DESPISING THE SHAME OF THE CROSS: HONOR AND SHAME IN THE JOHANNINE PASSION NARRATIVE

Jerome H. Neyrey

ABSTRACT

The passion narrative in John 18–19 is profitably viewed in terms of the values of honor and shame. A model of this anthropological concept is presented, which stresses the form of the typical honor challenge (claim, challenge, riposte, and public verdict). This model then serves as a template for reading John 18–19 to bring the phenomena of honor and shame to the surface in that narrative and to interpret the endless confrontations described there in their appropriate cultural perspective. Thus from the narrator's point of view, Jesus maintains his honor and even gains more in his death; he is in no way shamed by the events.

I. INTRODUCTION

New Testament authors reflect the general perception of crucifixion in the Greco-Roman world as "shame" (Heb 12:2). Various classical authors give us a sense of the typical process of crucifixion, which at every step entailed progressive humiliation of the victim and loss of honor (Hengel: 22–32):

1. Crucifixion was considered the appropriate punishment for slaves (Cicero, In Verrem 2.5.168), bandits (Jos. War 2.253), prisoners of war (Jos. War 5.451) and revolutionaries (Jos. Ant. 17:295; see Hengel 1977:46–63).
2. Public trials ("misera est ignominia iudicorum publicorum," Cicero, Pro Rabinio 9–17) served as status degradation rituals, which labelled the accused as a shameful person.
3. Flogging and torture, especially the blinding of eyes and the shedding of blood, generally accompanied the sentence (Jos. War 5.449–51 & 3.321; Livy 22.13.19; 28.37.3; Seneca, On Anger 3.6; Philo, Flac. 72; Diod. Sic. 33.15.1; Plato, Gorgias 473bc & Republic 2.362e). Since, according to m. Mak. 3.12, scourging was done both to the front and back of the body, the victims were nude; often they befouled themselves with urine or excrement (3.14).
4. The condemned were forced to carry the cross beam (Plutarch, Delay 554B).
5. The victim's property, normally clothing, was confiscated; hence they were further shamed by being denuded (see Diod. Sic. 33.15.1).
6. The victim lost power and thus honor through pinioning of hands and arms, especially the mutilation of being nailed to the cross (Philo, Post. 61; Somn. 2.213).
7. Executions served as crude forms of public entertainment, where the crowds ridiculed and mocked the victims (Philo, Sp. Leg. 3.160), who were sometimes affixed to crosses in an odd

and whimsical manner, including impalement (Seneca: Consol. ad Marciam 20.3; Josephus, War 5.451).

8. Death by crucifixion was often slow and protracted. The powerless victim suffered bodily distortions, loss of bodily control, and enlargement of the penis (Steinberg 1983:82–108). Ultimately they were deprived of life and thus the possibility of gaining satisfaction or vengeance.
9. In many cases, victims were denied honorable burial; corpses were left on display and devoured by carrion birds and scavenger animals (Pliny, H. N. 36. 107–108).

Victims would thus experience themselves as progressively humiliated and stripped entirely of public respect or honor.

The issue, however, lies not in the brutal pain endured. For among the warrior elite, at least, the endurance of pain and suffering were marks of ἀνδρεία or manly courage (e.g., Hercules' labors; Paul's hardship catalogues, e.g., 2 Cor 6:3–10; 11:23–33). Silence of the victim during torture was a mark of honor (see Isa 53:7; Cicero, In Verrem 2.5.162; Josephus, War 6. 304). But mockery, loss of respect, and humiliation were the bitter parts; the loss of honor, the worst fate. Although the gospels record in varying degrees the physical torture of Jesus, they focus on the various attempts to dishonor him by spitting on him (Mark 14:65//Matt 26:67; see Mark 10:33–34), striking him in the face and head (Mark 14:65//Matt 26:67), ridiculing him (ἐμπαίζειν Mark 15:20, 31; Matt 27:29, 31, 41), heaping insults upon him (ὀνείδιζειν Mark 15:32, 34; Matt 27:44), and treating him as though he were nothing (ἐξουθένειν, Luke 23:11; see Acts 4:11).

This study of the Johannine passion narrative views it precisely through the lenses of honor and shame. We suggest that despite all the shameful treatment of Jesus, he is portrayed, not only as maintaining his honor, but even gaining glory and prestige (Malina and Neyrey 1988:95–131). Far from being a status degradation ritual, his passion is seen as a status elevation ritual. This hypothesis entails a larger consideration, namely, the importance of honor and shame as pivotal values of the Mediterranean world (Malina 1981:25). We presume that the original audience would have perceived Jesus' passion in these terms.

Modern readers, however, are not cognizant of these pivotal cultural values. We neither understand the grammar of honor nor appreciate the social dynamics in which they play so important a part. If we would interpret the narrative of Jesus' death from the appropriate cultural point of view, we must attempt to see things through the lenses of ancient Mediterranean culture, which were those of honor and shame. In the cultural world of the New Testament, Jesus' death by crucifixion was acknowledged as a most shameful experience. Paul merely expressed what others perceived when he labelled the crucified Christ as a σκάνδαλον to Jews and μωρία to Greeks (1 Cor 1:23). The author of Hebrews explicitly calls the cross "shame" (ἀσχύνες, 12:2).

The gospels acknowledge that prophets are denied honor in their own villages (ἄτιμος, Mark 6:4/ /Matt 13:57). They tell of messengers sent to a vineyard, who are wounded in the head and treated shamefully (ἐτίμασαν, Mark 12:4). But the early Christians counted this type of public shame as honor: "… rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor (ἀτιμασθῆναι) for the name" (Acts 5:41). Honor and shame, then, are not only integral parts of the language patterns which describe the fate of Jesus and his disciples, but a basic element in the way the Christian story perceives and deals with suffering, rejection, and death.

II. A Brief Grammar of Honor and Shame

Greeks, Romans, and Judeans all considered honor and shame to be pivotal values in their cultures (Adkins; Malina 1981; Gilmore). From Homer to Herodotus and from Pindar to Paul (Nagy: 222–242; Friedrich: 290), men lived and died in quest of honor, reputation, fame, approval, and respect. Lexical definitions offer a wide range of overlapping meanings for honor/**TIMή**: (1) the price or value of something, (2) respect paid to someone, (3) honorary office, (4) dignity or status, (5) honors or awards given someone (Schneider: 169–71). Paul Friedrich offers a social grammar of honor based on Greek epic poetry: "The structure of Iliadic honor can be stated in part as a larger network that includes propositions about honor and nine honor-linked values: power, wealth, magnanimity, personal loyalty, 'precedence,' sense of shame, fame or 'reputation,' courage, and excellence" (290).

