THE CHALLENGE OF THE THESSALONIANS
AND PAUL'S RIPOSTE

by

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Abstract

Social Scientific Criticism provides the reader of the New Testament with a set of tools to access the intended meaning of a text. That is to say, it is not the words which convey meaning, but rather the context within which the words are embedded. The anthropological model of honor and shame is one of these tools. This model has been developed from the modern study of agrarian and rural Mediterranean villages and from the study of ancient and classical Hellenistic literature and philosophy. The present study considers the context of honor and shame which lies beneath what is generally regarded as the earliest extant Pauline letter, I Thessalonians. After preliminary exercises, such as a survey of the literature on I Thessalonians and an establishing and clarification of the method which drives this study, the text is analysed from the perspective of honor and shame, limited good, and agonism. Since honor and shame did not operate in a vacuum of social values and practices, other details are brought into the exegesis, such as praise and blame in ancient letter writing, and Paul's place in the environment of patron-client relations. The result is a reading of the letter which focuses on the variety of challenges which the converts posed and on Paul's need to defend himself in a way that was appropriate to his mission. Through such a reading, certain stylistic features of the letter are highlighted in a way that sets this study apart from its predecessors.
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Introduction

Like all letters in antiquity, Paul's letters were written to bridge a physical separation. Letters were regarded as a poor but necessary substitute for face-to-face communication. Paul was not the first person ever to write letters, but he does appear to have been the first "Christian" to do so. Paul's letters are the earliest extant documents of formative Christianity. In writing letters, Paul tapped into an already well established epistolary tradition. He also, however, adapted the finer details of that tradition to suite his own needs and circumstances. Perhaps the greatest of these changes is that Paul wrote to groups more than to individuals. It is also apparent, however, that he meant for the letters to be read aloud. This is likely what lead Paul to combine epistolary styles with Greco-Roman rhetoric, so that, read aloud, his letters might carry the same impact of an orator's speech. Another difference between Paul's letters and traditional letters is the length. While other letters were to-the-point, even terse, Paul's are considerably longer. Even I Thessalonians, which is the second shortest undisputed letter (by word count) is long by current standards (Stowers:1986).

I Thessalonians is a mere five chapters, but it is clear that its brevity has no relation to its complexity. There are two features of this letter which are conspicuous: the features of praise, and the features of defensiveness. Praise is a technical
epistolary term and device used to grant honor to the reader (and hearer, in the case of Paul's letters). Its opposite is 'blame', which means not to designate responsibility but to take away honor leaving instead shame. Praise and blame were important devices used by the ancient letter writers (Stowers:1986) and no less so by Paul. The features of I Thessalonians which I describe as praise have been noticed by all commentaries, though they usually use the term "warm" to describe the letter. The trouble with referring to the "warmth" of the letter is that it mistakes Paul's writing style (implied author) for his true feelings and intent. Since we are not in a position to know whether Paul actually felt warmth towards the Thessalonians, or instead used "warmth" as an epistolary device, we are better off using the term "praise." We shall see that letter writers could use praise without desiring to praise. Therefore, to say that Paul frequently praised his young church for their faith and love implies nothing about his actual feelings. His expressions of longing to see them again also fall into the category of praise, because such an expression would have honored them.

But this letter is by no means all praise. The other conspicuous feature is the defensiveness of certain passages. Of these, the most frequently cited is 2:1-12, the Apostle's Defense. Here, Paul defends his honor and reputation (which were not separate then as they tend to be now) in the face of several charges (challenges) emanating from within the Thessalonian congregation. Elsewhere in the letter, Paul defends his honor against more subtle challenges. The overall sense is that the letter
serves as a *riposte* to a *challenge*, technical honor and shame terminology which shall be defined in Chapter Two.

The letter expresses both praise and longing as well as defense and conflict. While most studies have noticed the presence of both these features, the majority have avoided dealing with both in the same study, that is, they tend to handle one and ignore the other. When conflict is emphasised, scholars trace the cause to theological differences between Paul and the congregation. They portray Paul as battling ways that are hostile to his mission or to his theological beliefs. When the praise of the letter is emphasised, Paul's expressions of love for the Thessalonian converts and his desire to be reunited with them, are linked to his "duty" of offering pastoral care and consolation to a suffering congregation. The problem with the "conflict" studies is that they fail to express adequately the urgency of Paul's response. Interpreting this letter from the perspective of honor and shame shifts the focus away from theological explanations and more toward social-cultural explanations. The conflict and its relationship with the letter's praise is only adequately understood with reference to social-cultural terms and institutions, such as honor and shame, agonism, patron-client relations, and within the realm of traditional epistolary devices like praise and blame.

Chapter One shows the relevance of the present study by reviewing the literature on I Thessalonians which has attempted to account for the writing and content of I Thessalonians. Though there are many compelling studies of the letter, it
is clear that no single approach is capable of accounting for the two primary features of this letter. What is more, none of the studies attempts to reconcile the conflict and praise with which this letter was written. Also, previous studies have noticed the defensive nature of 2:1-12, yet in most cases it is reduced in urgency, perhaps because of the praise of the letter. An honor and shame analysis reveals that this defense (and others in the letter), need not be diminished because of the love and longing which was written into the letter. The merit of this approach lies in its ability to draw out features of the letter which have been noticed but not adequately understood.

Chapter Two outlines the method being adopted in this exercise. Honor and shame as a Social Scientific model is placed within the context of Social Scientific Criticism in order to provide a general understanding of the purpose and even necessity of this exercise. By studying the social values that comprised Paul's world, Social Scientific Criticism emphasises aspects of the style and wording of I Thessalonians which have been under emphasised by previous studies. Social Scientific Criticism provides the reader of the New Testament with tools to access the ancient social world so that the documents created in that environment can make sense in our world. The tool in this case is the model of honor and shame. It is crucial to use a model which will allow the modern interpreter to access the ancient culture without (uncritically) importing modern notions and presuppositions into this other world. Social Science models and theories allow one to separate and distinguish "the
differences between the social location of the interpreter and the social location of the authors and objects to be interpreted" (Elliott:1993, 37). Chapter Two also builds a model of honor and shame that can be applied to I Thessalonians. By understanding the social values of honor and shame and the way they operated in the ancient world, the reader will be better equipped to understand what Paul wrote and the manner in which he wrote it. Honor and shame can be used to make sense of social relationships, to account for methods of interaction, and to shed light on the structure of the social community. The model of honor and shame can be used to make sense of conflicts and to show the existence of conflict where one might not have seen it before. The approach from the perspective of honor and shame emphasises the agonistic exchange which ensued between Paul and the Thessalonians.

Chapter Three applies the honor and shame model to I Thessalonians. This model clarifies the intent of the letter and the nature of its language. The honor and shame exegesis allows one to account for and reconcile certain important stylistic features of this letter, namely its praise and blame, the repetition of the οἶδαςτε ("you know") clauses, Paul's claim of ascribed honor in addition to his achieved honor, and the defense of Paul's conduct and teaching while he was in Thessalonica. Through the application of this model to the text, it becomes evident that Paul was expected (culturally and socially) to defend his honor. However, he was also compelled (personally) to do so in the least damaging way. As a result, the whole honor and
shame discourse which takes place in this letter must be situated within the traditional episotory practice of praise and blame and traditional patron-client relations. The honor and shame model offers the field a timely and profitable perspective from which to analyse the strategy of this earliest extant letter by Paul.
Chapter One
Research on I Thessalonians

Introduction

I Thessalonians has been relatively neglected compared to other parts of the New Testament. Perhaps this is because of its brevity, or because it contains none of the fieriness or poetics of Galatians or I Corinthians (respectively). Recently, however, scholars have turned to I Thessalonians with renewed interest. Scholars interested in the earliest developments and manifestations of this movement of "believers" no doubt feel there is some insight to be gained from a better understanding of this earliest "Christian" text (Collins:1988a, 773). This chapter asks the question: What has modern social scientific exegesis of I Thessalonians contributed to our understanding of the letter and the circumstances which led to its composition?¹ Although there have been many compelling investigations into the content and strategy of this letter, none of them accounts for two of the central features of this document. They do not reconcile the longing and praise expressed by Paul for the Thessalonians with the defense of his conduct and teaching. Moreover, these studies have not portrayed the urgency of the conflict or of Paul's defense, both

¹This is not, however, an attempt to answer the question "What was Thessalonica like when Paul first visited...?" (Donfried:1985, 336).
of which run through the letter. Before reviewing the literature on I Thessalonians, it may be helpful to undertake a brief social description this city.

The City of Thessalonica

The city of Thessalonica was, in Paul's day, a major trading centre. Situated along the Via Egnatia and at the head of the Aegean Sea, Thessalonica attracted many travellers by land and sea, some of whom would become residents. Though the city was originally Greek, by the time of Paul's visit, power in the area had shifted towards the Romans. Despite this, Thessalonica retained many of its Hellenistic features. Thessalonica attracted people not only for its commercial prosperity, but also for its religious and political tolerance. Their status as a "free city" allowed them to maintain many of their Greek legal and social institutions, as was evident in the way they dealt with legal and political issues (Donfried:1995, 2). It also kept them free from the Roman tax burden.

The city was home to numerous and well-documented civic and religious cults (Donfried:1995). The most important "civic" cult was the Roman imperial cult, ensuring continued good relations with Rome. Their status as free city was owed to their support of Antony and Octavian in 42 BCE at the Battle of Philippi. This is also a reflection of the important place of Benefactor/Beneficiary (essentially Greek) and Patron/Client (essentially Roman) relations in the history of the city (Hendrix:1991,
Chow: 1992). The need to ensure the continued favor of the Romans led to the development of ways to honor the benefactors of the city. The city coinage, with the decorated with the heads of Roman aristocrats, is an accurate indication of this fact. It is no mere coincidence that "the head of Augustus displaces the head of Zeus on the coins of the city" (Donfried and Marshall: 1993, 18). The greatest of the attempts to honor the Roman benefactors/patrons was the building of the temple of Caesar during the reign of Augustus (24 BCE - 14 CE). The addition to this, the priest of Augustus was given charge over the temple and all priestly matters. The elevation of the Roman emperor to divine status brought considerable blurring of the distinctions between civic and religious cults. The Thessalonians treated the gods and the emperors alike as benefactors who, if properly honored, could bestow favors. The place of patron-client relations as a traditional institution in the city might shed some light on certain aspects of Paul's relationship with the congregation. Paul may have been recognised as a patron to the congregation, or conversely he may have seen himself as their patron. Paul entered the city and with power and authority established a community of believers for whom he was responsible.

The Imperial "civic" cult was far from hostile towards the religious cults, such as the mystery cults of Dionysus, Serapis, and Cabirus (Koester: 1987a, 363). Given the importance of these religious cultic traditions in Thessalonica, it is likely that most of Paul's converts were familiar and practised in these traditions. I Thess 1:9 relates...
how the Thessalonian believers turned πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τὸν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ ("to God from idols to serve a living and true God"). This would indicate that Gentiles comprised the majority (by far) of the congregation, or, stated differently, that the Jews in the congregation were so few that they did not warrant mentioning. These cults may have responded to Paul reciprocally, that is by trying to win back his converts (deSilva:1996). There is sufficient information in the letter, not the least of which is the suffering of the converts, to conclude that these cults were a significant force with which Paul had to contend and, possibly, compete (Judge:1960, Morris:1984, Wanamaker:1990, Chapa: 1994).

It may be beneficial to compare and contrast the social settings of Thessalonica and Corinth (as reflected in the two Corinthian letters). Like Thessalonica, Corinth owned a large port and supported a powerful economy. Also like Thessalonica, Corinth was a capital city (of Achaia) and attracted a diverse selection of people and cultures. Corinth too was home to numerous civic and religious cults, as well as eastern mystery religions and a number of diaspora Jews. We can make an educated guess, based on I Cor 1:26-28, that there were (not many but at least) some wealthy and powerful members among the Corinthian congregation. It is doubtful, however, that any were members of the aristocracy (Witherington:1995, 22). These wealthy

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2This interpretation of 1:9 is challenged by Hodgson:1982.
members likely acted as patrons for the church, offering their homes as places of worship and perhaps protection. Their high status may have contributed to their disdain for Paul's insistence that members of the community work with their hands (as he did), with his lack of rhetorical skill as a speaker, and with his (unkempt?) appearance. The wealthy and powerful members may have considered themselves the benefactors/patrons of Paul and the church. Paul, however, objected to this view since he clearly saw himself as their benefactor/patron (Witherington:1995, 341). As in I Thessalonians, Paul referred to himself in fatherly language to the Corinthians, for it was he who had set up the community there and who had advanced the gospel of God.

Concerning the social standing of the Thessalonians, we have no such hints as the one found in I Corinthians. Thus, it is impossible to assess with any degree of certainty whether Paul faced the same sort of challenges from the Thessalonians as he would from the Corinthians. There is only a brief hint, at I Thess 1:5, that the Thessalonians too may have been displeased with Paul's rhetorical abilities. This theme, however, is not as well developed here as it is in the Corinthian letters. At I Thess 1:5, Paul told them "We know, brethren beloved by God, of your having been chosen, because our gospel did not come to you in word alone but also in power and in the holy spirit and in full assurance, just as you know how we governed ourselves among you for your sake." Greco-Roman rhetoric allowed a speaker/writer to express himself with artistry and eloquence, which even the uneducated would have enough
experience to appreciate (Witherington:1996, 45). Cicero wrote that "wisdom without eloquence does too little for the good of the state, but... eloquence without wisdom is generally highly disadvantageous and is never helpful" (de Inv 1.1.1; also Quintilian Inst Ora 2.15.1). Yet, Paul indicated that he spoke not only with eloquence but, more importantly for him, with the power of the Holy Spirit. Given that this is the only place in I Thessalonians that this theme arises, it seems unlikely that the Thessalonians were attempting to turn the tables on Paul as were the Corinthians. What is more developed in I Thessalonians, in terms of a challenge, is the way Paul carried himself and what he taught.

Perhaps the single most common feature between the two cities and (groups of) letters is that the problems which are reflected in the letters are more social than theological in origin (Witherington:1995, 74). The studies on I Thessalonians tend to focus on the theological origin of conflict and praise, but it shall become apparent that this approach does not account for the issues in the letter as thoroughly as the Social Scientific approach.

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3 Wanamaker (1990) argued that the intention of 1:5 was not to separate by contrast: preaching which uses the words of men vs. preaching in the Holy Spirit. Rather the intent was to join the two -- "his preaching consisted in both the words that were spoken and the power that was manifested to the Thessalonians at the time" (Wanamaker:1990, 79).
Attempts to Account for the
Conflict and Praise in I Thessalonians

There are many inquiries into I Thessalonians which do not fall within the
scope of this exercise. For example, there are several works which focus on the
1990, and Wanamaker:1990). There are also studies which seek in the letter evidence
of the social setting of the church. These find the suffering of the Thessalonians
rooted in their having made a (messy) break with their previous cultic associations
these works account for the language found in the letter as originating in the social
Chow:1992), none focuses on the conflict between Paul and the Thessalonians, nor on
the warmth and urgency of the letter in this regard.

Of the studies which fall into the scope of this exercise, the majority focus on
the letter in theological terms. The first group accounts for the eschatological advice
as reflective of a theological "conflict" (in the smallest possible sense) between Paul
Barclay:1993). A second related group has drawn our attention more towards this
conflict, seeing reflected in I Thessalonians a series of charges (or the possibility of
charges) to which Paul responded (Schmithals: 1972, Lohse:1972, Kümmel:1975,
Yet here too, these are accounted for in theological terms and not in social-cultural terms. The third approach has seen it as a letter of consolation, or has focussed upon the theme of pastoral care (Forestell:1968, Malherbe:1983, 1987, 1990, Collins:1984, Donfried:1989, Donfried and Marshall:1993, Chapa:1994). These studies highlight the social-cultural terms and the features of praise in the letter. They tend, however, to downplay the importance of the conflict or of Paul's defense in favor of the letter's "warmth." The final section contains two approaches which have served to draw our gaze towards the social values which are reflected in the text (Keightley:1987, deSilva:1996). The present study is indebted to these previous insights, but also departs from them significantly in that it manages to reconcile the defensiveness (conflict) and praise, showing that they work in tandem as a part of Paul's riposte.

The first area of Thessalonian studies to be covered here concerns those which have focussed upon the eschatological teaching which Paul gave in the letter (4:13-18; 5:1-11). C.L. Mearns (1981) and Robert Jewett (1986) have used Paul's eschatological teaching (and other details of the letter) to discover a personality trait of the congregation which Paul felt the need to alter. Mearns felt that although Paul had originally taught a realised eschatology at Thessalonica, their behavior necessitated a future-oriented eschatology in order to "counter and correct the radical realized eschatological and charismatic enthusiasm" (Mearns:1981, 157) that had developed in their midst. According to Mearns, their overly-realised eschatology was
reflected in Paul's exhorting the ἀπακτοὶ to work and be active and to continue contributing to society, accepting that they could never know when the parousia would arrive (1 Thess 5:1-15).

