.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, 85.

recalls how identical twin brothers Cameron and Taylor Winklevoss are portrayed as matching in every way by the media. She refers to *The Social Network*, which we previously discussed in chapter 1, a film about the Winklevoss twins confronting Mark Zuckerberg about stealing their creation of Facebook. The quote she chose reinforces that twins “are essentially clones” and lack individuality.⁴³ Friedman examines a scene in the film where the Winklevoss brothers consider punching Zuckerberg. One twin tells her brother, “I’m six-foot-five, 220 pounds—and there are two of me.”⁴⁴ Friedman notes that the audience laughs and the twin’s comment reinforces the idea that twins are basically clones.

The first half of the sentence, “The remark gets a laugh from the audience,” seems harmless to most, but as a twin, Friedman does not perceive the matter lightly.⁴⁵ Most identical twins understand that referring to their twin sibling as a ‘look-alike’ or as a ‘matching double’ is a common joke about their strikingly-similar appearances. To some twins, however, people’s remarks about their noticeable similarities can be frustrating and offensive. Friedman seems to take the latter stance.⁴⁶ Evidently, she believes that one of the twins’ remarks relates to not only the audience’s laughter, but also the societal implications about identical twins suggesting that twins are clones. As a twin, Friedman understands this implication. While twins commonly hear that they are clones of their twin sibling, singletons may not be cognizant of the association. In order to better

⁴³ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid. She joins the sentence with “and” to show a direct correlation between the audience’s response and their thoughts.

understand Friedman's conclusion, we should examine the common misconception about twins being clones. For many years, identical twins have been considered clones because of their genetic similarities acquired in the womb. However, scientist Kathinka Evers, a proponent for cloning, believes otherwise.⁴⁷ In her article "The Identity of Clones," Evers reveals the common misconception about cloning and its relationship to identical twins.⁴⁸ She highlights that philosophically the term 'identity' often lacks a universal definition, to which she proposes three manners from which to perceive identity: numerical vs qualitative; relational vs intrinsic; and logical vs empirical. We will refer to Evers' definition of identity to explain Friedman's argument that twins are not clones.

To clarify the misunderstanding of 'identity,' Evers begins by distinguishing between numerical identity and qualitative identity. Numerical identity is the number represented in an object's instance, whereas qualitative identity refers to that object's qualities. Basing her logic on Leibniz's law, Evers proposes that a clone is an organism identical to another organism. However, clones cannot be strictly indiscernible, because they are living organisms that occupy a unique place in space and time.⁴⁹ Since cloning produces two individuals, numerical identity is insignificant and annulled. Therefore, Evers concludes that clones are properly understood as having a qualitative identity.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Kathinka Evers. "The Identity of Clones." *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 24, no. 1 (1999): 68. Evers leads the Centre for Research Ethics & Bioethics (CRB) neuroethics research team and is a co-director of the EU Flagship Human Brain Project. Her principal research focus is in neuroethics.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Leibniz's law refers to the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. Therefore, if x and y share all their properties, then x and y are identical. In other words, whatever holds of A holds of whatever is identical to A. Kathinka Evers refers to Leibniz's law to conclude that two individuals might have the same genetic code or physical environment, but that does not entail that they are indistinguishable.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 69.

After identifying clones as possessing a qualitative identity, she proceeds to distinguish between understanding clones in terms of relational and intrinsic properties. Whereas relational properties refer to an object's possessed qualities relative to its environment, intrinsic properties are properties which only the object possesses. Each object has a unique relationship with its environment; thus, each object's qualitative identity is unique.⁵¹ Cloning does not erase the individuality of each organism; rather, it is a scientific process for creating two organisms who have identical genomes.⁵² Since cloning is conducted in laboratories, it might seem ridiculous for people to assume that twins are clones. However, given the common use of the term 'identical' in relation to twins, one can see how clones and twins have become synonymous terms. After scientists famously cloned Dolly the sheep in 1997, scientists and twin researchers began using the words "twins" and "clones" interchangeably.⁵³ We will proceed to examine the implication of clones on twins.

Yet it would be a mistake to view twins as clones, because unlike clones that are created in a laboratory, twins are conceived in the womb.⁵⁴ Therefore, twins cannot be considered clones.⁵⁵ Segal explains that clones do not meet the same criteria as twins.

⁵¹ Kathinka Evers. "The Identity of Clones." *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 24, no. 1 (1999): 69.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Segal, *Twin Mythconceptions*, 231. Segal states that unfortunately, scientists would use the words "twins" and "clones" interchangeably because they know about twins and the cloning process. She mentions that calling twins "clones" is a misconception about twins that can detrimentally affect their self-perception. As she says in her book on page 232, "Just like it would be wrong to consider virtual twins (same-age, unrelated individuals reared together) as twins—because they are not—it would be unfair to consider clones as twins."

⁵⁴ Ibid. Although cloning can occur naturally and artificially, it is wrong to assume that all twins are born unnaturally.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 230-1.

These criteria include having simultaneous conception, shared parents, shared intrauterine environments, and the same birth place and rearing home.⁵⁶ Therefore, Friedman emphasizes that calling twins clones undermines their uniqueness. Despite their shared genetic identity, twins are not perfect copies, for Segal explains that identical twins differ because of environmental influences.⁵⁷ These environmental influences are not only limited to changes in the twins' external environment, but also subtle changes in twins' prenatal and postnatal environments.⁵⁸ Environmental changes, such as dietary habits, exercise routines, and smoking habits, result in physical and behavioral differences in identical twins, making them two unique individuals. In this respect, Segal agrees with Friedman that identical twins' shared genome does not mean that they have the same epigenome; likewise, twins differentiate more as they age.⁵⁹ Segal describes the paradox of genetics by stating that twins are like "the same tune played in different keys," both unique and beautiful but also the same.⁶⁰ Therefore, saying that identical twins are clones is a misunderstanding that is not scientifically supported. Since perceiving twins

⁵⁶ Segal, *Twin Mythconceptions*, 231.

⁵⁷ Segal, *Entwined Lives*, 21. Segal is a twin researcher with over 30 years' experience. A fraternal twin, Segal is deeply interested in the intricacies of twins. Her principal research is in the correlation between twins and human behavior. She is a Distinguished Professor in Humanities and Social Sciences and Director of the Twin Studies Center at California State University, Fullerton. Using various genetic studies, Segal concludes that having the same genetic code does not guarantee that identical twins are the same in every respect.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 19. Epigenome refers to the expression of genes as a person interacts with her external environment. For example, a person who regularly smokes but eats a healthy diet will likely have wrinkles sooner than someone who has a similar diet but does not smoke. Despite twins often differentiating as they age, Segal admits that identical twins "end up being very much alike in behavior and physique." For more, read *Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

as clones has a negative connotation, Friedman is disturbed by “the notion that twins are essentially clones.”⁶¹ Given the common assumption that twins are clones, understanding twins’ identity is important. Many assume identical twins are clones because they share genes; however, this assumption could not be further from the truth. For twins to be called clones is to assume that they have no individual identity. Rather, twins are enmeshed into one identity without any uniqueness or purpose. To refute this misconception, Friedman emphasizes the importance of twins to embrace their individuality. She believes that identifying twins by their twin relationship enforces that twins are clones. For seeing twins, who are very similar, act and live together reinforces the idea that twins have a single identity. Therefore, she encourages twins to identify themselves as individuals. Although they have a special relationship, twins should be careful not to allow their twin relationship to become an overbearing aspect of their lives.

Twin Individuality. Friedman uses scientific research that confirms the individuality of twins. She refers to numerous biological studies confirming the individuality of twins, one of which is by Manel Esteller of the Spanish National Cancer Center in Madrid.⁶² In one study, Esteller and her team of researchers analyzed the role of epigenetics in twins’ individuality. In their report, twins’ epigenomes are confirmed to change as twins grow older because of the twins’ interactions with external environments. These changes result in their differentiation, and the longer that the twins live apart, the more apparent they

⁶¹ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 11.

⁶² Nicholas Wade. “Explaining Differences in Twins.” *The New York Times*. July 5, 2005.

become.⁶³ *The New York Times* columnist Nicholas Wade agrees and outlines the following in support of Esteller's findings: 1) epigenetics markers are lost as people age and 2) the pattern of epigenetic marks change due to personal experiences and environmental influences, such as smoking and dietary habits.⁶⁴

Twins differences are not only related to postnatal life as Alessandra Piontelli explains. The neuropsychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and author of *Twins: From Fetus to Child*, reports the differences in each twin fetus's intrauterine environment during pregnancy. Piontelli's findings indicate that twin fetuses have different environments during development, thus attributing to twins' physical and behavioral differences. For example, eating more can cause one twin to grow taller before the other.⁶⁵ Piontelli reports that identical chromosomes do not necessarily entail identicalness, because chromosomal expression is influenced by various environmental factors.⁶⁶ Agreeing with Piontelli, Friedman notes that in many twin ultrasounds, one twin takes up more space or crowds the other.⁶⁷ She refers to Piontelli's research to conclude that the distinctions of each fetus in an ultrasound "debunks the myth of identicalness."⁶⁸ She uses Piontelli's and Esteller's research to prove that identical twins should be regarded individually, since they were created as individuals.

⁶³ Nicholas Wade. "Explaining Differences in Twins." *The New York Times*. July 5, 2005.

⁶⁴ These two findings suggest that Nicholas Wade agrees with Dr. Esteller that individuality in twins is scientifically confirmed.

⁶⁵ Piontelli, *Twins: From Fetus to Child*, 18.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 21.

⁶⁷ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 19.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

Friedman argues that since twins are two different people, they should have unique names.⁶⁹ Researcher Stefan Norgaard concurs. Norgaard examined the correlation between naming and identity in South Africans after the apartheid.⁷⁰ Although Norgaard does not include twins in her research, the discoveries about naming and identity directly apply to twins, since twins have similar psychological and social perceptions. Norgaard mentions that names, whether intentionally or unintentionally decided, can have negative consequences on identity formation, for names can mask “the very dynamic and contested identity formation” that is at work in individuals.⁷¹ Many South African parents who survived the apartheid chose names for their children that corresponded with their emotions, such as gratitude, frustration, and anger over the past events. These children are often referred to as the “born free,” because they did not experience the harsh circumstances of the apartheid, although ironically, they experienced more difficulty in renegotiating what their parents perceived their identities to be and their perceptions of themselves.⁷² Such renegotiation appeared frequently in Norgaard’s interactions with young South African adults when he asked them about their names. These young adults explained that they preferred to be called by names “crafted by themselves,” rather than by the names given to them, because of its association with independence and self-sufficiency.⁷³ Although the new generation of South Africans have taken this definition

⁶⁹ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 43.