A detailed grammar of honor can be found in Malina's *New Testament World* in our co-authored essay of 1991, but a summary of it may aid readers unfamiliar with the topic. Honor comes to someone either by *ascription* by another (birth, adoption, appointment) or by one's own *achievement*. Achieved honor derives from benefaction (Luke 7:5; Diod. Sic., 6.1.2), military prowess, success at athletic games, and the like. In the warrior culture of Greece and Rome, honor accrues with prowess in battle (see David and Goliath) or endurance in labors (Heracles; see 2 Tim 4:7–8). Yet most commonly honor is acquired in the face-to-face game of challenge and riposte which makes up much of the daily life of individuals in villages and cities.

Honor resides in one's name, always an inherited name. Sons enjoy the honor of their father's name and membership in his clan. Hence, they are regularly identified as "the son of so-and-so" (e.g., 1 Sam 9:1–2; Ezra 7:1–6). Yet individuals might be called by honorific names such as "Rabbi" (Matt 23:7) or "Prophet" (John 9:17) or "Christ" (John 7:26). These labels, which are claims to precedence and honor, are likely to be bitterly contested.

Honor resides in certain public roles, statuses, and offices. Fathers enjoy great honor in their households, honor which is sanctioned in the Ten Commandments. Most notably, honor was attached to offices such as king and high priest, as well as governor, proconsul, and other civic or imperial offices. In the great tradition of the aristocrats, the hierarchical ranking of honor was clearly known (Garnsey: 221–71). But in the little tradition of peasants and artisans, such ranking was a matter of considerable debate and controversy, which we can observe in the squabbles over the seating at dinner tables (Luke 14:7–11).

Honor has "a strong material orientation" (Schneider: 170). That is, honor is expressed and measured by one's possessions which must be on display. Wealth in general denotes honor—not simply the possession of wealth, but its consumption and display: e.g., banquets, fine clothes, weapons, houses, etc. Hence it is not surprising to hear Josephus describing as "honor" the benefactions Vespasian bestowed on him: "raiment and other precious gifts" (War 3.408). Similarly he describes the honors given Daniel: "(The king) gave him purple to wear and put a chain of linked gold about his neck" (Ant. 10.240). Finally Josephus records Haman's suggestion to the Persian king concerning how to honor a friend: "If you wish to cover with glory the man whom you say you love, let him ride on horseback wearing the same dress as yourself, with a necklace of gold, and let one of your close friends precede him and proclaim throughout the whole city that this is the honour shown to him whom the king honours" (Ant. 11.254).

Anthropologists describe the physical body as a microcosm of the social body (Douglas: 115). The values and rules pertinent to the macrocosm are replicated in the way the physical body is perceived and treated. LET US EXAMINE HOW THE BODY REPLICATES HONOR. 1. *THE HEAD AND FACE* ARE PARTICULAR LOCI OF PERSONAL HONOR AND RESPECT. A HEAD IS HONORED WHEN CROWNED OR ANOINTED. SERVANTS AND

COURTIERS HONOR A MONARCH BY AVOIDING LOOKING THEM IN THE FACE, THAT IS, BY THE DEEP BOW. COMPARABLY, TO SLAP SOMEONE ON THE MOUTH, SPIT IN THEIR FACE, BOX THEIR EARS OR STRIKE THEIR HEADS SHAMES THIS MEMBER AND SO GIVES "AFFRONT" (MATT 26:67; LUKE 22:63–64; MARK 15:17–20). 2. *CLOTHING* COVERS THE DISHONORABLE OR SHAMEFUL PARTS OF THE BODY (1 COR 12:23–24), NAMELY THE GENITALS AND THE BUTTOCKS. CLOTHING, MOREOVER, SYMBOLIZES HONOR: "MEN ARE THE GLORY OF GOD AND THEIR CLOTHES ARE THE GLORY OF MEN" (*DEREK ERETZ ZUTA*). ELITES SIGNAL THEIR STATUS BY THEIR CLOTHING AND ADORNMENT (LUKE 7:25; SEE M. YOMA 7.5). PURPLE CLOTHING WAS A PARTICULAR MARK OF HONOR, WORN BY KINGS (JUDG 8:26), PRIESTS (EXOD 28:4–6; 39:1, 28–29; 1 MACC 10:20; 11:58), AND NOBLES AT COURT (EZEK 23:6; ESTH 8:6; DAN 5:7; SEE REINHOLD: 7–21, 48–61). UNIFORMS SIGNAL RANK OR OFFICE. PHILO PROVIDES A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF THE WAY CLOTHING REPLICATES HONOR IN HIS DESCRIPTION OF PHARAOH'S INVESTITURE OF JOSEPH WITH SYMBOLS OF STATUS GIVING HIM A "… ROYAL SEAT, SACRED ROBE, GOLDEN NECKLACE, SETTING HIM ON HIS SECOND CHARIOT, BADE HIM GO THE ROUND OF THE CITY WITH A CRIER WALKING IN FRONT WHO PROCLAIMED THE APPOINTMENT" (*JOS* 120). THE COSTUMING OF JESUS IN A PURPLE ROBE AND A CROWN OF THORNS MOCKS HIM WITH THE NORMAL TRAPPINGS OF HONOR. BEING STRIPPED OF CLOTHING, MOREOVER, ELIMINATES ALL MARKS OF HONOR AND STATUS; IT ALSO INDICATES A LOSS OF POWER TO COVER AND DEFEND ONE'S "SHAMEFUL PARTS." 3. *BODILY POSTURES* EXPRESS HONOR. MASTERS SIT AT TABLE, WHILE SERVANTS STAND AND WAIT UPON THEM (LUKE 17:7–8; SEE 13:29). TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS STAND AROUND THE THRONE WHERE GOD IS SEATED; THEY FALL DOWN BEFORE HIM IN WORSHIP (REV 4:10). ΠΡΟΣΚΥΝΕῖΝ DESCRIBES A POSTURE WHEREBY SOMEONE BENDS LOW TO KISS ANOTHER, EITHER ON THE HAND OR THE FOOT; THUS IT COMES TO MEAN BOWING BEFORE OR SHOWING RESPECT FOR SOMEONE (JOSEPHUS, ANT. 11.209).

