



Heaven to Earth: An empirical, phenomenological, and theological contribution to understanding Canadian fighter pilot air-to-ground combat experiences

Thèse

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RÉSUMÉ

Entre le 30 octobre 2014 et le 15 février 2016, des pilotes de chasse des avions CF-18 ont procédé à 251 frappes aériennes contre des cibles en Irak et en Syrie pour soutenir la campagne aérienne de la coalition internationale, Opération IMPACT. Vulnérables à une combinaison de facteurs de stress uniques associés aux combats air-sol, les pilotes de chasse ont également été exposés à des accusations portées contre eux par les médias canadiens qui remettaient en question leur intégrité morale à cause de violences commises contre des victimes civiles. Aucune recherche à ce jour n'a été menée spécifiquement sur les expériences de combat des pilotes de chasse et les conséquences de ces expériences sur leur bien-être. Située au carrefour des sciences humaines et de la théologie, notre enquête a été guidée par la question de recherche suivante : Quelles réflexions sur les expériences de combat air-sol des pilotes de chasse canadiens aideraient les intervenants militaires à prendre des décisions qui contribueraient au bien-être des pilotes alors que ceux-ci se préparent au combat et participent à de futures campagnes aériennes ?

L'approche de recherche

Le chercheur, un aumônier militaire, a interviewé six pilotes de chasse des avions CF-18 stationnés à la base des Forces canadiennes de Bagotville qui ont participé à l'opération IMPACT. Six entretiens avec ces pilotes sont devenus le corpus des pilotes. En utilisant une approche qui relève de la phénoménologie et se situe dans la tradition de la recherche qualitative, le sens attribué par les pilotes à leur expérience de combat a été analysé d'abord au moyen d'une lecture empathique, puis au moyen d'une lecture critique du corpus des entrevues. À partir de cette analyse, le stress et le diptyque honneur / honte ont été identifiés, respectivement, comme les phénomènes clés pour l'interprétation des expériences vécues de ces pilotes.

Puisque le stress et l'honneur / la honte sont des expériences communes à toute l'humanité, la compréhension de ces phénomènes s'est enrichie grâce à l'analyse d'un corpus littéraire théologique appartenant au passé. Le corpus des évangiles, composé des quatre évangiles du

canon du Nouveau Testament, fournit un récit illustrant la vie et la vision du monde de Jésus-Christ et d'autres personnages bibliques. Des exemples de phénomènes de stress et d'honneur / honte ont été identifiés dans le corpus des évangiles et interprétés selon une approche tex-tuelle, sociologique et basée sur l'expérience. Par la suite, deux épisodes spécifiques de l'évangile de Luc, Luc 7. 36 à 50 et Luc 15. 11 à 32, ont été analysés plus en profondeur.

Conclusions

À partir de l'analyse du corpus pilote et du corpus théologique, nous avons tenté d'établir un dialogue interprétatif entre les sciences humaines et la tradition chrétienne. Suite à cette dis-cussion, notre compréhension de l'expérience des phénomènes de l'honneur et de la honte par des personnages bibliques a été enrichie. De plus, nous avons pu formuler des recom-mendations en vue de la création de politiques et de pratiques qui pourraient améliorer le bien-être des pilotes de chasse alors qu'ils se préparent au combat et participent à de futures campagnes aériennes.

ABSTRACT

Between 30 October 2014 and 15 February 2016, CF-18 fighter pilots conducted 251 air-strikes over Iraq and Syria in support of the coalition air campaign Operation IMPACT. Vulnerable to a combination of unique stressors associated with air-to-ground combat, fighter pilots were also exposed to Canadian media accusations of moral violations resulting from civilian casualties. No research to date has been conducted specifically on combat experiences and the well-being of active fighter pilots. Situated at the crossroads of human sciences and theology, this inquiry is guided by the following research question: What theological insights into Canadian fighter pilot air-to-ground combat experiences would help military stakeholders make decisions contributing to pilot well-being as pilots prepare for and participate in future air campaigns?

Research Approach

The researcher, a military chaplain, interviewed six CF-18 fighter pilots stationed at Canadian Forces Base Bagotville who supported Operation IMPACT. Six transcribed pilot interviews became the pilot corpus analyzed for this inquiry. Using a multi-method approach within the phenomenological genre of the qualitative research tradition, the meaning pilots attributed to their combat experience was analyzed first, by an empathic reading, then by a critical reading of the pilot corpus. From this analysis, stress and the diptych honour/shame were identified, respectively, as the key phenomena to interpreting pilot combat experiences.

Since stress and honour/shame are universal to all humanity, an understanding of these phenomena was enriched through an analysis of a theological corpus of literature from the past. The gospel corpus, comprised of the four gospel accounts within the canon of the New Testament, provided an account of the life-world of Jesus Christ and other biblical characters. Examples of the phenomena of stress and honour/shame were identified in the gospel corpus and interpreted using a textual, sociological, and experiential orientation. Two specific episodes, Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 15:11-32, were then analyzed in more depth.

Conclusions

From the analysis of the pilot corpus and the analysis of the gospel corpus, an interpretive dialogue between the human sciences and the Christian tradition was undertaken. As a result of this discussion, our understanding of honour/shame experienced by biblical characters is enriched. In addition, recommendations are offered to assist in the formulation of policies and practices that will improve the well-being of our CF-18 fighter pilots as they prepare for and participate in future air campaigns.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS/INITIALISMS

1 Pe	1 Peter
1 Ti	1 Timothy
Ac	Acts of the Apostles
C2	Command and Control
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CAOC	Combined Air Operations Centre
CAS	Close Air Support
COC	Chain of Command
CDE	Collateral Damage Estimate
CF-18	Canadian Fighter Jet CF-18 Hornet
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CRUG	Combat Readiness Upgrade
Dt	The Book of Deuteronomy
Ec	Ecclesiasticus
Ep	The Book of Ephesians
Ex	The Book of Exodus
FAC	Forward Air Controller
JAG	Military Lawyer
Jn	Gospel of John
JTAC	Joint Terminal Air Controller
He	The Book of Hebrews
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
Is	The Book of Isaiah
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
Le	The Book of Leviticus
Lu	Gospel of Luke
Mk	Gospel of Mark
Mt	Gospel of Matthew
NIV	New International Version
NVG	Night Vision Goggles
Op	Operation
OSI	Operational Stress Injury
Ps	The Psalms
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
Ro	The Book of Romans
ROE	Rules of engagement
ROZ	Restricted Operating Zone
SAR	Search and Rescue
S/R	Spirituality and Religion
SCAR	Strike Coordination Armed Reconnaissance

TFS Tactical Fighter Squadron
USAF United States Air Force
vul Vulnerability Period

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following individuals who have encouraged me during my doctoral research experience.

To Dr. Pat Murphy, thank you for getting me started on this doctorate. You sowed the idea and made yourself available at different points during this project.

To Colonel Darcy Molstad, 3 Wing Commander at CFB Bagotville at the time this inquiry was undertaken, thank you for graciously providing me the authorization to interview your fighter pilots and for encouraging my course work at Université Laval.

To the six fighter pilots at 3 Wing, CFB Bagotville, who selflessly set time aside to help others by participating in an interview, thank you for taking the time from your intensely busy schedules to meet with me and answer sensitive questions about the thoughts, feelings, and physiological sensations associated with your combat experiences.

To my dissertation committee members, Dr. Robert Mager and Dr. Jean-Marc Charron, thank you for setting aside a number of weeks to read my dissertation. Jean-Marc, thank you for your appropriate comments as this dissertation took shape. Thank you, Robert, for accepting to be my supervisor throughout this journey. Your nuanced and thoughtful advice has made this study rigorous.

To my wife, Nancy, who endured this project for over 5 years, thank you for your continual love and support demonstrated by your daily sacrifice in our marriage. Without you, I would not have been able to persevere and accomplish this inquiry.

To the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I profess not only as my Ultimate Concern but also as Lord of all, may this dissertation contribute to you receiving all glory and honour forever and ever!
Amen!

INTRODUCTION

Surprisingly, my interest in conducting a phenomenological inquiry on the combat experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots has its origins in the Francophone Games held in Niamey, Niger, West Africa in December 2005. As a volunteer sports chaplain, I had a ministry of presence at the Athletic Village. During those four weeks of ministry, I was surprised by the different responses of occidental and non-occidental athletes to a sports chaplain. Athletes from non-Western countries approached chaplains while athletes from Western countries avoided us. I realized if sports chaplains were to have an effective ministry among Western athletes, they must have something to contribute to the felt needs of these athletes. This reflection led me to post-graduate work on emotions and motivation in the context of sport and spirituality.