Jewett (1986) preferred to distinguish the "realised eschatology" interpretation of scholars like Mearns from his own "millenarian radicalism," but the two amount to much the same thing. A millenarian world view is one which awaits the sudden, immanent, and total restructuring of the world. For Jewett, Paul's eschatological exhortations reflected the primary characteristic of the Thessalonian congregation: they were far too excited (and agitated) and were expecting the parousia daily. This millenarian radicalism was evident in the behavior of the ἀπακτοὶ, "who resisted on principle the structures of everyday life including the work ethic, the sexual ethic, and

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5 So too with Best (1972), Bruce (1980, 1982), and Barclay (1993). Schmithals (1972), on the other hand, accounted for this eschatological enthusiasm through a gnostic presence in Thessalonica.

6 Other scholars include F.F. Bruce (1980) and D.A. Black (1982).

7 Mearn's realised eschatology refers to a belief that the eschaton is already present in the world, while Jewett's millenarian radicalism implies it is immanent but not present. Yet the studies of Mearns and Jewett show (unwittingly) that both tend to be manifest in similar social behavior, that is in abandoning one's duties.

8 And Jewett's own descriptions tend to blur any distinctions between the two, especially on pages 97-98 of The Thessalonian Correspondence (1986).
the authority of the congregational leadership" (Jewett:1986, 176).\(^9\) Jewett argued that an understanding of the Cabirus cult could augment our perspective of the Thessalonian converts' behavior and beliefs. Cabirus was, according to Jewett, initially a favorite deity of the laborers, those who were situated very close to the bottom of the social scale.\(^10\) This redeemer-figure was appropriated by the wealthy and the "civic establishment" (Jewett:1986, 131). This appropriation of the laborers' patron deity left a gap which was filled for many by Paul's Christ imagery.\(^11\) Paul's depiction of the eschatological Christ would have seemed very familiar to those who had participated in the Cabirus cult. The "Christian" initiation would have seemed familiar to the Thessalonians. Initiation into the Cabirus cult involved the donning of ceremonial robes, water baptism, and the confession of sins (Jewett:1986, 129). Those who worshipped Cabirus looked forward to his return when he "would aid the poor and defend them against their oppressors..." (Jewett:1986, 165). Jewett argued that Christ would have served as an attractive alternative to Cabirus because of the promise that the poor would be defended and their persecution vindicated.

\(^9\)A.J. Malherbe (1983) offered a different interpretation. He felt that Paul's eschatological advice was not directed at repairing a flawed practice or interpretation. Instead Malherbe argued that the advice was meant solely to console and not to inform.

\(^{10}\)Aware of the troubles caused by ordering society along economic lines (MacMullen:1974, Alfoldy:1985), Jewett (1986) used economic terms ("poor") as well as socio-political ("oppressed") in order to create the sense that however one ranks society, these people were situated near the bottom of it.

\(^{11}\)Wanamaker (1990, 5) thought that the Thessalonian elites who adopted Cabirus probably did so as an attempt to unify the citizenry of the city.
These studies have succeeded in focussing our attention on the conflict between Paul and the Thessalonians reflected in the letter; however, they do this only minimally. Jewett (1986), for example, does not believe that 2:1-12 reflects a direct conflict between Paul and the congregation, but rather sees the "conflict" rooted in the theological differences between Paul and the millenarian radicalists. This approach, however, does not afford the conflict its appropriate import within the structure of the letter. This is even more the case with regards to the praise of the letter. Given the centrality of these two features, we need an approach which does justice to both simultaneously.

The second collection of studies wonders if Paul was responding to accusations made against him and his companions, Silvanus and Timothy, by the Thessalonians or others. Here there is a division between scholars who envision real criticism and those who, due to the letter's praise, refer to an imagined or at least non-Thessalonian source for the criticism. Studies in this group have focussed on I Thessalonians 2:1-12, known to some as the 'apostolic defense.' There are a number of issues in 2:1-12 which might lead one to see it as a defense of accusations levelled at Paul and his partners. Several times in this short section, Paul appealed to their memory of his work among them. In the letter as a whole Paul uses such phrases fifteen times, and six of them appear in this passage alone.\(^\text{12}\) Paul also appealed twice to God as witness

\(^{12}\)The phrases Paul uses to do this vary from the numerous \(\text{o}^\text{id}a\text{t}e\) (you know) constructions to \(\mu\nu\eta\mu\nu\epsilon\nu\nu\) (to remember), \(\chi\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha\nu\ \gamma\rho\alpha\phi\varepsilon\iota\nu\lambda\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu\) (there is no need
(2:5, 10) to his innocence (against the charges). The charges which Paul might have faced revolve around several issues: that Paul had fled the community in order to avoid persecution, leaving them to face it instead (2:2); that he and his companions acted from pride or for their own gain (2:3); that they spoke flatteries designed to deceive the Thessalonians and increase their own glory among men (2:5-8); and finally that they lived off of the converts (2:9). Barclay (1993) wrote that these amounted to "slanderous abuse" (Barclay:1993, 513). F.F. Bruce (1980) offered the same list of accusations, but he felt they did not originate from the Thessalonians. Rather he felt that the accusations might have come from the family and neighbors of the believers. For these scholars, the contents of Paul's letter are in response to a context of accusation, be it from the Thessalonians themselves or from their neighbors.

Others have accounted for the content of 2:1-12 slightly differently, though in the same vein. The "warmth," or, more accurately, the praise which Paul expressed inhibits some from seeing any conflict between Paul and the Thessalonians. These

13Lohse (1972), Kümmel (1975), Bruce (1980), Perkins (1987), and Donfried (1985, 1989), all agree that Paul was defending himself and the work of his companions.

14According to Kümmel (1975) it was "obviously the local Jews" (Kümmel:1975, 258) who were causing the Thessalonians to doubt Paul.
scholars claim that Paul is making a general defense similar to that practised by contemporary moral philosophers. Several writers have drawn parallels between Paul's letter and similar writings from the moral philosopher Dio Chrysostom (c. 40-120 CE). Malherbe (1970) noticed the similarities between Paul's and Dio's use of certain language. For example, Dio had accused certain charlatan philosophers of deception (πλάνη), flattery (κολακεία), seeking their own glory (δόξα), vanity (κενός), and failing to speak boldly (παρησία). Each of these words appears in the defense of 2:1-12. Charlatan philosophers were often accused of living off of their charges (Collins: 1984), another way in which Paul distinguished himself from these people (2:9). It was common for moral philosophers to attempt to set themselves apart from others who provided the same service. Malherbe (1983) wrote that an overall sense of distrust towards and between itinerant philosophers was common. As a result, it was not necessary for them to be accused directly in order to feel the need to defend themselves, their motives, and their methods. They often reminded each other that their "λόγος [word] should conform to their ἐργον [action]" (Malherbe: 1983, 247). The (good) philosophers would try to distance themselves from the (bad) philosophers, who, they felt, were acting from impure motives (Koester: 1979). Some have concluded, therefore, that Paul was not reacting to allegations directed at him.

15Malherbe (1970, 1983), Koester (1979, 1987a), I.H. Marshall (1983), Collins (1984, 1988a), and Wanamaker (1990). In all these cases, even if the scholars have not alluded to a similarity in the language as Malherbe did, they insinuate that 2:1-12 does not constitute a response to real accusations, but reflects Paul's perception of being misunderstood.
personally but at the type he represented. There are two scholars who see 2:1-12 as a combination of these two approaches. Best (1972) and Bruce (1982) argued that the letter does indeed list the aspects of behavior that were suspected of itinerant philosophers, but that these issues must have come up within the congregation at Thessalonica.

Unlike the previous section, this collection of studies emphasises the importance of the role of conflict within the letter as a whole. Whether the conflict emanated from the congregation directly or indirectly, these studies indicate that there was a concrete situation which required Paul to respond. They contribute to our understanding of this letter because they show that the conflict was central to the letter. However, these works do not take the reader beyond this. They do not answer why Paul defended himself with such urgency as we see in the letter. Also, as with the other studies, these avoid the praise and longing which are equally central to the letter.

A third group of scholars has approached I Thessalonians with a primary issue in view: how did Paul deal with the suffering and grieving of this community. This suffering is alluded to directly in several places: 1:3,6-8; 2:14-16; 3:3-4; 4:13-18. Focussing on the language of praise, these scholars have felt that the primary function of the letter was to console, and that the combination of consolation with exhortation was already traditional in moral philosophy. Malherbe, in a variety of ways, has
connected the tradition of *consolatio* with paraenesis and exhortation in extending "pastoral care" that Paul to his church (Malherbe:1987, 1).\(^{16}\) Malherbe (1983) was intrigued by how Paul’s use of hortatory terms was very much in the tradition of Greco-Roman exhortation. Hortatory terms abound in I Thessalonians: παράκλησις - exhortation (2:3), παρακαλέω - to exhort (2:12; 3:2,7; 4:1,10,18; 5:11,14), παραμυθέομαι - to encourage (2:12; 5:14), (δια)μαρτύρομαι - to solemnly declare (2:12; 4:6), στηρίζω - to support (3:2), παραγιγελία - instruction (4:2), παραγγέλω - to instruct (4:11), ἐρωτάομαι - to appeal (5:12), νομιθέω - to admonish (5:12,14), ἀντέχομαι - to hold fast (5:14), μακρομυθέω - to be patient (5:14). These terms for Malherbe indicated that Paul’s primary purpose was paraenetic (so too with Murphy-O’Connor:1995). The intent of the paraenesis in I Thessalonians, however, was not to exhort and castigate, but to exhort and console. Consolation is a part of paraenesis.\(^{17}\)

This complex relationship between consolation and paraenesis was clarified by Chapa (1994). Chapa agreed that the most important aspect of consolation was

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\(^{16}\)Forestell (1968) felt the overall tone of the letter was "gentle and optimistic" and that it constituted "sound pastoral care motivated by disinterested love" (Forestell:1968, 28). This same conclusion was echoed by Krentz (1992).

\(^{17}\)Collins drew attention to an important aspect of Paul’s hortatory language, specifically the παρακαλέω formulas. Collins felt that the use of παρακαλέω in literature evoked a diplomatic mood and showed that the writer was being sensitive to the needs and feelings of the audience. The παρακαλέω formula "conveys an authoritative request, but lacks the bluntness of a direct order" (Collins:1984, 302). Collins does not attempt to explain the sense behind the decidedly non-diplomatic ἐνορκίζω (to cause to swear) in 5:27.
exhortation (Chapa:1994, 152). Consolation often included the exhortation that suffering is a natural part of the human condition -- that it could be no other way. Consolation also involved the exhortation "not to be overcome excessively by grief and, in consequence, neglect one's duties" (Chapa:1994, 152). The combination of exhortation and consolation was most evident in the figure of the nurse. The nurse provides consolation to a child who has been hurt by carelessness. But she also (at the appropriate time) castigates the child for its carelessness. Exhortation was a necessary part of consolation, but it always came from a place of caring and love, not of fault-finding. Moral philosophers considered themselves similar to nurses in this respect: obligated to render help, even to strangers (Malherbe:1990, 380). Like nurses, moral philosophers offered help to the infirm, though to those made infirm by an ailment of the spirit instead of the body. Also like the nurse, the moral philosophers needed to exhort their listeners to behavior that would be conducive to their mental/spiritual health. As a result, their words often seemed combative and offensive, but their speech was seen as a strong medicine -- unpleasant at times but designed to work, and always emanating from love, not malice (Malherbe:1970).

Donfried (1989) also recognised the relationship between paraenesis and consolation. Like Malherbe and Chapa, in this respect, he saw the primary aim of the letter as the consolation of grief.

Malherbe (1990) pointed out that the exhortation/consolation had to keep a fine balance between avoiding convenient or worn-out clichés on the one hand, and sounding too harsh and risking resentment on the other.
Malherbe (1990) concluded that Paul was more than a little familiar with the tradition of the moral philosophers (as did Collins: 1988a, 775). Paul's writing is replete with the phrases, motifs, terms, and mannerisms of the moral philosopher -- consoling, but harsh if necessary. However, where Malherbe (1990) saw the primary function and style of I Thessalonians to be thoroughly consolatory, Chapa argued that the lack of cohesion between the consolatory characteristics of the letter should make one cautious to designate the letter as *consolatio* (Chapa: 1994, 159). Despite the many common elements between I Thessalonians and a letter of consolation, Chapa identified other aspects which were lacking, making him reticent to call the letter exclusively consolatory. He concluded that while the letter definitely contained "some rhetorical strategies current in literature of consolation," (Chapa: 1994, 159) it was possible and advisable to call it a consoling letter without eliminating other compelling aspects.

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20 The characteristics of literature of consolation evident in I Thessalonians include: The letter serves to stand in for an absence (2:17-18); sympathy, as in "I have suffered too" (2:2); philosophical consideration -- nobody is immortal (3:3-4); probability of future afflictions (3:3); praise for how suffering has been faced (1:6-10); drawing comparison with others who have suffered nobly (2:14-15); and finally exhortation (chapters 4-5).

21 The aspects which made Chapa reticent to conclude that this is a letter of consolation include: the "lack an overall linking scheme" (1994, 159), there is no mention of a sad event which prompted the writing of the letter, and that Paul's *paraklesis* more closely resembles the exhortations of Hebrew prophets than it does the consolations of Hellenistic moral philosophers.

22 The most recent addition to Malherbe's (1995) study of the pastoral and consoling elements of I Thessalonians has lead him in the direction of the Family and fictive kin model. Paul added to his consolation with the use of family terms to describe his relationship with...
This approach differs from the others in that it accentuates the centrality of the letter's praise; often the praise-language is directly related to the strategy of consolation. What is more, this approach reconciles two different types of language — praise and exhortation — by applying them both to the act of consolation. This is the most important contribution of this approach to the present study. Yet, these works emphasise the letter's praise at the cost of ignoring the conflict and the defensiveness found in other passages.

A final area of studies has contributed to the current approach to this letter. Despite ignoring both the conflict and the praise, it has emphasised the importance of social values in the creation of a community and therefore in its documents. Georgia Masters Keightley (1987) worked from the presupposition that memory is social. Memory is not comprised of "facts" alone, but of "remembered facts" (Keightley: 1987, 151). Memory of time and space is created by each community, society, person, country, etc. A country or person or community may conform to the universal pattern of minutes, days, and weeks; however, it superimposes upon this its own sense of time — past and future — in the form of liturgical calendars, institutional calendars, and

them: ἀγαπητοί (beloved), ἀδελφοί (brothers), ἀπορφανισθέντες (having been made an orphan), and πατήρ (father). This language was meant to console the grief of the Thessalonians by showing that they were now members of a new family, not simply of a new community. As Osiek (1996) has shown, the family was an important symbolic concept and a pragmatic entity in antiquity. Hence, Paul's use of family and fictive kin imagery would have been powerful and effective. Given Neyrey's (1995) portrayal of the consequences of being disowned by one's family, it is not surprising that Paul would have used (fictive) kinship language to welcome and console the Greek converts.
personal anniversaries, etc. So too regarding the creation of space and community with the standard dualisms of us/them, resident/foreigner, and others concerning class, race, gender, and education. Memory remembered helps to give structure to a community.

"Time" in I Thessalonians is centered on two events: the death of Jesus (the beginning of the new time) and the immanent parousia (the expected end of this new time). The memory of Jesus also dictates how time is to be spent. They are not to take time for granted, as with those who think "peace and security." (5:3) Time in I Thessalonians is "characterized mainly by its unexpectedness, its suddenness, its inevitability" (Keightley: 1987, 1523). The believers are also to live justly, to make their lives worthy of God (2:12), knowing that it is God's will for them to be sanctified (4:3). Likewise, "space" in I Thessalonians is created by preaching the gospel with the power of the holy spirit (1:4; 2:1, 13) because it calls for a new community. The "gospel of Christ" (3:2), the instructions they are given "in Christ" (4:2) all "stand behind the radically new scheme of social existence that characterizes the Thessalonians' life" (Keightley:1987, 154). Paul's use of abundant family terminology is also attributed to this newly-created space, that of the new family of God (also, Malherbe:1995). Their place in this new community is signified by God as father, Jesus Christ as Saviour, and their brethren as "brothers and sisters."23

23The primary weakness with Keightley's argument is that the details she attributes to the Thessalonians' memory of Jesus seem more appropriately attributed to their memory of
Also in the realm of community-building and boundary-maintenance is a recent study by D.A. deSilva (1996) which looks at I Thessalonians using an honor and shame model. DeSilva focussed on honor and shame as tools of social engineering. DeSilva's model rests on the notion that "Honor and dishonor represent the primary means of social control..." (deSilva:1996, 50). Because the dominant society has ways of discouraging deviance -- or conversely of perpetuating majority values -- the minority must develop defense mechanisms with which they can fight the assimilation. Minority groups must be vigilant about defining and redefining their boundaries lest they are swallowed up by the dominant society. "In this way, the minority culture is freed from the dominant culture's social-control techniques to pursue the goals deemed honorable by that group" (deSilva:1996, 69).