YET IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE ANCIENTS, HONOR, LIKE ALL OTHER GOODS, EXISTED IN QUITE LIMITED SUPPLY (FOSTER: 304–5). THERE WAS ONLY SO MUCH GOLD, SO MUCH STRENGTH, SO MUCH HONOR AVAILABLE. WHEN SOMEONE ACHIEVED HONOR, IT WAS THOUGHT TO BE AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS. PHILO, FOR EXAMPLE, CONDEMNS POLYTHEISM, BECAUSE IN HONORING OTHERS AS DEITIES, THE HONOR DUE TO THE TRUE GOD IS DIMINISHED: "GOD'S HONOUR IS SET AT NAUGHT BY THOSE WHO DEIFY MORTALS" (EBR. 110; SEE JOSEPHUS, ANT. 4.32; WAR 1.559). WHEN JOHN'S DISCIPLES LAMENT TO THEIR MASTER THAT JESUS IS GAINING MORE DISCIPLES AND HONOR, THEY UNDERSTAND THAT JESUS' GAIN MUST BE JOHN'S LOSS. JOHN CONFIRMS THIS, "HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE" (JOHN 3:30). THUS, CLAIMS TO HONOR BY ONE PERSON WILL TEND TO BE PERCEIVED AS THREATS TO THE HONOR OF OTHERS, AND CONSEQUENTLY NEED TO BE CHALLENGED, NOT ACKNOWLEDGED. IN FACT, TWO GOSPELS STATE THAT IT WAS OUT OF ENVY THAT JESUS' ENEMIES HANDED HIM OVER (MARK 15:10//MATT 27:18; CF. JOHN 11:47–48).

φιλτιμία or love of honor was a powerful driving force in antiquity. We are particularly interested in how this was played out in the rather ordinary circumstances of life. Honor must be

both claimed and acknowledged. After all, it is the respect one has in the eyes of others. But honor claims are vulnerable to challenge. Challenges must be met with an appropriate riposte or honor is lost. All such claims, challenges, and ripostes take place in the public domain, and their verdict of success or failure determines the outcome of these games (Malina 1981:30–33; Malina and Neyrey 1991a:36–38, 49–51). Claim, challenge, riposte and verdict, then, constitute the formal elements in the endless contests for honor and respect.

Thus far we have discussed "honor," but we must be equally aware of "shame." Contempt, loss of face, defeat, and ridicule all describe shame, the loss of honor. The grammar of honor presented above can be reversed to describe "shame." Shame can be *ascribed* or *achieved*. A magistrate may ascribe shame by declaring one guilty and so worthy of public flogging (2 Cor 11:23–25); a king may mock and treat one with contempt (Luke 23:11). God may declare one a "Fool!" (Luke 12:20). Thus the elite and those in power may declare one honorless and worthy of contempt: "… exclude, revile, and cast out your name as evil" (Luke 6:22). Yet shame may be *achieved* by one's folly or by cowardice and failure to respond to a challenge. One may refuse to participate in the honor-gaining games characteristic of males, and thus bring contempt on oneself.

The bodily grammar for honor works also for shame. If the honorable parts of the body, the head and face, are struck, spat upon, slapped, blindfolded, or otherwise maltreated, shame ensues. If the right arm, symbol of male power and strength, is bound, tied, or nailed, the resulting powerlessness denotes shame. If one is publicly stripped naked, flogged, paraded before the crowds, and led through the streets, one is shamed. Shame results when one's blood is intentionally spilled, but especially when one is killed by another.

III. IRONY: TURNING SHAME INTO HONOR

Since there are two parties competing in the passion narrative, there are two perceptions of what is occurring. The enemies of Jesus bind, slap, spit upon, blindfold, flog, strip, and kill Jesus; their actions are all calculated to "mock" and "revile" him. In their eyes they have shamed Jesus. But the gospel, while it records these actions and gestures of shame, tells quite a different story. In the evangelist's eyes, Jesus' shame and humiliation is truly the account of his glory: "Ought not the Christ suffer and so enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26; see Acts 14:22; Heb 2:10). Indeed, in the Fourth Gospel, his death is regularly described as glory and glorification (John 7:39; 12:28; 17:5; see 21:19). Or, to paraphrase Paul, foolishness, weakness, and shame in human eyes are wisdom, strength, and honor in God's eyes (1 Cor 1:20, 25). Thus the story of Jesus' shame is ironically understood by his disciples as his "lifting up," his exaltation, his enthronement, in short, his honor. The issue might be rephrased: Who gets to judge whether the crucifixion is honor or shame? If the public verdict rests with the Judeans, then Jesus is shamed. But if the community of believers renders the verdict on the basis of God's riposte or Jesus' demonstration of power in death, then the verdict is of honor.

This ironic perspective is part and parcel of the principle that Jesus constantly narrates: that last is first, least is greatest, dead is alive, shame is honor (Duke 1985:95–116, 126–38). Hence, two perspectives need to be distinguished as we read the account of Jesus' crucifixion: in the eyes of outsiders and enemies, his crucifixion is unqualified shame! But in the eyes of his disciples, it is ironic honor. Let us now take these abstract notions of honor (and shame) and use them as an exciting and illuminating lens for perceiving the passion narrative of Jesus, the honorable one.

IV. HONOR AND SHAME IN JOHN 18–19

1. *Arrest* (**18:1–11**). Although capture and arrest normally denote dishonor, this narrative presents a scene of honor displayed and maintained. First of all, honor means power and control (de la Potterie, 1989: 29). In this regard, when the cohort approaches Jesus, he steps forward to take charge of the situation. By claiming that "Jesus knew all that was to befall him" (18:4), the narrator signals Jesus' control of the situation (see 19:28). Moreover, he questions the powerful forces gathered against him: "Whom do you seek?" In the cultural scenario of honor and shame, the questioner generally acts in the challenging or commanding position (see Mark 11:27–33).

At his remark, "I am he," the soldiers "drew back and fell to the ground" (18:6), leaving Jesus standing. Honor is thus signalled by bodily posture. Commentators regularly note that Jesus' "I AM" can be read as the divine name which he is granted to use (Neyrey 1988:213–20). Falling to the ground characterizes human reactions in the presence of the glory of God (Ezek 1:28; 44:4) or at least an honor-bestowing posture in the presence of a superior person (Dan 2:46; Rev 1:17). At a minimum, Jesus enjoys such a prominent and honorable status that armies fall at his feet. Even if Dodd is correct that the narrator is drawing on psalms describing how one's foes stumble and fall when attacking (Dodd: 76–77), nevertheless some vindication or riposte to a challenge is evident. If this language describes Jesus' heavenly status, then he enjoys the same honor as God, an honor that God commands (5:23). To use God's name, "I AM," might be considered an act of power; and honor is always attached to power.

The narrator repeats the sequence of events in 18:7–8, which doubles the impression of Jesus' strength and honor. His control of the situation extends even to his command about the safe departure of his disciples: "Let these others go" (18:8). Weak people do not tell a cohort of Roman soldiers what to do. This proves, moreover, that his word of honor is true and trustworthy: "This was to fulfil the word which he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those you gave me' " (18:9). Thus the narrator presents Jesus firmly in control: knowing all that will happen, asking questions, controlling the events, giving commands, and receiving profound respect from his would-be assailants. He is without doubt the most honorable person in the situation.