A few years later, I found myself in a similar situation as a military chaplain serving on a Canadian air force base. Rather than having contact with elite athletes, I was in occasional contact with the elite of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF): CF-18 fighter pilots. Being part of a tight-knit community, the pilots' professional and social contacts remain mostly between themselves. Rarely would a pilot seek the services of a chaplain except for family rites of passage, such as weddings, baptisms, and confirmations. To gain credibility in their eyes, I reasoned that chaplains needed to be invited into the lives of pilots. What better way to be invited into their lives than to learn more about what impasses a pilot (flying and engaging in combat). As a chaplain, when I thought about combat, one of the associations that quickly came to mind was the adverse psychological outcomes resulting from combat. As I began reading about combat trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and operational stress injury (OSI), I learned that literature referring to these adverse psychological outcomes in fighter pilots was almost non-existent. Apart from research on drone pilots and a quantitative study of data collected during a debriefing of United States Air Force (USAF) Airmen returning from Afghanistan, I could not find any literature that researched fighter pilot experiences in combat. The conclusion I drew was that to the best of my knowledge researchers have not investigated fighter pilot well-being in the Canadian context.

Chaplains in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are first responders. There is a chaplain on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Chaplains are available to counsel military personnel in need and to direct them to other appropriate resources. This inquiry is a first response to the needs of fighter pilot well-being. In this inquiry, I integrate a human science perspective with a theological perspective. Each perspective brings to light unique considerations that are insightful for fighter-pilot well-being.

In Chapters 1 to 3, I present the context of this research inquiry, its theoretical foundations, and my research strategy. In Chapters 4 to 6, I present my analysis of the interviews I conducted with six CF-18 fighter pilots. This analysis, which uncovered several core interpretive phenomena, was undertaken using a phenomenological approach adapted from the human sciences. To provide a counter-point to my analysis from the human sciences, Chapters 7 and 8 present an additional analysis of these core interpretive phenomena from an evangelical theological perspective. In Chapter 9, I undertake a dialogue between the two above analyzes with the intent of enriching both a human science and theological understanding of the core interpretive phenomena observed in the pilot interviews. Finally, I conclude this dissertation with my thoughts on the practical implications, the limitations, and the future research suggested by this inquiry.

My desire is that future researchers will follow up on these findings and sharpen preparative training, combat support, and post-deployment services that will improve the well-being of our CF-18 fighter pilots as they prepare for and participate in future air campaigns.

CHAPTER 1: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The RCAF commander is ultimately responsible for every aspect of his troops' well-being. However, due to heavy responsibilities, these leaders may find it difficult to keep abreast on research conducted on the well-being of Canadian military combatants. As a result, they delegate this responsibility to the experts: mental health researchers and practitioners. In the process, RCAF leadership may overlook the fact that the most recent recommendations they've received from experts are based on research conducted primarily on ground soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. Though CF-18 fighter squadrons are deployed to multinational air campaigns, Canadian airpower practitioners appear content to apply ground troop generated research in support of their CF-18 fighter pilots.¹ Can all research knowledge generated from soldiers in past ground campaigns be simply transferred to support CF-18 fighter pilots who will be deployed to future air campaigns? In order to reflect on this practical question, I decided to explore CF-18 fighter pilots' beliefs about their well-being in the context of air-to-ground combat.

To the best of my knowledge, in the Canadian context, research is yet to be conducted on fighter pilot experiences and mental health outcomes ([Royal Canadian Air Force, 2016](#)). Because of this void, I have undertaken this interdisciplinary research inquiry.

The purpose of this dissertation is to present the qualitative research conducted on CF-18 fighter pilots in the late summer of 2016. This dissertation describes and analyzes how fighter pilots experienced air-to-ground combat over Iraq.

A description of experience is not limited to one field of academic study. From within the human sciences, psychology emphasizes the intra-personal experience of knowing (cognition) and motivation/emotion (appetition) ([McCall, 1983](#)). Sociology studies the experience

¹ Technically, the term Canadian fighter pilots and RCAF fighter pilots refer to all fighter pilots who have flown with the RCAF since World War II. CF-18 fighter pilots, who are the subject of this study, refer to pilots who have flown the CF-188 Hornet aircraft.

of people in their inter-personal context. The field of theology focuses on the individual and the community from the perspective of God, spirituality, and ultimate concern. I situate this inquiry at the interface of these three academic disciplines.

1 The Situational Context

CF-18 fighter pilots flew 1378 *sorties* over Iraq/Syria in support of the multinational coalition air campaign Operation (Op) IMPACT between 30 October 2014 and 15 February 2016 resulting in 246 airstrikes in Iraq and five in Syria ([Government of Canada - Department of National Defence, 2016](#)). Vulnerable² to a combination of unique stressors related to their combat exposure, fighter pilots were also susceptible³ to media accusations of causing civilian casualties and to personal violations of their moral beliefs of right and wrong. Pilots are Canadians who have integrated their nation's values into their own belief system. The Canadian narrative treasures individualism, choice, tolerance ([Thiessen, 2015](#)), and cherished pluralism ([Carson, 1996](#)). However, in addition to holding beliefs common to Canadian society, pilots also hold collective beliefs about the air campaign and unique beliefs about their individual combat experiences. This inquiry explores both the collective and unique beliefs underlying pilot experiences.

2 The Challenges Summoned by this Dissertation

In its analysis of CF-18 pilot experiences, this dissertation challenges some of the thinking of our present culture. At one level, it challenges the assumption that all psychological research conducted on ground troops can simply be transferred to combatants in the air. At a second level, it challenges the assumption that the current Canadian mental health professional/patient model is effective in debriefing *all* Canadian combatants when returning from

² Vulnerability refers to the variation between groups of individuals that are exposed to a threat. All pilots in combat had a higher vulnerability or exposure to threats than did ground crew who remained on the operational base during the deployment.

³ Susceptibility refers to the degree to which individual pilots may respond negatively to a given threat.

battle. At its deepest level, it challenges the assumption that a theological discussion, commonly relegated to the private sphere, cannot contribute to the public discussion of subjects of interest in Canadian society. At minimum, a theological analysis can complement a psychological analysis of the human. If its reach is extended, a theological analysis may broaden the understanding of the human's spiritual dimension, and ultimately enable receptive readers to re-evaluate their own spiritual journey.

3 The Dilemma Inspiring this Dissertation

A surprising observation I made when conducting this research was that CF-18 fighter pilots interviewed generally have an antagonistic relationship with military flight surgeons. One of the pilots⁴ interviewed was direct in saying that pilots do not like flight surgeons. The reason is that flight surgeons and aeromedical psychologists can ground pilots either temporarily or permanently ([Saitzyk, Mayfield, Sharkey, & Coleman, 2017](#)). Fighter pilots are passionate about flying; they do not want to be grounded!

This antagonism may even taint a pilot's relationship with mental health professionals and chaplains. A tainted relationship is suggested by my observation that pilots did not express the need to talk to any of the above support personnel about their multinational air campaign experiences. The pilots I interviewed declined to divulge their occasional, unanticipated re-living of undesirable combat experiences to mental health personnel during formal debriefings.

Military support personnel concerned about pilot well-being, such as flight surgeons, mental health professionals, and chaplains, face what I call a communication/support *dilemma*. On the one hand, we are mandated to provide support to military personnel. On the other hand, if military support personnel are unaware of fighter pilot combat experiences because pilots

⁴ For simplicity, at times, I will now refer to CF-18 fighter pilots by using the more generic term *pilots*.

are reluctant to discuss their experiences with us, how can we pretend to provide relevant support contributing to their well-being?

To go a step further, if military stakeholders are unaware of pilot combat experiences, is it possible that strategic decisions are made in preparation for future air campaigns that neglect the susceptibility of their fighter pilots to adverse psychological outcomes?

Though an oversimplification, I imagine this dilemma as life-worlds of two distinct military communities situated on two opposing cliffs overlooking a stream deep below. Separating the communities is a bridge with barriers. The first community (military support personnel) wants to enter the life-world of the second (fighter pilots who experienced combat) in order to provide support as pilots work through various adverse psychological outcomes associated with combat. However, the second community would rather talk about more superficial subjects. Is it possible, in this scenario, to remove some of the barriers from this bridge?

In the fall of 2016, I interviewed six CF-18 fighter pilots who participated in the multinational coalition air campaign over Iraq. As a researcher, I approached pilots with a desire to listen and to learn about their experiences of air-to-ground combat. I was curious about the recollection of their thoughts, emotional responses, and physiological sensations associated with combat. In addition, I wanted to understand the meaning pilots constructed from these experiences. To my surprise, pilots described some of their combat experiences to me, a chaplain and researcher, in rich detail. What allowed pilots to temporarily remove a barrier contributing to the communication/support dilemma? Consistent with the qualitative research tradition undertaken in this inquiry, where hypotheses are generated from the interpretation of the data rather than stated at the beginning of the study ([Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014](#)), I now realize that during the interview, I was not a threat to pilot honour. I had no authority to ground pilots if they revealed any adverse psychological outcomes due to their combat deployment. I was conducting research for the betterment of pilot well-being with the support of their squadron and wing commanders.

4 The Goal of this Dissertation

This dissertation is an outcome of that research inquiry. I attempt to relate and interpret a sampling of pilot combat experiences to RCAF leadership, military support personnel working with pilots, and other interested readers. My intent in writing this dissertation is first, to offer recommendations to assist in the formulation of policies and practices that will improve the well-being of our CF-18 fighter pilots as they prepare for and participate in future air campaigns; and second, to encourage future mental health research directed towards the unique fighter pilot community.