It was deSilva's contention that this is precisely the struggle which was taking place in Thessalonica. The majority and former culture (Greco-Roman) of the believers was using alienation and shaming tactics to induce the believers to abandon their new faith and return to their old one (as reflected in the references to their suffering). For example, each group has a 'court of reputation' which serves as the arena of censure or recognition. This usually consists in people whose opinion one values, be they peers, superiors, friends, or the public in general. Paul had to remind

Paul. For the Thessalonians did not know Jesus, but rather knew only Paul. Their "memory of Jesus" is very indirect, resembling to a far greater extent Paul's "memory," if it can even be called that.
the Thessalonians that their former 'court of reputation' was no longer the relevant 'court of reputation'. Rather, their new 'court of reputation' had God as its head. For example, the very simple designation "the church of God" (2:14) reflects this. The more complex phrase "for this is the will of God, your sanctification" (4:3) serves two functions. On the one hand, it attempts to create a boundary between the "sanctified" and otherwise. This separation of insider and outsider is also made explicit at 5:3-8. Even calling the Thessalonians "brethren" so incessantly can be seen as a way of reminding them that they themselves are a part of their own 'court of reputation'. On the other hand, it shows God as the primary figure to whom all are accountable. Paul also told them "to please God" (4:1). Finally, though deSilva offers many more examples, Paul used the term φιλαδελφία (brotherly love) to connote the love and support of each other in the new community instead of the more universal φιλανθρωπία (love of humanity).

These two studies serve to direct our attention to the social values which hold a society and which a society holds. In deSilva's case particularly, he also seeks to understand the role of those values, namely honor and shame, in the creation of a community and also in the creation of its documents. In this way we are directed to search more closely how the social values of honor and shame influenced Paul to write I Thessalonians. How is it that these values made Paul's language not only acceptable but expected? These two studies, however, do not address the defense
(conflict) or the praise of the letter. There is still the need for an approach which is capable of considering these two issues, as well as considering the role of social values which these two studies start us along.

Summary

These approaches each contribute to a better understanding of I Thessalonians. The studies of Paul's eschatology remind us that all was not well between Paul and the Thessalonians. The focus on the defensive nature of Paul's writing emphasises the degree of the conflict more strongly still, but does not develop the degree of its urgency. Furthermore, both these groups ignore the praise which comprises the "other half" of the letter. The approach from the perspective of consolation recognises that Paul certainly would have consoled his suffering converts; hence, the abundance of praise throughout the letter. The studies of community building and boundary maintenance introduce the importance of cultural and social values and the relationship between the text and the community to which it is connected.

Social Scientific Criticism offers an alternative which highlights the letter's praise and the urgency of Paul's defense. In 1994, Richard Horsley argued that the "established paradigm" of Pauline studies has hidden from view that "Paul's euangelion was apparently political" (Horsley:1994, 1158). In the same way, it could be argued that the "established paradigm" (the theological approach) has not
adequately illumined how Paul was influenced (even governed) by the normative social values of his world, among them the values of honor and shame. It could be argued further that the "established paradigm" has hidden from view the intimate relationship between the social values of honor and shame and the epistolary devices of praise and blame. This shall be considered in Chapter Three. If there is a "new paradigm," it might be the Social Scientific approach. The next chapter develops a model of agonistic honor and shame and defines the terms associated with it. This is done within the rubric of Social Scientific Criticism.
Chapter Two
Social Scientific Criticism
and
Honor and Shame

Introduction

Social Scientific Criticism seeks to explain the 'whys' and 'hows' of a biblical text, not simply the 'whats' and 'wheres' of its context.¹ Such is the distinction that has been drawn between social description and social explanation (Elliott:1993). Social description is important in many situations, and often description of context is required before the interpretation of a text can occur.² It is not, however, the end of the process but rather the beginning.³ This process of explanation is evident in recent studies which have used this approach. Scholars have sought to understand some

¹In this way it ventures beyond the Sitz-im-Leben of the text, that is the simple social description of society.

²There are limitations so great that some question whether sociology (and its models) should be used at all. The hazards and limitations which are most pressing for this type of study are sociological abstraction (Neusner:1986, Holmberg:1990, Horsley:1994), the cross-cultural and cross-temporal application of models (Rodd:1981, Osiek:1992b) and the New Testament as a sociological source (Rodd:1981, T. Best:1983, Schöllgen:1988)

³Richard Horsley (1989) offered a defense of sociological description. Horsley wrote that "given the combination of lack of evidence with a lack of truly analogous comparative material and sociological models based on such comparative material, it may be absolutely essential to devote much more attention to reconstruction of the most pertinent ancient social structures and conflicts before we can seriously proceed to satisfactory explanation" (Horsley:1989, 8).
element of the New Testament by approaching it with an understanding of social values like honor and shame.

Social Scientific Criticism has provided the foundation and insight necessary for a study of this type. The sociology of knowledge (Berger: 1967), the role and importance of symbolic cultural values (Malina: 1993b), and the use of models for analysing the influence of these values (Riley: 1963, Carney: 1975, Malina: 1983, Rohrbaugh: 1984 and 1991) are all a part of this method. The Social-scientific method focuses on the text (content, meaning, genre, and rhetorical strategy) as well as on the context (historical, cultural, and social). Yet, to do just these two would be scarcely different from what already exists in New Testament interpretation, namely the theological, literary, historical, redaction, rhetorical and form criticisms. What is unique about Social Scientific Criticism is that it focuses on the dialectical relationship between the social values of a society (such as honor and shame) and the people (and their documents) which operate in that society.

This chapter endeavors to do two things. First, within the context of Social Scientific Criticism, this chapter shall define the aspects of honor and shame which are most relevant to our study of I Thessalonians. Though this takes up the majority of this chapter, the last part shall focus on recent work which has utilised honor and shame as a Social Scientific model with which to understand certain parts of the New
In this way we shall be prepared to apply the model to this letter of Paul.

**Elements of Honor and Shame**

Honor and shame are features and values of past and present Mediterranean (and Latin American) culture which serve to govern or influence social interaction. If these values are to be found in the culture of a people, then they will be found with certainty in their documents. Indeed, just as the values of honor and shame can be found encoded in the Homeric epics, in Aristotle, and in Thucydides, so too are they found in the New Testament. The aim of approaching the New Testament documents from the perspective of honor and shame is to explain why the actors (Paul or Jesus, for example) behaved as they did. Why (or how) did their actions make sense in that time and to that audience? Defining the values of honor and shame allows us to make sense of their actions and words. The purpose of such models in Biblical studies is to understand the social inter-relationships which transpire in ancient texts. When one applies the model of honor and shame to I Thessalonians, the purpose, content, and urgency of Paul's response to the community assumes added clarity.

The task of *defining* honor and shame as social values is an exacting one.

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*"Biblical texts, like all texts oral or written, presuppose and encode information regarding the social and cultural systems in which they were produced and in which they make sense. Both the meanings communicated by the author(s) of these texts to their intended hearers readers and the text's persuasive power are determined by the social and cultural systems that the author(s) and audiences inhabited and that enabled meaningful communication in the first place"* (Elliott:1993, 50).
Some scholars have tended to associate dyadic cultures with the social values of honor and shame. For Malina and his predecessors, a culture which is governed by values of honor and shame must be dyadic (Pitt-Rivers: 1966, Malina: 1993b).  

'Dyad' means 'pair' and it is, ostensibly, the opposite of our modern 'monadic' -- individualistic -- culture. Stated differently, honor and shame as "pivotal values" (Malina: 1993b, 28) are not compatible with a monadic personality or culture. An honor and shame culture requires the constant comparison of one individual to another, which Malina called the "group oriented personality" (Malina: 1993b, 65). According to J.J. Pilch (1991a), a dyadic personality exists only in relation to another person: "The dyadic personality always needs another person or persons to assure personal identity, to grant social approval, to assist in making decisions, to prevent one from getting into trouble, to monitor behaviour..." (Pilch: 1991a, 69). Malina (1993b) contrasted the

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5This distinction of the shame/dyadic culture is often contrasted to the guilt/monadic culture, and is held to be true not only of the distinction between ancient and modern cultures, but also that between North American and South American and Japanese cultures (Benedict: 1947). It is apparent that South American and Japanese society, where life is lived in public and one is accountable to one’s neighbours, continues to function with the external behavioral controls of honor and shame. A creative account of this traditional feature of Latin American culture (and its incremental "modernisation") is found in Jorge Amado’s Gabriela, Clove, and Cinnamon (1962). One should not claim, however, that honor or shame do not exist in our own society. A cursory glance at men posturing in a bar and people in the courts defending their "names" from libellous slander is testament to the (continuing) influence of these values. It is these values which dictate, for example, the level of our horror at being insulted or humiliated in the presence of our peers.

6Pilch (1991a) offered the following examples of how the dyadic society is reflected in the New Testament: I Th. 1:6, 5:14; Gal. 1:10, 2:6, 2:9, 4:10, 6:1; I Cor. 1:11-17, 3:3-4, 6:12-20, 5:1-5, 9:19-23, 10:23-11:1. Let us look at the two examples from I Thessalonians. I Th. 1:6 says καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου -- "and you became
ancient dyadic personality with the modern monadic sense of individuality apparent in
the social activist who is "motivated to behave in the 'right' way, alone, if necessary,
regardless of what others might think or say. In our own modern process of identity
formation, we are led to believe and act as if we do so singly and alone, responsible
only for our own actions, since each person is a unique sphere of feeling and knowing,
of judging and acting" (Malina:1993b, 67). The consensus is that the modern notion
of the person-as-individual and with individual interests and rights would not even
have occurred to the ancient dyadic personality.7

It is within this dyadic cultural environment that honor as a "pivotal value" has
been so firmly based.8 There are two types of honor -- ascribed honor and achieved

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imitators of us and of the Lord." I Th. 5:14 says παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ υμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,
nουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους, παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους, ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀθενών, μακρομυθεῖτε πρὸς πάντας -- "And so we exhort you, brothers, admonish the
disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient towards everyone." These
two excerpts from I Thessalonians reflect dyadic behavior in that the addressees are asked to
define their behavior or conduct in accordance to that of another person's sense of
appropriateness, not from their own sense of right.

7The extent to which this exclusive designation of ancient culture as dyadic is
questionable. It appears that concern for the opinions of others was not all-encompassing in
antiquity. There are many examples of people (and characters) in antiquity acting with no
regard for public expectations. Indeed, Malina's sense of the modern social activist echoes
Williams' (1993) description of Ajax and like characters in the Sophoclean and Euripidean
dramas who behave from an internal (monadic) as opposed to the external (dyadic) sense of
what is right. Further in support of this challenge, Malherbe (1970) showed that the Cynic
philosopher was required to act without regard for the concerns or censure of society,
otherwise he could not speak with παρρησία -- free and courageous speech (Malherbe:1970,
208), a word which Paul used in I Thessalonians to describe his own preaching.

8Rohrbaugh (1995) and Saul Olyan (1996) illustrated how the Hebrew Bible is
steeped in honor and shame language and symbolism. This is reflected in the language which
honor. When one is born into a family, s/he inherits the honor of his/her predecessors. Honor which is ascribed by birth or origins is commonly signified by blood or name, hence the genealogies in the New Testament, Paul's claim to be "of the people Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, according to the law a Pharisee" (Phil 3:5), and the designation of a person by place (Mary of Magdala, Joseph of Arimathea). Nothing can be done to earn ascribed honor. Achieved honor, is used to describe the covenantal relationships between people and God and between people and other people. For example, I Samuel 2:30 states: "The LORD says, 'Those who honor me I will honor (דָּבֶנֶּהוּ), and those who show contempt (תֹּעֲבָר) for me, they shall be diminished (דָּבֶנֶּהוּ)(dishonored?)'." Though Olyan's wishing to read "dishonored" for דָּבֶנֶּהוּ is not entirely accurate, I would defend his having done so. Strictly speaking, the hiphil of דָּבֶנֶּהוּ, which is what appears in the passage, means "to treat with contempt" (Holladay:1988). However, Olyan is trying to draw out the implied differences between those who shall be "honored" and those who shall suffer the opposite fate, in this case "contempt," though it is compelling to read "dishonored." Olyan also considered the obligation which David had to his people. II Samuel 19:1-9 tells of how David dishonored the sacrifice of his people by mourning in victory (over Absalom) instead of rejoicing. Also, at II Samuel 10:1-6, the Ammonites publically shame David, leaving him with no recourse but to respond (riposte) militarily.

Malina was one of the first to draw attention to the abundance of honor and shame terminology and influence in the New Testament. For example, whenever Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees or Scribes for working on the Sabbath (Matt 12:2) or questioned about the source of his miracles and authority (Matt 21:23-27), this was clearly a challenge which was meant to shame. When the Pharisees wanted a sign from Jesus (Matt 12:38-42; Matt16:1-4) he strategically out maneuvered them. He did not, however, ignore them; he responded to the challenge in a way that would shame the Pharisees. Even the times that Jesus was approached by the public desiring to be cured (i.e., with good intentions) can be seen as potential for Jesus to be shamed, for shame would be the certain result if Jesus were to fail. Jesus knew well what the implications were if a miracle could not be performed. According to Halvor Moxnes (1988), in Paul's letter to the Romans, honor and shame terminology can be "found in all sections of the letter and are thus more evenly distributed than the terminology of justification" (Moxnes:1988, 210). Both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles contain many more examples of honor-shame and challenge-riposte discourse than can be presented here.

Moxnes (1993) wrote "It has been argued that Christianity was totally opposed to the honor and shame culture--that it represented, instead, a totally different set of values like
on the other hand, is earned by one's actions, such as by doing noble deeds, hence the honor accorded to the victor of an athletic contest, or to the builder of public buildings. These deeds need to be seen and acknowledged by the public; in order for honor to be bestowed or gained, the public must be privy to the event. Achieved honor is granted by society alone, and it can be lost as quickly as it is won. Honor is the public claim to a certain worth or position in society (reputation), and it is confirmed (or not) by the public's approbation (or lack of it). Achieved honor is competed for, and is won and lost in the theater of daily public living.

Shame, for men, is the negative result which accompanies a loss of honor. It is a negative commodity which people endeavor to avoid. Just as the public-as-witness is critical in claims of honor, so too is it within the assessment of shame. In this way, shame functions as the counterpart to honor as a behavioral control. Shame is external, in that it is not simply the result of being insulted, but of having an audience to witness the insult. The behavioral control of shame is said to be external because it relies on the presence of others to mete out punishment for inappropriate behavior. Conversely, guilt has been seen as an internal control because even in the absence of

humility and charity" (Moxnes:1993, 175). However, Moxnes (1993), Neyrey (1994) and Rohrbaugh (1995) have suggested that Jesus and Paul were full participants in the social challenge and riposte contest. Notice Paul's claims to both ascribed honor and achieved honor on various occasions: I Thessalonians 2:2, Philippians 3:4b-6; Acts 22:4-5; 23:1; 26:4-5. It is interesting to compare these, and indeed this whole thesis, with Peter Marshall's reference to "Paul's typical depiction of himself as a figure of shame" (P. Marshall:1983, 302).
an audience, one is able to feel guilt. But shame is also (though less often recognised as) the positive acknowledgement and respect for the honor of others. To be shameless, then, is to have no regard either for the honor of those around you or for your own honor.

The common use of honor and shame as a single paradigm has perpetuated the sense that these two values sit in a binary relation to one another. Peristiany's description of honor and shame as "two poles of an evaluation" (Peristiany:1966, 9) implicitly informs many scholars still. Honor was seen as the positive commodity which every male wanted, and shame was something that was avoided at all cost. It is more accurate, however, to view them as two separate though commonly related values. This is true mostly because it has been found that the necessary opposite to honor is not shame, but dishonor. DeSilva (1995) reflects this sensitive distinction.

Discussions of shame are increasingly accompanied by the topic of guilt. In a dyadic society, behavioral controls such as honor and shame are seen as group

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10Williams (1993) described this in the following way: Shame, as an external reality, can be alleviated by removing oneself from the gaze of the audience -- to disappear. Guilt, however, cannot be alleviated in this manner. With guilt, "I am more dominated by the thought that even if I disappeared, it would come with me" (Williams:1993, 89).