Jesus' commanding posture reminds the reader of the Noble Shepherd discourse, where he disavowed that he was a victim and claimed power even over death: "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (10:18). Since power is one of the public faces of honor, Jesus' power to protect his sheep as well as his power to lay down his life indicate that he suffers no shame whatever here. Nothing happens against his will, so he is in no way diminished.

Yet others in the narrative see the scene differently. Simon Peter drew his sword and struck at one of the arresting crowd, which we must interpret as his riposte to the perceived challenge to Jesus' honor. In other circumstances, his action would be labelled an honorable thing, namely, the defense of one's leader against an honor challenge. Jesus himself states this: "If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, that I not be handed over to the Jews" (18:36). Normally failure to respond to a challenge is shameful, but here Jesus explains that it is precisely out of honor that he refuses to resist, that is, out of respect for the will of his Father: "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (18:11). Peter's riposte, then, is unnecessary, for Jesus' honor is not threatened. Indeed, it belongs to the virtue of ἀνδρεία or courage to endure what must be endured (Seeley: 117–41). And courage of this sort is an honorable thing.

2. *Jewish Investigation (18:12–14, 19–24)*. Outsiders see only that Jesus has lost power: "The cohort seized Jesus and bound him" (18:12). His captors take him to the private chambers of

Annas, a very powerful enemy, who questions Jesus. Recall that questions are generally challenges. Here Jesus delivers a bold response: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together" (18:20). Jesus claims that he has acted as an honorable man, always appearing in the appropriate male space, the public arena, and speaking boldly and clearly. His παρρησία (bold speech) denotes courageous and honorable public behavior (see 1 Thess 2:2). In contrast, this Gospel declares as shameful people who are afraid to speak openly about the Christ (9:22–23; 12:42; see Phil 1:20).

The narrative interprets Jesus' bold speech as a riposte to Annas' challenging questions. Jesus commands his interrogator, "Ask those who have heard me. They know what I said" (18:21). This occasions a severe counter-challenge from one of the officers standing by, who "struck Jesus with his hand" (v. 22; see 19:3). The gesture was surely a slap in the face, thus giving an "affront" to Jesus. It is similar to the blows given Jesus according to the synoptic accounts (Matt 26:67; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63–64; see Matt 5:39). But Jesus is not silenced or humbled as was Paul, when he was struck by Annas' servant (Acts 23:4–5). He gives an appropriate riposte, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" (18:23). Thus he withstands the insult and continues to speak boldly; he has the last word.

3. *Roman Trial (18:28–19:16)*. The very fact of being put on trial is itself an honor challenge, simply because the one who is publicly accused experiences his claims to honor (name, worth, reputation) to be publicly questioned. Modern people have idealized trials as occasions not only to clear one's name, but to put the system itself on trial, that is, to challenge the challenger. Our judicial process, moreover, functions on the presumption of innocence. Not so the ancients, where guilt was presumed. It was inherently shameful to be seized and publicly charged with wrongdoing, "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you" (18:30).

The trial episode (18:28–19:16) can be described as an extended game of charge and refutation or challenge and riposte. This occurs on several levels. First, those who deliver Jesus engage in their own challenge-riposte game with Pilate. Pilate *claims* the honor of procurator and magistrate as he questions them ("What accusation?" 18:29); they *challenge* him by asserting their own power ("If this man were not an evildoer …" v. 30); and this leads to Pilate's *riposte* ("Take him yourselves.…" v. 31). For the moment Pilate wins, as they are forced to admit that they have no power: "It is not lawful for us …" (v. 31). This challenge-riposte game between Pilate and the Judeans will be continued in 18:39–40 and 19:6, 12–16. But the main contest focusses on the formal process of Jesus before Pilate, which also is an elaborate game of challenge and riposte.

Commentators note the alternation of scenes in the trial from outside to inside, and even the chiastic shape of the narrative. Raymond Brown (859) provides the following arrangement (for minor variations, cf. Giblin 1986:223).

1. *Outside* (18:28–32) Jews demand death
2. *Inside* (18:33–38a) Pilate questions Jesus about kingship
3. *Outside* (18:38b–40) Pilate finds Jesus not guilty; choice of Barabbas
4. *Inside* (19:1–3) Soldiers scourge Jesus
5. *Outside* (19:4–8) Pilate finds Jesus not guilty; "Behold the man"
6. *Inside* (19:9–11) Pilate talks with Jesus about power
7. *Outside* (19:12–16a) Jews obtain death

Commentators are wont to contrast these scenes as "public" (outside) and "private" (inside). Yet the designation "private/inside" is misleading here, for we should not imagine Pilate and Jesus having a tete-a-tete. And even if the narrative action occurs "within" the Roman compound, it is still a "public" place occupied by Roman soldiers, and not the "private" world of the household (cf. 12:1–8; 13:3–5). Dodd's remark that there are two stages, "a front stage and a back" (96), seems more accurate. Yet the narrative distinction between "going within" and "going out" serves to mark the various scenes and different audiences. The "outside" public scenes are the honor contests between Pilate and the Judeans. The socalled "inside" scenes, which comprise the *cognitio* of the trial between judge and the accused, are also public in that they occur in the public forum of the roman courtyard or praetorium, whether this be the fortress Antonia (Josephus, Ant. 15.292) or the new palace of Herod (Benoit 1952:545–49). The "outside" crowds are informed of the results of the "inside" contest, which affects their challenge-riposte game with Pilate. The honor-shame dynamic, then, occurs on both stages, but between different sets of contestants.

Trials under Roman jurisdiction have a formal structure which is helpful to note (Sherwin-White: 12–20; Neyrey 1987:509–11):

Formal Elements of a Roman Trial	1st	2nd
1. arrest	18:1–11	---
2. charges	18:28–32	19:7
3. judge's cognitio.	18:33–38a	19:8–11
4. verdict	18:38b	19:12
5. judicial warning	19:1–6	---
6. sentence	---	19:13–16

This structure indicates that Jesus' trial went through two forensic cycles; it helps, moreover, to clarify the roles of Pilate, Jesus, and the crowds, especially in terms of the four formal elements of an honor contest. The crowds, who function as the witnesses or accusers in the forensic process, *challenge* Jesus' *claims*. Pilate, the judge, examines these challenges and determines whether Jesus' claims are honorable or not. Jesus, who is on trial, is challenged precisely as to his honorable status. Let us now view in greater detail these forensic elements and roles in terms of honor and shame.