This dissertation describes the process I followed to tap into pilot experiences. It provides the justification for decisions I made in the collection, organization, and interpretation of the data generated from those experiences. In addition, it provides the results of my research in the broader context of the ongoing discussions within the selective discursive communities of sociology, psychology, and theology consulted for this inquiry.

5 The Form of the Dissertation

If you are reading this dissertation, I can assume that you have an interest in pilot combat experiences. To lighten the reading for you, I have attempted to write this dissertation in the first person, active voice. As well, I made the decision to use the inclusive “he” when referring to pilots who participated in this study. The reason for using this sexist pronoun style is two-fold. First, it simplifies the communication between you, the reader and me, the author. However, more importantly, it contributes to the anonymity of pilots interviewed for this research project.

6 The Essence of the Dissertation

I have attempted to encapsulate the essence of this dissertation by the wording of its title. The title reveals key anchor points to help situate this study.

Heaven to Earth: An empirical, phenomenological, and theological contribution to understanding Canadian fighter pilot air-to-ground combat experiences

Heaven to Earth as used in this title has at least two meanings. First, it points to air-to-ground combat experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots who flew over Iraq from October 2014 to February 2016. Pilots flew *sorties* protecting coalition forces and targeting enemy forces on the ground. Second, it also points to the theological stance that I take as a researcher. I constructed meaning from these pilot experiences by interpreting them through a theological lens. Although theology literally means the study of God, the sub-discipline of public theology investigates phenomena in the non-religious, public sphere from a Christian theological perspective ([Graham, 2013](#)). In this research inquiry, I examine pilot experiences and their implications from a vertical stance (theological) rather than just from the purely horizontal stance of the human sciences (whether psychological or sociological). For David Tracy, an American theologian, a theological work in today's post-modern context can be simply put as a mutually critical conversation between a religious tradition and contemporary culture ([Tracy, 1994](#)). In the next chapter, I will have more to say about this conversation between a religious tradition represented by selected books of the Christian Scriptures, and contemporary culture represented by selected literature from the human sciences.

By means of this study, I attempt to make an *empirical contribution*. By empirical, I mean that I plant my feet in a worldview that assumes, as humans, we live in a shared apprehendable reality that is independent of human knowledge. However, we construct meaning from this shared reality by what we believe about this reality: our lived beliefs. These lived beliefs are influenced by our historical, cultural, and ideological pre-understandings. An implication of this assumption for my study is that pilots, who described their combat experiences in recorded interviews, actually lived these combat experiences in this real world. This point may appear too obvious to readers who do not identify with the academy. However, it is important that I state it for those who do. I recorded the interviews and had them transcribed verbatim. The six transcribed pilot interviews became the empirical raw data or what I refer to as the *pilot corpus*. I then analyzed and interpreted the corpus for this study.

The study is *phenomenological* in the sense that I am investigating the phenomenon⁵ of CF-18 fighter pilot combat experiences and the meaning pilots constructed from those experiences. Rather than using a common quantitative method of formulating questions for pilot interviews with a preconceived theme for study, I identify more with a phenomenological genre within the qualitative research tradition. In other words, though tempted, when analyzing the interviews, I refrained from imposing any theme of inquiry (such as resilience, trauma, or PTSD) on the phenomenon of pilot combat experiences.

The study is *theological* not only because as the researcher, I am a retired chaplain. More importantly, a theological contribution, on an important subject, presents a promising and original perspective that would be missed if the discussion was limited to the human sciences. Therefore, I bring to this study an evangelical Christian theological pre-understanding where some of my values and beliefs about mental health may differ from a person conducting this same research with a secular pre-understanding.

I situate this study in the setting of *air-to-ground combat experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots* who engaged the enemy in Iraq while supporting the multinational air campaign Op IMPACT.

7 **The Audience Intended for this Dissertation**

Not only does this dissertation inform the reader of pilot combat experiences, it is also my doctoral dissertation for a Ph.D. in Theology. Usually, doctoral dissertations are written with the academy in mind. As a result, theological dissertations embrace very theoretical concepts and may be difficult to read. However, David Tracy ([1981](#)) lists three possible audiences that an author of a theological work may address as the author undertakes a conversation between a Christian religious tradition and a phenomenon of contemporary experience: the academy,

⁵ For this study, a phenomenon is anything that we experience as humans, whether imagined or real, tangible or intangible. This includes objects, actions, qualities, locations, and circumstances. Most phenomena we experience are *taken for granted* in that we do not reflect on the fact that we are experiencing them.

the Christian tradition, and contemporary culture. I have chosen to favour the audience of contemporary culture in this dissertation. That is not to say that those in the academy or in the Christian tradition will not read this dissertation nor that they are not interested in fighter pilot experiences. Rather, my intent as author is to write a dissertation using a form and language that those outside the academy and the Christian tradition can understand and benefit from. My theological reflection will not be overtly apparent from start to finish of this dissertation. It will be most evident in Chapters 7 to 9 where insights from what I refer to as the *gospel corpus* will enrich the understanding of combat experiences in what I label the pilot corpus. However, my theological reflection lies beneath the surface of all the words written in this dissertation. My Christian theological reflection, with its values and beliefs, forms my pre-understanding as I undertake this study. It influences the selection of the literature read for this research inquiry, the questions pursued, the interpretation of the pilot interviews, the choice of themes I developed, and the chapters written for this dissertation. In addition, it is possible that I am not always able to articulate the reasons behind certain decisions I made. However, throughout the following chapters, I make every attempt to do so.

Although I write with the audience of contemporary culture in mind, I am also accountable to the academy. I will be introducing theoretical concepts of phenomena experienced commonly by both pilots and non-pilots. I will justify my conceptualization by referring to the human science literature that supports those conceptualizations. My intent is that this inquiry be rigorous, generating trustworthy interpretations backed by well-founded evidence.

Finally, I want to be accountable to the Christian tradition I have been a part of over the past four decades: the very diverse evangelical community. With respect to this potential audience, I am open to suggestions or helpful critiques offered by those who are part of this tradition.

8 The Research Question

Not only flight surgeons but also other military support personnel, such as mental health professionals and chaplains, are mandated to provide support to pilots. However, CF-18

fighter pilots participating in this study did not express the need to consult professional support personnel about their combat experiences. Therefore, professional support personnel concerned with the mental health of pilots face a dilemma. If uninformed of pilot combat experiences, how can we hope to provide support contributing to pilot well-being?

The disclosing of what I call a pilot communication/support dilemma led me to formulate the following research question.

8.1 My Enunciation of the Research Question

What insights into CF-18 fighter pilot air-to-ground combat experiences would help military stakeholders make decisions contributing to pilot well-being as pilots prepare for and participate in future air campaigns?

8.2 My Objectives in Answering the Research Question

To help answer this question, I set the following eight research objectives:

1. To compile a corpus text composed of the transcribed interviews of CF-18 fighter pilots who voluntarily shared their experiences of air-to-ground combat over Iraq;
2. To analyze this pilot corpus by observing the salient emotional experiences of pilots using an adapted phenomenological research genre within the qualitative research tradition;
3. To identify a reflective core phenomenon from this analysis that provides an interpretive key to understanding the meaning pilots attributed to their salient emotional experiences;
4. To identify an unreflective core phenomenon from this analysis that provides a second interpretive key for understanding the source of the reflective meaning pilots attributed to their salient emotional experiences;
5. To develop a clearer understanding of these interpretive phenomena by consulting the relevant literature in the fields of contemporary sociology and psychology;

6. To enrich this understanding of these interpretive phenomena from a theological stance by examining the traces of these same phenomena in the gospel corpus composed of selected literature from the Christian tradition found in the canon of the New Testament;
7. To enter into a dialogue on these interpretive phenomena between contemporary culture (represented by my interpretation of the psychological and sociological literature reviewed to undertake this inquiry) and the Christian tradition (represented by my interpretation of selected texts of the gospel corpus using interpretive methods with a textual, a sociological, and an experiential orientation);
8. To offer recommendations to assist in the formulation of policies and practices that will improve the well-being of our CF-18 fighter pilots as they prepare for and participate in future air campaigns.

8.3 My Experience that Lead to Identifying the Research Question

As I consulted the literature on military trauma, a mental health dilemma captured my attention. Military stakeholders remain perplexed as to why some members exposed to combat develop various degrees of psychological injury while others do not ([Copp & Humphries, 2010](#)). Thus, I turned my attention to the literature describing both risk factors and resilience to PTSD. In the Canadian military context, I learned that current mental health researchers in the Canadian Army were confident in their understanding of the psychological impact of the ground mission in Afghanistan ([Zamorski & Boulos, 2014](#)). However, research on combat ground troops, until recently, has focused on PTSD and OSI. According to Jessica Hamblen ([2009](#)), PTSD is an anxiety disorder associated with horrific, life-threatening traumatic events such as military combat. However, what has received less attention in the literature is another adverse psychological outcome associated with combat: moral injury ([Drescher et al., 2011](#)). I found this intriguing.