11Williams (1993) indicated how relevant it is that in ancient Greek literature, honor and shame infrequently appear as binary opposites. Williams wrote, "People have at once a sense of their own honour and a respect for other people's honour; they can feel indignation or other forms of anger when honour is violated, in their own case or in somebody else's" (Williams:1993, 80). Shame is not simply the negative "loss of honor." It is also a positive indication, as in the healthy respect for or recognition of the honor of others. This alone would indicate that honor and shame should not treated as binary opposites (Wikan:1984).
oriented, as opposed to guilt, which is seen as an individually centered behavioral control (Malina: 1993b, 67). Anthropologists and classicists adopted the distinction between modern "shame cultures" and "guilt cultures" (Benedict: 1947, 222), and it seems that biblical scholars have assumed it from there (Malina and Neyrey: 1996). Guilt and shame, however, are not as easy to separate as was once thought (Cairns: 1993, 26).\textsuperscript{12} Shame is not exclusively an external control, for it has internal aspects as well (Williams: 1993, 79; Cairns: 1993, 142). Shame also is more than just the internal fear of public castigation. Shame springs from a contradiction between internalised standards (or conscience\textsuperscript{13}) and one's own behavior (Cairns: 1993, 144). Shame can be the result of public disapproval, but it can also be the result of a personal disapproval.\textsuperscript{14}

Honor in the ancient world was a limited good (Malina: 1993b). The theory of

\textsuperscript{12}Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1990) felt that the dichotomy between shame and guilt was not supported by the literature. He claimed that guilt was as prominent as shame in ancient Greek literature. This has been echoed by Cairns (1993) and Williams (1991).

\textsuperscript{13}Cairns was clear to point out that this "conscience" in no way resembles our notion of "conscience." He used it simply to accentuate the internal aspect of the sentiment, as "that which encodes the standards and values of the individual" (Cairns: 1993, 146).

\textsuperscript{14}This can be seen as especially true when one considers that one's anticipation of disapproval might be "wildly wide of the mark" (Cairns: 1993, 16), indicating that censure can exist independent of an external reality. This is partly evident in Telemachus' instinctive rather than calculative (Cairns: 1993, 104) sense of shame (\textit{Od.} 3.14-24) in approaching someone with more honor than himself. For Williams this was evident in the two Homeric terms \textit{aidōs} (shame) and \textit{nemesis} (indignation). He found it revealing that the two terms are frequently found on the same side of an equation, indicating they are neither exclusively internal nor external (Williams: 1993, 89).
limited good relates primarily to discussions of wealth and the accumulation of market goods, but it also describes honor in antiquity in the sense that there was never enough for everybody to have equal access to it (Malina:1993b, 90-116). The increase in one’s honor is always accompanied by the decrease in another’s honor (dishonor of sorts). This is the case when John the Baptist claimed (voluntarily) that “one who is more powerful than I is coming” (Luke 3:16; also Matt 3:11 and Mark1:7). John the Baptist recognised that for one to come along who was greater than he would necessarily mean his own “demotion” in status (reduced honor). Like any economic good in short supply, the limited nature of honor leads to competition (demand) for it. This demand and competition for honor is reflected in the term *agonistic* to describe ancient society. From the Greek word *agōn*, meaning contest or struggle, the term agonism refers to the belief that life in the ancient Mediterranean was lived publically and that competition for the goods needed for sustenance (food, tools) and the advancement in society (honor) was keen. Honor is considered to have been a commodity which others attempted continuously to usurp and which one had to be vigilant to protect. This feature of honor in the ancient world, according to some, is so prominent as to warrant calling it agonistic. Agonism is the aspect of this model which has been most commonly utilised (Moxnes: 1988, 1993, 1996; Malina:1991, 1993a, 1993b; Hanson:1994; Neyrey:1994).15

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15Although Gilmore (1987) and deSilva (1996) have shown that the agonistic aspect of honor and shame distorts the considerable variety of honorable and dishonorable behavior,
Agonistic honor and shame are characterised foremost by the contest (agon) of challenge and riposte. When not won by virtuous deeds or cooperatively, honor was won by challenging others for theirs. The way to retain honor in the face of a challenge is with a riposte. From an agonistic point of view, a challenge must be met by the appropriate response or riposte (Malina: 1993b; Rohrbaugh: 1995, Moxnes: 1996). Failure to respond to a challenge can be interpreted as cowardice, bringing immediate shame (Rohrbaugh: 1995). Challenges can take several forms, whether direct or indirect, subtle or obvious. Challenges can take the form of an outright face-to-face verbal insult or a subtle twist in the tone of one's voice; they can be a brief contact between bodies on the street, or a slap in the face. Clearly, the

it has not yet been shown that the public competition for honor has ceased to constitute a characteristic of ancient culture. Neyrey (1994) and Hanson (1994) have both shown that this model has potential to illuminate the formative values which lie behind the creation of a document. What has been shown is that an increasingly complex model of honor and shame requires the presence of both aspects. For example, consider the two following honor discourses. In II Samuel 19:1-9, David's behavior is subject to Joab's criticism for not being in accordance with acceptable behavior. David is censured for "covering with shame" (יִנָּה) the faces of all those who risking their lives to save the king and his family. The cooperative model offers an explanation here where a solely agonistic model could not. However, the cooperative aspect of honor and shame cannot explain David's military riposte to being publically shamed at II Samuel 10:1-6. Although social engineering is a critical aspect of honor and shame discourse, it cannot claim to account for every detail of a text any more than the agonistic aspect can.

16 The area of the head figures prominently in honor and shame terminology: an insult to one's face or to slap someone or spit in the face are both seriously dishonoring; to behead someone is the ultimate loss of honor, not only because of the loss of life but because of the indignity done to the head. This is reflected in I Samuel 31, which relates the great shame that was done to Saul by the Philistines when he was beheaded after his death on the battle field, and so too in I Sam 17:5 when David beheads Goliath.
nature of a riposte must depend on the nature, source, and perceived intent of the challenge.  Therefore the riposte too can be either subtle or obvious, so long as it is witnessed by others. There is no formulaic riposte; it seems that the role of the public is to interpret a riposte in order to judge its sufficiency. The "public," in this case, forms a "court of reputation" (Pitt-Rivers: 1966, 27). The 'court of reputation' is the group before whom one is responsible, accountable for one's actions. It is comprised of those who know your standing in the community and your honor and therefore assess daily your movement up or down the social ladder of honor. The 'court of reputation' is always present to judge the outcome of a challenge and riposte contest.

The challenge-riposte contest can and does cross social strata. Traditionally it has been held that a challenge cannot transgress social boundaries, that only social equals can challenge each other (Peristiany: 1966, Pitt-Rivers: 1966, Malina: 1993b, Moxnes: 1993). An inferior is not deemed to possess enough honor to besmirch the honor of her or his superior. A father (or king or God) who punishes his child (or liege or people) does so out of discipline and not as a riposte to any challenge (Pitt-Rivers: 1977, 10; Malina and Neyrey: 1991a, 30; Malina: 1993b, 35; Joubert: 1995).

17 According to Malina (1993a), to thank a person for a kind act can also be considered a challenge. To thank a person is to say "thank-you, but no more," which constitutes a challenge (Malina: 1993a, 171). Rohrbaugh (1995) wrote that honor "can be challenged positively by means of a gift or compliment, sometimes so subtly that it is hard for non-Mediterraneans to catch the drift" (Rohrbaugh: 1995, 185).

18 DeSilva (1995 and 1996) has shown that there is also another function of the 'court of reputation', namely to impose unity within a social group.
An insulting remark or failure to obey a superior can be responded to (i.e., punished) as insubordination or impudence, but there is no chance of honor being won or lost in the exchange. Likewise, an insulting remark from a superior is simply an insult, for a superior would not take the honor from someone who cannot defend him or herself.

While there has been no official revision of this detail, some recent literature reflects one indirectly (Neyrey:1994, Rohrbaugh:1995). It is worth reconsidering the validity of this assumption since the very basis of this study is that Paul, even as God's apostle and therefore a figure of considerable honor, reacted as one who had been challenged by the Thessalonians. While it is not difficult to conceive of a scenario in which an insult from a person of lowly status to an aristocrat has no chance of damaging honor, it is not possible to state categorically that challenges never crossed status boundaries.

There are several examples in the New Testament and related literature which imply a cross-status challenge. In the Acts of Paul and Thecla, Thecla shamed Alexander -- "She laid hold of Alexander, tore his cloak, and took his crown off his head, and made him appear ridiculous before all the people. But Alexander, partly as he loved her and partly being ashamed for what had been done..." (7:5-6). This passage is conspicuous not only because Alexander is an aristocrat, but is all the more so because Thecla is a woman. It is assumed by many that the woman's role in the honor and shame culture was limited to the sexual politics of adultery and promiscuity, as distinct from the traditional male roles of power brokerage (Brandes:
Also, at Jesus' trial, Pilate was shamed when the crowds contradicted his suggestion to free Jesus, and when he realised that he was powerless to do anything about it (Matt 27:15-24). Finally, although the gospel writers saw Jesus as holding some sort of authority beyond the temporal authority of his opponents (implying an unequal status), they did not hesitate to portray him in challenge and riposte contests with the Pharisees and with Pilate. An example from the Iliad also highlights the cross-status concern for honor: "I feel shame (αἰδέομαι) before the Trojans and the Trojan women with trailing robes, that someone who is less of a man (κακώτερος) than I will say of me, "Hector believed in his own strength and ruined his people" (Il. 22:105).

Rohrbaugh wrote recently that "Challenges may be answered, brushed aside with the scorn allowed a superior, or responded to in kind, but they are never, ever, under any circumstances, run from or ignored" (Rohrbaugh:1995, 185, my emphasis). This is precisely how the challenge and riposte occurs between two people of unequal status: the superior might very well brush it aside, but it is not ignored. Even the contemptuous brushing aside of a challenge recognises it as a challenge, and therefore

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In the early understanding of honor and shame, gender was an important aspect. What was honorable and shameful for men and women was different and based entirely on gender (Malina:1993b). While gender is a prominent feature of honor and shame, Delaney (1987) warned against the assumption that it is the essence of these values. She wrote that a woman's shame stems from her inability to access the power that is available to men in that male dominated society. However, there is a certain honor to which women have access, such as honor gained through giving birth (Stuart Love:1993).
the brushing aside can be interpreted as a riposte. Perhaps if one wonders whether some exchange includes a challenge, one need only wonder if the exchange could result in lost honor for either party. Joubert (1995) claimed that Paul, as *paterfamilias* to the Corinthians, was beyond questioning and challenge. Yet it is easy to see that if Paul had not responded, his honor would have been diminished in their eyes.

These examples suggest that the challenge and riposte struggle was not always limited to persons of equal status, or at the very least that even people of high status were wary about their honor. Thus, the fact that Paul referred to himself as "father" to the Thessalonians (2:11) does not mean that he saw himself to be un-challengeable.20 Likewise, neither did the fact that Paul was an apostle of God/Christ (2:7) elevate him beyond challenge from his converts.

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20Holmberg (1978) implied that Paul's use of 'father' did mean that he was beyond challenge. Holmberg indicated places in the Pauline letters where this is evident. The communities 1) were expected to recognise their debt to Paul (I Thess 2:5-7, 8f); 2) Trust and be proud of him (II Cor 5:2; 12:11); 3) Repay their debt to him by opening their hearts and ears to him (II Cor 6:11-13; Gal 4:19f); 4) Recognise their inferiority to him and their inability to judge their "father" (I Cor 3:1-4; 4:1-4; II Cor 3:1-3); 5) Imitate their "father" (I Cor 14:16; 10:33-11:1; I Thess 1:6); 6) Obey their "father" (I Cor 4:21; II Cor 2:9). The trouble with this view is that Holmberg (holding to the traditional notion that a challenge cannot cross status boundaries) had Paul claiming he was beyond the challenge-riposte contest with his churches. Yet, this is not supported by an honor and shame analysis of I Thessalonians, at least. Perhaps it was more the case that with the family as a major source of honor in the ancient world (Moxnes:1993), Paul used the image of the father not to impose his own unchallengeable will on the community, but to foster a sense of family (unity and empowerment) among his converts (Malherbe:1995). Holmberg's interpretation of "father" offers such a different perspective of Paul than does Collins' (1984) interpretation of the ταρακαλέω (to exhort) formula.
Recent Studies Using Honor and Shame

The majority of Social Scientific studies which have used honor and shame have focussed upon the agonistic aspect of this model. That is to say, they have perceived members of a society (like Jesus or Paul) to be players in an unending struggle both to usurp the honor of others, and to defend their own. The agonistic understanding of honor and shame is built on the concept of *limited good* (Malina: 1993b). It is common to consider honor in this setting as a commodity in short supply. The fact that there was not unlimited honor for everybody is what led most to the constant competition for it.

Recently this model has been used to interpret certain passages of the canonical gospels (Hanson: 1994, Neyrey: 1995, Rohrbaugh: 1995). K.C. Hanson (1994) saw the makarisms (blessings) and reproaches (woes) in Matthew to be firmly rooted in an agonistic honor and shame context. While translators offer "happy," "blessed," or "fortunate" for μακάριος (and for its LXX equivalent of ἡ ρήσις), Hanson argued that these lack any semblance of grounding in the cultural values of honor and the social context of agonism. Conversely, the translation of these as, for example, "Honorable are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῶν πνεύματι, δι' αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - Matt 5:3) more honestly reflects the importance of honor and agonism during this time. The same holds true for the opposite of these terms, the reproach οὐαί (נֶר in the Hebrew Bible) as "woe
to," "unhappy," or "unfortunate." Hanson argued that the sense of "How shameful are the scribes and Pharisees..." (Ούαλ δε ύμιν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρασσίοι... - Matt 23:13) reflects the agonistic culture in a way that simply "Unhappy..." does not. Furthermore, Hanson noted that the μακάριος/γράφη constructions are "neither authoritative blessings nor joyous emotions... [but rather] represent the public validation of an individual's or group's experience, behavior, or attitude as honorable" (Hanson:1994, 89-90). Hanson thus wished to retranslate every makarism and reproach in both Bibles to reflect the honorable and shameful behavior which these terms seek to establish.²¹

In approaching the makarisms in Luke from the same perspective, Neyrey (1995) found how emphatically the gospels represent the relationship between family, wealth, and honor. According to Neyrey, "wealth is a component of honour and both reside primarily in the family" (Neyrey:1995, 144). Neyrey contended that the makarisms in Luke (6:20-23) represent the fate of one who has been rejected by his or her family (most likely for following the Jesus movement), namely the experience of

²¹Kressel (1994) had the following criticisms of Hanson's view of the makarisms and reproaches. Kressel disagreed with Hanson's connection of beatitudes and admonitions with blessing and cursing. The latter imply the use of magic, while the former do not. It is not right for Hanson to treat them as if they are one in the same. Kressel also objected to Hanson's implication that honor can be thought to include the same manifestations in areas as diverse as the Mediterranean and Arab worlds (also Herzfeld:1980). These two comments represent two of the more common criticisms of honor and shame studies, namely that often too much is made of the centrality of these values in culture, and that too often a unity of what constitutes honorable behavior between various areas, cultures, and social strata is assumed.
poverty, hunger, weeping, exclusion, and being reviled and defamed. All these factors can be linked to the expulsion from one's family and the dishonor which would accompany that event. One's family was the preeminent route to honor in the ancient Mediterranean (Osiek:1996), and honor (in the form of status) was the preeminent route to wealth. Therefore, to lose one's family was to lose both honor and wealth. Hence, Luke called these people honorable because they were members of a new and honorable family.

Rohrbaugh (1995) saw Luke 3:23-38 as a "stunning claim to honor" (Rohrbaugh:1995, 188). This passage offers a genealogy of Jesus which portrays him as "the son of Joseph, son of Heli..." and traces his descent back to "son of God" (τοῦ Ἁδὲμον τοῦ θεοῦ). Having made this claim, Luke spent the remainder of his gospel defending it. Luke portrays Jesus as being continually challenged and as responding to the challenges of others (riposte) in a way which wins him honor in the eyes of the audience and which brings shame on his opponents. Jesus is thus placed (by Luke) very firmly in the agonistic environment of honor and shame that characterised the ancient Mediterranean.

The observation that honor and shame studies have tended to focus too exclusively on the agonistic aspects of this model is put forward with increasing frequency. Overall, deSilva (1995) called for a "more nuanced understanding of how honor and dishonor work as values" (deSilva:1995, 12), one which more realistically
accounts for the variety of its manifestations not only in the ancient Mediterranean but in other areas and times as well. To this end, deSilva (1995) proposed that the value of honor also functioned as an "instrument for persuasion" (deSilva:1995, 24). When honor and dishonor (sometimes shame) functioned as tools for social engineering, they lacked all sense of competitiveness, though neither could they be called cooperative.