Charges (18:29–33). This gospel mentions that Roman soldiers participated in the seizure of Jesus (18:3); their presence indicates that Jesus was in some sense arrested. The charges against him which Pilate investigates are formal challenges to his claims to honor and status: "Are you the *King of the Jews*?" (18:33; see also 19:7, 14, 19). From the beginning, Jesus has been acclaimed as a most honorable person, and so enjoys a singular portion of ascribed honor. On the basis of God's own prompting, John the Baptizer acclaimed him "Son of God" (1:34). Disciples acknowledge him as "the Messiah" (1:41) and "Son of God and King of Israel" (1:49). Even a leader of the Judeans accepts him as "a teacher come from God" (3:2). According to the story,

various people acclaim him "savior of the world" (4:42), "prophet" (6:14; 9:17), "king" (6:15; 12:13–15), and "Christ" (7:26). In the game of honor and shame, all of this constitutes a claim of honor, the public identity and reputation of Jesus, which is now being challenged in this trial.

Cognitio (18:33–38). The judge's *cognitio* of Jesus in his judicial quarters serves as the forum where Jesus' honor claims are both *challenged* and *defended*. On the level of rhetoric, Pilate asks questions which challenge Jesus, whose riposte is initially the clever strategy of answering a question with a question (see Mark 11:28–33; 12:14–16). Pilate challenges with a question: "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus parries with his own question: "Do you say this of your own accord …?" Pilate asks more questions: "Am I a Jew?… What have you done?… So you are a king then?… What is truth?" On the narrative level, then, Pilate is perceived as asserting his own honor claims as the embodiment of Roman authority by his rhetorical posture as the figure whose duty it is to ask questions and so challenge others. This initial exchange sparkles with honor challenges. Pilate asks a question, presumably concerning the charge against Jesus. By questioning Pilate, Jesus might be said to be giving a riposte: "Do you say this of your own accord …" (v. 34). Pilate's response is not only scorn ("Am I a Jew?"), but a mockery of Jesus. How shameful, he points out, that "Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over" (v. 35).

This sparring game quickly fades, for the narrator wishes to portray Jesus giving a solemn *riposte* to the challenge to his identity and authority. "Kingship" is Pilate's challenge, a very noble and honorable status, which Jesus defends. Twice he proclaims, "My kingship is not of this world" (18:36, 37). If his kingship is not of this world, it must belong to another world (8:23), that is, God's world, which is eternal, unchanging, and truly honorable. Although this "world" was once a worthy recipient of divine favor (3:16; 4:42; 10:36; 12:47), it quickly proved hostile to Jesus. He became an alien here in this world and met only challenge and opposition (1:9–10; Meeks 1972:67–70). The world's hostility, then, constitutes an ongoing challenge to Jesus' honor. But the assertion that his kingdom is not of this world implies that he belongs to a better kingdom, which must triumph over the hostility experienced here. Although challenged, Jesus belongs to a kingdom where he is honored as he should be (5:23; 17:5, 24).

This Gospel speaks of a ruler of this world, who will be Jesus' chief challenger. But even this powerful figure "has no power over me" (14:30); he will be cast out (12:31) and judged (16:11). Thus Jesus boasted to his disciples, "I have overcome the world" (16:30). This powerful challenger appears to be Satan (Schnackenburg: 2.391). But as the passion narrative progresses, even the Roman emperor will qualify as a rival of God (19:12, 15). Yet if Jesus' kingship were of this world, his followers would do the honorable thing and "fight, that I not be handed over to the Jews" (18:36). The vindicator of his kingship, then, must be a most powerful person also "not of this world," namely God. He will give the riposte for King Jesus (12:28; 17:1). But the claim that Jesus is a king remains unassailable: "You say that I am a king; for this I was born, and for this I have come into the world" (18:37). Jesus makes another *claim* that pertains to his kingship, "Every one who is of the truth hears my voice" (v. 37). This directly echoes the remarks about the shepherd in 10:3–4, 26–27 (Meeks 1967:66–67). If "shepherd" is a metaphor for king (i.e., David, the Royal Shepherd), then Jesus reaffirms his honor as king. Good and honorable people, he says, acknowledge this honor claim by "hearing my voice." Whether scornful or cynical (Brown: 869), Pilate's retort, "What is truth?" indicates that he rejects this claim.

Verdict (18:38b). The source of Jesus' honor, while not made explicit here, will shortly be made clear to the court (19:8–11). Yet the reader knows that Jesus enjoys maximum ascribed honor from the most honorable being in the universe, namely, God (see 5:36–38; 12:27–28). All

that Jesus is, has, and does comes from God (5:19–29). The reader knows that he comes from God and is returning to God (13:1–3; 17:1–5), where he will be glorified with the glory he had before the creation of the world. At this point in the trial, Jesus has given an adequate riposte to the challenge to his honor; he is a king and defends that claim. On the narrative level, Pilate's forensic verdict of innocence tells the reader, at least, that Jesus' claims are publicly judged to be honorable: "I find no crime in him" (18:38). Honor defended is honor maintained. Yet the public verdict in this honor contest remains unclear.

In acknowledging a custom, Pilate offers to those who have just challenged Jesus' honor the release of this same "King of the Jews" (18:39). This should be interpreted as Pilate's personal challenge to the crowd (Rensberger: 92–94). Their challenge to Jesus had just been rejected (v. 38), and now Pilate taunts them by inviting them to accept Jesus in the fullness of his honor claim, "Will you have me release to you the 'King of the Jews'?" (v. 39). Pilate asks Jesus' challengers publicly to accept a riposte to their challenge, and so admit defeat in this game. His question, then, continues the honor-shame contest between him and the crowds (see 18:29–31). Yet, the crowds give a counter-challenge to Jesus' honor claim and Pilate's gambit: "Not this man!" The shame of being disowned by one's own occurs again (v. 35); Jesus' enemies prefer the release of Barabbas, a thief or social bandit, to him (18:40). The contest between Pilate and the crowd continues as a stalemate.

Judicial Warning (19:1–5). Pilate gives Jesus a "judicial warning," such as Paul received when five times lashed and three times beaten with rods (2 Cor 11:24–25; cf. Acts 5:41). Judicial warnings were intended to inflict pain but especially to humiliate and so discredit troublemakers. In essence, Jesus is beaten and mocked. Even if the technical terms "mock" and "mockery" do not occur here (cf., ἐμπαίζειν Matt 27:29; Mark 15:20; Meeks 1967:69), native readers whose world is structured around honor and shame know what is going on. In the honor culture of ancient warriors, stoic endurance of physical pain denotes courage and honor (ἀνδρεία). But to be mocked is by far more painful than the physical beating because it produces the most dreaded of all experiences, shame.