For Meagan M. Thompson, a researcher with Defence Research and Development Canada, though fear and horror are correctly coupled with traditional definitions of PTSD, guilt and shame are more appropriately linked with moral injury ([M. M. Thompson, 2015](#)). According

to Litz et al. (2009), morals “are *fundamental assumptions* about how things should work and how one should behave in the world” (p. 699, emphasis added). With my pre-understanding formed by my chaplaincy background, I equated the term *fundamental assumptions* used in this context with the term *beliefs*. This led me to conclude that both *fear* and *beliefs* play some role in the mental health dilemma. The implication is that the beliefs of a person may somehow be associated with both healthy and adverse psychological outcomes. This implication resonated within me. Two other thoughts then came to mind. First, I realized that another means of examining the effects of combat on mental health outcomes was through the lens of moral beliefs (M. M. Thompson, 2015). Second, beliefs form a core element of a theological discussion.

It occurred to me that the lack of research examining the interaction between beliefs and experiences of CAF members engaged in combat contributes to our deficiency in understanding the reasons for the mental health dilemma. In addition, solutions to the mental health dilemma were not restricted uniquely to a secular psychological discourse. Was it possible that a theological discourse could contribute to elucidating this dilemma? More specifically, could a study focusing on beliefs shed light on our limited understanding of the complexities surrounding susceptibility and resilience to PTSD, which is fear-based, and moral injury, which is associated with moral beliefs?

When one thinks of beliefs, the tendency is to think in terms of spirituality and religion (S/R). American researchers Harold G. Koenig, Dana E. King, and Verna B. Carson (2012) document a growing body of quantitative research demonstrating the relationship between professed beliefs associated with S/R and positive physical/mental health outcomes in civilian populations. However, studies investigating the relationship between beliefs and psychological outcomes in the military context are sparse and contradictory. In a sampling of USAF, non-pilot combat veterans, Michael D. Grubbs (2012), a USAF chaplain, confirmed a relationship between strong professed beliefs associated with S/R measured on a Spiritual Well-being Scale and fewer post-traumatic symptoms. However, Michel Sartori (2012), an officer in the Canadian Army, documented the crumbling of professed beliefs associated with S/R

leading to suicidal thoughts and physical self-injury among CAF ground soldiers interviewed who were exposed to combat in Afghanistan.

Beliefs, however, are not limited to the sphere of S/R. Individuals also hold beliefs about phenomena of the finite world of the here and now. Referred to as lived beliefs, Carrie Doehring ([2014](#)), an American psychologist and professor of Pastoral Care and Counselling, associates these beliefs not with what a person professes, but with a person's behaviour in everyday life energized by emotions. In other words, lived beliefs are interpretive assumptions that underlie personal experience.⁶ Though not the first to broaden the conceptualization of beliefs beyond the domain of S/R – the American psychologist Albert Ellis ([1962](#)), one of the founders of cognitive-behavioural therapies, did this decades before – Doehring represents a voice at the interface of contemporary psychological and theological research that identifies the importance of better understanding beliefs.

My research project began to take form. I wondered if patterns existed between the lived beliefs of CF-18 fighter pilots and their susceptibility and resilience to moral injury. To identify any possible patterns, I chose to use an approach within the qualitative research tradition rather than a quantitative approach. If I had performed a study on pilots using a research genre from the quantitative tradition, I would have collected data that I could have quantified. For example, I would have provided pilots with a written questionnaire with the following format. “How did you feel when you struck your first target? 1) Guilty; 2) Sad; 3) No emotion; 4) Happy; 5) Awesome.” Then, I would have compared these answers with several quantitative variables, such as their age, gender, and years of experience. I would have analyzed the quantitative data statistically, setting aside any idiosyncratic or outlier results peculiar to an individual. However, most importantly, using a quantitative approach, *I* would

⁶ Lived beliefs differ from a worldview in that a worldview is a collection of a person's beliefs that can be described as the highest order of a person's beliefs. Worldview beliefs are the foundational beliefs that orient the other levels of a person's lived beliefs.

have selected themes that *I* wanted to examine by the way *I* formulated my questions. *I* would then embed those themes in the questions of the questionnaire.

However, by choosing to identify with a research genre from a qualitative tradition, I used a research approach more consistent with the phenomenon I wanted to study: pilot beliefs about their combat experiences. Beliefs are not like data that can be collected, quantified, and analyzed statistically. However, beliefs can be observed, interpreted, and understood. Therefore, I set as my aim to understand the resilience and adaptability of CF-18 fighter pilots to PTSD, OSI, and moral injury by interpreting pilot experiences within a qualitative research tradition.

As I turned my attention to reading the literature on a qualitative research approach, it became evident to me that I could still influence the selection of pilot experiences by the questions I asked. If I asked questions concerning the themes of resilience and susceptibility to PTSD or moral injury, in a sense *I* am still setting the agenda for what pilots will tell me. *I* would be tacitly determining the themes for the data *I* was collecting. As I began to understand the literature on qualitative research, I gained an appreciation for allowing the experience of pilots to set the research agenda rather than me, the researcher. I decided to change the focus of my qualitative approach. My goal became less directive. I chose to conduct an exploratory qualitative research project examining how pilots experienced air-to-ground combat in the broader context of their profession. As a result, the responses of pilots themselves provide the flight path to the phenomena *I* would investigate.

As I asked the six pilots who volunteered for this study semi-directive, open-ended questions, I experienced two surprises. The first surprise was that pilots were not telling me what I had expected. Instead of recounting their *traumatic* experiences of combat, I was hearing about their *exhilarating* experiences of combat! Their experiences were not portraying concerns leading to PTSD, OSI, or moral injury. Rather, pilots portrayed their combat experiences as

empowering, pleasant, and gratifying experiences contributing to their professional well-being!⁷

The second surprise was the pilots' perception of those interested in their well-being. Instead of mentioning flight surgeons, mental health professionals, or chaplains, pilots perceived their immediate pilot chain of command (COC) as most interested in their well-being. In fact, when reading the pilot corpus, I learned that pilots did not feel the need to talk to professional support personnel when attending formal debriefing sessions. In addition, to my dismay, improved pilot well-being during a deployment was not associated with psychological or emotional support. Rather, pilots associated improved well-being with improved administrative support. As a result, these observations led me to change the intent of my study. No longer would I be investigating the mental health dilemmas of PTSD, OSI, and moral injury. Pilot experiences led me to formulate and elucidate what I earlier referred to as the communication/support dilemma.

Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, I have oriented the reader to the purpose, content, and organization of this inquiry. I began by describing the motivational force driving this inquiry: the communication/support dilemma. Next, I specified the destination of this inquiry: to bring the reader in contact with a sampling and analysis of CF-18 fighter pilot combat experiences to inform future policy and practices for fighter pilot well-being. To assist the reader in reaching this destination, I have attempted to write in the first person, active voice using vocabulary contributing to the anonymity of pilots interviewed. After providing the essential elements of this dissertation by expanding on its title, I stated the research question that forms the nexus of this dissertation. The research question led to a series of objectives that guided my thinking as I undertook this study. Because of the investigative nature of this study, these

⁷ Because the six pilots participating in this study were volunteers, it is possible that other pilots may have had traumatic experiences but they did not come forward as participants for this study.

guiding objectives were not clear at the submission and presentation of my research proposal. They only became clear as I reflected on the corpus and continued to read literature from the academic disciplines that informed this study.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH PATH

The combat actions of CF-18 fighter pilots had serious implications for combatants on the ground. The fate of friendly ground forces and the enemy was determined by decisions made by Joint Terminal Air Controllers (JTAC) on location, by pilots over the location, and by the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) personnel hundreds of kilometres away. However, ground combatants were not the only ones pondering their destiny. Fighter pilots jeopardized their well-being and possibly their lives by flying air-to-ground combat missions over Iraq/Syria. Pilots contemplated a possible ejection, the downing of their jet, and an inhumane demise at the hands of the enemy. This became more evident in February of 2015 after the world watched a captured Jordanian pilot being burned alive in a cage by the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) ([ISIS, 2015, February 3](#)). The serious nature of this air campaign merits the investigation of fighter pilot combat experiences and the beliefs underlying those experiences.

In this chapter, I begin the theoretical underpinning of this inquiry by exploring the definition of key terms used in the philosophical, sociological, and psychological literature reviewed.⁸ I cluster these key terms around the themes of stress/trauma, emotions, faith/lived beliefs, and experience/interpretation. I then describe the theological research model I applied to study the non-religious phenomenon of pilot combat experiences. Though adapted for my purposes, the academic sub-disciplines of practical and public theology provide the sources for this model. Next, I summarize the faith tradition, evangelicalism, which forms my theological pre-understanding. Finally, I conclude this chapter by outlining the steps I took to conduct this research inquiry. These steps also provide the outline for Chapters 3 to 9 of this dissertation.

⁸ I will further describe some of these terms in subsequent chapters.