⁷⁰ Stefan Noorgard. ““Born Free”? Names, Identity, and Identity-Formation.” *Bulletin Of The National Library Of South Africa*, 69, no. 2 (December 2015): 237. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Stefan Noorgard. ““Born Free”? Names, Identity, and Identity-Formation.” *Bulletin Of The National Library Of South Africa*, 69, no. 2 (December 2015): 237. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost. The

to extreme measures, such as protesting the government and societal structure, the underlying premise behind naming remains the same: a person's name greatly impacts and shapes her identity.⁷⁴

To continue the naming conversation, we will discuss Friedman's argument about twins having alliterative names. She believes that such names negatively affect twins as they grow older, because they feel bound to their twin sibling.⁷⁵ Rhyming names are a byproduct of the twin mystique, and many perceive them to be charming. She explains the identity issues identical twins can experience from having similar names by describing her personal experience. She has an identical twin sister named Jane, and when they were growing up, someone in their family invented the conjoined name "Ja-on" to distinguish them.⁷⁶ Friedman disliked the nickname because over time, she became frustrated for not being known apart from her sister. Since her family members viewed her as part of a unit, she was trapped into the twin "mold." Over time, she wished to have a different name from her sister, so people could view her individually.⁷⁷ Therefore, Friedman highly encourages parents to refrain from giving their twins alliterative names, despite its perceived cuteness, to help twin children have a strong sense of their individual identities.

definition of the phrase "born free" changed, for it encompassed independence and self-sufficiency. Young South Africans believed that changing their names shows their independence and self-sufficiency.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 44.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Friedman's first name is Joan, and her sister's first name is Jane. Although the nickname "Ja-on" makes sense, it negatively impacted Friedman.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 45.

Friedman's Principle of Individuation. Friedman bases her arguments for twins' individual development on developmental psychology. According to this psychology, individuation is the process by which a person becomes her true self.⁷⁸ Individuation involves several steps, including integrating one's personality and life experiences into her identity. Friedman argues that twins cannot fully participate in individuation if they are bound to their twinship, for the twin relationship can prevent each member of the twin pair from discovering her self. To exist as an individual is to exist as an independent person. Friedman characterizes independence in two ways. First, an independent person is self-reliant.⁷⁹ A common issue identical twins face is being trapped in the care-taking dynamic, where one twin is the caretaker and the other is cared for. In other words, the caretaker becomes dominant over her twin sibling and is the leader. Friedman warns twins from falling into this pattern of behavior because it confuses them about their identity. Therefore, being self-reliant is crucial for self-development because one does not depend on her twin for emotional care and support. A self-reliant individual makes decisions on her own instead of relying on her twin sibling to assist in finalizing her plans. She chooses activities in which she wants to participate instead of relying on her twin's choice. Second, an independent person knows how to care for her twin without being overly close to her. Being too emotionally attached to one's twin results in the caretaking dynamic, which creates an unhealthy level of dependence. Friedman explains that an individual does not stop taking care of her twin because she does not love her twin. Rather, she creates boundaries when caring for her twin becomes burdensome. For

⁷⁸ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 70.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 67.

instance, when a twin notices that she sacrifices a significant portion of her time and energy to caring for her twin and cannot spend as much time with her family as she would like, then she knows she needs to address the issue with her twin. For if she continues, she might risk damaging her relationship with her husband and children. As an individual, she must prioritize caring for herself over caring for her twin.

Friedman argues that many twins yearn for independence as adolescents and adults, because twins are made to exist as two separate individuals.⁸⁰ Like how singleton teenagers crave personal independence, twins have the same longing, except with another dynamic: to rebel against being a twin.⁸¹ Friedman believes the primary reason why twins rebel is their inability to properly develop as individuals. Many twins also desire to disassociate themselves from the social implications of being too close to one's twin.⁸² Beginning in adolescence, twins who appear to be too similar are deemed socially unacceptable. The social stigma carries on into adulthood, leading many twins to eventually deemphasize their relationship.

Friedman explains that although twins share a unique relationship, they each deserve to have their own identity and a sense of themselves as stand-alone individuals.⁸³ Therefore, each person's birthright is to claim her distinct self. Knowing who someone is in the world is, she believes, key to living a joyful, fulfilling life. She calls identifying one's personal identity as claiming one's self, which involves honestly contemplating

⁸⁰ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 27.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 167-8.

⁸² Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 154.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

questions such as, “How do I define myself as a person?”⁸⁴ Self-reflection is an effective way to internally process one’s identity, because it forces one to ponder on her unique characteristics, passions, and personality traits apart from her twin. However, Friedman acknowledges that claiming one’s self is an internal process that differs for all twins. While self-reflection might be useful for some, others might benefit more from having therapy sessions to discuss their issues with professional counselors. Therefore, Friedman encourages twins to examine themselves and decide the best method for them to claim their unique identity as individuals.

Identity from Separation. Along those lines, Friedman believes that twins should not regard themselves as twins, because the phrase “the twins” suggests that twins are two “halves of a whole.”⁸⁵ In other words, she finds that twins who look at themselves as twins focus on their shared identity, and the only reality they will ever know is that they belong with their twin sibling.⁸⁶ Instead, she wants twins to focus on their individual identities apart from their twin relationship in order to see themselves as two individuals. In doing so, twins will be able to acknowledge their distinct identities, although they happened to have been born at the same time.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 158.

⁸⁵ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 27.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 9.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 26-7.

For Friedman, a major step for twins to reach personal independence is admitting their “secret struggle” with their twin sibling.⁸⁸ The struggle she describes is the twin relationship. It is common for twins to have a love-hate dynamic with their twin sibling, because they do not always agree. Friedman claims that twins struggle with accepting their emotions about each other because they assume they must be identical in every way. Because of the close nature of their relationship, twins often avoid confronting each other over their different feelings. Friedman explains that twins feel a sense of betrayal by admitting their negative emotions because of society’s pressure to be “best friends forever.”⁸⁹ In addition, twins feel like “there is something inherently wrong about their twinship” by questioning why they do not have a harmonious relationship with their twin sibling.⁹⁰ Some twins believe that expressing any feelings different from their twin sibling is wrong. She wants twins to realize that having different opinions or emotions is a sign of independence, because a prerequisite for healthy attachment to someone is the ability to harbor both loving and disappointing emotions. However, she emphasizes that learning about oneself requires acknowledging one’s true feelings, even if they are not positive. She writes that among these ambivalent feelings are “confusion, anger, and . . . even intense hostility and hatred.”⁹¹ Although these emotions may not all be positive, it is important to acknowledge them for understanding one’s self. Acknowledging negative feelings is the first step for twins to understand their twin relationship, discovering who

⁸⁸ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁰ Segal, *Twin Mythconceptions*, xx.

⁹¹ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 5.

they are as individuals, and deciding what they want in life. Friedman notes that many twins suppress their feelings instead of approaching the conflict causing such emotions. Therefore, she encourages twins to focus on their emotions and confront whatever issues may arise. To become healthy individuals, twins must learn to recognize these feelings, so they can learn how to properly respond to them.⁹² For to think independently requires handling one's emotions. Friedman states that these ambivalent feelings are "nothing to feel ashamed of" for twins in undergoing self-discovery.⁹³ Rather than being saddened by realizing that one has negative emotions about her twin, she should realize that handling these emotions are important for discovering herself.

Friedman believes that twins learn to be healthy individuals when they are given the same experiences to mature as singletons—having sibling rivalry, demanding attention from parents, and competing with each other.⁹⁴ It is crucial for twins to identify themselves separately from their twin sibling, so they can experience personal autonomy. Her model of healthy individuals seems to be singletons, because they are not obligated to care for their siblings like twins. Since singletons are born as individuals, they have no difficulty accepting their status in the world. Likewise, Friedman wants twins to develop such confidence in their individuality. If each member of the twin pair were to perceive herself as a singleton, then she would benefit by allowing herself to experience complete, personal autonomy without feeling bound to anyone. That way, she would not need to

⁹² Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 105.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

feel “out of sync with [herself]” by prioritizing her needs and wants.⁹⁵ Although difficult at first, separation is essential for discovering aspects of yourself, and this cannot be done fully when twins function as twins according to the twin mystique.⁹⁶

The Twin Marriage. Friedman argues that when twins seek the process of individuation, they must get divorced from the “twin marriage” by living as individuals instead of as half of a twin pair.⁹⁷ She relates the twin relationship to a marriage because the twins are united by their same age; however, unlike partners in marriage, twins do not choose their partners. Therefore, twins are trapped, according to Friedman, in a quasi-marriage they did not choose.⁹⁸ Friedman acknowledges that many twins perceive their relationships as unbalanced or burdensome because they were raised in families where they were not defined as separate individuals. The twins then defined themselves in their shared identity, since they were not acknowledged or celebrated for their separate identities. Therefore, the twins are caught in a “dysfunctional marriage.”⁹⁹ They become so focused on pleasing each other that they lose their ability to satisfy themselves. This responsibility makes twins feel obligated to constantly make their twin sibling happy and comfortable; on the other hand, this makes it harder for twins to become authentic and separate

⁹⁵ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 82

⁹⁶ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 73.

⁹⁷ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 69.

⁹⁸ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 5.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

people.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, twin closeness is experienced from obligation rather than mutual choice, resulting in an ingenuine relationship. Friedman believes that when twins treat each other as participants in a quasi-marriage they are travelling dangerous territory because they have yet to develop as individuals. Unlike marriage, the twins have not properly developed emotionally to appreciate the meaning of being authentically close to someone.

Placing Value Judgments on Twins. In order to confirm Friedman’s beliefs that misconceptions about twins exist one might consider Elizabeth Brodersen’s research about labeling twins. It is common for people to label one twin as the “good” twin and the other as the “bad” twin. Brodersen calls this effect the “unconscious shadow content” of twins.¹⁰¹ After conducting research on twins for three years, Brodersen discovered that the common misconception about twins—that one is good and the other is evil—comes from Greek myths about Eros and Thanatos.¹⁰² People tend to split positive and negative opinions onto twins, despite being “irrespective of [the twins’] actual behavior.”¹⁰³ Brodersen believes that this discovery is useful for revealing the hidden, complex scapegoat mechanism behind the growth of consciousness and the individuation

¹⁰⁰ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 2.

¹⁰¹ Elizabeth Brodersen. *Laws of Inheritance: A Post-Jungian Study of Twins and the Relationship between the First and Other(s)*, London, England: Taylor and Francis (2015): 8. ProQuest Ebook Central. This effect describes “the unconscious positive or negative projections of others onto [twins].”

¹⁰² Elizabeth Brodersen. *Laws of Inheritance*, 8.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 10.

process.¹⁰⁴ She places Eros and Thanatos along a symbolic personality spectrum to demonstrate how ambivalent natures can be “allowed full affective range” to understand the laws of inheritance.¹⁰⁵

Brodersen explains the proper way of assigning value judgments onto twins. They should do so based on *how* they are being raised together, not in *their* being raised together; in other words, Brodersen shifts the responsibility from the twins to their parents, because parents bear the responsibility for understanding twins’ nature.¹⁰⁶ Like Friedman, Brodersen advocates for parents of twins to be educated about twins’ unique nature. Brodersen partially comes to this conclusion because of her terrible childhood experience, but mainly from believing that parents should not raise their children in ways that are detrimental to their nature.¹⁰⁷

Segal also agrees with Friedman that twins *themselves* should decide how similar and dissimilar they want to be, although parents and others can suggest ideas for twins’ relationships. Segal describes this by saying that parents “respond to, rather than create, behaviors expressed by identical twins.”¹⁰⁸ Her important discoveries about twins reveal that identical twins naturally think alike about their relationship, whereas fraternal twins usually share different viewpoints.¹⁰⁹ A study of high school twins confirms that identical

¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Brodersen. *Laws of Inheritance*, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Eros and Thanatos are archetypal twins “that affect not only the unconscious behavior of actual twins but also intra-psychic processes in non-twins.” Eros is the Greek god of love and is associated with nurturing and life-giving personality traits. Thanatos is the Greek god of death and is associated with divisive and differentiated personality traits.

¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth Brodersen. *Laws of Inheritance*, 191.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Segal, *Entwined Lives*, 100.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

twins think more similarly than fraternal twins. In the study, twins ranked their relationships based on satisfaction with their twinships and the frequency of fighting. Surprisingly, identical and fraternal twins did not express different feelings about being twins, suggesting that twins should decide the nature of their relationship with their twin sibling. Segal writes in her book *Entwined Lives* that identical twins are “the movers and shakers” when it comes to their behavior.¹¹⁰ Twins who are treated alike share the same level of behavioral resemblance as twins who were treated less alike. Apparently, parental enforcements of certain behaviors or other people’s downplaying twins’ traits and tendencies have very little, if any, effect on each twin’s behavior.

Along those lines, twins can identify their individual differences, for they are characterized in virtually every trait.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, either the twins themselves or others around them willingly misunderstand their differences. Segal states that differences in twins should be “accepted as differences and not as deficits,” which she quotes from Sandra Scarr, a behavioral geneticist.¹¹² Segal wishes that people would understand that “genetically based differences among people *do not* warrant value judgments” because they are simply differences.¹¹³ Value judgments should be assigned in certain, but not all, circumstances. Segal believes that “human differences, whatever their source, should be celebrated, not denigrated,” instead of being taken for granted.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Segal, *Entwined Lives*, 101.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 315.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 316.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 317.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*.

Nonetheless, twins are unique in their ability to exhibit human behavior and offer a different perspective on individualism and living in community.

Conclusion. In this chapter, we summarized Friedman's perspective on twinning. She argues that society does not recognize twin individuality because of the twin mystique, which emphasizes the inseparable twin relationship. Many twins struggle to develop individually because of society's assumptions about twins. Therefore, Friedman suggests that twins develop individually by identifying themselves apart from the twin relationship. Individual identification is important for twins because it allows them to live independently. Twins are also free from the limitations that may exist in the twin relationship. One example is twin comparison. Identical twins are not compared to each other when they are regarded as individuals; however, one twin is often analyzed based on her twin's strengths when viewed as twins. Friedman seeks to prove that twins are different people to refute the twin mystique's notion that they are always the same.

Segal's research on twins emphasizes the fact that twins are different. Twins are different for several reasons. One reason for twins' differences is their interactions with the environment. In the womb twins encounter changes in the intrauterine environment, such as food intake. As adults, twins' choices reflect certain genetic tendencies. For instance, sun exposure causes different appearances, such as tanned skin and wrinkles. In other words, Segal's research highlights that no matter how people regard identical twins, they will always be unique individuals. Another reason why twins differ is their personal choices. Segal mentions that twins should determine their behavior instead of accommodating to their parents' wishes. Likewise, Friedman adds that twins should not

be pressured to act according to the twin mystique. She claims that many parents believe the twin mystique and want their children to develop accordingly. An example is naming twins. Friedman advises parents to give their twins unique names, so the twins will be identified individually. This development looks closer to the twins' sharing a single identity than their having separate identities. For this reason, she encourages twins to consider themselves before their twin sibling to obtain happiness. By regarding themselves individually, twins are more likely to develop independently than they would by identifying themselves in the twin relationship. Friedman warns her readers that when twins embrace their twin relationship—as described in the twin mystique—they tend to not understand themselves as well as they could. The twin relationship is more distracting than it is helpful for twin development.

To prove that twins are individuals, Friedman argues that twins are not clones. Evers' research concludes that twins are not clones because twins are natural products of conception, unlike clones that are created in laboratories. Since twins are unique individuals, claiming that they are clones minimizes their uniqueness. Friedman suggests that twins should embrace their individual identities to be properly understood by society and not be misunderstood. Because of their special relationship, twins are judged by singletons as being too close or being either the “good twin” or the “bad twin.” Similarly, Brodersen argues that parents of twins should refrain from comparing twins to each other. This chapter provides an individual account of twinning by providing research to support Friedman's arguments on twin individuality.

CHAPTER III

Implications of Friedman's Argument

After having provided a summary of Friedman's arguments, we will delineate specific features in Friedman's argument for twins' personal development in this chapter. We believe that the implications of her argument are of utmost importance as we continue our discussion on personal identity, especially as we begin to transition from the individualistic approach to personal identity to its description in theology, particularly that of Zizioulas. Before we begin incorporating theology into our discussion on personal identity, we will reveal the implications of Friedman's arguments. We begin by explaining Friedman's belief that individuals exist for themselves. Then, we discuss Friedman's advice for twins to care for themselves over their sibling. Finally, we examine Friedman's beliefs about twins being unique individuals.

Individuals Exist for Themselves

Although twins share a special bond with their twin sibling, they ultimately exist for themselves. Friedman states that twins should not feel guilty about pursuing their own interests because it is unreasonable for twins—as two separate people—to always have the same passions, strengths, and weaknesses.¹¹⁵ She acknowledges that although

¹¹⁵ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 190.

identical twins have a greater tendency to have similar interests, not all identical twins are extremely similar because each set of twins is different. She emphasizes the importance for each twin to know that she will develop within her own time frame because without acknowledging this, twins will easily compare themselves to their twin sibling.¹¹⁶ From Friedman's experience, she knows that constantly living in comparison to a twin sibling can negatively impact personal development. Friedman encourages twins by stating that they should not be ashamed of longing to reach personal independence and autonomy, since it is in their nature. Therefore, twins should experience the freedom in understanding this fact—that it is not abnormal to live for themselves. For instance, twins should be individually recognized on their birthday, since they long to celebrate their lives. After all, life is about being a personal star—being your own cheerleader, believing in yourself, and enjoying what you like.¹¹⁷ It is futile to assume that twins do not want to break away from their twin sibling because they share a special bond. In fact, Friedman states that it is of utmost importance for twins to realize that it is healthy for them to be separate individuals.¹¹⁸

Caring for Your Twin Sibling vs. Caring for Yourself

Friedman emphasizes that twins should not prioritize caring for their twin sibling over living independent lives. In other words, twins should experience the freedom of being able to make personal decisions without thinking about their twin sibling's opinion.

¹¹⁶ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 134.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 123.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 107.

Friedman discusses this in what she calls the “caretaking dynamic.”¹¹⁹ When twins do not individuate early in their childhood, they become parents for each other by caring for and attempting to meet the needs of their twin sibling.¹²⁰ Friedman describes this situation by saying the following: just like children cannot take of themselves, twins should not feel obligated to care for their twin sibling. Twins should first focus on becoming a fully mature and developed person before helping their twin sibling.¹²¹ Without knowing herself, a twin can have a false idea of who she is, thus detrimentally affecting her personal development. According to Friedman, it does not make sense for twins to feel pressured to care for their twin siblings just because they are twins. She finds this idea just as counterintuitive as telling two children of different ages to develop the exact same way. In a way, Friedman is advocating that twins should not be their sibling’s keeper because they must first and foremost take care of themselves.¹²²

Twins Being Unique Individuals. Despite the common belief that identical twins share the same genes, Friedman states that several scientific studies confirm the biological individuality of twins.¹²³ Although it is true that identical twins share more genes than fraternal twins, it is false to assume that they are less unique than fraternal twins or

¹¹⁹ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 132.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² We find this argument to be similar to Cain’s response back to God, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” in Genesis 4: 9 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version With The Apocrypha*.

¹²³ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 19.

singletons. Identical twins differentiate as they age, although they still maintain their similar appearances.¹²⁴ Friedman emphasizes that twins should not forget that they are born as unique individuals because if they do, then they will forget an important aspect about themselves. Although twins share the same birthday and have a special bond with their twin sibling, they are just as unique as singletons. Friedman argues that the biological uniqueness of identical twins confirms that they are different people. On the contrary, the twin mystique assumes that twins are the same, which Friedman finds to be quite unfortunate.¹²⁵

Friedman believes that since twins are separate people, they should be treated as individuals instead of one unit. Although twins are unique individuals, others might not perceive them as such. Once again, Friedman refers to the twin mystique because the American culture portrays twins as inseparable, lifelong companions.¹²⁶ The implications of the twin mystique are that twins cannot live without the other, they do not have distinct identities, and they only live for each other.¹²⁷ Such implications result in some twins having difficulty making friends and explaining their twin relationship to others. Because of this, Friedman mentions that twins should listen to her advice about considering pursuing personal interests. By doing so, twins signal to others around them that they are competent to make their own decisions. That way, twins are independent from the “constant state of comparison and competition” stated in the twin mystique.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 19.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 21.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 4-5.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 205.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 191.

Proper Influences for Personal Development. Since twins are unique individuals, they are defined by more “influences than simply their relationship to each other.”¹²⁹ These influences include the following: personality traits and personal strengths, weaknesses, interests, and abilities.¹³⁰ Friedman encourages twins to consider participating in different activities and having separate friendships for healthy personal development. She wants twins to realize that they live in a world that is beyond “me and my twin,” since twins are often told this by others, including pop culture.¹³¹ Friedman suggests that some influences are detrimental to twins’ personal development, such as twins constantly being around the same people. Although the latter is not necessarily harmful, Friedman advocates that twins should not always be together because they are misunderstood by society. The twin mystique is a perfect example of this because although society claims to understand twins, it generalizes twins and creates stereotypes that prevent twins from knowing themselves.¹³² In so doing, Friedman advocates that twins turn to internal influences—such as one’s characteristics—for personal development at first, and then they can consult external influences, such as books, friends, and even counselors. Ultimately, Friedman wants twins to realize their own potential and fully understand themselves before being exposed to outside sources. She does not believe external influences are always harmful, but she finds that these influences are not the best place to start one’s personal development.

¹²⁹ Friedman, *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, 21.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 16, 21.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 68.

¹³² *Ibid*, 21.

Conclusion. It is necessary to understand the implications of Friedman's arguments before continuing the discussion on personal identity. In this chapter, we summarized the underlying messages of Friedman's arguments for individuality. Since individuals exist for themselves, they are not obligated to care for others. For this reason, Friedman advises twins not to care for their sibling at the expense of their personal development. Friedman is not telling twins to stop caring for their sibling; rather, she warns them that ignoring personal issues may be detrimental, regardless of intentions, such as helping a sibling. Another principle is that twins are unique individuals. Since they are separate beings, twins should realize that they can and should live independently. Friedman encourages twins to pursue different friendships and interests, so they can discover themselves individually. Therefore, twins do not need to limit themselves to their twinship. If she is limited by her twin sibling's opinion, a twin cannot independently make decisions. Friedman emphasizes that twins should learn to be individuals, and part of this process is to accept that individuals exist for themselves, care for siblings but not at their expense, and are unique beings.

After having discussed Friedman's beliefs about twin individuality and the implications of her arguments, we will explain Zizioulas' beliefs about personal identity in the following chapters. Unlike Friedman, Zizioulas is an Eastern Orthodox theologian who focuses on discussing personal identity in relation to community. Having provided a secular account of individuality, we will examine religious arguments to provide a balanced analysis of personal identity. Afterwards, we will engage with these implications to compare Friedman's individualistic arguments to Zizioulas' theology of personhood.