As regards his body, Jesus is shamed by being stripped naked, bound, and beaten in the public forum of the Roman soldiers. His head, the most honorable member of his body, is mocked with a "plaited crown of thorns." His body is dressed in purple, the royal color. Many of the soldiers "struck him with their hands," surely on the face or head, and sarcastically acclaimed his honor, "Hail, King of the Jews" (19:3). Each of these ritual gestures has been shown to be a characteristic element in the honoring of Persian and Roman rulers (Alföldi: προσκυνήσις/bending the knee: 11–16, 45–70; acclamation, especially as *dominus*: 38–45, 209–10; crown: 17–18, 128–129, 263–67; clothing: 143–56, 175–84, 268–70; scepter: 156–57, 228–35; throne: 140–41, 159–61). Thus a mock coronation ritual occurs (Blank: 62; Meeks 1967:69–72), whose primary function is to shame Jesus, the alleged King of the Judeans.

But if the actors in the drama are portrayed as shaming Jesus, it does not follow that readers of this gospel must concur. On the contrary, insiders have been repeatedly schooled in irony to see Jesus' death as his "being lifted" to heaven (3:14; 8:23; 12:32) or his "glorification" (12:23; 13:31–32; 17:1, 5). The grain of wheat dies and falls into the ground, but thereby lives and bears fruit. In short, the gospel inculcates an ironic point of view that death and shame mean glory and honor. The mock coronation of Jesus, which in the eyes of outsiders means shame, truly betokens honor from the viewpoint of insiders. In terms of Jesus' honor, it truly is a status elevation ritual. Although ironically invested with imperial honors, Jesus nonetheless is acclaimed as honorable, especially in his shame (Duke: 132–33). Rensberger describes this scene

as Pilate's humiliation of the Judeans by the sarcastic presentation of a Roman's interpretation of Jewish messianic hopes (93–94).

New Charges/New Cognitio (19:7, 9–11). Pilate then brings forth this Jesus who has been mocked and dishonored. I do not know when modern readers started thinking that such a presentation was supposed to inspire sympathy for Jesus, because in the culture of the time such a scene would surely provoke laughter and derision. Crowds regularly gathered at public executions to participate in the mockery (see Matt 27:38, 39, 41). The crowds react here in culturally predictable ways by continuing their dishonoring of Jesus: "Crucify him! crucify him!" (19:6). Rejection by one's ἔθνος and delivery to the Romans would be shame enough; now his own people call for his shameful death.

With Pilate's verdict of Jesus' innocence, the trial should be over ("I find no crime in him," 19:5, 6). But a new charge is made, which constitutes a new *challenge* to Jesus' honor: "By our law he ought to die, for he made himself the Son of God" (19:7). The crowds consider this "claim" to be so serious a charge as to warrant the death sentence. And so a new trial ensues to deal with the new charge.

Let us view this new charge from the perspective of honor and shame. In antiquity people were constantly "making themselves" something, that is, claiming a new and higher status or role (Acts 5:36). Hence the public accusation that Jesus *makes himself* something functions as a *challenge* to a perceived empty claim, a common phenomenon in antiquity (κενόδοζος and ἀλαζῶν; see Acts 8:9; 12:22–23; Josephus, War 2.55, 60; Ant. 17.272, 278). This sort of challenge to Jesus occurred regularly throughout the narrative (1)"… *making himself* equal to God" (5:18); (2) "Who do you *make yourself* to be?" (8:53); (3) "You, a mortal, *make yourself* God" (10:33); (4) "He *made himself* the Son of God" (19:7); (5) "every one who *makes him self* a king …" (19:12). In the course of this narrative, the author has consistently dealt with this charge by dividing the charge/challenge: (1) it is *denied* that Jesus "makes himself" anything, but (2) it is *defended* that he is such-and-such (Neyrey 1988:20–23). For example, Jesus claims in 5:19–29 that he is "equal to God." This is no empty claim, for he insists that God has granted him both creative and eschatological powers and the honor attached to them. The Father (1) *shows* him all that God is doing (5:20), (2) *has given* all judgment to the Son (5:22), (3) *has granted* the Son also to have life in himself (5:26), and (4) *has given* him authority to execute judgment (5:27; Neyrey, 1988:20–25). Thus, Jesus does *not* "make himself" anything, for that would be a vainglorious claim and thus false honor. But he truly is "equal to God," "King," and "Son of God," because these honors, roles, and statuses are ascribed to him by God (see the ascribed honor of being "made king" in 6:15).

It is not, moreover, accidental in the Gospel traditions that Jesus himself rarely claims to be prophet, king, son of God, etc. These tend to be ascribed to him either by God (13:31; 17:5, 24; see Mark 1:11; 9:7) or by others: (Son of God, 1:34, 49; Christ, 1:41; 10:24; King, 1:49; 6:15; 12:13; Savior, 4:42; and Prophet, 4:19; 6:14). Thus the tradition steadfastly maintains that Jesus is an honorable person in two respects: he does not seek honor by making vain claims to such-and-such a status, but he is regularly ascribed great honor by others. The reader, then, has been schooled how to interpret this new charge against Jesus, rejecting any sense of a vainglorious claim and affirming the truth of the honor ascribed to Jesus.

The new forensic charge requires a new *cognitio* by the judge (19:8–11). Pilate asks the appropriate question in terms of honor and shame: "Where are you from (πόθεν)?" (19:9). True honor is ascribed honor; and ascribed honor is a function of one's father and clan or one's place of origin (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:32–34, 39–40; 1991b:85–87). Concerning place of origin,

honor was earlier denied Jesus because he is from Nazareth, from which no good comes (1:46; see Titus 1:12). Paul claims honor by coming from Tarsus, "no mean city" (Acts 21:39), and Jerusalemites claim honor from being born there (Ps 87:5–6). Concerning father and clan, it is almost a universal phenomenon in the Bible that when characters are introduced or described, they are always identified as the "son of so-and-so" or the "daughter of so-and-so." For an individual's honor is bound with that of his or her father. The rules in the *progymnasmata* for writing an encomium all stress that writers begin their praise of someone by noting that person's family and place of origin (Lee 188–206). All of the extant texts of the *progymnasmata* on writing an encomium start with praise for εὐγενεία, which consists in noting (1) origin (γένος), (2) race (ἔθνος), (3) country (πατρίς), (4) ancestors (πρόγονοι), and (5) parents (πατέρες). Hence Pilate tests Jesus with the appropriate question, πόθεν εἶ σύ, which may refer either to his "place of origin" (8:23) or his parents (6:41–42). But the question directly touches Jesus' honor.

Jesus now remains silent (19:9). He neither defends himself nor offers a riposte to the challenge. Silence in the face of accusation is very difficult to assess; but in an honor and shame context it would probably be read as a shameful thing (see Neh 6:8). To fail to give a riposte to a challenge is to accept defeat and so loss of honor.