The labelling of behavior as honorable or dishonorable served to establish, maintain, and strengthen the boundaries marking off and protecting a social group. This was a tactic used by the "dominant culture" (deSilva:1995, 80) to impose unity and to discipline deviant behavior. By invoking the "majority" as the 'court of reputation' (the "court" before whom your actions were praised or blamed), the dominant culture attempted to perpetuate the values of the majority. Minority cultures could use this same tactic as a way to insulate themselves from such attempts at social engineering. This was accomplished primarily by changing the 'court of reputation' from 'them' to 'us'. In the letter to the Hebrews, the writer, educated in Greco-Roman rhetoric, addressed a church that had been rejected by the "dominant culture" in an attempt to force it to conform to societal and majority values. The writer established a new 'court of reputation' in order to show that there was no need to feel pressured by what was no longer a relevant 'court of reputation'. This new 'court of reputation' defined the Hebrews as honorable and their former dominant culture as dishonorable.
In this way, deSilva noted that honor and shame language can be used to redefine and strengthen social boundaries.

**Summary**

These approaches to honor and shame contribute to our understanding of how the values operated in New Testament times and, therefore, how they might be reflected in I Thessalonians. Hanson (1994) showed that certain language must, when appropriate, reflect its social environment. Since language communicates meaning only when it is rooted in its social context (Dilthey:1958, Malina:1983), translations must account for this social context as much as they attempt to account for linguistic usage. Neyrey (1995) illustrated how values like honor are also rooted in more stable institutions such as the family. Even in I Thessalonians, Paul used terminology which is reflective of the ancient Mediterranean family (i.e., he calls them 'brethren' throughout, he calls himself 'father' at 2:11). Rohrbaugh (1995) showed that Luke cannot avoid placing Jesus (or perhaps he did so deliberately) in agonistic situations through which his honor was ever increased and recognised. We are reminded that although the agonistic aspect of honor is not the only one which can supplement our understanding of the New Testament, it is nonetheless a pervasive element throughout, including, as we shall see, in I Thessalonians. Indeed, deSilva offered in Hebrews (1995) and I Thessalonians (1996) examples of how agonistic honor cannot
explain all occurrences of honor discourse in the New Testament. Yet, it is perhaps indicative of the broad ranging influence of honor and shame in that society that deSilva's (1996) application of his particular model does not exhaust the possibilities even in such a short document. Each of these studies using honor and shame have contributed to (or made possible) the present reading of I Thessalonians.
Chapter Three
The Challenge of the Thessalonians and Paul's Riposte

Introduction

All of the perspectives presented in Chapter One illuminate important features of I Thessalonians and contribute to our understanding of its themes and intent. None of them, however, reconciles the two pivotal features of this document -- Paul's defensive tone and the praise which is expressed in the letter. The honor and shame model contributes to our understanding of Paul's strategy and the language of I Thessalonians in this regard. The intent of this chapter is twofold: to illustrate how an agonistic model of honor and shame, characterised by the challenge and riposte contest, is reflected throughout the contents of this letter, and to show how the praise of the letter plays a central role in this. Viewed through the lens of honor and shame, Paul's very act of writing and the praise of the letter each assume a new meaning. The present model reveals that Paul was challenged by his congregation, an act which required Paul to respond lest he be shamed and thereby lose his achieved standing among them. Paul had achieved this standing by building their community of
believers in God and by teaching them the gospel of God. Yet, while Paul had to respond, he had to do it in a way that would not alienate his converts. In the forensic defense speech one was expected to denigrate one's opponent so that he would be reduced in the eyes of the audience (Cicero *de Inventione*, 1.16.22, Quintilian *Inst Ora* 3.9.1). Paul needed to respond but to shame them, to make them the enemy, would have contravened the very fibre of Paul's mission, which was to bring the Gentiles closer to God, not to rule over them as a patriarch. In light of this, Paul's praise ceases to be simply a reflection of his love for them or his attempt to console, as has been the understanding to date, but is instead a central part of his riposte. The praise of the letter is what allows Paul to defend his honor among the Thessalonians without shaming them utterly. We shall see later that Paul's use of praise in this way was well established as an epistolary device designed to soften the hurt caused by blame.

The Reflections of Challenges and Paul's Riposte

The challenges of the Thessalonians are apparent in the letter in several ways, both direct and indirect. The Apostle's Defense, 2:1-12, reflects that Paul was

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1 We shall also see later the variety of ways in which Paul indicated his achieved honor.

2 Compare this to Joubert's (1995) study of Paul's portrayal of himself as *paterfamilias* over the Corinthian church, and Paul's indignation that they would dare to challenge him.
challenged directly by their doubts and by several complaints concerning his conduct. Paul had learned of these and was compelled to defend his behavior and the motivation of his mission. Paul had achieved a certain standing among them, and so to ignore these challenges would have been tantamount to surrendering his acquired position. 

Paul was also challenged indirectly, as is evident in the four sections which comprise 4:1-5:11 -- two paraenetic sections on community ethics and two concerning the Day of the Lord. In these four passages, the challenge of the Thessalonians was manifested in their behavior and in the questions they asked. In 4:1-8 Paul responded to issues concerning sexual ethics, and in 4:9-12 to issues concerning community responsibility. This behavior was not in accordance with what Paul claimed to have taught them. Therefore, their disregard for Paul's words (whether intentional or accidental is irrelevant) presented a challenge. The passages 4:13-18 and 5:1-11 were likely provoked by questions posed to Paul through Timothy's visit: what will become of the faithful departed at the parousia, and when will the Day of the Lord come?

3 Although Paul had two companions with him who are never presented as mere lackeys, and although all of the verbs regarding the mission are first person plural, I am compelled to refer to the singular Paul since historically and traditionally he is the principle figure.

4 Many scholars have been unwilling to admit the presence of problems in Thessalonica. Instead, they wish to emphasise I Thess 3:6, maintaining that there was neither malice in their hearts nor error in their belief structure (Malherbe:1970, Bruce:1980, Best:1982, I.H. Marshall:1983, Gundry:1987). However, that Paul might have been compelled to defend his honor is in no way dependant on the presence of a seething mass of rioting converts in Thessalonica (Malina:1993b, Rohrbaugh:1995).
Here too, Paul claimed to have given them adequate information to answer these questions themselves. Therefore, the very fact that they asked was a challenge to the efficacy of Paul's teaching, which of course required a response.\(^5\)

\(^5\)Honor and shame analysis reveals a thematic structure to the letter. Though this is not to be confused with the rhetorical structure outlined by various scholars (Jewett:1986, Johanson:1987, Keiffer:1990, Hughes:1990, Wanamaker:1990), though there are several places where the two schematics overlap.

1:1 - Prescript to the letter.
1:2-10 - Preamble which sets up (thematically) the Apostle's Defense, and warms up the audience. This coincides with the purpose of an exordium (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herr* 1.4 and *de Inv* 1.15.22; Quintilian, *Institutia Oratoria* 4.1.5), though in this case it is longer than usual.
2:1-12 - The Apostle's Defense.
2:13-16 - Post-script to the defense mirroring the four themes of the preamble exactly (i.e., that the gospel came not in word alone, that they accepted the gospel with passion, that they were imitators of other important believers, and that they suffered).
2:17-3:10 - Narrative of Paul's desire and inability to visit them, and of Timothy's being sent and returning.
4:1-5:11 - Four sections of Paul's defense of the efficacy of his teachings:
4:1-8 is the exhortation on sexual ethics.
4:9-12 is the exhortation on community responsibility.
4:13-18 is the first eschatological teaching.
5:1-11 is the second eschatological teaching.
5:12-28 - Final summary exhortations and the final greetings. This coincides with the rhetorical device called peroratio (Quintilian, *Inst Ora* 6.2.1; Cicero *de Inv* 1.51.97).

At first glance, the final exhortations at 5:12-22 may not appear to be any different from the exhortations which precede them (Rigaux:1956, Wanamaker:1990, Barclay:1993, to name only a few). However, while the earlier exhortations are part of a subtle challenge and riposte contest, the exhortations in 5:12-22 form a summary of the various issues already raised. I agree that this section reflects concrete issues at Thessalonica, but they do not introduce anything new into the riposte. Perhaps this is reflected in Best's portrayal of these verses as "a series of largely unrelated exhortations" (Best:1972, 223). Best was careful not to place too much import on the information in this section. David Alan Black (1982), on the other
One may notice that the dialectic of challenge and riposte is far more subtle in 4:1-5:11 than it is in the Apostle's Defense. To view these passages through the lens of honor and shame does not require one to believe that Paul was responding to malicious misinterpretations of his teachings. Neither need it suggest that the Thessalonians had wholly dismissed what he had taught them. However, regardless, it is clear that Paul perceived his honor to be threatened; doubt of any magnitude and source (malicious or benign) would have constituted a challenge to which Paul must respond. Even an accidental misinterpretation can be seen as a challenge that would require a riposte, for to let it pass would have damaged his reputation (Pitt-Rivers: 1966, Malina: 1993a, Rohrbaugh: 1995).

Paul's riposte is evident in the letter in a number of ways. The defense of his conduct and motives in the Apostle's Defense and the responses to their questions later are the primary direct components of his riposte. Paul's explicit claim of ascribed honor as an apostle of God also functions directly as a part of his riposte. There are also stylistic aspects of Paul's writing which can be seen as an indirect part of his riposte. For example, the length of the *exordium* and the *narratio* gives the letter the overall sense that its primary function was as a riposte. There is also much praise and blame hand, saw this section as a summary of the previous exhortations. For example, he believed that the δακτυλίς (the idle), the ὀλιγώποι (faint hearted), and the ἀσθενής (the weak) each refer back to previous exhortations in the letter -- 4:9-12; 4:13-18; and 5:1-11 respectively. Details from this section which are perhaps not directly mirrored in the text are consistent with the overall tone and themes of the letter.
which fills this letter. These shall each be examined in the following pages. In this it shall become clear how the praise functioned within the environment of Paul's riposte and blame.

**The Apostle's Defense -- 2:1-12**

An honor and shame analysis illustrates the gravity of the charges which Paul faced and the urgency of his riposte. Paul was charged with being a coward, and of acting with deceptive motives. The charge of deception included within it several issues, namely that Paul did not warn them about the suffering to come, that he sought the glory of humans, and that he lived comfortably off of them. These were charges Paul would have recognised immediately because they were part of the common social distrust of the itinerant philosopher (Malherbe:1970). Hence, Paul would have been familiar with the type with which he was being associated, and, as is seen in this letter, he took great offense at it.

The first challenge to which Paul responded was that he had left the city in great haste in order to flee the same persecution that he told them to endure, or more pointedly, that he was a coward (Thurston:1974; Perkins:1987). It is perhaps indicative of the gravity of this charge that Paul dealt with it first. Cowardice was a serious charge, one which would reflect directly upon one's honor. Courage is

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6 Acts 17:1-10 relates the story of Paul's and Silas' night time escape from an angry mob.
associated with honor by Aristotle: "There is, in the first place, because of its resemblance to true courage, the courage of the citizen soldier. Citizens, it seems, endure dangers because the laws and customs penalize and stigmatize them if they do not, and honor them if they do. Hence those peoples are considered the most courageous among whom cowards are held in dishonour and courageous men in honour" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 3.8.17-20). Also by Aristotle: "men are called courageous for enduring pain. Hence courage ...is justly praised, because it is more difficult to endure what is painful than to abstain from what is pleasant" (*Nic. Eth.* 3.9.34-5). The value and honor of courage is also reflected by Thucydides: "Our fathers... withstood the Persians, although they had no such resources as ours, and abandoned even those which they possessed, and by their resolution more than by good fortune and with a courage greater than their strength beat back the Barbarian and advanced our fortunes to their present state" (*The Peloponnesian War* 1.144.4). Cowardice was a charge that no man aware of his honor could shirk.

Naturally, the Thessalonian converts would have been upset that Paul had whipped up a storm of controversy and opposition in Thessalonica and then abandoned them to face it alone (Donfried: 1985). But Paul reminded them Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε ("For you yourselves know" - 2:1) that he had no aversion to suffering, having suffered considerably at Philippi for spreading the gospel. Instead, he was careful to exonerate himself in that despite προπαθόντες ("having suffered
previously") and ὑβρισθέντες ("having been shamefully treated"), he was not daunted from his assigned task of preaching the gospel of God. He wrote ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλήσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγώνι ("we had courage in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in great opposition" - 2:2). Paul defended himself in two ways here. First, he did so by reminding them of what they already knew and what they had seen first hand of his behavior, not by introducing new information about himself. Second, Paul referred to his own achieved honor in this very area. By drawing attention to the fact that he had preached even ἐν πολλῷ ἀγώνι ("in great opposition" - 2:2) and suffering, Paul countered their challenge of cowardice by making a claim to honor himself (Morris: 1984, 51). A common way to respond to a challenge of dishonor was to indicate your own honor (Cicero, de Inv 1.16.22).

Not only did the Thessalonians think that Paul had fled Thessalonica in order to avoid persecution, but they also felt that he had not warned them about the suffering that would accompany their conversion. However, he reminded them in two different ways that he was in no way dishonest about their future. Paul told them that they were

7This a very loaded term. According to Peristiany, "the crime of hubris [ὑβρίς] in Ancient Greece consisted in so over emphasizing one's virtue that one competed... for honors beyond man's reach" (Peristiany:1966, 16). Clearly such honor encroached on the territory of the gods. In a social context, it referred to the negation of one's social position. Ironically, Paul claimed as a source of achieved honor his having been shamefully treated (ὑβρίζω) in Philippi. It is his premise that it is honorable to suffer (Keck:1984; Collins:1984; Keightley:1987; and Donfried:1989).
destined to suffer (ἐίς τούτο κείμεθα - "for this we are destined" - 3:3), and furthermore he claimed to have told them beforehand how they were about to suffer (προελέγομεν υμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι - "we told you before that we are going to suffer"). In both cases, Paul used the οἴδατε clause in order to emphasise that this was not the first he had said on the subject (Bruce:1982, 15).

The second broad charge was that Paul was not honest with the Thessalonians concerning their suffering, his intent, and their money. These are all tied together because, if Paul had disguised the potential for suffering, it would have been in order to convince them to convert, thereby increasing his power, his honor as an apostle, and his financial base. This is reflected in Paul's words, ἡ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἔξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ ("For our teaching was not from deceit, nor out of impurity, nor in guile" - 2:3). It is possible that the Thessalonian converts feared Paul had ignoble motives behind his mission. Itinerant philosophers teaching for personal monetary gain, and often doing so through flattery and like devices, was a common sight throughout the Hellenistic world (Wanamaker:1990, 97). The fact that Paul might have been taking a collection for the church at Jerusalem (as reflected in II Corinthians 9) may have fostered the anxiety that some of the money was ending up with Paul (Williams:1992, 39).

Paul's defense against the broad charge of deception continued in 2:4-8, where he stated that he had set out ὁχ ώς ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκοντες ("not to please men" -
2:4) but to please God, the same God who tests their hearts and who entrusted the gospel to Paul. More on Paul's ascribed honor later. Paul told them he did not speak ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ("with flattering words" - 2:5), presumably to lure them into converting, nor did he convert them ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας ("as a pretext for greed" - 2:5), presumably to take money from them (Best:1972, 98). Rather, Paul converted them from love and because he had been commanded to. Paul made his defense even stronger by invoking God as his witness (θεὸς μάρτυς - 2:5). Finally, Paul responded to the accusation that he lived off of the converts while he was there. Paul, the tent maker, reminded them of τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον ("our toil and hardship" - 2:9), working day and night precisely τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινὰ ὑμῶν ("in order not to be a financial burden to any of you" - 2:9). Like some of Paul's other claims to honor, this would have been an uncommon claim to honor, as working with one's hands was considered to be degrading work (Rohrbaugh:1991, Chow:1992). Yet, Paul made it clear here and later (4:11) that working with one's hands was honorable. In fact, working with one's hands, and Paul's trade in particular, played a "paradigmatic function for his paraenesis on work" (Hock:1980, 48).