1 Definition of Terms

1.1 Terms Centring on Stress/Trauma

1.1.1 Stress

According to the late Canadian researcher Hans Selye ([1974](#)), “[stress] is the body’s nonspecific response to any demand made upon it” (p. 27). These demands, whether physical or psychological, constantly impose constraints on a person. For Chantal Leclerc and Bruno Bourassa ([2013](#)), who studied the stress of professors at Université Laval, a transactional model of stress locates the origin of stress neither in the person nor her environment⁹, but in a conceptualized, psychological space between the person and her environment ([Lazarus & Folkman, 1984](#)). An individual appraises these external demands (or stressors) and compares them with his own inner resources to respond to these demands. If an individual perceives the self as having an excess of inner resources to meet a demand, the demand becomes a pleasant, stimulating challenge. If an individual perceives the self as having a deficiency of inner resources to meet a demand, the constraint becomes an unpleasant threat. In summary, events in life become unpleasant stressors when perceived as a threat ([Adler, Litz, & Bartone, 2003](#)). I will further develop my conceptualization of stress in Chapter 5.

1.1.2 Stressors

According to Selye’s conceptual model, stressors are unpleasant, psychological threats arising from the environment that are perceived as surpassing an individual’s available coping resources. The Surgeon General’s Mental Health Strategy ([Government of Canada - Department of National Defence, 2013](#)) documents three general sources of stressors that may contribute to adverse mental health outcomes in CAF personnel: stressors common to all Canadians, stressors due to the routine experience of military life, and stressors unique to combat exposure.

⁹ In this dissertation, I do not use the term *environment* in an ecological sense. When I use the term *environment* in a psychological sense, I am referring to anything originating from outside an individual.

1.1.3 Combat Stressors

In their summary report to the Surgeon General Health Research Program, Canadian authors Born, Lee, Dubiniecki, and Pierre ([2015](#)) have noted that stressors encountered in combat are unique to each of the three military environments¹⁰ (the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Royal Canadian Air Force). This would suggest that stressors encountered by fighter pilots flying over a theatre of combat would differ from those encountered by a soldier fighting on the ground. Gwynne Dyer ([1985](#)), a veteran of the Royal Canadian Navy turned author and international correspondent, contrasts the air force environment with the army environment in the following ways: first, in the air force, combatants are officers with a minimum of a bachelor's degree rather than enlisted members; second, in the air force, combat is characterized by brief incidents within the context of a life-style similar to civilian life; third, on an air force base, fewer problems of discipline and morale exist; and fourth, among air force leadership, optimistic assumptions prevail (that correct techniques and appropriate technology will solve most problems and guarantee victory).

1.1.4 Traumatic Events

For Grant H. Brenner ([2010](#)), an American author integrating spiritual and psychological resilience with disaster relief, a traumatic event is a threat perceived as surpassing one's psychological *tipping point* ([Gladwell, 2002](#)). According to cognitive theory, when the appraisal of an event threatens the physical, psychological, or moral integrity of a person, a disruption occurs in the person's normal coping resources. Peter Munoz ([2013](#)) classifies fear-induced psychological injury resulting from a traumatic event as being *unintentional* when an individual is exposed to a natural disaster/accident, *intentional* when an individual is exposed to

¹⁰ In this dissertation, when I use the term *environment* in a military sense, I am referring to a military member's working context: army, navy, or air force.

terrorist acts or war, and *vicarious* when an individual is exposed to victims of intentional/un-intentional trauma. In addition, an individual may be exposed to any combination of the above traumatic events.

1.1.5 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

According to Hamblen (2009), PTSD is a clinically defined, fear-based, anxiety disorder following a life-threatening traumatic event. Exposure to an acute event of terror outside the usual realm of human experience may lead to intrusive psychological re-experiencing of the event (*reliving the past*), psychological numbing or reduced involvement with the external environment (*avoidance and numbing of the present*), and nervous system hyperactivity or arousal (*fear of the future*).¹¹

The combatant may not be able to cognitively appraise acute, overwhelming traumatic events. This may lead to a disorganization and fragmentation of traumatic memories in the future. As a result, only selected portions of the traumatic memory may be brought into awareness leading to recurrent, distressful flashbacks (Cahill & Foa, 2007).

1.1.6 Operational Stress Injury

Operational stress injury (OSI), a more inclusive term than PTSD, refers to any persistent psychological difficulty attributed to military experience (Ray & Forchuk, 2011). Canada's Defence Policy describes OSI as "any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from operational duties performed in the Canadian Armed Forces [that] interferes with daily life" (Government of Canada, 2017, p. 26). Drescher et al. (2011) provide examples of psychological injuries outside of PTSD diagnostic criteria that have been observed in combat veterans. With respect to *self*, psychological injuries include poor self-care, self-harm,

¹¹ The American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5 criteria for the diagnosis of PTSD can be found on the following webpage: <https://www.brainline.org/article/dsm-5-criteria-ptsd>.

guilt/shame, lack of forgiveness, and ethical deterioration. With respect to *others*, psychological injuries include distrust in others and aggressive behaviour. With respect to the *Ultimate*, psychological injuries include loss of spirituality and negative attributions about God.

Kate Amatruda ([2010](#)) presents four known mechanisms leading to OSI: first, trauma – an acute impact injury due to a threat provoking terror, horror, or helplessness; second, fatigue – a chronic wear-and-tear injury due to the cumulative nature of stress; third, grief – an injury due to the loss of something of value or the passing of a significant other; and fourth, moral outrage – psychological anguish due to the betrayal of one’s core moral beliefs by perpetrating, failing to prevent, or witnessing actions contrary to those beliefs ([Litz et al., 2009](#); [Webster & Baylis, 2000](#)).

1.1.7 Risk/Protective Factors leading to Psychological Injury

Risk/protective factors play a role in the susceptibility to psychological injury by either eroding or strengthening resilience. Marchand, Boyer, Martin, and Nadeau ([2013](#)) studied risk/protective factors among Quebec police officers exposed to traumatic events. These researchers classified risk/protective factors into three temporal divisions. *Pre-traumatic* factors are those factors that precede a traumatic event. *Peri-traumatic* factors are those factors concurrent with a traumatic event. And *post-traumatic* factors are those factors following a traumatic event.

These risk/protective factors may be further differentiated by their association with either persons or non-persons. In the Canadian military context, Zamorski, Rusu, and Garber ([2014](#)) identified the following risk/protective factors as contributing to susceptibility/resilience to psychological injury among army combatants in Afghanistan: factors associated with persons (leadership, social support,¹² and other military members); factors associated with non-persons (operational tempo, number of previous deployments, deployment length, and time length between deployments); factors associated with support services (pre-deployment/post-

¹² Family support, peer support, military leadership, Government, media, and the Canadian population.

deployment mental health training and psychological debriefing); and factors associated with what I would refer to as beliefs (the evaluation of current life stressors, S/R, and ultimate concern).

1.1.8 Resilience

According to Health Services of the CAF, military resilience “is the capacity of a soldier to recover quickly, resist, and possibly even thrive in the face of direct/indirect [intentional/un-intentional] traumatic events and adverse situations in garrison, training and operational environments” ([Government of Canada - Department of National Defence, 2015, p. 2](#)). Jeffrey T. Mitchell ([2015](#)) proposes a three-stage model to help classify different types of resilience to traumatic psychological injury: *pre-traumatic resistance* – the ability to increase one’s psychological resilience before being exposed to distress resulting in psychological injury; *peri-traumatic resilience* – the ability to rapidly rebound from a critical incident; and *post-traumatic recovery* – the ability to rebuild the human spirit after experiencing a traumatic event. When exposed to a horrific event, a resilient combatant displays an adaptive interaction with his environment in addition to a successful *better-than-expected* outcome ([Shannon, Beauchaine, Brenner, Neuhaus, & Gatzke-Kopp, 2007](#)).

1.2 Terms Centring on Emotions

According to Olivier Luminet ([2002](#)), a European researcher in psychology, an emotion is the extremely rapid psychological response of an individual to habitual or uncommon phenomena arising either from within the individual or from his environment. An emotion can be broken down into three distinct responses: a physiological response, a behavioural-expressive response, and a cognitive-experiential response. The physiological response refers to the sensations an individual experiences within the body, such as sensations of tingling, increased heartbeat, and a change of breathing. The behavioural-expressive response refers to the experience of changes in facial expression, body language, and body movement. The cognitive-experiential response of an emotion is what is commonly understood as the subjective feeling an individual experiences. An emotion, as distinguished from a mood, is the coordinated effect of these three responses of an individual that has a duration ranging from

a few seconds to a few minutes. A mood is the coordinated effect of these three responses on an individual that comes on slowly and can last for hours or days.

The Swiss professor of psychology Klaus R. Scherer ([2000](#)) proposes that the study of the cognitive-experiential phenomena of an emotion may be divided into the following four conceptual models: a *dimensional model*, a *discrete model*, a *meaning model*, and a *cognitive model*.

