Innocence vs. Honor Discussion Question

In class we discussed the ethical consideration/point of view of innocence/guilt and honor/shame. Examples of each are as follows:

You go into a fast food restaurant and order water with your meal instead of a soft drink. You receive a clear cup for your water. When you go to get your drink, you fill your water glass with soda.

**Innocence/guilt** is a position that you know that you should be drinking water because you did not pay for soda (innocence). At the drink dispenser, you fill the cup with soda and you know that is wrong and you feel guilty that you did something wrong.

**Honor/shame** is a position that you think of yourself as a person of integrity (honorable), and drinking the soda is ok unless someone sees you with the soda and challenges you that you are stealing. You feel shame that you were caught, but it does not affect how you look at yourself as a person of integrity.

Another example is when you start class and write an essay saying you are a student of integrity and truthfulness. In Innocence/guilt, if you skip class/homework or tell your instructor that something bad happened and you did not do what you were supposed to do. You went to a movie instead. You feel guilty because you lied. In honor/shame you do not do what you are supposed to do, but it is ok unless you get caught in the lie – your teacher was at the movie and knew you were not there.

Which proposition fits you best, innocence/guilt or honor/shame? Explain. There is no right or wrong answer. Each of us is what we are.

I would say that to me Honor and shame fits best. This is because of the culture background as well. The way that I was raised and the way that my family educated me, honor for us if very important especially when it comes to family honor. If I consider the restaurant case, me personally I would never take a drink instead of water because that’s not a moral thing for me. To us in Albania public opinion matters a lot to us.