There is a distinct change in the language of the last long sentence of the Apostle's Defense (2:10-12). This change acts forcefully as a part of Paul's defense of his honor.\(^8\) Up to this point Paul had defended himself by indicating what his mission

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\(^8\)Not only does the language change, but the sentence also begins very abruptly. The sentence lacks the connecting particle that was commonly used in order to connect one
was not; however, at the close of the Defense, Paul accentuates the positive. Paul called his conduct ὅσιως καὶ δικαιώς καὶ ἀμέμπτως ("holy, righteous, and blameless" - 2:10). ἀμέμπτως (blameless) is loaded with honor and shame sentiment, the use of which to describe his mission amounted to a claim of achieved honor (Pilch:1991b). ἀμέμπτως (or its kin) also appears two other times in this letter, both times in Paul's hope that soon he would be able to call the conduct of the Thessalonians 'blameless' (3:13 and 5:23). Paul continued at 2:11-12, comparing his actions to those of a father who exhorts, encourages, and even insists on a conduct worthy of God. Paul wrote, καθαρεῖς οἶδατε ὡς ἐνα ἐκαστὸν ὑμῶν ὡς πατὴρ τέκνα ἐαυτοῦ παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθοῦμενοι καὶ μαρτυρόμενοι ("as you know very well how we were with each one of you like a father with his own children, exhorting and encouraging and insisting for you..." - 2:11-12). Paul stated explicitly not only how positively he carried himself, but intensified it with ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεὸς ("You and God are witnesses" - 2:10). Paul used this device only three times in all his letters, two of which are found here in the Apostle's Defense (the other is at Romans 1:9). There cannot exist a more strenuous defense of honor than to invoke God as your witness, nor a more subtle stroke of flattery to address sentence to the previous one. While it does not in this case indicate a change in the subject being discussed (I.H. Marshall:1983, 73), it does mark the change in its tone.

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"God" in the same phrase as one's audience.9

Some scholars have seen reflected in the Apostle's Defense actual charges, while others have seen instead the mere possibility of charges associated with the itinerant philosophers. Which ever is more accurate is not important here. What is most important and telling is that Paul responded as if they amount to the same thing. The honor and shame analysis accentuates how seriously damaging such charges could be to Paul's honor (reputation) and therefore how necessary and urgent was his response. This is not the only place in the letter where there are reflections of the challenges to which Paul sought to respond.

Paul's Defense of his Teachings - 4:1-5:11

In the first section (4:1-8) and the following one (4:9-12), Paul responded to behavior of the Thessalonians which was probably reported to him by Timothy (3:6). Paul was clearly dissatisfied with what he had heard because it was not in accordance with what he claimed to have taught them. That Paul was being challenged would be especially obvious if their errant behavior had been the result of a total disregard for his teachings (Best:1972). It would also be true, however, if they had felt their behavior was the result of something Paul had failed to do or had done inadequately. Yet, in the end both of these scenarios are the same, because their behavior would

9To call to witness "expresses not only the element of valuation but also that of personal engagement" (Beutler:1991, 394).
have constituted a challenge to Paul either way.

The first way in which their behavior challenged Paul's teaching concerned sexual ethics, namely sexual impropriety (πορνεία - 2:3). Paul's riposte came in two ways. First of all, he appealed to their memory of his teaching: οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδόκαμεν ύμίν ("for you know what instructions we gave you" - 4:2). This served to indicate that there was nothing lacking in the manner or in the words which Paul had taught. The second way in which Paul defended his honor here was to appeal to them to be pleasing to God, as if to encourage them to consider both what he had taught them and what God would want of them. In fact, this aspect fills this portion of the letter. Paul appealed to them to live according to what he had taught them, writing ἐρωτῶμεν ύμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν... περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀρέσκειν θεῷ ("we request and exhort you to live and be pleasing to God" - 4:1). He also claimed that this was not his own will but God's will for them to be sanctified, τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστιν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ο ἀγιασμὸς ύμῶν (for this is the will of God, your sanctification" - 4:3). He also told them that ἐκδίκος κύριος περὶ πάντων τούτων ("the Lord is an avenger concerning these things" - 4:6b). Paul supported this by claiming that οὐ γὰρ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ο θεὸς ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγιασμῷ ("God did not call us in impurity but in sanctification" - 4:7). Finally, Paul claimed that ὁ ἀθετῶν οὐκ ἀνθρωπον ἀθετεῖ ἀλλὰ τὸν θεὸν ("who ever sets [this] aside..."
sets aside not man but God" - 4:8 ).

Paul emphatically upheld the importance of pleasing, and of being accountable to, God.

In the Roman Empire of his day, it is not difficult to envision sexual freedom being a way of life for new Gentile converts (Schmithals:1972; Morris:1984, 80). Thus, it was important for Paul that he correct their errant behavior not only because "the Lord is an avenger (ἐκδίκος - 4:6) concerning these things" but because it contradicted what Paul had taught them directly, so constituting a challenge to him.

This brings to mind deSilva's (1996) recent work using the 'court of reputation'. As deSilva argued, Paul was reminding the Thessalonians that they were now accountable to a new 'court of reputation', at the head of which sat God. In their old 'court of reputation', such behavior was honorable, but here it was not. Therefore, Paul encouraged and appealed to them to live properly, for to err in this 'court', to displease God, had dire consequences.

The second way in which their behavior challenged Paul concerned community responsibility -- 4:9-13. Paul marked this transition to a new topic -- ἡ φιλαδελφία

10 Also contained within this teaching is the sense that sexual impropriety is not suitable behavior for a member of God's church: οὐ γὰρ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὧ θεὸς ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίαν - ("God did not call us in impurity" - 4:7). It is worth noting that this is an example of how honor and shame are not always binary opposites (Wikan:1984; Moxnes: 1988). Here the opposite of shamefulness (as in shameful behavior) is not honor but rather "holiness," ὁ ἁγιασμός.

11 Whether this behavior was caused by Gnostics (Schmithals:1972), a realised eschatology (Mearns:1981), eschatological excitement (Bruce: 1980), or a millenarian piety (Jewett:1986) is not of concern here. What is important is that there was something "wrong"
("brotherly love") -- with Περὶ δὲ ("Now concerning..."). Just as he had done with regards to sexual propriety, Paul intended to defend the efficacy of his teaching and therefore his honor. In a fashion similar to the previous section, Paul showed in two ways that this was not new information he was presenting. First of all, Paul reminded them twice that he had taught them adequately -- οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν ("you do not need it to be written to you" - 4:9a) and καθὼς ὑμῖν παρηγγείλαμεν ("just as we instructed you" - 4:11). Secondly, Paul indicated here that God was involved in the teaching process -- αὕτω γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοι ἐστε (for you yourselves are taught by God - 4:9b). The various sections of Paul's riposte seem structurally consistent, indicating perhaps that he had in mind a structure he believed would be effective.

Continuing with his riposte, Paul urged them φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἰδία καὶ ἔργαζεσθαι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν ὑμῶν ("to strive eagerly to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your [own] hands" - 4:11). The rationale behind Paul's exhortation was so that they would not be dependant on anyone inside or especially outside the congregation- ἵνα περιπατήτε ἐν συχισμόνως πρὸς τοὺς ἑξω καὶ μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε ("so that you may behave becomingly towards outsiders and have need of nothing" - 4:12). This admonition reflects that

with their conduct which needed to be "rectified."

Perhaps the rationale behind the admonition to act "becomingly" to outsiders was in part to avoid court cases. According to Pitt-Rivers and Pilch (1991b) "no man of honour...
there were members of the community who were being lazy and meddlesome. This has led Black (1982) to argue that the ἀτακτοὶ (idle) mentioned in 5:14 refer to the same people to whom Paul addressed this specific advice. The meaning of ἀτακτοὶ is imprecise (as the variety of translations attests), but it seems to have been a pejorative designation for someone not doing his or her part in the life of a community; this is reflected in the injunctions which Paul provided (I.H. Marshall: 1983, 117). For example, the ἀτακτοὶ were not living quietly and not minding their own affairs.\textsuperscript{13} They also were not working to support themselves as Paul himself had done (4:11, also at 2:9). The entire passage suggests that idleness and living off of the work of others in the community was not a sign of brotherly love (Bruce: 1982, 91; Keightley: 1987, 155). Also, laziness which led one to depend on fellow believers was bad enough, but to rely on the help of outsiders was a scandal which would have reflected poorly on (I would add shamed) Paul and his reputation (Best: 1972, 178; I.H. Marshall: 1983, 117).

The next two sections of the letter (4:13-18 and 5:1-11) were prompted by questions which Timothy carried back with him from Thessalonica (Lohse: 1972, 34-5): what will come of the dead at the parousia (4:13-18) and when will it come (5:1-11). was prepared to remit to the courts the settlement of his affairs of honour" (Pitt-Rivers: 1977, 9). To go to the courts was to admit a failure to solve the problem personally. This is also reflected in Matt. 5:25.

\textsuperscript{13}The meaning of ἀτακτοὶ is much clearer and more explicitly developed in II Thessalonians.
11)? Here too, the fact that the questions were asked at all can be taken as a challenge that there was something lacking in Paul's teaching. That Paul saw the situation this way is especially evident in the way he responded. The first section was in response to a question concerning the faithful departed (4:13-18). Some among the congregation had died, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων ("now concerning those who have fallen asleep") and those left living wondered what would come of them at the parousia. Paul assured them δὲν ἐγνωρίζομεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας ("that we who have been left living at the parousia of the Lord will not come before those who have died" - 4:15).

Unlike the other passages, it could appear that Paul was presenting new information to the congregation. For example, this section is not accompanied by the familiar οἶδατε clause, or even anything reflecting Paul's belief that they should already know what he was writing. This, along with the present tense of the key clauses -- Οὐ θέλουμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἐγνωρίζειν ("We do not wish for you to be ignorant" - 4:13) and Τούτο γὰρ λέγωμεν ὑμῖν ("For this we tell you..." - 4:15) allows for the possibility that Paul had not taught them this precise teaching before (Best:1972). However, it seems odd to treat this single section as new information while the rest of the letter is, for the most part, composed of reminders. It must be recalled that a simple question could pose a challenge because it required a satisfactory response, and
by which a failure would have resulted in diminished honor. Anything which had the potential to damage one's honor must be seen as a challenge. Despite the differences between this and the other defensive passages, there is still a challenge reflected here, albeit perhaps the most subtle one in the letter.

The second question with which Timothy returned concerned the timing of the parousia: \( \text{Περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καίρων} \) ("Concerning the time and the seasons" - 5:1a). Paul wrote that \( \text{oú χρείαν ἔχετε ύμῖν γράφεσθαι} \) ("there is no need to write to you" - 5:1b). However, he strengthened this with the repetitive \( \text{oἴδατε} \) clause, \( \text{αὐτοῖ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε} \) ("for you yourselves know well" - 5:2a). If in the last section Paul's sense of frustration at repeating himself was absent, it is resumed here. Perhaps it was Paul's own teaching that had caused the Thessalonians to believe that the parousia was immanent (Mearns: 1981).\(^{14}\) Regardless, Paul's response suggests that this was not how he meant for them to understand his instructions now. Here, Paul chose to tell them how the Day of the Lord would come (Richard: 1995, 260) instead of telling them when.

Paul meant for the Thessalonians to be ever prepared for the parousia, for it would come without warning signs \( \text{ὡς κλέπτης ἐν νυκτὶ} \) ("like a thief in the night" -

\(^{14}\)The degree of their impatience depends on how much time one allows to have passed between Paul's mission and the writing of the letter. If one assumes it was a matter of weeks or a few months (I.H. Marshall:1983, 6), then the Thessalonians were indeed very impatient. If, however, it was closer to eighteen months (as allowed though not supported by Morris:1984, 21), then it may simply have been a healthy amount of "If not now, when?"
5:2b). Paul's intent in teaching the Thessalonian believers that the Day of the Lord would come like thief in the night was not only to encourage them to be alert and ready, but also to dissuade them from making concrete preparations, like selling their belongings and abandoning their jobs and duties.\(^{15}\) Paul embellished his metaphor with the imagery of a pregnant woman. The Day of the Lord would come with the same unexpectedness, inevitability, and unpleasantness (I.H. Marshall:1983) of labor pains - \(\omega \sigma \pi \epsilon \rho \ η \ \omega \ddot{d} i ν \ τή \ εν γα\sigma \tau \rho i \ \epsilon \chi \omega \upsilon \rho \eta\) ("just as the labor pains in the stomach") - 5:3.\(^{16}\) The last part of the passage (5:4-11) contains some serious community maintenance which is better understood using deSilva's (1996) specific version of this model.

**Paul's Ascribed Honor**

We have just considered how Paul conducted his riposte by appealing to his achieved honor: he called his conduct "blameless," he recalled his suffering, and he referred to his toil and hardship (2:1-12). We also just saw how he did this while responding to reports of their behavior and to their questions (4:1-5:11). However, Paul can also be seen appealing to his ascribed honor -- his having been chosen by

\(^{15}\)This allowed Richard to situate this teaching within a larger section which included the community exhortations preceding it (Richard:1995, 266).

\(^{16}\)This is not to confused with the signs that "Paul" indicated would precede the Parousia in II Thessalonians 2:3, namely \(\acute{\alpha} \pi \sigma \tau \alpha \sigma \iota \alpha\) ("the rebellion") and \(\acute{\alpha} \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \omega \zeta \ \tau \eta \zeta \ \acute{\alpha} \nu \omicron \iota \acute{\alpha} \zeta\) ("the Man of Lawlessness").

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God to spread the gospel. There is nothing achieved about this honor, for Paul understands that this office was beyond anything he could have brought upon himself. Paul had honor because he was chosen by God to perform a task. Paul illustrated this by aligning himself closely with God and Jesus throughout the text, thereby making explicit his honor. In the same way as one might appeal to family lineage as the source of honor, so Paul appealed to his affiliation with God and Jesus as a source of his ascribed honor.

Throughout the letter Paul indicates that his position of authority is always beneath God's, saying ὁ ἀθέτων οὐκ ἀνθρωπόν ἀθετεῖ ἄλλα τὸν θεόν ("who ever declares this [teaching] invalid does not spurn [challenge] man [me] but God" - 4:8). By doing this, Paul set himself up as a spokesperson for God, which clearly made him (Paul) a figure to be obeyed (honored). Right from the start of the letter, Paul deferred all power and credit to God. The church of the Thessalonians was ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ("in God the father" - 1:1), not 'in Paul', despite his impressive sacrifice and effort. Paul was deliberate to point out that the gospel which he had taught them was not a human novelty. Three times it was called τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ("the gospel of

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17 This fact might also be signalled by what Collins (1984) called the παρακαλέω (to exhort) formula. The use of παρακαλέω effected a diplomatic tone that was "attuned to the sensitivities of the readership" (Collins:1984, 301) at the same time as it indicated that the writer did not speak on his own accord. The παρακαλέω formula "conveys an authoritative request but lacks the bluntness of a direct order" (Collins:1984, 302) that was characteristic of diplomatic communications. Although Collins (1984, 179) noted the impact of Paul's decidedly less 'diplomatic' ἐνορκίζω (to cause to swear) at 5:27, he made no attempt to reconcile the two seemingly opposing perspectives.
God" - 2:2, 2:8, 2:9), and once τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("the gospel of Christ" - 3:2). In other places the gospel was called λόγος ("the word"), and in every usage it was specified either as the "word of God" (2:13 twice) or "the word of the Lord" (1:8; 4:15).  

That Paul was divinely commissioned was explicitly claimed at 2:4 when he stated that δεδοκιμάσθη ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευῆται τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ("we were approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel" - 2:4). Paul recounted how all that he told them was through or in the Lord: τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδόκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ίησοῦ ("what instructions we gave you were through the Lord" - 4:2)  

and τοῦτο γὰρ λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου ("for we speak this in the word of the Lord" - 4:15). At 1:5, Paul stated that the gospel did not come from him in word alone, but was accompanied by "divine power" (Wanamaker:1990, 14) and by the Holy Spirit, both of which are extensions of God. Finally, at 4:7 (and in general), Paul made it clear that it was God who called the Thessalonians into their new community (Malherbe:1995). In deferring credit and glory to God, Paul wished to show that by

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18 It is also two times called "our gospel" (1:5 and 2:8). However, given the other examples, it cannot be understood here that Paul was calling it his own gospel. The most that can be said is that Paul was aligning himself as a partner in the process. At 1:6, Paul called the Thessalonians "imitators" (μυθηταί) of himself and of the Lord, implying that the behaviour of himself and of the Lord is one and the same. "Our gospel" might refer to God, Jesus, and Paul, and likely in that order.

19 The translation of this text into German by Traugott Holtz (1986) really emphasises the point that the message is from God: Ihr wisst ja, welche Weisungen wir euch gaben, ermächtigt (authorised) durch den Herrn Jesus.
his close proximity to God (1:5) he was himself a figure with authority and worthy of honor. Appealing to his ascribed honor in this case was just another way for him to present himself as an honorable figure. Paul set himself up as one worthy of honor in order to add potency to his riposte. For Paul to defend himself from the various challenges outlined above, he had to show how worthy of respect he was.