Following a *dimensional model*, psychological theorists categorize emotions by means of the different subjective cognitive-experiential effects experienced by an individual. According to this model, all emotions resemble one another and can be reduced to how an individual experiences the emotion. For example, theorists can classify emotions according to the dimensions of activation and valence. Thus, any emotion experienced by an individual as producing a high activation and a pleasant valence would be classified as *motivating*. In contrast, any emotions experienced by an individual as producing a low activation and an unpleasant valence would be classified as *boring*. According to a two-dimension model based on activation and valence, all emotions are experienced somewhere on a continuum of high to low activation (degree of intensity or saliency) and on a continuum of pleasant (positive)/unpleasant (negative) valence.

For example, using a *dimensional model* of emotions to describe human experience, the phenomenon of honour may be experienced when positive attention is directed towards a person. This positive attention may be interpreted as enhancing the worth of a person. The phenomenon of shame may be experienced when negative attention is directed towards a person. This negative attention may be interpreted as diminishing the worth of a person.

Following a *discrete model* of emotions, psychologists do not reduce emotions into general dimensions such as activation and valence. Rather, psychologists conceptualize each emotion as having unique, discrete, characteristics and functions. Once the unique features of an emotion are understood, theorists can categorize discrete emotions into categories with similar

family resemblances. For example, guilt and shame are discrete emotions with unique features even though they both can be classified as moral emotions.

According to a *meaning model*, emotions are categorized neither according to their subjective effects nor to resemblances. Rather, researchers propose that differing emotions are unique to cultures. This culturally constructed approach rejects the presupposition that similar emotions are universal to all humanity. To understand the differing emotions and the meaning attributed to those emotions, researchers study the verbal¹³ symbols and the meaning of those symbols in a target culture.

Finally, according to a *cognitive model*, two cognitive processes, emotional regulation and cognitive evaluation, influence the expression of an emotion. With respect to the former, an individual may learn to regulate his emotional response to an event. For example, during combat training, fighter pilots learned to concentrate on programming their weapons before engaging in a strike. This ingrained training of programming weapons allowed pilots to remain calm during these intense moments in the reality of combat. With respect to the latter, an individual's emotional response to an event is determined by her cognitive evaluation of the event. For example, two individuals witnessing the same event may have two different emotional responses based on two different cognitive appraisals or beliefs about the event ([Imada & Ellsworth, 2011](#)).¹⁴ Alternatively, an individual witnessing the same event a second time may cognitively appraise the event differently than the first resulting in a dissimilar emotional response.

¹³ In this dissertation, I use verbal to mean *put into words*. This putting into words is either linguistic (through writing) or orally (by means of speech).

¹⁴ For example Imada & Ellsworth observe that if an individual believes that her success is due to person effort, the individual will experience pride, satisfaction, and confidence. However, if an individual believes her success is due to other people, the individual will more likely experience gratitude, appreciation, and friendliness towards her benefactors.

In this dissertation, I borrow from all four of these models: dimensional, discrete, meaning and cognitive. However, I do distance myself from the anti-realism associated with the constructionism of the meaning model.¹⁵ With respect to the cognitive model, I agree with Phoebe C. [Ellsworth \(2013\)](#), the American social psychologist and professor of both psychology and law, who observes a correlation between the beliefs or interpretive assumptions an individual has about an event and her emotional response. Ellsworth writes, “It is possible that anger and the urge to hurt might be the initial reaction even of the pacifist, but appraisals and emotions are not frozen in the moment of the initial perception, but constantly evolve as other *beliefs*, values, and memories come to mind and as the situation changes ([p. 127](#)) (emphasis added). Put differently in my words, what one believes about a phenomenon and changes in those beliefs influences how one experiences the phenomenon emotionally, whether it be at the physiological level (inner sensations), at the cognitive-experiential level (meaning & feelings), or at the behavioural-expressive level (somatic expression and action tendencies).

1.2.1 Shame

Using a *discrete model* of emotions, Canadian researcher Megan M. Thompson ([2015](#)) classifies the phenomena of shame and guilt in the family of moral emotions. Moral emotions resemble one another in that they are associated with individual and collective moral standards. Though both are emotions with a negative valence, shame is a more salient experience. Guilt focuses on a person’s behaviour with respect to a moral standard. As a result, actions contrary to one’s moral standard can be amended and corrected. Shame, on the other hand,

¹⁵R.K. Meyer ([2007](#)) presents the philosopher Roy Bhaskar’s critical realism critique of constructionism. One of Bhaskar’s arguments is that constructionism adopts a linguistic fallacy. The linguistic fallacy reduces being to a discourse on being” (p. 50). Applying this argument to human emotions, linguistic symbols in a given culture (the labelling or discourse on emotions) is conflated with the reality of the emotional experience. The psychologist, Ellsworth ([2013](#)), extends this linguistic fallacy to the study of emotions. She notes that developmental research has shown that language is not necessary for an emotional experience. Emotional experience is observed in children before they have acquired a language or are able to label their experiences with words.

focuses on a person's being. Shame is characterized by the unbearable feeling of being the object of another's disgust and the corresponding desire to flee from the presence of others.

For the American psychiatrist and author Curt Thompson ([2015](#)), people are shamed by other people. Shame is always experienced in the context of inter-personal relationships. On the one hand, people may turn away from the one being shamed resulting in the isolation of the shamed person. Alternatively, people may turn toward the one being shamed with indignation, resulting in the desire of the shamed person to flee and hide.

In his research on Christian missionaries, William S. Wilkinson ([2015](#)) goes a step further and introduces the concept of internalized shame. “[Internalized shame] no longer needs an external shaming other. The internal eye now self-activates shame” (p. 31). Borrowing from the observations made by the American professor and clinical psychologist Gershen Kaufman ([1992](#)), Wilkinson states that internalized shame is characterized by self-directed disgust and has its origins in infancy. Internalized shame results from repeated, unrepaired experiences of rupture within the mother-infant relationship. As the child passes through the different stages of development, this repeated shame experience becomes internalized. Shame then unconsciously becomes the template for the person to interpret future experiences of the self as being unworthy.

In his theological book on shame, Edward T. Welch ([2012](#)), an American Christian psychologist puts words to the experience of internalized shame: “You are different, rejected, exposed, contaminated” (p. 20). He then adds to the description, “You are WORTHLESS, NOTHING, ZERO” (p. 25, emphasis original).

Foundational to the views on shame by the contemporary Christian authors referred to above, June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing ([2002](#)) distinguish shame from guilt in the following way. With the phenomenon of shame, the self focuses on the self. When it comes to guilt, the self focuses on self-behaviour with respect to a moral standard. Building on the research of H. B. Lewis ([1971](#)), Tangney and Dearing view the shaming act not only originating from an observing public audience, but also from within the self. This latter source,

internalized shame, is triggered by the private agent of self (the subjective consciousness) degrading the focal nature of self (the self observed). This splitting of self into the subjective and the objective provides a means of describing the experience of internalized shame.

Though shame can originate either with the disapproval of others or with the disapproval of self, the result is the same. Shame is experienced as a salient, self-conscious feeling of being small and worthless. As a result, shame undermines a person's sense of well-being.

Shame is increasingly being associated with adverse psychological outcomes both in the non-military literature ([Herman, 2011](#)) and, more recently, in the CAF context ([M. M. Thompson, 2015](#)). In contrast to fear and horror, which are associated with traditional definitions of PTSD, guilt and shame are more appropriately linked with moral injury. Litz et al. ([2009](#)) observe that a combatant who kills in combat by violating the rules of engagement (ROE), or contributes to such a killing by inaction, is susceptible to moral injury. Following a deployment, a combatant may experience self-inflicted shame or public-induced shame for his acts of commission or omission. If the combatant is susceptible to internalized shame, this experience of shame is augmented. To cope, the combatant may engage in maladaptive practices such as destructive habits, addictions, and isolation to avoid the unpleasant feelings of shame.

Fighter pilots were once ordinary Canadian citizens. They entered the CAF with differing degrees of shame proneness. In addition, some of their actions during combat may have contributed to self-inflicted or public-induced shame. Identifying possible strategies that pilots used to avoid feelings of shame may provide insight into the possible association of shame with moral injury.

I will further develop my conceptualization of shame and suggest some possible strategies used by pilots in Chapter 6.

1.2.2 Honour

In contrast to shame, honour elevates and provides worth to a person. The American sociologists Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner ([1974](#)) describe honour by distinguishing it from human dignity. Dignity is the intrinsic value of a person that remains once all social roles are stripped away. Put differently, dignity is associated with the intrinsic value of an individual for being human. Honour on the other hand, is the extrinsic value of a person's identity attached to stable institutional roles. Society bestows honour as an expression of status to a community of social equals. Honour is linked to the past and is transmitted to those who form the present generation of that institution. I will further develop the phenomenon of honour in Chapter 6.

1.2.3 Emotional Complexity

Emotional complexity (EC) refers to the experience of multiple emotions described in the self-reporting of one's life-world ([Grossmann, Huynh, & Ellsworth, 2015](#)). The basic assumption according to this construct is that emotions are discrete and can be categorized into two opposing families: a family of discrete positive or pleasurable emotions and a family of discrete negative or unpleasant emotions. The experiencing of these complex emotions may be conceptually defined as either *dialectic* or *differentiated*. A *dialectic* experience occurs when an individual experiences both a pleasurable and unpleasant feeling either at the same time (a *dialectic synchronic* experience) or one following the other over a period of time (a *dialectic diachronic* experience). A *differentiated* experience refers to a person feeling several discrete emotions concomitantly either within the family of pleasant emotions or within the family of unpleasant emotions.