CHAPTER IV

Zizioulas' Communion Ecclesiology

In the previous chapters, we have discussed Friedman's perspective on twinning and her belief that twins are unique individuals. Friedman provides a secular perspective on individual identity. Having discussed identity from the perspective of the individual, we continue from a communal perspective. In the next two chapters, we incorporate theology into the conversation of individuality. Theology is crucial to this discussion because of its emphasis on community for personal development. Although theology itself does not talk about twins, theology has several important principles about individuality. Since the discussion is about twins' self-discovery, the theological stance on personal identity is relevant. The theological implications of communal living will serve as a counter-paradigm to Friedman. We will rely on John Zizioulas' theological arguments to relate theology to personhood.

A well-respected theologian of the contemporary Orthodox church, Zizioulas uniquely unites theology, philosophy, and the Church in his discussion of personhood and communal living.¹³³ Zizioulas' central argument is that the Church ought to live as Communion by being bound to its various parts and the Head of the Church—Jesus Christ. Zizioulas uses the sacrament of Communion as a metaphor to discuss aspects of communal living in Christian and Church life. In this chapter, we will discuss Zizioulas'

¹³³ Knight, *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church*, 41.

perspective on individualism and personal identity, individual uniqueness, and biological uniqueness. Then, we explain his ecclesiology and the Church's need for Communion in becoming one body in Christ.

Individualism and Personal Identity

In Western society, individualism is no longer questioned; rather, it is embraced as the ideal for personal development. Given the high regard for the individual, personal identity has become a highly-contested topic of the current, post-modern era. Zizioulas argues that this debate, however, is not new; rather, it has been a part of the church's discourse for centuries.¹³⁴ Zizioulas argues that the Trinity's intimate, inseparable communion is an example for Christians to follow. Abiding in eternal communion, the Trinity cannot exist or be discussed as distinct, separate beings; rather, their identity is in their communal existence—their unity in diversity. Therefore, Zizioulas identifies the Son not as a separate being in the Trinity but as one of three holy Persons, for “to speak of Christ is to speak at the same time of the Father and the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁵ Likewise, Christians are called to experience similar unity in the Church, for living as a Christian requires living in community with God's people.

¹³⁴ Zizioulas, *Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 27.

¹³⁵ Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 99.

Individual Uniqueness

Where does uniqueness come from and how is it defined in personhood? For Zizioulas, uniqueness is identified in love. Before addressing love's relation to uniqueness, we will discuss Zizioulas' arguments on individual uniqueness and its relation to personal identity. Zizioulas writes, "Uniqueness is something absolute for the person," suggesting that each person's nature is created to be unique.¹³⁶ Therefore, a person does not need to strive to prove her individuality. Zizioulas might even consider this active establishment of a person's own identity to be sinful, because it undermines God's role as Creator, mirroring Adam and Eve's sin during the Fall.¹³⁷ Zizioulas argues that individualism is humanity's original sin, for humans wanted to identify themselves apart from their relationship to God; they wanted to individuate themselves apart from God, claiming glory for themselves. Thus, individualism is grafted by creation into human nature. Zizioulas explains this by stating that every person's central desire is to "exist as a concrete, unique and unrepeatable entity."¹³⁸ However, the way a person responds to this desire reflects the degree of her quality of life. True life comes from abiding in love and experiencing that love in community. Love's role in uniqueness is so critical that living without it robs individual uniqueness; to not love others in community is to become a member of the masses.¹³⁹ In other words, life is loving others, while death

¹³⁶ Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, 47.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 46.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 49.

is ceasing to love and be loved. If love is essential for true fulfillment, then individual uniqueness must be identified by love.

Biological Uniqueness. Is individual personhood determined by genes, environment, or a combination of both? Zizioulas believes that it is primarily found in human nature. Importantly, his definition of “nature” differs from that of philosophers or scientists because he focuses on the theology of biological existence. Therefore, the question of individual identity includes theology and science, for Zizioulas argues that biology and theology are unified by The Creator. Since God is the author of biology, biology is not entirely a scientific matter but one that takes theological form. Biology is but one part of a properly theological account of personhood.

According to Zizioulas, people have two forms of existence: a hypostasis of biological existence and a hypostasis of ecclesial existence.¹⁴⁰ The hypostasis of biological existence refers to a person’s corporeal existence, or the union of both soul and body. The origins of a person’s existence are traced to her conception and birth, since erotic love between a man and a woman produces children. Therefore, Zizioulas argues that humans are born out of—and into—love.¹⁴¹ Each person is born out of a communion between two human beings. For it is not out of one person that a human exists, but out of two. Likewise, Zizioulas states that out of one person love is born, but out of two a

¹⁴⁰ Zizioulas *Being As Communion*, 50.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

person is conceived. While this is known scientifically as the fertilization of an egg by a sperm, theologically it relates to a human's communion-bent nature. God, who lives in perfect communion, created human reproduction out of marriage's communion.

Therefore, Zizioulas argues humans are born *into* and *out of*, or *as a consequence of communion*. Human nature is not constituted by itself, but out of the unity of a parent's nature and of God's. This holy unity of humanity reflects a person's identity as the image-bearer of God.

Grafted into humanity, Communion is an essential component of human existence, because according to Zizioulas, each person bears this communion in her hypostasis. If everyone bears this hypostasis of perfect union, why then is it unknown to most? This arises from additional constitutions bound in human nature. Zizioulas describes this in the existence of two passions that act contradictorily to personhood. The first passion, ontological necessity, is simply the necessity of existence. A person's biological existence is a necessary component of her life, since she is a physical being; however, Christian thinking identifies humans as embodied souls. Zizioulas' theory does not contradict this philosophy but renders it more significant. If human existence is necessary, then humans must live in physical bodies. Not only are human bodies biological entities, but also the temple of their souls.¹⁴² For to be human is to have a body and a soul. Therefore, Zizioulas states that human existence is as miraculous as it is

¹⁴² 1 Corinthians 6:19 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. Jesus mentions that Christians' bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. However, this is relevant even for non-Christians because all humans' bodies house their souls. The image of a temple is significant because it suggests a reverence for the life-giving soul dwelling in a person's body.

mystical, for science has yet to explain how a soul, an invisible yet integral part of humanity, abides in a tangible body. The tension between these two living forces is mystical and leads to the second passion—*death*. Zizioulas' definition is the gradual passing of death, not only the ending of biological existence. However, it also has an astonishing effect on a person's mortality, for it is the climax of the soul's existence. Spiritually, death is the separation of humanity's hypostases.¹⁴³

Individualism is where the hypostases of humanity are divided and no longer in communion. Zizioulas describes individualism as the beginning of death, for it marks the fatal separation of man from himself. On one hand, individuality is a gift because it physically separates bodies; on the other hand, it is a curse because it twists the reality of human's communal existence. Zizioulas believes that a person eventually concludes that she belongs to herself by following her own path, rejecting her communal makeup, and becoming bound to herself. Thus, she loses her life source. By having such thoughts, she makes her own personal decisions and focuses on the health of her body. As innocent as this may seem, Zizioulas find that these actions, when taken to the extreme, result in neglecting one's unified relationship with God. Thus, individualism leads to death. Now that we have explored the connection between biology and theology in individual personhood, we will recall the different definitions of death. Zizioulas claims that where biology identifies death as the cessation of the body's biological functions, theology reminds us that death is when the individual body is left entirely to itself—naked in its

¹⁴³ Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, 51. The *hypostases* of human nature are *hypostasis of biological existence* and *hypostasis of ecclesial existence*. In other words, the communion of physical and spiritual bodies in a person.

sinful nature. Without love's heartbeat to sustain its existence, the body returns to ashes.¹⁴⁴

The hypostasis of ecclesial existence refers to humanity's need for active church involvement. Where the hypostasis of biological existence fails, Zizioulas argues that the hypostasis of ecclesial existence succeeds, for it is the wellspring of life.¹⁴⁵ This renewal begins with the sacrament of Baptism, where humanity is born again. Through joining Christ's body in the Church, a person is given new life. Zizioulas states that Baptism allows a person to be washed clean from her previous life—her life without Christ—and to embrace her new life in Christ. Now she is purified by God's covenant of love in the Church. Therefore, humanity gains a second chance to live freely without fear of death. Theology is crucial to this discussion because of its emphasis on community for personal development. Zizioulas argues that when a person is left to her biological state, she is bound to the chains of death. Therefore, embracing life in the Church constitutes freedom. Zizioulas argues that the Church augments life in ways that biology does not. First, a person has a new relationship with the world. Entering the Church is becoming part of a new family, the body of Christ. Jesus refers to the Father as the Church's "head"

¹⁴⁴ Genesis 3:19 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Catholics celebrate Ash Wednesday in remembrance of this truth by worshiping together and wearing a cross made of ashes on their foreheads. This beautiful symbol is the perfect metaphor of existence, for all humans return to the dust from which God created Adam. Human nature brings humans back to the Creation which God made to glorify Himself in death.

¹⁴⁵ Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, 53.

and the members of the Church's body as brothers and sisters.¹⁴⁶ By joining a sacred family, Zizioulas states that a Christian is not limited to the imperfections of her biological family. Rather, she can engage with her new brothers and sisters freely in worshipping God. Second, she can love freely because she is no longer obligated to love in obedience to biological laws.¹⁴⁷ Left to her biological nature, a person prioritizes loving her family over her neighbors or strangers and excludes others. In her renewed state, however, Zizioulas claims that she can choose to love the other as Christ would. The Church transforms the Christian to a new being who has the capacity to love others more than her own family. Thus, Christians can love without exclusiveness. Therefore, Zizioulas argues that the hypostasis of ecclesial existence transforms one's life from a selfish understanding of love to a communal network of love.

The Trinity. Zizioulas examines the Trinitarian relationship to explain the harmony that should exist in the Church corporately and individually. Following the Cappadocian Fathers, Zizioulas asserts that the Trinity is significant for personal relationship.¹⁴⁸ The Trinity is the perfect relationship between each "person" in the Trinity because God

¹⁴⁶ Matthew 23:8-9 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples and the crowd listening to his teaching that their father is the Father in Heaven.

¹⁴⁷ Zizioulas, John D. *Being As Communion*, 57.

¹⁴⁸ Geoffrey Wainwright. "John Zizioulas on Personhood in God and for Humankind." *Ecclesiology*, 4, no. 2(2008): 222. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost. Despite being Eastern Orthodox, Zizioulas incorporates theology from the Eastern and the Western Churches to support his arguments. Zizioulas' theological arguments are free from bias towards one Christian denomination. His goal is to unify the catholic church in its calling to communion.

exists in harmony and maintains unique characteristics as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the Trinity ultimately reveals truth in the Father-Son relationship.¹⁵⁰

For Zizioulas, the Father-Son relationship is significant because it serves as a model for Christians' intimacy with God. Just as Jesus does not exist to contradict or disprove the Father, Christians should act in accordance to God's will. Additionally, examining Jesus' life provides a deeper understanding of the Father than Christians can understand from only reading the Old Testament. Zizioulas states that Jesus choose to follow the Father's for His life rather than living for personal glory by being obedient to Father, even to the point of death on the cross.¹⁵¹ Throughout His ministry, Jesus glorifies the Father by living perfectly—without sin—to redeem humanity from sin. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, humans can personally communicate with God through prayer. Zizioulas also argues that the Holy Spirit plays a critical role in the Christian life. Through the Holy Spirit, Christians can cry, "Abba, Father."¹⁵² For the Christian, God should not be regarded as someone distant, but rather as a Father who is closer than any other—a Father who fully understands the Christian and is willing to help her in and through every circumstance. Zizioulas finds that when Christians turn to God during times of need, want, prosperity, and tribulation, a beautiful relationship between God and His followers is created. By crying out in such a manner, the Christian recognizes her weakness and

¹⁴⁹ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 35.