Paul's claim of ascribed honor would have had extra meaning in a world as familiar with patronage as was Greco-Roman Thessalonica. The institution of patron-client relations was a fundamental aspect of Paul's world. Just as Chow (1992) did with regards to Corinth, I would argue that if the whole of the Greco-Roman world was familiar with the centrality of patronage, then so was Thessalonica, and if in Thessalonica, then also within the church there. In a world of limited good (Malina: 1993b), people did not have equal access to goods or services. Patronage allowed people of the lower strata access to those goods or services which normally they would not have had. While patronage today might be thought of as unethical, in Paul's time it was what kept the society of inequality from falling apart or self-destructing. From a patron, one could receive protection, representation, financial support or food, or prestigious appointments (Chow:1992, 188). In return the patron could expect loyalty. This may not seem like an easy trade, but in Paul's world loyalty was of immeasurable value. To have loyal supporters (honor) is what got patrons high offices (more honor). A client was expected to protect the patron's name in public and

Recalling the agonistic nature of ancient Greco-Roman society, an increase in one's own honor always meant a decrease in another's honor. Therefore, the patron was always trying to amass more clients and from there more honor.

By calling attention to his ascribed honor, Paul was presenting himself not specifically as a patron, but as a "broker." A broker was one who mediated relations between a patron and his clients. Brokers were common since frequently a patron could not logistically participate in every interaction with a client. For example, the emperor was a patron with many clients, from those in the palace to those governing the provinces and cities. Brokers, especially those connected to powerful patrons, could be patrons in their own right (Wallace-Hadrill:1989, Chow:1992, Joubert:1995).

A governor would be a broker between the emperor and the province, but the governor would also have clients within the province. In this way, patron-client relations formed an intricate vertical web of inter-relationships that connected everybody either as patron, broker, or client. Seneca wrote, "run through the list of all those men from the lowest to the highest -- this man desires an advocate, this one answers the call, that one is on trial, that one defends him, that one gives sentence; no one asserts his claim to himself, everyone is wasted for the sake of another. Ask about the men whose names are known by heart, and you will see that these are the marks that distinguish them: A cultivates B and B cultivates C; no one is his own
master" (de Brev Vit 2.4). What might Paul's role have been in all this?

Given the complexity of the patronal web, Paul could easily have played the part of each role: as a client (to Jesus), as a broker (between God and the Thessalonians), and as a patron (over the Thessalonians). After all, Paul claimed to have become all things to all people (I Cor 9:22). Paul's language of brokerage here is a claim to honor, for he is connected to the greatest patron of them all, God. So great is Paul's honor in this case, that he does not even need to play the patron card in order to indicate his deservingness of honor and respect. Paul's language betrays a thorough understanding of the way patronage worked in his day. But his actions (or writing) indicate that he was not always satisfied with it. Paul may have sought to escape the vertical axis of public relations for one more horizontal (Chow:1992, 190), but in the mean time he had to operate effectively within the same realm as the majority. As is clear from I and II Corinthians, the transformation from vertical to horizontal relations was not quickly accepted by his churches. Perhaps Paul was envisioning a scenario with God and the earthly church as the only vertical axis, and with all relations within the church on an horizontal axis exclusively. This, however, is moving beyond the scope of this exercise.
The Extended Exordium and Narratio

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (1995) wrote, "The extent to which the exordium and the narratio should be developed depends on the relationship of the speaker to the audience...The speaker who is already held in respect does not have to win it" (Murphy-O'Connor: 1995, 74). By all accounts, the exodium and the narratio together comprise two thirds of I Thessalonians. What is more, in the schematic which Murphy-O'Connor compiled (Murphy-O'Connor: 1995, 77-79), there is no other New Testament letter, Pauline or otherwise, where the exordium and narratio are so long. The exordium was meant to "warm up" the audience to make them more receptive to what one was about to say (Quintilian Inst Ora 4.1.5, Cicero De Oratore 2.79.321). Furthermore, the exordium was meant to secure the goodwill (captatio benevolentiae) of the audience so that they might be well disposed to what followed (Cicero de Oratore 2.43.182). The function of the narratio was to lay out the matters under dispute, so that they may be dealt with each in turn. Paul's language in this part of the letter is supportive, complimentary, and flattering. It is worth noting that the exordium functions in much the same way as praise. Some of the themes of praise

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20Here are several assessments of the first two sections of the letter. Jewett (1986): Exordium (1:1-5), Narratio (1:6-3:13); Hughes (1990): Exordium (1:1-10), Narratio (2:1-3:10); Wanamaker (1990): Exordium (1:2-10), narratio (2:1-3:10). These are offered simply to show the lack of critical agreement in this area. Perhaps acknowledging this, Johanson (1987) argued that the letter defied any simple rhetorical or textual classification. Johanson saw in the letter the free and creative mixture of epistolary, exhortative, and rhetorical aspects, as well as conventional Hellenistic epistolary forms modified by "Old Testament-Jewish exhortatory discourse" (Johanson:1987, 187).
which fill the exordium are covered in the next section on praise and blame.

**Praise and Blame in I Thessalonians**

It is a well established fact that I Thessalonians is a warm and sentimental letter (Forestell:1968; Koester:1979; Bruce:1982; Malherbe:1983; Johanson:1987; Collins: 1988b; Krentz:1989, 1992). In fact, Beare (1962) went so far as to say that the letter lacks any controversy whatsoever. For the purposes of this exercise, the term praise refers to what others call the "warmth" of the letter. Although the two terms refer to the same features of the letter, the term praise is more technical and implies less about Paul's emotional state (as opposed to his strategy in the letter). To praise is to grant honor to the reader. This can be done with compliments (as we would think of praising), but also with expressions of love, or longing to be reunited, and by referring to the joy felt at receiving a letter or news, etc. (Stowers:1986). There are many examples of praise in I Thessalonians.

Paul expressed thanks to God for the Thessalonian congregation. Paul wrote Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν ("We give thanks to God always for all of you" - 1:2). It was common for a thanksgiving to appear at the start of any letter, with the exception of the harshest type of blaming letter (Stowers: 1986, Murphy-O'Connor:1995). The length of the thanksgiving could be connected to the friendliness of the letter. There is a special feature of I Thessalonians, however,
which sets it apart from all the letters in the New Testament and in Stowers' (1986) collection of letters, namely the second thanksgiving (2:13). Paul wrote, Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τῇμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως ("And because of this we too give thanks to God without ceasing" - 2:13). If one assumes that this second thanksgiving is not indicative of a second letter (Schmithals: 1972), then it becomes a powerful element in the letter's praise, especially considering its placement directly following the Apostle's Defense. This second thanksgiving assumes added importance in terms of the letter's overall sense of praise when one considers that Galatians lacks any thanksgiving whatsoever. It may be as Murphy-O'Connor (1995) said, that Paul had little to be thankful about there. But what we also see is that Paul was responding more angrily to the Galatians (than to the Thessalonians) and so there is less praise evident throughout the letter.

Paul also praised the Thessalonians by expressing his sense of longing to see them again. He wrote Ἡμεῖς δὲ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν πρὸς καὶρὸν ὡρὰς, προσώπῳ οὐ καρδίᾳ, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ ("And we, Brethren, having been orphaned from you for a short time, in body but not in spirit, hastened all the more in great longing to see you face to face" - 2:17). Paul wrote in explicit terms of his pain at the separation and his desire to see them again. He also wrote in intimate terms appropriate for family when he described his separation from them as one orphaned.
Likewise, because of this desire, and because he was personally unable to visit them, he sent Timothy to stand in for him in a short visit. Paul wrote, Δἰὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκῆσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι... καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον ("Therefore, when we could no longer bear it, we resolved to be left behind... and we sent Timothy" - 3:1-2). These expressions of longing would have been very complimentary to the Thessalonians and therefore would have constituted an important part of the letter's praise.

Paul praised the Thessalonians (literally) when he wrote of how their perseverance and faith had become known throughout Macedonia and Achaia. At 1:3, Paul praised them for their τὸ ἐργὸν τῆς πίστεως ("work of faith"), τὸ κόπων τῆς ἀγάπης ("labor of love"), and τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἔλπιδος ("perseverance of hope"). Paul also wrote, γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πάσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι καὶ ἐν τῇ Αἴγυπτῳ ("you became an example for all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia" - 1:7, and repeated in 1:8). In this way Paul acknowledged their achieved honor in this area, which is itself an effective means of praising someone (Stowers:1986). The praise of the letter is evident in many more places: 1:6-9; 2:13; 2:19; 3:8; 4:10; 5:5 and 5:11.

The repetition of ἀδελφοί ("Brethren," eleven times) might also be seen as a subtle example of praise. By using the term, it seems Paul wanted to make clear that he was not writing to an enemy, but to his own family whom he loved dearly. Paul
also indicated the extremes to which he (and his companions) would go for them.

Paul wrote οὔτως ὁμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδούνας ὑμῖν ὁὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχὰς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε ("So much did we care for you that we were determined to give to you not only the gospel of God but our own lives, because you became beloved to us" - 2:8). He expressed his love for them not only by calling them "beloved," but also by telling of his willingness to give his own life for them.

Of course, it goes without saying that I Thessalonians is not all praise. Blame plays a significant role throughout the letter too. Paul's riposte was itself blaming, for a riposte was meant not only to maintain one's honor, but also to reduce the honor of the challenger. Blame is the epistolary opposite of praise. Where praise honors the reader, blame takes it away and leaves shame. This could be done to three degrees of extreme: admonishing, rebuking, and reproaching, where admonishing is the gentlest and reproaching is the most violent type of blame (Stowers:1986).

The most conspicuous blaming device which Paul used was the οἴδατε ("you know") clause. The οἴδατε clause was a gentle reminder that Paul had behaved and taught well. Paul also used this device in order to show that there was nothing lacking in the content or manner in which he had taught the Thessalonian converts. Paul indicated that the information he was presenting to them was not new.²¹

²¹Donfried agreed that the οἴδατε clauses were not simply "superfluous rehearsals" (Donfried and Marshall:1993, 24), but he claimed that they were Paul's way of advocating the
which focus on the warm and personal tone of the letter (what I have identified as the letter's praise) tend to see the repetition of these clauses as another sign of this "warmth." The phrase might very well function to personalise Paul's response, and in that way be part of the praise. The honor and shame perspective, however, reveals another option: that the repetition of these clauses served as another of Paul's tools with which he defended his conduct and his instructions and therefore his honor as an apostle and teacher. The phrase, in this case, is not a part of the praise but an element of the letter's blame.

These clauses are found at strategic points throughout the letter with stylistic variety. Nine times Paul used a variation on οἶδατε: καθὼς οἶδατε - "just as you know" (1:5; 2:2; 2:5), αὕτοι γὰρ οἶδατε - "for you yourselves know" (2:1; 3:3), καθάπερ οἶδατε - "even as you know" (2:11), καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἶδατε - "just as has happened and as you know" (3:4), οἶδατε γὰρ - "for you know" (4:2), and αὕτοι γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε - "for you yourselves know very well" (5:2). Paul used a second construction to express a similar sentiment: μὴ χρείαν ἔχειν ἣμᾶς λαλεῖν τι - "there is no need for us to say anything" (1:8), οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ύμῖν (4:9) and οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε ύμῖν γράφεσθαι (5:1) - "there is no need to write [it] to you." Finally, Paul used (once) the words μὴ μονομενεύετε γὰρ - "for

gospel which he had preached and which they were in the process of questioning due to the suffering they were experiencing because of it. Donfried was convinced that the primary issue at Thessalonica was the continuing relevancy of the gospel.
you remember" (2:9). As a reminder, the phrase was meant to shame (as in to instill a sense of shame) but not to be profoundly shaming. Paul used it as if to say, "I blame you for not remembering...".

It is crucial to recognise that the oǐδατε clauses exist solely within (or in reference to) those sections where Paul was defending his achieved honor (2:1-12 as apostle and 4:1-8; 4:9-12; 4:13-18; 5:1-11 as teacher). The occurrences of them outside these sections either foreshadow the Apostle's Defense (as in 1:4; 1:5; 1:8) or recall it (as in 3:3; 3:4). These statements seem designed as a gentle counter-challenge to the accusations and questions of the Thessalonians. By appealing to their memories of his work so often, it is almost as if Paul meant to say, "How dare you forget what kind of man I was" or "How could you have forgotten what I taught so well?" The oǐδατε clauses are part of Paul's way of combatting the charges against his conduct, or of the inefficacy of his teaching, in that he appealed to their memories of him. It must be kept in mind that this is gentle blame, which becomes even gentler when used frequently in close proximity to ἀδελφοί ("Brethren").

In a similar vein, exhorting is also a blaming device, for it instructs someone to a certain course of action. Exhorting is a gentle push in a direction, as opposed to a harsh command (Collins: 1984). Yet, although to exhort is not harsh, it is still blaming because it indicates that the present course of action is destined for shame. Blame and

\[22\] This is a adaptation of a letter of blame presented by Stowers (1986, 89).
praise are similar in that both can function to encourage certain actions. Yet the epistolary theorists clearly show that too much blame brought resentment while too much praise became flattery (Stowers:1986, 80), making both alone ineffectual for encouraging change. This is reflected in Collins' study of the παρακαλέω formula (Collins:1984, 301-302). Exhortation was a common feature of traditional letters of friendship. In these letters of friendship (Stowers:1986, 58-70), the exhortation to write more often was placed alongside the praising words of love and longing. That way the reader would know that the exhortation was coming from love and not real anger. The more angry the letter (letters of reproach, for example), the less praise there would be to soften the hurt of the blame. Later we shall consider which type of letter I Thessalonians represents.

In excellent praise/blame form, the places where Paul exhorted (blamed) he also praised for the good in their actions that he had heard about. For example, Paul wrote Δοιπόν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα καθὼς παρελάβετε παρ᾿ ἡμῶν τὸ πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀρέσκειν θεῷ, καθὼς καὶ περιπατεῖτε, ἵνα περισσεύῃτε μᾶλλον ("And so finally, Brethren, we ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, just as you learned from us how to behave and be pleasing to God, and indeed as you are doing, you will do so more and more" - 4:1). The epistolary theorists on which Stowers (1986) relied,

23"To praise a man is in one respect akin to urging a course of action" (Aristotle's Rhetoric 1.9.1, The Modern Library).
state time and again that blame which is not softened by praise will lead only to resentment. This is evident in the way Paul used the oíðατε clause in close proximity to ἀδελφοί, as if to immediately soften the hurt of the blame (of oíðατε) with praise (ἀδελφοί). Considering all this praise and expression of love and longing in I Thessalonians, it is little wonder that so many have wanted to call this letter "warm."

We are beginning to get a glimpse here that the praise which Paul expressed was part of an epistolary tradition that dictated, if one wanted to keep one's friends as friends or one's clients as clients, one needed to soften one's blame with praise.

Paul used the epistolary devices of praise and blame in conjunction with formal rhetorical tools. Praise could function not only to offset blame, but to hold the attention of the reader and to attain their goodwill. According to Cicero (de Inv 1.16.22) goodwill could be grabbed rhetorically (captatio benevolentiae) by extolling one's own virtues, by denigrating the virtues of one's opponent, and by extolling the virtues of the audience. In this case, the goals of epistolary praise and blame and forensic rhetoric coincide. The denigration of one's opponent or enemies is evident in I Corinthians, where Paul did his best to put the Corinthian opponents in the worst possible light (Witherington:1995, also Chow:1992, Clarke:1993, Joubert:1995). It cannot be overemphasised, however, that in Corinth Paul had a third party against whom to rail, and that in Thessalonica he did not. With Schmithal's (1972) hypothesis of a gnostic presence in Thessalonica no longer accepted, it is clear that the situation
here is different from what Paul faced in Corinth. In I Thessalonians, the "challenge" to Paul was emanating from the Thessalonians themselves. There is nothing to indicate that the challenge was coming from outside the congregation, or from a group within the congregation but about whom Paul felt he could do without. Therefore, Paul had to treat the Thessalonians more as the audience than the enemy. This makes sense given that it was they who would decide if Paul retained his achieved honor. Clearly, too blaming a response from Paul would not have convinced the Thessalonian converts of Paul's honor or of his blameless conduct. Whether Paul was the patron, broker, or client, it was not in his best interest to alienate the Thessalonians. As an apostle, Paul's only interest was to keep the Thessalonians in God's community.

While blame threatened to cause an audience to look away in shame, praise held their attention and their gaze. Praise accompanied blame only when the writer was concerned about avoiding resentment. Said another way, if the writer was really angry and left with no recourse, he or she might write a letter of reproach, which was heavy on blame and light on praise. The amount of praise I Thessalonians serves to say in style what Paul would say later in words to another church: οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς γράψω ταύτα ἄλλῳ ως τέκνα μου ἀγαπητά νοσθετῶ[ν] - "I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children" - I Cor 4:14). Paul had to defend his honor, but to do it in the customary way, or to be too angry, would have driven an unremovable wedge between himself and his church.
Therefore, while Paul could not avoid blaming the Thessalonians for doubting his motives or conduct, or for not remembering what he taught them so well, he was careful to include sufficient praise to soften the blow, but not so much that he would appear flattering (2:5).