Yet readers have already been socialized in just this aspect of Jesus' honor, and so the riposte has been given in advance. Knowledge of whence Jesus comes (πόθεν) and whither he goes (ποῦ) has been a major issue throughout the narrative. Outsiders either do not know (3:8; 8:14; 9:29) or falsely think they know (6:41–42; 7:27–28). Many times Jesus proclaims the correct answer, namely, that he descends from heaven (6:38), or that he descends from heaven and ascends back there (3:13; 6:62). Insiders like the blind man accurately deduce the true "whence" of Jesus because of his power to heal (9:30). And finally the reader is told that Jesus comes from God and returns to heaven (13:1–2). Thus readers can answer Pilate's question; they know "whence he is," namely, a person whose parent is none other than God and whose "country of origin" is no less than heaven. His honor, then, is secure in their eyes.

The narrative suggests that Jesus' silence *challenges* Pilate's power, for he responds with new questions: "Will you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?" (19:10). "Power" (ἐξουσία) is at stake; and power is an expression of honor. Although Jesus gives no riposte to this new challenge concerning his origin, he does in turn offer a counter-challenge to Pilate's claim of power: "You would have no power over me unless it were given you from above" (19:11). Hence Pilate's power is a relative thing. The truly powerful figure is not Caesar, from whom Pilate enjoys ascribed honor, but none other than God, from whom all power flows (John 10:29). Emperors, kings, and governors all owe their power and honor to God (Rom 13:1; 1 Tim 2:2; 1 Pet 2:13–17). This narrative, moreover, asserts that it is God's will and purpose that Jesus undergo this trial (John 12:27). God commanded that he "lay down his life and take it up again" (10:17–18). Inasmuch as sons are commanded "Honor your father" (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16; Mark 10:19), the presentation of Jesus as the obedient one (Heb 5:8; see Mark 14:36//Matt 26:39//Luke 22:42) marks his actions here as honoring his Father and thus warranting the honor of an obedient son.

In fact, Jesus ironically states that even Pilate is behaving honorably because he acts in accord with the power given him from above. The dishonorable people are those "who have delivered me over to you" (19:11); they are the sinners. Thus in the confrontation between him and Pilate, Jesus remains successful; he suffers no loss of honor. In fact, he seems to have gained an ally of sorts in Pilate, his judge, "who sought to release him" (19:12).

Final Verdict and Sentence (19:12–16). In the next scene, the grand public tableau of the trial, the two sets of contestants play another episode of challenge and riposte. In terms of the Pilate-vs-Jesus contest, Pilate's move "to release him" functions as a definitive riposte to the crowds' various challenges to Jesus' claims to honor. Pilate thrice declares Jesus innocent, and so Jesus cannot be shown to be "making himself" anything. But in terms of the Pilate-vs-crowd contest, the latter issues one final challenge, not so much to Jesus' claims, but to the honor and status of Pilate himself. "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; anyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (19:12b).

As historians remind us, a "friend" is often described as the object of political patronage (Bammel: 205–210; Brunt: 1–20). Thus Josephus, when speaking of a circle of aristocrats, calls them "persons of power among the Friends of the King" (Ant. 12.298); Antiochus wrote to his "governors and Friends" (Ant. 12.134). Philo records how Flaccus acted harshly against those who "insult a king, a Friend of Caesar's, a person who had received Pretorian honours from the Roman Senate" (Flac. 40; cf. 1 Macc 2:18; 3:38; 10:65). Thus Pilate owes Caesar a debt of loyalty for his ascribed honor as procurator. Whatever honorable status he enjoys depends on his being the faithful client of an imperial patron. But Pilate's status as "Caesar's *friend*" (and client) is directly challenged by the crowds, who accuse him of shaming Caesar by supporting a rival king. Pilate answers this challenge in a scene in which all of the various challenges and ripostes are resolved.

Pilate's riposte takes the form of a solemn judicial verdict and sentence. But the scene as narrated contains a fundamental ambiguity. The text states that "he (Pilate) brought Jesus out and sat down at the judgment seat" (19:13). Controversy surrounds the verb "sat down" (ἐκάθισεν), which may be read transitively (i.e., Pilate *sat* Jesus *down* on the judgment seat) or intransitively (i.e., Pilate himself *sat down* on the seat). Grammatical studies support both readings. Those who argue that Jesus was seated point to the irony of the powerless Jesus assuming the role of judge, a role ascribed to him by God according to John 5:22, 27; and 12:31. This reading would follow the gospel axiom that last is first, weakest is greatest, the judged one is the judge. Indeed it would be an extraordinary piece of irony for the dishonored Jesus to assume this position of great honor (see Luke 24:26).

But the literal reading of the passage portrays Pilate's riposte to the crowd's challenge to him. As judge and magistrate in charge of these affairs, including the exercise of the *jus gladii*, Pilate now assumes all of the trappings of his office. Honor is replicated in bodily posture as Pilate seats himself on his official seat, the βῆμα, while the other participants stand (19:13). Exercising his authority, he issues a proclamation to the crowds: "Behold your king!" Rhetorically, this remark is a command ("Behold!") and an insult ("your king," see 18:39). It ostensibly upholds the original claims of Jesus by dismissing the challenges of the crowd. Thus the judge has rendered a third verdict of innocence (18:38; 19:4, 12), which functions as a riposte to the challenges to Jesus' honor. But the claim that Jesus is a king is no more acceptable to the crowds now than it was earlier.

Finally the two strands of the honor contests coincide. The crowds challenge Pilate's verdict, even as they shame Jesus: "Away with him … crucify him" (19:15a). Pilate had previously noted the shame of being disowned by one's own ἔθνος (18:35), which shameful action is now repeated. Ostensibly, Pilate has lost the game, and his honor has been diminished. But he makes one last move, a final riposte to the power of the crowd.

Inasmuch as "king" has been the contested claim throughout the trial, Pilate demands of the crowd a formal judgment in the case: "Shall I crucify your 'king'?" (19:15b). Questions, of

course, are challenging, and the response to this question brings maximum shame on Jesus' antagonists: "We have no king but Caesar" (19:15c). Their remark is an act of supreme dishonor to their heavenly Patron and Sovereign. At the conclusion of the Greater Hallel we find the following prayer:

> From everlasting to everlasting thou art God;
> Beside thee we have no king, redeemer, or savior;
> No liberator, deliverer, provider;
> None who takes pity in every time of distress or trouble.
> We have no king but thee. (Meeks 1967:77)

It is they who prove to be the "friend of Caesar," thus shaming God and God's anointed king. Rensberger notes that Pilate has once more humiliated his opponents by having them publicly deny their claims to a political messiah (96). Yet no reader would fail to note that God is now mocked and must vindicate his divine honor. The advantage seems to lie with the crowd who bends Pilate to its will and succeeds in dishonoring Jesus ("Crucify him!" 19:15).