¹⁵⁰ Wainwright, "John Zizioulas on Personhood in God and for Humankind," 236.

¹⁵¹ Philippians 2:8 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

¹⁵² Romans 8:15 and Philippians 2:8 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

admits God's strength. Recognizing this truth creates a deep intimacy that should mirror that between each "person" in the Trinity. Zizioulas argues that like the Trinity's perfect reliance on each other, Christians should lean on God to experience the most intimate relationship known to humanity.

The Trinity is revealed only in the Church, for the Church is the community of God's children.¹⁵³ Zizioulas argues that as adopted children of God, Christians can understand community in the Trinity.¹⁵⁴ Like family members understand each other perfectly, the Church knows God, including the difficult concept of the Trinity. Zizioulas acknowledges that the secularist might consider the Trinity to be insignificant. Referring to Paul's letter to the Roman church, Zizioulas states that secular people cannot understand the freedom that Christians experience from the Holy Spirit because they are slaves to their desires, thus always living in fear.¹⁵⁵ Zizioulas encourages Christians by saying that they should not live in fear because they have God's power dwelling inside them, thus allowing them to conquer all things by God who strengthens them.¹⁵⁶ Zizioulas notes the significance of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. Liberating Christians from themselves, the Holy Spirit cultivates a desire for Christians to share this freedom with the world.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Wainwright, "John Zizioulas on Personhood in God and for Humankind," 222.

¹⁵⁴ Romans 8:15 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Romans 8:15 and Philippians 4:13 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

¹⁵⁷ Romans 8:15 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

The Church. Zizioulas argues that the Church—the body of Christ—exists as the hypostatization of beings in Christ’s unique hypostasis.¹⁵⁸ Since human beings are defined through otherness, they cannot be defined in the absence of others.¹⁵⁹ Zizioulas states that for Christians, this means they cannot be seen apart from Christ, since hypostatization occurs in the Holy Spirit’s giving humans freedom and communion in God.¹⁶⁰ Churches are unified communities despite their diverse members because of each member’s uniqueness. Therefore, Christians should be associated with their local church congregations and the catholic Church—the unified body of Christ.¹⁶¹

After understanding the importance of the hypostatization of the individual church members, we can explore the divine interference between God’s communion in the assembly of others. Zizioulas states that the Church is the community where otherness is experienced as communion through uniqueness; therefore, the Church body consists of unique beings that commonly “express and realize the freedom of otherness.”¹⁶² Since

¹⁵⁸ Travis E. Ables, “On the Very Idea of an Ontology of Communion: Being, Relation, and Freedom in Zizioulas and Levinas,” *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost. Heythrop Journal 52, no.4 (2011): 674.

¹⁵⁹ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 39.

¹⁶⁰ Travis E. Ables, “On the Very Idea of an Ontology of Communion: Being, Relation, and Freedom in Zizioulas and Levinas,” *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost. Heythrop Journal 52, no.4 (2011): 674.

¹⁶¹ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 38.

¹⁶² Travis E. Ables, “On the Very Idea of an Ontology of Communion: Being, Relation, and Freedom in Zizioulas and Levinas,” *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost. Heythrop Journal 52, no.4 (2011): 674. See also Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 38-9. In *Communion and Otherness*, Zizioulas briefly addresses the relationship between the Church and the individual in section IV.

each church member is filled with the Holy Spirit, the Church experiences God's communion in the assembly of others. Although the differences between church members are sometimes regarded negatively, Zizioulas argues that Christians should perceive these differences beneficially. By recognizing that no one in the Church shares one outlook, Christians can rely on their Heavenly Father for guidance.¹⁶³ The Church should experience the freedom discovered in otherness because recognizing the uniqueness of each member expresses the beauty of recognizing the other—those who do not know Christ.¹⁶⁴ The Church should be distinguished from other individuals in respecting the other, for Zizioulas states that the Church expresses God's love to the world by respecting and admiring God for His brilliant creation.¹⁶⁵

For those who are not part of the Church, they can still understand the benefits of participating in a community and apply it to their lives. One might consider how secular people can do this, since they do not believe in love as Christians do. According to Zizioulas, secular people need to respect other human beings. If they fail to realize that everyone is essentially the same—everyone fears death and longs for immortality—then they ignore the human condition.¹⁶⁶ Zizioulas states that fearing the other results from ignoring what happens after death.¹⁶⁷ The world would be a better, safer place if everyone

¹⁶³ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 39-40.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 40-1.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

aspired to respect each other and not ostracize others for their differences. According to Zizioulas, through our differences, we can discover how we are alike.¹⁶⁸

Communion. The Eucharist plays a significant role in the Church's Communion with Jesus, for the Eucharist allows believers to participate in Jesus, who nourishes the life of the Church.¹⁶⁹ Zizioulas claims that since Jesus is the life source for believers, they should look to Him for eternal life and recognize His role in the Church. The purpose of Eucharistic ecclesiology is Christian reunion, which occurs through ecclesial communion.¹⁷⁰ For Zizioulas, the Church is the place where believers have fellowship, encourage each other, and extend helping hands to each other. Ecclesial communion includes agreement in the faith as well as in Baptism, the Eucharist and the Church's ministry.¹⁷¹ Zizioulas states that Jesus also unites with the Church during the sharing of the bread and cup because the Eucharist demonstrates the unity of believers in Jesus Christ. As such, "the thanksgiving of being"—the Eucharist—is where the community of

¹⁶⁸ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 39-41. If people fail to realize their similarities and differences with others, how can they focus on self-improvement, achieving personal goals, and striving for personal greatness? It is impossible for people to want to improve their selves without having others to aspire to become or to model after.

¹⁶⁹ Wainwright, "John Zizioulas on Personhood in God and for Humankind," 222. Zizioulas' discussions on Communion in *Being As Communion* and *Communion and Otherness* have given him much acclaim among theologians. He has even been deemed as "one of the most original and profound theologians of this epoch" because of his beautifully-explained intellectual arguments about the Church's need to live in Communion with its members and the world.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 236.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 222.

God's people is fully manifested.¹⁷² The Eucharist involves the entire Church body, and each local Church participates in the Eucharist. In other words, the experiences of otherness inside and outside the Church are relational.¹⁷³ Therefore, Zizioulas believes that a local church body should work to not only order its own life, but also consider the interests and concerns of other churches.¹⁷⁴

Zizioulas argues that local church bodies work together to participate in God's work.¹⁷⁵ Local churches participate in the communion of the catholic church—the whole church body—by the Gospel and the Eucharist.¹⁷⁶ This participation suggests that the Church agrees to serve as the salt and light to the world by living out a Gospel-centered life and applying the Gospel to its interactions with Church members and neighbors.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, Zizioulas finds Communion to be an expression of service and witness to the world.¹⁷⁸ Without such expression, the Church is like the believer who says that he has faith and others have deeds; as James wisely and truly states, faith without works is dead.¹⁷⁹ Likewise, if the Church does not act on its beliefs, then Zizioulas states that its

¹⁷² Wainwright, "John Zizioulas on Personhood in God and for Humankind," 222.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 236.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Each church should not take an individualistic approach by caring only for its own interests and fostering its own flock, or in other words, they ought not be so self-absorbed.

¹⁷⁶ Wainwright, "John Zizioulas on Personhood in God and for Humankind," 236.

¹⁷⁷ Matthew 5:13-16 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

¹⁷⁸ Wainwright, "John Zizioulas on Personhood in God and for Humankind," 222.

¹⁷⁹ James 2:14-26 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

faith is dead, although God is alive. In the Trinity, “communion belongs not to the level of will and action but to that of substance.”¹⁸⁰ The Church should strive to have a similar understanding of Communion because it should understand that its substantial existence comes from God’s imparting His commandments and Spirit unto its members.

Conclusion: In this chapter, we discussed Zizioulas’ arguments that personal identity is separate from individualism. According to Zizioulas, individualism undermines personal identity, because it encourages people not to live in community. He stresses the importance of communal living by examining the Trinity. Composed of three Persons, the Trinity lives in constant unity as Three in One. Zizioulas explains that the Trinity is a beautiful example of living in community, because each Person of the Trinity is unique but also known in relation to the other Persons. For Christians, this means that they should aspire to live in this kind of community. Zizioulas argues that people are created as unique beings, so therefore, they do not need to prove their individuality. He cautions that people who identify themselves apart from community live selfishly. He argues that true life comes from experiencing life in the presence of others and abiding in love; therefore, neglecting love’s role in relationship to uniqueness makes people merely other humans. To Zizioulas, a person is someone who loves others, so living selfishly leads people to a spiritual death.

¹⁸⁰ Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, 86.

In addition, we discussed Zizioulas' arguments on biological uniqueness. He claims that individual personhood is primarily found in human nature, since God created people with separate bodies. However, the physical body does not exist alone, which Zizioulas explains by defining the hypostasis of biological existence and the hypostasis of ecclesial existence. The hypostasis of biological existence refers to people being embodied souls, whereas the hypostasis of ecclesial existence refers to people's need to exist in community. Each person is composed of both hypostases. Therefore, Zizioulas argues that Communion is crucial for human existence, because it includes both hypostases. Individualism has a different account for personal existence. Zizioulas argues that individualism separates the hypostases, resulting in the lack of Communion. This leaves people lifeless, for they no longer appreciate community and life as God intended.

Zizioulas' communion ecclesiology includes his specific arguments about the Trinity, Church, and Communion. Zizioulas discusses the Trinity to describe the harmonious unity in which God constantly exists. Likewise, he argues that the Church should aspire to live in Communion. Existing in community, the Church demonstrates that people are defined through otherness. Communion unifies the Church to Jesus Christ. By the partaking of this sacrament, the Church becomes one body in Christ and experiences fellowship with one another. The Trinity, Church, and Communion demonstrate that personhood is characterized by community with others. After having discussed Zizioulas' arguments on personal identity, we will proceed to examine his perspective on individualism. The next chapter outlines how theology has been included in the identity debate for centuries.

CHAPTER V

Zizioulas on Individualism

Given Zizioulas' religious associations with community, the question of identity has greater importance because it affects individuals' lifestyles and convictions. If beliefs are the source of individual action, then lifestyles are the results of one's beliefs.

Zizioulas would relate this concept to the Church's call to love the world so the world may learn about Jesus. In this chapter, we will focus on Zizioulas' discussions about individual identity. We begin by describing individualism's Christian heritage and explaining the urgency of discussing individualism in American culture. Then, we discuss Zizioulas' arguments about individualism. Finally, we provide a scenario about asceticism and conclude with its relationship to individuality.