For example, a fighter pilot interviewed experienced *dialectic synchronic* emotions when flying across the border from Kuwait into Iraq for the first time. The pilot experienced the exhilaration of entering combat with a jet transformed into a *killing machine*, while at the same time, he felt the fear of the possibility of having to eject and be captured by a ruthless enemy.

According to Honos-Webb, Stiles, Greenberg, and Goldman ([2006](#)), the self-reporting of complex emotions may be an indication of emotional maturity. These authors suggest that an individual who has not assimilated problematic experiences will tend to view self as a stable, unitary self. This individual may self-report as being strong emotionally. On the other hand, an individual who has assimilated a problematic experience and has gained emotional mastery over it will view self as flexible and complex. This individual may self-report both pleasant and unpleasant emotions by affirming that one is both “strong and needy” (p. 7).¹⁶

1.3 Terms Centring on Faith and Lived Beliefs

1.3.1 Faith

For the late protestant theologian Paul Tillich ([1957](#)), an awareness of infinity is found in the finite human. An individual has the potential for ultimate concerns that transcend temporal, finite realities. Faith is the stable and enduring expression of an individual towards his ultimate concern. While an act of faith is directed towards his ultimate concern, in response, this ultimate concern first, demands unconditional obedience that compels an individual to sacrifice his other concerns and second, promises ultimate fulfillment for those sacrifices. For Tillich, any finite reality that has been elevated to an ultimate concern will eventually prove itself a failure. As a result, the rewards promised for the sacrifices offered do not materialize and lead an individual to disappointment. When this temporal ultimate concern is proven a failure, the meaning of the individual’s life erodes.

If Tillich’s concept of ultimate concern is applied to a combatant, one would expect to find the erosion of a combatant’s meaning to life leading to adverse psychological outcomes in the following combination of events: first, when the ultimate concern of a pilot consists of a

¹⁶ Though not developed in this dissertation, the Psalms of David within the Jewish and Christian religious canon provide numerous examples of an author affirming both his personal strength and his dependence upon God.

finite reality such as self, others or his nation; and second, when his acts of commission or omission were contrary to his or society's cherished moral beliefs.

1.3.2 Lived Beliefs

In contrast to faith, lived beliefs are directed to the finite world of the here and now ([Tillich, 1957](#)). Lived beliefs, as conceptualized in this dissertation, extend beyond what is commonly understood as being religious or spiritual beliefs. In addition, lived beliefs differ from the popular notion of beliefs as mere mental processes that form an idea in the mind, whether it be wishful thinking ([McCall, 1983](#)) or as a backup when one lacks empirical evidence ([Tillich, 1957](#)). Put simply, lived beliefs are the beliefs that form the interpretive assumptions about our daily life experiences. They can be conceptualized as what an individual believes about self, self's relationship with other people, self's relationship with non-personal objects, and self's relationship with abstract phenomena (whether these phenomena be spiritually orientated or non-spiritually orientated).

However, lived beliefs are more than cognitive content. The American philosopher Robert Audi ([1994](#)) wrote that a belief is a state “of readiness to act in certain ways [behaviour] appropriate to its [cognitive] content, at least by affirming the proposition believed” (p. 423-4). In addition, equating lived beliefs with more than cognitive processes, Doehring ([2014](#)) associates lived beliefs with a person's behaviour in life energized by emotions. The American philosopher Eric Schwitzgebel ([2011](#)) helps us differentiate the various contours of belief by identifying its cognitive, behavioural, and emotional dimensions.

In this inquiry, when I use the term beliefs, I am referring to lived beliefs. I will have more to say about beliefs in section 1.4.4 of this chapter (Relationship between Experience and Lived Beliefs).

1.4 Terms Centring on Experience/Interpretation

1.4.1 Self

This inquiry begins by assuming the existence of the western construct of the self as a conscious, autonomous entity that is the locus of decision-making ([McLeod, 2001](#)).¹⁷ In contrast to a collective understanding of self, this individualistic concept of self assumes that the boundary between the self and the non-self is drawn at the frontier of the individual human body. The self refers to an interconnected constellation of intra-personal, inter-related dimensions that are differentiated only for research purposes. These intra-personal dimensions include, but are not limited to the following: cognitive, verbal, physiological, affective, volitional, temporal, mnemonic, relational, and behavioural. In contrast to the self, the non-self refers to the multiple inter-personal and non-personal phenomena of an individual's environment¹⁸ that are the objects of an individual's experience. Inter-personal phenomena in this study include, but are not limited to significant others (family members, friends, peers, immediate leadership), stakeholders (collective groupings of anonymous people, such as distant leadership, government leaders, members of the media, and Canadian citizens), and the Ultimate concern (if the Ultimate is considered as a personal God). Non-personal phenomena in this study include, but are not limited to tangible and intangible phenomena¹⁹ (whether

¹⁷ Another way of conceptualizing self would be to shift the focus from the individual to a covenant relationship with a significant other. Marriage would be an example of a covenant relationship where the self is set aside for the benefit of the couple ([Keller & Keller, 2011](#)). The concept of self could also be shifted to a corporate identity. In the past before the influence of the Enlightenment, the self identified itself with institutions. Berger et al. ([1974](#)) provide knighthood as an example of such an institution where self formed a corporate identity. In return, society bestowed honour on knights. In another realm, within the New Testament, the Apostle Paul identifies the self of a believer being in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14). Believers in Jesus Christ are understood to be in union with Christ ([Grudem, 1994](#)). Thus, believers presently share a collective identity with Christ in a spiritual sphere.

¹⁸ As a reminder, I am using the term *environment* in a psychological sense as anything originating outside of an individual.

¹⁹ Phenomena may be tangible or intangible. If tangible, they are experienced by means of the five senses. If intangible or abstract, phenomena cannot be quantified.

imagined or real), such as objects, actions, qualities, locations, circumstances, notions, and ultimate concern (if the ultimate is considered as impersonal).

1.4.2 Construct

Fay Fransella ([2016](#)) describes a construct as a reality created by an interpretive act of at least one individual. An individual holds to a plurality of tiered constructs that range from specific to more generalized or higher orders of abstraction. These constructs form the basis for an individual to make sense of self in relationship to everything that is non-self (others, objects, and other abstract phenomena).

1.4.3 Experience

Humans are complex. Being able to describe human experience without falling into reductionism is impossible. In spite of this challenge, the following proposal is my imperfect attempt to describe individual human experience as understood in this study.

As humans, we experience a multitude of events in our daily lives. These events, originating both within the self (cognitive and physiological) and from the non-self (environment) are captured by our senses. They are initially neutral or without meaning to us until reflected upon. Intuitively, we may cognitively interpret these events to generate meaning. The interpreted event and the meaning generated from the event are what I refer to in this research inquiry as *experience*.

This understanding of human experience conveys the following notions.

First, experience is personal and understood as the *I was there* variety. It is first-hand experience that is captured by an individual's senses and transmitted to her cognitive faculties.

Second, experience is an interpreted event. It is initially neutral or without meaning until reflected upon. As an *unreflective* event, an individual has not yet generated meaning from the event. This *unreflective* nature of an experience demonstrates itself in at least two forms. In the first form, an event may be taking place, but the individual does not capture the event

by means of his senses. Another person or non-person may need to draw the individual's attention to the event so that the event may be interpreted and experienced. In its second form, the individual cannot interpret the event and convey it into meaning for a number of reasons. One reason may be the event's novelty. The event enters into awareness, but the meaning of the event remains elusive. It may take another person to help the first interpret the event.

Finally, in contrast to an event remaining *unreflective*, the processing of an event in the mind can lead to a *reflective* experience. By being reflected upon, the event becomes an experience. The event is conveyed into meaning by means of a cognitive evaluation on the part of the individual. During this cognitive evaluation, the self as subject becomes operative. The individual reflects on the experience. For example, an experience can be interpreted and conveyed into meaning as being positive (pleasant/beneficial), negative (unpleasant/detrimental) or neutral. The experience is then remembered and incorporated into an individual's life as *wisdom-gained*. In this research inquiry, I refer to this transformation of an event without meaning to an experience that has meaning as being *reflective* on the part of an individual.

I propose that the following metaphor, borrowed from Collen ([2006](#)), provides a helpful description of the meaning-generating process of experience as it is transferred from being *unreflective* to *reflective*. Carried in suspension by a flowing stream and deposited as sediment at the bottom of slower-moving sections of a streambed, particles of different shapes and sizes represent the unreflective experiences within a person's consciousness. The flowing stream represents the consciousness of a person's daily life. As different sized particles in suspension are carried downstream by the rapid flow of water, so the unreflective experiences of daily life are carried in the stream of a person's awareness. Consistent with this metaphor, with time, one would expect a person's consciousness to become murky leading to confusion as higher concentrations of unreflective experiences are carried in the flow of life. However, a counter-process of meaning-generating sedimentation is also at work. By reflecting on his experiences, a person not only constructs meaning from life experiences but also clears the consciousness of unreflective experience. To the degree that reflection occurs, unreflective

experiences in suspension are deposited as reflective meaningful experience (*wisdom-gained*) in the streambed of consciousness.