What Type of Letter is I Thessalonians?

I Thessalonians might be the earliest letter of Paul's available to us, but when Paul wrote his letters he was familiar with the already established tradition of letter writing. Paul relied on the well known letter structure: recipient/address/sender, greeting, thanksgiving, body, conclusion, final greeting, and peace wish (Murphy-O'Connor: 1995). Paul tapped into this tradition, but he also adapted it considerably to suite his own needs (White:1983). Paul's letters are much longer than the traditional letter, with the exception of Philemon (Stowers:1986). Even I Thessalonians, which is one of the shortest Pauline letters, would dwarf letters of the same period. What might the letter carriers have thought to deliver a letter the size of I Corinthians or Romans? Also, Paul's letters were written to groups as public property, as opposed to traditional private letters addressed to individuals (Witherington:1995). This public nature of Paul's letters (I Thess 5:27) lead to another radical change. Paul's letters were meant to be read aloud as if Paul himself were present speaking the words. As a result, Paul incorporated Greco-Roman rhetoric into his writing, so that their delivery
could be as eloquent as a speaker was expected to be (Litfin: 1994). Because of this, rhetorical criticism has offered valuable insight into the composition and (rhetorical) strategy of Paul's letters.

Deciding what type of letter Paul intended to write is made difficult because of how much Paul adapted the traditional letter format, style, and length. Borrowing extensively from Stowers' *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (1986), one sees how difficult (and unnecessary) it is to decide on a letter type for I Thessalonians. There are many letter types, but for our purposes, the most relevant are letters of friendship, letters of exhortation, letters of praise, and letters of blame. These are the most relevant because they come closest to resembling the style and themes of I Thessalonians. The first thing one realises is that the categories of letter type (as with rhetoric) are synthetic, for more often than not, letters contained several types within them (Johanson: 1987). This is very evident with Paul's letters, not the least of which is I Thessalonians.

Letters of friendship had their foundation on the belief that friends held all things in common, especially affection (Aristotle *Nic Eth* 9.8.1168b, 6-8). As a result, letters of friendship were full of declarations of love and of longing to be reunited with the friend (Stowers: 1986, 61-69). Letters of friendship also imply an horizontal relationship between writer and recipient (that is between social equals). It was not uncommon, however, for letters written from a superior to an inferior to use the
language of a friendly letter. As Demetrius wrote, men of prominence wrote friendly
letters "not because they are close friends and have (only) one choice (of how to
write), but because they think that nobody will refuse them when they write in a
friendly manner, but will rather submit and heed what they are writing" (Stowers:
1986, 58). Stowers has stated that there are no letters of friendship in the New
Testament. While this is structurally and exclusively accurate, there are clearly
elements of the friendly letter found in I Thessalonians, namely the claim to be
separated in body but not in spirit (2:17), the pain experienced at that separation (2:17-
20), expressions of love for the recipient (2:8, among others), memories of past times
(1:9, 3:6). Despite these many elements of letters of friendship present in
I Thessalonians, Stowers is right to imply that it is not a letter of friendship, if for no
other reason than that there are too many aspects of other letter types in it.

Letters of exhortation (which I Thessalonians has been identified as by
Stowers: 1986, Malherbe:1987, Murphy-O'Connor:1995) were a complex type, for
they contain blaming and praising at the same time. Types of paraenesis included
consolation (4:13-18), warning (5:12), encouragement (5:14), censure (blame), praise,
and admonition (also a type of letter of blame). There are many elements of the letter
of exhortation evident in I Thessalonians. These letters did not teach anything new
(the ωἴδατε clauses), the writer is the moral superior (Paul as apostle), a model of
behavior is presented for the reader to strive towards (1:6; 4:11), and finally, the
paraenetic letter assumes that the reader is already living in the right way (4:10). While it has been popular to designate this letter as paraenetic, it could be argued that there are too many other letter types in it to warrant so exclusive a tag.

We can already see how difficult it would be to designate letters as pure praise or pure blame, for "praise and/or blame is used in virtually every type of letter that the theorists isolated" (Stowers:1986, 77). Hence, here too Stowers claims that there are no letters of praise in the New Testament, yet as we have seen there is a tremendous amount of praise in I Thessalonians. This problem exists also with letters of blame (also called exhortatory blame). There are three types of letters of blame, each distinguished from the other by the amount of praise within it. Letters of admonition are the gentlest blaming letter. That is to say, they are meant to shame, but the use of praise ensures that the reader is not driven away. Admonition is not meant to be hurtful, but rather helpful to the reader. Again, the fact that I Thessalonians is a riposte to a challenge is indication that the letter was meant to blame, but the considerable amount of praise (especially compared to the much angrier letter to the Galatians) softens the blame so that the Thessalonians might take heed of the words.

A stronger letter of blame was the letter of rebuke. The letter of rebuke was aimed more at the character flaws of the reader, and was therefore sightly more shaming. It was also more shaming because there was more blame and less praise than in the letter of admonition. Stowers indicated that Galatians is a letter of rebuke
because, for as angry as the letter is, there is at least some praise in it. This can be compared to the strongest blaming letter, the letter of reproach. This letter is the harshest letter, and seems to show little regard for the feelings of the reader. That is, where the letter of admonition included praise to soften the hurt, the letter of reproach did not. Paul knew that this harsher approach existed, and he also knew that it was not appropriate for his mission. At I Thess 2:7, Paul showed that he was not wielding his anger above them as a weapon, but wrote how he was more like a nurse with her own children.

Paul's letters cannot be called only one or another of these letter types, for clearly there are too many elements of each to be found in I Thessalonians. There are even others elements not covered here, like the letter of consolation (Chapa:1994), the letter of apology (which uses aspects of the forensic defense speech in a way that resembles I Thess 2:1-12), the letter of accounting, and the letter of accusing. Paul's letters were rich in many types of letter, weaving them together to create a new type of letter which would be imitated after he was gone (White:1983).

**Paul and the Thessalonians**

Does any of what has been discussed above help clarify Paul's relationship to the church in Thessalonica? This is open for debate. Paul clearly fits some of the characteristics of the patron: he was the moral and temporal leader of the churches he
established, he was the one to whom they turned when in need of consolation or
guidance. Like a patron, Paul was nothing without his churches (clients), for his
success (honor) as an apostle was directly attached to the number of churches he could
secure. But there are other aspects of Paul's behavior which challenge this view.
Most importantly among these is that some in his churches did not see him as a
patron. Given the centrality of this institution, there should have been little or no
doubt about Paul's position in the community. But clearly there was something
lacking in his demeanor which led some to see him perhaps more as a client than as a
patron (I Corinthians). Paul may not have trumpeted his position as patron, but based
on his response to the Corinthians, neither was he thrilled at the prospect of being the
client of wealthy Corinthians. So far, we do not really have enough information to
assess how Paul saw himself.

We might also ask how the reflection of challenge and riposte in I
Thessalonians affects an understanding of patronage and clientage in Thessalonica (or
in the larger world). If one accepts the assessment above, that Paul was challenged by
the congregation there, does this carry implications about Paul's possible position as
patron? Perhaps it does. It seems, on one level, that Paul-as-patron and Paul-as-
challenged might be in contradiction to each other. Patrons being challenged by their
clients was uncommon. Clarke called the patron "beyond reproach" (Clarke:1993,
73). On the other hand, Paul's having been challenged by the Thessalonians may
reflect more about the view of the Thessalonians than of Paul himself. Perhaps this is an indication that they did not see him as their patron, for if they had they would not have challenged him. This might also account for Paul's indignation at such a low opinion of him.

Summary

Paul defended his honor in this letter in several ways: by refuting the accusations of the Thessalonians directly and explicitly, by appealing to their memories of his conduct and his teaching, by correcting the erroneous views which were manifested in their own behavior and conduct, and finally by referring to his ascribed honor as one chosen by God and as an apostle of Christ. This letter indicates that Paul considered it his business to keep the Thessalonians within the standards of behavior as defined by God's 'court of reputation'. Therefore, while defending his honor, which he was culturally forced to do, Paul deliberately wrote with praise, expressing pride in them, longing to see them again, and a willingness to go to extremes for them. This letter fits within the letter writing tradition of which Paul was a part, using the accepted form but in a new and radical way.

Through the lens of honor and shame, I Thessalonians has assumed a dynamism, even an urgency. The variety of studies on I Thessalonians which were surveyed in Chapter One drew a picture which was rather impressionistic. The honor
and shame model, on the other hand, has added a considerable amount of detail to this illustration. Honor and shame has highlighted how grave the accusations were and how imperative it was that Paul not only defend himself, but that he do so to the satisfaction of a judging audience, in this case the Thessalonians themselves. This model also highlighted how the praise (what others have identified as the "warmth") of the letter in no way contradicts this defensiveness. Praise and blame were the most common tools of the letter writer. The praise in I Thessalonians functions as a central part of the rhetoric of Paul's riposte.
Conclusion

I Thessalonians is the earliest extant document in the New Testament canon. There is something appealing about the letter for that reason. Perhaps to understand more about the earliest document of this religious movement is to understand more about the whole of the process of its birth and its outgrowth from Judaism. Despite this appealing feature, it is only within the last twenty years that the number of studies on this letter has grown. The first aspect which strikes the reader of I Thessalonians is the amount of praise which is expressed in the letter, especially when placed alongside II Thessalonians. The second prominent feature is the lengthy defense at 2:1-12 and the similar defensive style in other parts of the letter. These two features have been acknowledged and studied by all the commentaries, but never simultaneously. This may be because these two features have been seen to oppose each other. The expressions love of, longing for, and praise of the Thessalonian congregation has made some scholars reticent to acknowledge any problems between Paul and his church. Approached theologically, the defensiveness and the praise lack the emphasis they deserve. The sociological approach, on the other hand, can both borrow from and build upon the earlier theological studies. Approached from a Social-scientific perspective, the defensiveness and praise assume their rightful place
Chapter One surveyed the variety of ways the conflict and praise of I Thessalonians have been accounted for in commentaries and other scholarly literature. Work in this area can be divided into four specific groups: attempts to account for the eschatological details which Paul gave (Best:1972, Bruce:1980, Black: 1982, Mearns:1981, Jewett:1986, Barclay:1993); studies which have seen reflected in I Thessalonians a series of accusations (either real or possible) at which Paul took great offense (Schmithals:1972, Lohse:1972, Kümmel:1975, Koester:1979, Bruce: 1980, Donfried:1985, 1989, Perkins:1987, Collins:1988a); approaches which have seen it as a letter of consolation, or have focussed upon the theme of pastoral care (Forestell:1968, Malherbe:1983, 1987, 1990, Collins:1984, Donfried:1989, Chapa: 1994); and finally, two studies that have looked at the letter from the perspective of community-building and maintenance (Keightely:1987, deSilva:1996). These studies have all contributed, in various important ways, to our understanding of the cultural and social forces behind the creation of the document. None of them, however, attempted (or chose) to reconcile the conflict and the praise which they all have noticed.

Chapter Two prepared a foundation for the definition and application of an honor and shame model. By establishing Social Scientific Criticism as the search for explanation of a document and not just its social description, the very foundation of
this exercise was revealed, namely to access the world of social and cultural values
which helped shape documents and people such as I Thessalonians and Paul. The
realisation that these values operate symbolically in the world has guided the
development of this hermeneutical method. Chapter Two also highlighted those
aspects of this complex model which are most relevant to this particular study. The
model adopted for this exercise is driven by the understanding that the New Testament
personality was primarily dyadic (that is defined in relation to one's neighbors, not to
one's self), and that honor was a limited good which was competed for publically and
daily (agonism). Another aspect of the agonistic model of honor and shame is the
central role of the challenge and riposte context. The chapter closed with a brief
review of recent literature which approached the New Testament from the perspective
of honor and shame.

Chapter Three contains the exegesis of I Thessalonians from the perspective of
the agonistic honor and shame contest which was part of the Mediterranean cultural
and social fabric. In the process of my exegesis, I was able to account for and
reconcile the two central features of this text. By using this model, the conflict
between Paul and the Thessalonians became almost tangible. Paul's achieved honor as
an apostle and teacher had been jeopardised by a series of challenges from within the
congregation, and the letter as a whole was seen to reflect this. Through the lens of
honor and shame, the letter assumed a new mission, namely to defend Paul's honor
before the 'court of reputation' that was made up of the Thessalonian converts themselves.

The praise of this letter, which has been noticed by all who read it, also took on new meaning when viewed through this lens. While it was common practice for one to defend one's honor by bringing shame and hostility onto the challenger, this was not an appropriate strategy for Paul. Paul's mission was to bring the Gentiles into God's covenant, not to rule over them as a patriarch. The warmth of the letter allowed Paul to defend his honor and to keep them from becoming resentful towards the gospel of God. Also, the conspicuous repetition of the οἶδατέ ("you know") clauses was seen in a new light. This feature became a standard way for Paul to defend himself by appealing directly to their memories of his conduct and teachings. Through it, Paul showed that he had behaved and taught in a way that was worthy of honor. In expressing frequently that what he taught was from God alone, and that he had been chosen by God for the purpose of spreading the gospel, Paul referred to his ascribed honor in addition to his achieved honor. This too was done with an eye towards affecting a change in their perception of him and what he had taught them.

With regards to deSilva's (1996) study concerning the new 'court of reputation' in Thessalonica, I might add that Paul's language indicates another aspect worthy of our attention. According to deSilva, it was God to whom they were answerable now, not to their old Gentile 'courts of reputation'. However, Paul's riposte indicates that he
herself was sensitive to another 'court of reputation', namely the Thessalonian
congregation itself. Paul did not wish them to think poorly of him, nor to have any
aspect of his teaching or conduct doubted. Therefore, he wrote this letter in order to
show that his conduct and teaching were in fact in accordance with their expectations.
The letter was designed to redeem himself in their eyes. Paul may have preached a
higher 'court of reputation', but there is no doubt that he still saw himself accountable
to certain earthly ones as well. The Thessalonian congregation was the 'court of
reputation' which would judge if Paul had sufficiently defended his honor among
them. The praise of the letter functions to keep the Thessalonians listening and to
keep them open to God's will. Therefore, it would have been prudent to praise as
much as to blame. Paul had to defend his honor, but he had to do it in a way that
would keep the Thessalonians interested and open to his mission.

By approaching I Thessalonians from the social-scientific method generally,
and from the perspective of honor and shame and praise and blame specifically, we
are able to consider issues of a broader ilk. For example, what was Paul's relationship
to the congregation in Thessalonica? Was Paul their patron or their client? Did they
see it the same way as Paul? We have cause to believe that the church in Corinth did
not, and that they challenged Paul's position as patron. There were some in the church
who, having considerable wealth, wished to be (and to be treated as) patrons to the
church. We see from I Corinthians that Paul was unwilling to accept this
arrangement. But was this the case in Thessalonica?

We do not have the same evidence for such an assessment in Thessalonica. Paul might have seen himself as their patron, or he might have seen himself as a broker between God and the Gentiles. Paul claimed not to have used his authority while he was with the Thessalonians. Things appear a little differently in the letters, however. In I Thessalonians, at least, Paul exercises his authority in precisely the way he did not in person. While Paul was establishing his churches, he may have underplayed his authority. Unfortunately for him, this may have worked to his detriment, for we see in I Corinthians that his authority as an apostle was questioned. This may have been the case in Thessalonica also, though likely to a lesser degree. Having been questioned or challenged, Paul was put in a position where he had to exercise this authority. This position might have been as a patron or as a broker, but regardless it was a position with honor and worthy of respect. Paul, it seems, was a different man in writing than he was in person. If some among his congregations were unimpressed with his speaking abilities, it is difficult to see how they could have been with his letters. It hardly needs to be said that they would have less reason to be unimpressed with his physical appearance in his writing. Perhaps Paul was far more eloquent as a writer than he was as a speaker. The survival of the churches both in Thessalonica and Corinth might suggest that the letters were successful in doing what his speaking could not.
The Social-scientific method continually brings Paul's world into better focus. We no longer have only the seven letters and a theological account of Paul in Acts with which to better understand him. We now have ways of accessing the social world and values as well as institutions which would have shaped Paul's world view and the ways he expressed himself in his letters. We can access this world of Paul's with a knowledge of honor and shame, of praise and blame, and of patron and client relations. But it would not be accurate to think of these as if they were each separate entities. The Social-scientific method must attempt to understand how these were related to each other and other social institutions and values, such as kinship, gender distinctions, and friendship. Since Paul was conditioned by his world, it is incumbent upon us to continually strive to understand that world, that we might better understand the man and his writing.
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