The History of Individualism

Originating in the 16th century, modern individualism can be traced to Western Europe during the Reformation. Prior to the Reformation, the Catholic Church was the center of the Western world. There was a role for individuals, but as members of the corporate Christian community of the Church. It was not until Luther's Protestant interventions did Christianity begin to place such a high emphasis on the individual.

Luther not only started a transformation of church doctrine, but also a cultural shift regarding personhood. How one imagines and practices the sacrament of Communion serves as an example of such changes in conceptions of personhood. David Sabean argues that the sacrament of Communion is the primary source for thinking about the self.¹⁸¹ He examines the role of memory before and after the Reformation from the perspective of village structure. Before the Reformation, villagers were heavily involved in churches. Traditionally, the church was located in the village's center, since it was regarded as the center of the community's activity and thinking. Therefore, villagers would unite at church with their neighbors. Memory was not determined by individual preference but rather as an exercise embedded in village tradition, with Communion serving as the unifying force. Communion was hailed as the practice in which all believers joined the body of Christ. During the Reformation, memory was transferred from the church to the individual; whereas before memory was collective, it became an entity of an individual. As individualism entered the scene, memory became about contemplating matters as individuals, separately from the church. From this change can be traced, Sabean thinks, modern understandings of the self.

Hence Luther's thinking about the individual contributes to modern understandings of personhood. Although known for many theological contributions to the modern world, perhaps Luther's most pervasive accomplishment was the elevation of the

¹⁸¹ David Warren Sabean. 1996. "Production of the Self during the Age of Confessionalism." *Central European History* (Brill Academic Publishers) 29, no. 1: 1. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost. Web. Accessed 17 March 2018. David Sabean is a distinguished professor of history at UCLA. As the "Father of the Reformation", Martin Luther takes credit for starting the Reformation and its principal teachings. The Reformation is arguably the most pivotal period in history for its effects on church and society.

individual. Luther described the self as a non-consistent self with no particular center, which aligned with his beliefs of the Catholic Church.¹⁸² Much of Luther's problems with the Catholic Church came from its magisterial approach to Scripture. The first to translate the Bible into the vernacular, Luther's *sola fides* combined with *sola scriptura* gave biblical interpretation to the individual. Therefore, the church was no longer the sole authority for biblical understanding, supplanted now by individuals as interpreters of Scripture, and as they received the Scripture on their own terms they became attuned to making memories—in this case biblical memory—apart from others. Thus, the theological birth of modern individualism.

Addressing Individualism Now

Given its history, individualism is a matter that must be addressed in our discussion about the conditions of Western society, including how those conditions effect how twin life is imagined. Since individualism now has a long-established presence in our culture, Christians might consider its origins and prepare how to respond. Twins are but one lens through which to examine individualism's effects on society.

America's recent history has made individualism a more urgent topic for discussing personal identity. Ian McFarland has theologically engaged the dynamic between community and individualism.¹⁸³ He argues that the 21st century is an important

¹⁸² Sabeen, "Production of the Self during the Age of Confessionalism," 1.

¹⁸³ McFarland, *Difference & Identity: A Theological Anthropology*, 14. McFarland is a professor of systematic theology at King's College and has written several books on the theological implications of individual identity in communal life.

time in history because Americans have witnessed many changes in social norms and have been challenged by traditional teachings of personhood.¹⁸⁴ People who were regarded as inferior, such as persons of color and women, were forced to deal with their struggles internally.¹⁸⁵ Thanks to the civil rights movement and the liberation of women, these groups can now handle their struggles publically.¹⁸⁶ Americans can and do aspire to unity in their struggles, fulfilling the vision offered by the Declaration of Independence, “all men are created equal” and pursuing the divinely given rights of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”¹⁸⁷ Because of its recent inclusion of the excluded, the 21st century is a unique period to discuss the implications of individualism.

Zizioulas and Individualism. As an Eastern Orthodox theologian, Zizioulas does not perceive individualism as Westerners do, but rather within the context of the Church, because the Eastern Orthodox theology is separated from the theological challenges of the Reformation, which took place exclusively in the Christian West. For instance, he believes that personal existence is not sufficient because of his belief in personhood.¹⁸⁸ He, as described in the previous chapter, believes that every person is a gift from God,

¹⁸⁴ McFarland, *Difference & Identity: A Theological Anthropology*, 14.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ “Declaration of Independence: A Transcription.” *National Archives*.

¹⁸⁸ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 141.

because everyone is created in the image and likeness of God.¹⁸⁹ He claims it is even “demonic to attribute one’s own personal identity to oneself” or to anything apart from God.¹⁹⁰ This selfish point of view is expected of humans, for in our sinful nature, we attribute our successes, and even our identities, to our own greatness. However, Zizioulas thinks we exist because of God’s love and freedom whether or not people recognize God’s role in their love or freedom.¹⁹¹

For Zizioulas, a proper definition of the individual stems from a proper understanding of the source of human existence. In reading Zizioulas in relation to Friedman, it becomes apparent how important it is to first answer the question of the source of human existence prior to developing a conception of persons. One can imagine two arguments for human existence: either human existence has existential but no ultimate meaning, or human existence is purposeful even beyond any individual’s sense of existence and hence bears ultimate meaning. Zizioulas, as one might expect, holds to the latter view, believing that God created people to share His love and goodness, where that love and goodness are aspects of that ultimate meaning.¹⁹² If it were not for this general purpose and meaning, then God would not need the Church to reveal Himself and glorify Him in their conduct. As a result, Zizioulas concludes that a person’s individuality comes from her corporate rather than individual identity. For Zizioulas, this is in the

¹⁸⁹ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 140. Also Genesis 1:26 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 141. Also Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 153.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid, 145.

Church and not in being a single member of the Church body. Since the body has many participating members, it seems logical for Zizioulas to encourage the Church to believe in a meaningful existence. For if a group of individuals has a purpose, then each person's individuality is affirmed and necessary.¹⁹³

This leads to Zizioulas' claim about the Church's corporate identity. He locates his understanding within corporate identity. The Christian tradition "leaves little room for doubt" that people belong in a community because their identity lies in a "corporate self-appropriation."¹⁹⁴ In other words, Christians cannot have "individual" identities because Christians belong to the body of Christ.¹⁹⁵ No doubt Christians are individuals, but their primary purpose, according to Zizioulas, is not self-defined. Their participation in God's work through the Church and in being redeemed by God serves as the Christian's identity. As such, Christians are no longer individual parts separable the body, but rather, they work together as part of the whole body to perform God's work in the world.

Zizioulas emphasizes Baptism's role in welcoming new Church members and in developing a communal identity. Baptism signifies the beginning of this identity because this holy sacrament allows one to participate in the following: emerging as a new member of the body of Christ, being made new, and beginning her new life with Christ.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 141. Also 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

¹⁹⁴ Catherine T. Nerney and Hal Taussig, *Re-Imagining Life Together in America: A New Gospel of Community*, 79.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Zizioulas reinforces this by stating, “we live only in and as members of one another” thus, making unintelligible any identity apart from a community.¹⁹⁷ Therefore, the baptized person “no longer [lives] for himself but in and for the whole body of Christ.”¹⁹⁸

Zizioulas encourages individuals to participate in a communal lifestyle because every person seeks to understand “how to ‘experience’ reality,” whether in this life or after death.¹⁹⁹ Part of discovering the answer to this quest can be found in dependence to others. The secular mindset finds contentment through self-efficacy. Zizioulas warns that this mentality is dangerous for the soul by isolating people from one another, and their true nature.²⁰⁰ Being with others is the only way, according to Zizioulas, to experience life as God designed it to be, the true source of empowerment and efficacy. Examples include expanding one’s education, engaging in deep conversations about philosophy, and learning different religions; none of these can be done alone. Zizioulas claims that everyone is an “other” to some degree because we all differ from one another.²⁰¹ Additionally, people tend to ignore others, pass them by, or feel intimidated by their presence. Since everyone has similar wants and desires and is created by the same God, it is reasonable to assume that non-Christians need to be in the presence of others, just like Christians need to have fellowship with one another.

¹⁹⁷ Catherine T. Nerney and Hal Taussig, *Re-Imagining Life Together in America: A New Gospel of Community*, 79.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 83.

¹⁹⁹ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 46.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 52.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 53. The presence of others is a threat to personal identity and to individual success.

Our Scenario. One might consider the example of asceticism in order to understand how individual personhood can exist within community. Ascetics, such as nuns, not only dress the same, but also act in similar ways by adhering to their religious order. This ascetic approach directly contrasts the Western culture's notion that dressing differently distinguishes individuals and signifies individuality. Nuns willingly sacrifice a symbol of their individuality, and one highly prized in Western post-Reformation cultures, in order to focus on personally seeking God. For these women, their individuality comes from their corporate identity as a community instead of an individually separate one from community. To achieve oneness with each other and with God, nuns participate in monastic living, and dressing the same is one expression of their unity.

This example ably serves to clarify Zizioulas' perspective on personhood. Our scenario depicts one core idea: living in community is not necessarily a bad thing. For Christians, this idea should be encouraged, instead of discouraged, because the Trinitarian God exists in community.²⁰² For people who do not attend churches, they can easily understand our scenario because no religious knowledge is required to enhance its clarity. Consider how nuns discover their individuality. For nuns, individuality will obviously not be established by different dress, hence the only way to distinguish one nun from the other is by spending time with them. One might imagine a scenario where a woman meets a group of nuns and is impressed by their unity. Seeking to learn more, she decides to spend a day with the nuns in the convent. Initially, she struggles to

²⁰² Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God*, 75.

differentiate them, since they all look so similar, dressed as they are, alike. After spending an entire day with them, however, she notices their differences. Being with the nuns for this extended period enabled her to discover personality differences, facial expressions, senses of humor, and specifications in terms of wit or modes of articulation. She realizes that the nuns' individuality is not located—as it is for societies that emphasize external differences—in how they dress, but rather through character and personality, situating individuality in ways that can only be discovered in relationship. Since the woman was raised in a more externally individuated culture, it took time and effort for her to become better acquainted with the nuns. Upon first regarding them, she perceived anticipated difficulties in familiarizing herself with each nun. She learned the differences between them by sharing life with them and having multiple conversations. She tells the nuns that she wishes more women would live harmoniously and experience their “oneness” of heart, mind, and spirit.

This scenario provides several insights into Zizioulas' arguments about individuality. First, the woman discovers that individuality is something to be discovered. Her realization aligns with Zizioulas' claim that people are created as unique individuals. If people are born as persons, then they do not need to actively search for their individuality. Therefore, a person's uniqueness is expressed through a person's inner qualities, such as her personality, behavior, and mannerisms. Second, the nuns identify themselves in their corporate community. Zizioulas argues that Christians should not place their primary identity in themselves, for they are the body of Christ and are identified in being Christ's ambassadors. Ultimately, Christians live as one family to

glorify God and are called “to live in unity” by modeling the communal harmony in the Trinity.²⁰³ To do so, Christians must agree on God’s Trinitarian nature, especially on the Holy Spirit’s role in the Church.²⁰⁴ In our scenario, the nuns live, eat, read, sleep, and talk together every day, which symbolizes the oneness that should exist in the Church. Likewise, their positive interaction with the woman left her appalled by their incredible communion because she realized the beauty of it. As she had told them, she wished that more women could enjoy being together the way that nuns do. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the Church can change the world by living in communion because spectators from society can look at the Church favorably for extending God’s love and “by being personally and existentially involved in [our] world.”²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Fox, *God as Communion*, 89.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 88.