A judicial sentence is pronounced, but one which is fraught with irony. The official judge, Pilate, apparently yields in this game of push and shove; his sentence is hardly honorable or just. Jesus' accusers, who earlier claimed that they had no legitimate authority to put a man to death (18:31), finally succeed in a plot that began in 5:18 and was solemnized at a rump trial in 11:50–53. Their success in having Jesus killed would be a mark of honor for them in the eyes of observers, but readers of the narrative know that this "sentence" is fully within the control of Jesus (12:32–33; 10:17–18) and the will of God. The sentence of a shameful death, then, is but an apparent loss of honor.

4. *Title (19:19–22).* The game of push and shove continues over the public title attached to Jesus' cross. Pilate's inscription, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," may be read as a final ironic riposte by the narrator in defense of Jesus' honor, comparable to Caiaphas's "prophecy" about Jesus' death (11:51). It is also Pilate's act of authority in defense of his own embattled status. The title, which may be construed as another honor claim, is once again challenged by the Jerusalem elite, who urge a more shameful version: " 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.' " Again, they charge that Jesus vaingloriously assumes honors not rightfully his (19:7, 12). This time Pilate wins: "What I have written, I have written" (19:22).

5. *Crucifixion (19:17–37).* The normal sequence of events which accompanies crucifixion was listed at the beginning of this study. In view of that, the shameful elements narrated in the crucifixion of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are the crucifixion itself, with Jesus' position as the middle figure in a triptych of criminals, themselves shameful persons (19:18). The mocking title over the cross publicly challenges Jesus' claim to honor and status. He is apparently stripped naked, for his clothing is confiscated by his executioners (19:23–24). The synoptics all record various persons "mocking" him (Mark 15:27–32; Matt 27:38–43; Luke 23:35–36), which is absent from the Fourth Gospel's account. Yet the very scene is a public humiliation (John 19:20); spectators would give public witness to the shame of Jesus' death (see Philo, Spec. Leg. 3.160). Thus to them he dies a brutal death, apparently a victim whose life was taken from him in violent fashion. His blood is spilled, without hope of vengeance or satisfaction. This is what outsiders see and count as shameful.

The narrator, however, instructs insiders to perceive this scene in terms of honor. First, Jesus does the honorable thing by his mother. She is presumably a widow, and now her only son is dying. In that culture, she has no male (husband or son) to defend her; she will suffer a tragic loss of honor with this death. But Jesus defends her honor by adopting as "brother" the Beloved

Disciple, and by ensuring that his new kinsman will defend his mother's honor by "taking her into his own house" (19:27; see Acts 1:14).

Shame lies both in being a victim and more especially in the exercise of power by another over one's life. That may be what the eye sees in Jesus' death, but not what the ear hears in the narrative. Jesus is honorably presented as the figure in control of events. He *knows* that all is now completed (v. 28) and he *chooses* to die, "It is finished" (v. 30). Because the narrative has prepared us for this scene, we are not reading these honorable ideas into the text. Back in the exposition of the role of the Noble Shepherd in John 10, Jesus explicitly described the honorable character of his death. First, he knows it, and so manifests control over his life: "I lay down my life" (10:17); "I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18). Second, he is no victim; no one shames him by taking his life: "No one takes it from me" (10:18); no one shames him by having power over him: "I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again" (10:18b). Just as he manifested control and power at his arrest, so he is presented here as doing the same thing. Honor is thus maintained.

Finally, his body was mutilated, a shameful act (recall the treatment of Hector's body by Achilles; see 1 Sam 31:9–10; 2 Sam 4:12; Jos. Ant. 20.99). The soldiers intended to break his legs and thus hasten death. Yet Jesus is spared this humiliation because he had already died. Moreover, the text puts an honorable interpretation on this by comparing Jesus' body to the paschal lamb, none of whose bones were broken (Exod 12:46; John 19:36). He dies, then, "unblemished." Nevertheless his chest is pierced, the wanton mutilation of a corpse. Yet as Josephine Ford has shown, the piercing of Jesus' side yields both blood and water, which in rabbinic lore constitutes a kosher object (1969:337–38). And so the narrator rescues Jesus' honor by indicating that this mutilation was controlled by God's prophecy through Zech 12:10.

6. Jesus' Burial (19:38–42). Under other circumstances, the bodies of the crucified might be left to rot on the cross and become food for scavengers (see Rev 19:17–18). This final shame precluded reverential burial by kin, both a mark of honor and a religious duty. Yet in our narrative, purity concerns demand some rapid disposal of the corpses; and so the body of Jesus is buried.

This gospel narrates that Jesus' body received quite an honorable burial, despite the shame of his death. Joseph and Nicodemus bring a prodigious quantity of spices, "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds," enough spices for a royal burial (see 2 Chron 16:14 and Jos. Ant. 17.199). They perform the honorable burial ritual, "binding the body in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews" (19:40). A new tomb is at hand, wherein they honorably lay Jesus. Despite the shame of crucifixion, some honor is maintained by this burial.

V. Summary and Conclusions

As we learn more about the pivotal values of honor and shame in their cultural setting, we come to appreciate how the narrative of Jesus' passion is perceived and articulated in this perspective. Honor and shame are not foreign categories imposed by an alien culture, but values rooted in the very cultural world of Jesus and his disciples, whether Roman, Greek, or Judean. We have observed what these ancient people value, how they strive either to gain or maintain their reputation, and how honor is replicated in the presentation and treatment of the physical body. When we appreciate the typical form of a challenge/riposte encounter, we gain greater clarity into the common social dynamics of the male world of the first century in all its agonistic flavor. It is always tempting for modern readers to psychologize biblical characters, often

imposing on them modern notions of the self or motivations and strategies typical of the modern world. Appreciation of the ancient psychology of honor and shame offers more authentic cultural and historical reading of those social dynamics.

Our understanding, moreover, of the cultural dynamics of honor and shame is a necessary and welcome addition to the standard tools of historical criticism. Our use of them greatly aids in the fundamental task of interpreting documents from a culture quite different from our own. And our appreciation of these cultural phenomena can only aid in our sympathetic understanding of other biblical and ancient documents, which share the same cultural values.

As a result of this study, readers of biblical documents should be able to apply the understanding of honor and shame to other texts. Using honor and shame as a template, readers can then bring to light the social dynamics operative, for example, in most of the public scenes of Jesus and his opponents. Whenever Jesus appears in public, the scene is generally described as a challenge to his claims of honor. The same perspective can profitably be applied to the conflicts between Paul and his opponents. Always honor is at stake, either as claimed or challenged. Thus no study of conflict in the biblical texts would be complete without its assessment in terms of the cultural dynamics of honor and shame. The bibliography contains further perspectives on honor and shame in relation to other biblical documents.[1]

[1] Neyrey, J. H. (1995). Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative. *Semeia*, *68*, 112–133.