CHAPTER VI

Examining Individualism According to Friedman and Zizioulas

Discovering one's identity is especially relevant today because of the emphasis on personal autonomy. We mentioned in the first chapter how individualism is exhibited in the American culture, referred to Friedman's advice for twins in the second and third chapters, and described Zizioulas' communal perspective in the fourth and fifth chapters. In this chapter, we briefly compare and contrast Zizioulas' and Friedman's arguments on individualism before providing our insights on twin living and individualism.

Examining Zizioulas' and Friedman's Arguments on Individualism

Although Zizioulas and Friedman discuss individualism, they have markedly different approaches on the subject. Not only are these approaches relevant to our discussion about individualism for our argument, but also for society. The main difference between their arguments lies in the authors' approaches to the subject. Zizioulas' theological approach contrasts with Friedman's secular approach that focuses on self-consciousness. We find it humorous that Friedman and Zizioulas state their

positions on individualism in the titles of their books.²⁰⁶ However, they could not be more different. The first difference is the issues to which the authors respond. Although discussing different subjects, both authors address individuals, personal lifestyles, and fulfilling one's purpose. With each book addressing a specific focus, Friedman and Zizioulas respond to problems regarding their study. While Friedman's book unveils the romanticizing of twins in the Western culture, Zizioulas addresses the problems of unity within the Church.²⁰⁷ Friedman claims that society's portrayal of twins causes twins to struggle with their identities, for twins are torn between the single image depicted by society and their desire to live as individuals. Zizioulas argues that examining the unity in the Trinity will lead the Church to submit to its calling to abide in holy Communion. The second difference is the audience for the books. Friedman's audience are twins and their family members, whereas Zizioulas engages a larger audience—the church body, or the body of Christ. Friedman treats her books like her psychotherapy practice; she writes to help twins heal from their wounds and assist them in their struggles. However, her career limits the patients who visit her. Friedman aims to address a larger body of twins by writing books and hopes to help twins seek self-understanding and contentment in their lives. Similar to Friedman's desire to address a large body of individuals, Zizioulas aims to address a large audience. Despite being an Eastern Orthodox theologian, Zizioulas strives to discuss the implications of communal living for the entire church instead of

²⁰⁶ Friedman, *The Same but Different: How Twins Can Live, Love, and Learn to be Individuals*. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*.

²⁰⁷ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 10.

limiting it to only his affiliated denomination. Another important note is the manner in which the authors address their audience. While Friedman writes in a conversational tone, Zizioulas engages in a scholarly discussion. This difference is likely due to their fields, for theology books are more formal than books that offer advice for twins. After summarizing the three main differences between Zizioulas and Friedman, we will provide brief summaries of each author's arguments separately.

Friedman's Individualistic Approach

Friedman claims that individuals live in a "self-contained universe," meaning that individuals make the best personal decisions.²⁰⁸ To understand what Friedman means, one might examine the famous debate between Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Isaac Newton concerning the nature of space and time. While Newton argued that space and time exist independently of each other and other forces, Leibniz argued that space and time have a cooperative relationship.²⁰⁹ Leibniz therefore concludes that space and time cannot exist apart, for all occurring events result from their existence. Hence, Newton advocated the "self-contained universe" theory, whereas Leibniz supported the "relational world" theory. Nonetheless, the "self-contained universe" and "relational world" theories contrast each other. This scientific principle also applies to modern notions of individualism given contemporary philosophy emphasizing the importance of self-

²⁰⁸ Polkinghorne, *The Trinity and an Entangled World*, 41.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

efficacy.²¹⁰ The main premise of the “self-contained universe, ” according to J.C Polkinghorne, is that space and time are independent of each other; they are “like objects that exist independently of anything else.”²¹¹ Likewise, individuals live independently of others, as do space and time for Newton. Thus, no one should impose on others. As a theory about self-determination, individualism attempts to remove any initial conditions of humanity’s need for camaraderie and fellowship.²¹² The premise of individualism states that humans have an innate desire to live independently and crave freedom from external restraints, such as society or culture. Thus, the individualistic mindset is grounded in subjective thinking.²¹³ By subjective, we refer to a person choosing her own standard of righteousness, instead of following a conventional, universal standard of ethics. Additionally, someone interprets reality through her own lens of consciousness.²¹⁴ Like the self-contained universe theory, individualism assumes that each person seeks only her best interests.

Friedman believes individualism explains how twins should respond to society’s unrealistic expectations of them, such as completing each other’s sentences and being “a kind of singular entity—two as one.”²¹⁵ Although addressing twin stereotypes is good,

²¹⁰ Polkinghorne, *The Trinity and an Entangled World*, 41.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality*, 153.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 153-4.

²¹⁵ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, ii.

Friedman describes twins' unique relationship as "a dysfunctional marriage."²¹⁶ By labeling twins who embrace their unique relationship as having a "dysfunctional marriage," she confines them to a generalized category, resulting in a question-begging proposition that smuggles in a premise where function necessarily entails independence.²¹⁷ In the beginning of her books, Friedman mentions that not "all twinships are either one type [being individualistic and drastically different from each other] or the other [embracing their communal identity as twins]," but then she exclusively encourages twins to model their lives after the first type of twins.²¹⁸ Since she addresses an adult twin audience who favors individualism, most of her writing is dedicated to twins who share a similar perspective; hence, she does not need to explain her reasons for supporting her argument. Some reasons include the following: relieving twins of their sense of obligation to each other, eliminating the caretaker role, and encouraging twins' pursuit of individuality.²¹⁹ Friedman advocates self-efficacy, which seems to be a reliable source of individuation, until one realizes that examining herself is not sufficient for addressing most of human existence.²²⁰ She believes that self-discovery

²¹⁶ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 23.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ One of the main points that Friedman emphasizes throughout her book *The Same but Different* is that twins should not rely on each other but on their parents. If this is the case, why is it wrong for twins to seek advice from their parents but not from their twin? Most likely, she is arguing that the concept of depending on someone else is not the best way to learn, but we believe that if she favors seeking advice (in general), then she should encourage twins to seek advice from their twin siblings, not shove them aside for the sake of becoming more individualistic. Education also is another source of learning outside oneself that can aid personal development.

is a reliable path for personal development. However, if she were to act on her beliefs, she would not reinforce the need for all twins to attain self-efficacy. Rather, she would acknowledge that every set of twins is different and cannot individually develop in the same way.²²¹ Ultimately, she supports a theological affirmation of individualism. This can be seen in the similarity of her view and the ontology offered by Newton. Despite her supposedly irreligious approach, Friedman promotes a distortion of a basic Christian conception of personhood, as best described by the medieval Christian theologian Augustine of Hippo.²²² Augustine has been called “the original protagonist” for individualism because he addressed the importance of a person regarding herself as having intellectual love from the supremacy of her mental capacity. One of the most influential Church thinkers, Augustine emphasized “the single, human mind” for intellect and reason.²²³ Essentially, individualism is not a modern concept, but rather an ancient idea that originated from Christian tradition.²²⁴ Friedman’s conception of personhood comes in the line of Augustine’s conception of the person in relationship to God. However, she omits God from the conversation because she twists the Christian emphasis of personal relationships to suggest that individualism is internally focused on self-fulfillment.

²²¹ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 10.

²²² Collins, *Trinitarian Theology*, 119.

²²³ *Ibid*, 120.

²²⁴ *Ibid*, 118.

Friedman does not believe that individuals are made to exist in community. Although most twins feel responsible for caring for each other, Friedman believes that this sentiment hinders twins from experiencing true independence. Therefore, she assumes that the goal of personhood is independence.²²⁵ Thus, freedom is shown by dressing differently and having separate groups of friends, interests, and definitions of success.²²⁶ Friedman believes that anything or anyone that threatens achieving self-efficacy should be “thrown out.”²²⁷ She considers singletons people insofar as they experience true freedom, because they are self-reliant and independently make decisions. Free from having overly-close relationships with their siblings, singletons can clearly judge what is best for them. Likewise, she expects twins to have a similar mentality. To Friedman, individualism is the best method for twins to grow as individuals, because, as self-reliant people, they can discover themselves for who they really are.²²⁸

Zizioulas’ Communal Approach. Zizioulas believes that personhood is not established but rather a gift to be received in community, with God and others.²²⁹ It is important to note

²²⁵ Collins, *Trinitarian Theology*, 49.

²²⁶ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 49.

²²⁷ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 52.

²²⁸ Friedman, *The Same but Different*, 22.

²²⁹ Collins, *Trinitarian Theology*, 143. This stems from ontology, or the study of being. For Zizioulas, the question of personal identity carries an implicit understanding of being, or that people’s existence is absolute. Their existence is not something metaphysical or built into something else, since God created people in His image and likeness.

that Zizioulas addresses what Friedman calls self-fulfillment and individual identity *personhood*. The term is an important distinction because of its implications for individuals. While Friedman describes people as individuals, Zizioulas calls them persons. One might consider how a person is regarded differently from an individual. In his books, Zizioulas spends much time distinguishing between the two. According to Zizioulas, an individual is someone who identifies herself apart from community, or spiritually a person who separates herself from God. Zizioulas provides an account of original sin to prove this point. During the Fall, Adam and Eve sinned by wanting to be like God in knowing good and evil.²³⁰ Zizioulas claims that Adam and Eve desired identities apart from God. Since they chose to act on their desire instead of obeying God's command, Adam and Eve formed their own identities. They desired to think and know independently instead of relying on God's will. In other words, original sin was individualism.

Because of creation, Zizioulas argues that being an individual is something people are by design, not something they need to acquire.²³¹ God created people to live in community; therefore, Zizioulas argues that they are *persons* and not *individuals*. Zizioulas notes that a person is someone who loves others freely and embraces community. On the contrary, an individual is selfish and loves herself over others. Unlike Friedman, Zizioulas argues that humans were created to live in community. To prove this point, he refers to the story of creation. After creating Adam, God noticed that Adam was

²³⁰ Genesis 3 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

²³¹ Collins, *Trinitarian Theology*, 143.

lonesome. Despite naming all the animals and caring for them, Adam sought to have companionship with someone of his kind. Seeing that Adam was not satisfied alone, God created Eve.²³² Therefore, Zizioulas argues that humans were not created to live alone. For if individualism is true, then Adam would not have desired a partner and community would be unnecessary. Having this mindset is important for discovering one's individuality. If one believes that she already is a unique individual, then she can focus on maximizing her strengths and improving her weaknesses, because she is secure in her identity. However, Zizioulas believes that if one is convinced that she must discover her own individuality, then her personal insecurities are overwhelming, so she chases after every idea until realizing that she already is unique.

Referring to our scenario in the beginning of chapter five, the nuns' corporate identity is in their sisterhood and religious order. Accepting this is comforting because each nun does not worry about elevating herself. Each woman in the convent can focus on glorifying God and doing her work, which includes but does not depend on her personal faults, strengths, weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and achievements. One can therefore imagine nuns as living into Zizioulas' concept of personhood, given how they understand that individuality is not something earned individually but lived out corporately. As women whose identities are firmly established through God's divine action in creating them and community they are more than satisfied with their Christian identity.²³³

²³² Genesis 2:18-25 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

²³³ Collins, *Trinitarian Theology*, 120.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion: Our Perspective on Twinness

After having discussed the implications of individualism according to Friedman and Zizioulas, we will provide our insights on this matter. In this chapter, we will discuss why individualism is a dangerous philosophy to adopt. We begin with a scenario depicting the nature of friendship and individual uniqueness. Then we examine the twin relationship as a community and contrast it with Friedman's individualistic perspective of twinship. Finally, we conclude the thesis by explaining why we wrote the thesis together and what twinship demonstrates about personal identity.

Our Scenario

Consider the following story. Raul is a new Christian who came to Christ through his friend Wen.²³⁴ Wen has patiently loved Raul since they were in third grade, supporting him through his trials in life, including the divorce of Raul's parents their sophomore year in college. It was during this chaotic year that Raul became a Christian. Raul was born into a family that embraced the tight-knit fabric typical of most Hispanic families. Therefore, his parents' divorce not only greatly shocked Raul, but also led to a personal identity crisis. If he was not a part of his family, then who was he? Wen

²³⁴ This example is purely fictional and is not meant to mimic a real incident. Any similar anecdotes are unintentional and a matter of coincidence. The example serves as a metaphor from which to understand the greater relationship between the Church's call to live in community and twins' engrafted nature to live in community.

understood the sensitive nature of Raul’s dilemma. Through a series of interactions, difficult conversations, and church visits, Raul realized that becoming a Christian is not just about subscribing to abstract religious doctrines; rather, it gives him the opportunity to become part of a new community.

Embracing his Christian family, Raul became free to love himself for his new identity in Christ and able to love others without fear. He learned how to love others by watching his friend, Wen, interact with people. When faced with Asian slurs, insults, or occasional punches in the nose, Wen restrained himself from returning the treatment he received. Rather, he chose to respectfully stand in silence—for he knew returning “an eye for an eye” would not solve the issue.²³⁵ Wen’s responses greatly impacted Raul, who thought that showing his masculine prowess in fighting is the best form of self-defense, not choosing to ignore his enemies. Raul always admired Wen and wished he could be kind like him. Additionally, he wished for an older brother. The oldest of four and the only male child, Raul lacked the ability to admire an older brother. Over time, Wen became that brother. Becoming a Christian elevated his relationship with Wen by officially uniting them as brothers.

Like Raul, twins have a similar choice: to become part of a community—their twin relationship—or to pursue the lifestyle of singletons in hopes of discovering relationships according to individualism. We have faced a similar choice at Baylor: whether to live according to others’ standards of twinning or to embrace how we believe God created us. If we had subsided to society’s expectations for identical twins, we would have experienced much less strife during our college career. However, we were

²³⁵ Matthew 5:38-9 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

determined not to change the nature of our relationship, for we believe our relationship is special as it is. To spend less time together or dress differently seemed daunting not because of the actions themselves but because of their personal nature. For us, we dress the same because we share fashion styles. Likewise, we participate in activities together because we enjoy being together. Therefore, we do not act similarly because we have brainwashed by others to act this way; rather, we are naturally similar people. For this reason, we perceive society's expectations for twins to eventually "grow out of" their relationship to be contrary to twins' nature. Friedman forgets that twins are born as communal beings because of their twinship.

Examining Twinship from Individualism and Community

By pressuring twins to not identify themselves as twins, Friedman promotes individualism. Friedman is mistaken in her advice on twin individuality. In doing so she disregards the Christian theological conviction that the very nature of persons is communion. Zizioulas claims that although individuals have separate identities, their purpose is not self-defined.²³⁶ Rather, they belong to a larger community that identifies them. For Christians, they are identified as the body of Christ. Although their personal relationships with God are important, Christians are not defined by themselves but by God; their identity is in Christ instead of themselves. As the Church, Christians are one body united under the Head, Jesus Christ. Therefore, they do not live for themselves but for God. Likewise, people are created to live in community and not for themselves. By promoting individualism, Friedman claims to help twins better understand themselves,

²³⁶ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 145.

but she ends up advocating against their best interest. By advising twins to spend time alone, Friedman is saying that twins can spend time with themselves, or in other words, live in exclusion from others. Friedman promotes an individualistic concept of community by telling twins to exclude spending time with each other, for spending time with others is a means to an end—perhaps for hedonistic or other selfish desires. This premise makes her evocations for community self-defeating because of their individualistic bent.

Friedman neglects the features of twinship that give one way into community. By having a same-age sibling, a twin is born with a lifelong companion. This special relationship has the potential to become a beautiful community. For instance, living together in their mother's womb for nine months and being born together, identical twins embody communion. Twins' lives are as tightly bound to each other as they are uniquely separate, for in their uniqueness lies their similarities. Therefore, individuality is not about the external façade proving one's unique nature. Rather, it is choosing to embrace one's identity as a communal being and becoming enriched by living with and among others. As Zizioulas states, "the human being is defined through otherness."²³⁷ In this sense, identical twins have a great advantage over those who can more easily distinguish themselves from others, for they are born knowing quite intuitively that they intimately belong to others. Because of their deep love for each other, twins naturally desire to care for each other. In this way, twins and multiples exhibit ideal communities because of

²³⁷ Zizioulas, *Communion & Otherness*, 39. Discussing identical twins' deep love for each other serves as a parallel to Zizioulas' claims about the Church. Instead of searching for material possessions to find companionship, the church offers a solution to this longing: living in community with others. Christians believe that salvation does not occur because of personal choices but rather from the support and love from others.

their self-sacrifice, deep concern for being their “brother’s keeper[s],” and friendship.²³⁸ Additionally, caring for others transforms people, for something beautiful happens when a person stops being self-driven and starts to address the needs of others. As the theologian Miroslav Volf argues in *Exclusion and Embrace*, receiving the other fuels the compassion that only givers, not takers, understand.²³⁹ All the shame and guilt from failing to achieve personal goals are erased, for people living in community have undergone the transformation from being self-absorbed people to compassionate individuals.

Why it was a Good Idea to Write a Joint Thesis. We have grown immensely by writing this thesis. Not only have we learned some invaluable lessons, but also realized that individualism is more dangerous and prevalent, and dangerous because prevalent, than we ever recognized. We realized how deeply engrained individualism is in the American culture. Reading Friedman’s books and understanding her arguments taught us that following the principles of individualism is satisfying because people desire to be acknowledged for their personal identities. As much as we disagree with her philosophy, Friedman forced us to think about what we consider to be healthy individuals.

Based off Friedman’s arguments, we will tell you what we believe constitutes healthy twins, and hence how we measure the quality of our lives as twins. Any two people are different for a variety of reasons, and the same applies to twins, despite their similarities. Therefore, we agree with Friedman on this point. However, we disagree with

²³⁸ Genesis 4:9 from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

²³⁹ Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 20.

where she goes with this reality. Friedman seems to prioritize public characteristics over the private ones because of their visibility. However, a person should be characterized by her physical features as just part of a host of things that distinguish her as herself, including her relationship to others. Referring back to the nun example, individuality is something to be discovered, not to be worn like clothes. Just because the nuns dress the same does not mean that they are not unique individuals. Rather, their unique personalities, and therefore each woman's individuality, is realized by knowing the nuns and not by looking at their identical clothes. Likewise, the same applies to identical twins, even those who dress the same. Regarding our twinship, we both are different despite being very similar. It is undeniable that we share many personality traits, such as extraversion and organization, but we also have different characteristics that are unique to each of us. Alexandra is more objective, reasonable, and has a dry sense of humor, whereas Nicole is more emotional and sensitive. Despite being known for always being together, upon getting to know us, as the woman got to know the nuns, one cannot deny that we are different people. Together, we complement each other and contrast each other. After becoming acquainted with us, our friends learn to differentiate us by a host of things, including being able to tell us apart physically. But distinguishing others requires a relationship, and we worry that Friedman's emphasis on individuality both stigmatizes people who do not live individualistically, as exemplified by our Baylor story, and precludes the kinds of communities by which people would learn to love others, including those who are stigmatized by society. Likewise, the same applies for all people. Everyone is characterized by her unique personality and will be remembered for it.

When we reflect on our Baylor experience, we do not look on it with disappointment or pain, but with gratitude. Before writing this thesis, we never considered that individualism would be the principal reason for all we experienced at Baylor. However, it is evident that the individualistic philosophy can account for the bullying we experienced, for some students disliked our close relationship. Unintentionally, we challenged our fellow Baylor students' ideas of human uniqueness and individuality.²⁴⁰ Because we challenged those ideas, some students did not know how to receive us. If anything, this thesis helps us better understand those students and the reasons for their actions. Fortunately, during our last two years at Baylor, we have not experienced the same severity of bullying as we did during our first two years. Our experiences have given us a new perspective on twinning. The lessons we have learned lead us to conclude that our lives as twins is unique and not something to take for granted. Being twins is an immense blessing, because it allows us to experience a special closeness that singletons are not born experiencing. Relationships come naturally to us, and we believe this is because we are twins. Since everyone naturally longs to be associated with people like them, we have been surprised that when identical twins—like us—enjoy being together, they are questioned or not understood. Until we began writing this thesis, we did not know that an individual's choice is elevated above all things, including friendships. Thus, the lessons we have learned give us a more optimistic perspective about our future and on others we will meet.

We are sometimes puzzled when people ask us how we will handle our futures. We know that people are curious, since our close relationship is rare among identical

²⁴⁰ Segal, *Twin Mythconceptions*, xvii.

twins. Although we know that our twinship dynamic makes the future possibly seem more challenging, we have a positive outlook. We are optimistic because we know that wherever we go, we will have each other, even if we are not living in the same city or working at the same company. We will always remain close friends and will stay connected somehow or other. Despite understanding people's fascination with twins, we sometimes wonder how people perceive the future differently than we do. To us, the future has many exciting challenges and milestones. Perhaps the most common question we hear is how we will remain friends once we are married. We hope our closeness will remain the same, although our priorities will change. Of course, we will not be there for each other in the same way we are now, but we will still regard each other in our own special way. We look at our twinship as a precious treasure that grows more valuable as time passes.

Conclusion: Twinship and Identity. In short, twins raise the question about who the self really is, for they threaten society's notion of individual beings—according to individualism.²⁴¹ In particular, identical twins are troublemakers because of their genetic makeup, for being genetically identical with another human being threatens what singletons think of uniqueness in the world. Their shared genome makes identical twins special and rare, because they share a unique relationship of being “two in one.” Despite their shared identity from their twinship, identical twins are different people who may be strikingly similar in numerous ways. However, their similarities do not erase their individual uniqueness, for at the end of the day, each twin is himself, just like we are

²⁴¹ Wright, *Twins*, 157.

ourselves. Although we may try to change everything about our identity—by dressing differently, living in separate buildings, etc.—we cannot change our awareness of ourselves as separate beings. Twins show that no matter how ridiculously alike people may be, no one crosses the boundary of being alike and being the same. Twins cannot be the same because they are separate beings. Therefore, as Wright wisely claims, “There is finally no escape from being the people we were born to be.”²⁴²

²⁴² Wright, *Twins*, 160.

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