This metaphor of *unreflective* experience deposited as *reflective* experience or *wisdom-gained* may prove helpful to clarify the phenomenon of experience in the following ways:

- 1) An individual does not reflect on all that he experiences;
- 2) Only those experiences that have been reflected on will have meaning;
- 3) Some meaningful experiences are more salient in an individual's life than others. For example, as larger particles in suspension are deposited faster than smaller particles in slower moving water, we would expect that salient experiences would become meaningful more quickly than less salient experiences. An exception to this pattern occurs when outside forces disrupt this process as illustrated in the next point;
- 4) Consistent with the sedimentation metaphor of experience, the fragments of traumatic memories with their ugly, razor-sharp edges either stay suspended in an individual's stream of consciousness or are temporarily deposited only to be repeatedly and unexpectedly brought back into the flow of awareness;
- 5) Events initially without meaning can become meaningful in at least three (or in a combination of these three) possible ways. The first way for an event to become meaningful is for an individual to slow down the pace of life and to take time to reflect on the meaning of the event. The second way is to relive an event multiple times. As an individual experiences a novel phenomenon multiple times, the meaning associated with the phenomenon may become clearer. Finally, an unreflective event may be precipitated²⁰ into a meaningful experience by the catalyst of another person or phenomenon.

²⁰ Precipitation is the creation of a solid from a solution by the addition of a chemical catalyst which reacts with other chemicals dissolved in the solution.

Above, I made an initial attempt to describe individual human experience by looking at events under the notion of either being *unreflective* or *reflective*. Because of its complexity, human experience can also be described using other notions. Another notion to describe the complexity of human experience is an individual's *awareness* of an experience at the moment. An individual can either be cognitively *aware* or cognitively *unaware* of an experience at the present moment of the experience.

An individual experiences multiple events concomitantly. At any one moment, only a few of these events take centre-stage of awareness, other events remain in the periphery of awareness, and still others are outside of conscious awareness. As an individual shifts attention to an experience either at the periphery or outside of conscious awareness, the experience at centre-stage shifts to the periphery, while others in the periphery may drop out of awareness ([Ashworth, 2008](#)).

To appreciate the complexity of experience, I will combine the possible *unreflective/reflective* notions with the *awareness/unawareness* notions using a Punnett square (Figure 1).

First, with respect to an unreflective event that generates no cognitive meaning, an individual may be aware that he cannot generate meaning from that event (UE-A). This possibility will be further explained in section 1.4.3 (Relationship between Experience and Lived Beliefs) of this chapter. Second, if an individual is not aware of an event then no meaning can be generated from the event (UE-U). Third, with respect to reflective experiences where meaning is generated, because one has reflected on the experience and has generated meaning from the experience as *wisdom-gained*, that meaning may be in a person's cognitive awareness at a given point in time (RE-A). Fourth, since only a limited number of experiences can be in an individual's awareness at any moment in time, most reflective experiences (wisdom gained) are outside of actual conscious awareness. Although not presently in awareness, the individual can recall this wisdom-gained into awareness when needed. In other words, these experiences are taken for granted (RE-U).

	Unreflective Event (UE) No Meaning	Reflective Experience (RE) Meaning
Awareness of Meaning (A)	An event has been experienced. The individual is aware of the event in the mind, but no meaning has been generated.	An event has been experienced. The individual is aware of the experience. The meaning has been generated in the mind, and the individual is aware at the present moment that the meaning is known (wisdom-gained).
Unawareness of Meaning (U)	An event has not entered conscious awareness. As a result, no cognitive meaning has been generated by the individual.	An event has been experienced. The individual is aware of the experience. The meaning has been generated in the mind, but the individual is not aware of this knowledge at the present moment. This wisdom-gained is taken for granted and can be recalled when elicited.

Figure 1 – Notions of an Experience

I will now apply the above notions to this research inquiry. As the researcher, my role during the interviews was to be a catalyst prompting pilots' further reflection on their combat experiences. In response to my invitation to become research participants and in preparation for the interview, pilots were obliged to bring their reflective combat experiences (RE-U) back into conscious awareness (RE-A). However, 12 to 18 months had elapsed between their experiences of combat and the interview. This time lapse may have led to changes in the meaning generated from some of those previously reflected experiences. The interview process, likened to a dam, compelled pilots to decelerate their lives, for 60 to 90 minutes, from their habitual fast-paced routine. Previous reflective experiences (RE-U) were once again brought into awareness (RE-A). Questions from the research interview guide also may have precipitated some of their previous unreflective experiences (UE-A and UE-U) into reflective experiences (RE-A). One possible example is the self-reflected statement of a pilot during the interview. After revealing his recurring experience of flashbacks recalling strikes on specific

targets during the air campaign, he vocally said to himself, “I don’t *think* I need to see anyone to, to talk about it.” He may have been questioning his previous belief that he had no need to talk to anyone about a specific combat experience.

In the above paragraphs, I have attempted to describe my understanding of experience used for this inquiry. To offer further clarification, I note that other aspects of pilot experiences are of less interest to me:

- Procedural knowledge: I did not focus on the skills that the participants accumulated as fighter pilots, nor on their competency as elite military professionals to accomplish their mission under their ROE.
- Cognitive knowledge: My interest was not in the intelligence of pilots manifested by their knowledge and application of the laws of aerodynamics or of weapon deployment.
- Physiological knowledge: I did not explore pilot adaptability and resiliency to gravitational forces imposed on their bodies by jet acceleration.

All of these experiences are important as pilots transfer their experiences to the next generation of pilots. Although I greatly respect the competence, intelligence, and adaptability of these elite professionals, my interest is more in what they believed about their competency, intelligence, and adaptability, if they chose to talk about those topics.

1.4.4 Relationship between Experience and Lived Beliefs

Echoing Hans-Georg Gadamer ([1989](#)), practical theologians John Swinton and Harriet Mowat ([2016](#)) write that “human beings are by definition interpretive creatures” (p. 103). To interpret is to assign cognitive meaning to people, to objects, and to abstract phenomena, thus making sense of everything we experience in this life. As humans, we make sense of our lives by our lived beliefs. These beliefs form the “underlying assumptions about the way the world is and how people and things should function in it” ([p. 109](#)).

Although beliefs form the interpretive assumptions about our daily experiences, they are intangible. Researchers find it difficult to access beliefs effectively by methods that operationalize and reduce them to quantitative variables that can be measured. However, I propose that beliefs are accessible to researchers by examining the descriptions of meaning that an individual generates from interpreting life circumstances. An individual becomes aware of an event and generates meaning from that event.²¹ Although an individual generates meaning cognitively, this meaning is in an interconnected relationship with other dimensions of human experience.

According to a phenomenological approach to human experience which will be developed in section 1.4.5 of this chapter, Wertz ([2011c](#)) writes, “Phenomenological reflection, called *intentional analysis*, shows that human experience is embodied, practical, emotional, spatial, social, linguistic, and temporal” (p. 126). Wertz introduces us to other dimensions of human experience. In section 1.3.2 of this chapter, I introduced the idea that lived beliefs form the interpretive assumptions about our daily life experiences. By means of lived beliefs, the human generates meaning from lived experiences. If lived beliefs are closely associated with human experience, I reason that lived beliefs can also be conceptualized using a phenomenological typology of human experience.

In section 1.3.2 of this chapter, I drew attention to Schwitzgebel (2011) who enlarged the concept of lived beliefs beyond the cognitive dimension to include the affective and behaviour dimension. By applying Wertz’s phenomenological and psychological understanding of human experience to Schwitzgebel’s philosophical typology of beliefs, I enlarge Schwitzgebel’s typology of beliefs, from three dimensions to at least nine dimensions. As a result, I

²¹ In phenomenological research, perceiving events and constructing meaning from those events have ontological implications that go beyond this section. Although I will touch on some of these implications in section 1.4.7 of this chapter and in subsequent chapters, a fuller discussion may be found in Ashworth ([2008](#)), R.K. Meyer ([2007](#)), and Harré ([2000](#)).

suggest that a researcher can examine the lived beliefs of a person by differentiating the cognitive, verbal, physiological, affective, volitional, temporal, mnemonic, relational, and behavioural dimensions of a lived belief.

According to this proposed typology, at minimum, the *cognitive* dimension refers to the awareness of a belief, the formulation of a belief as an idea in the mind, the labelling of a belief, and the reasoning that justifies a belief. The *verbal* dimension of a belief refers to what an individual professes to believe in speech or in writing. The *physiological* dimension refers to the body sensations that may accompany and influence other dimensions of a belief. The *affective* dimension refers to the subjective feeling that accompanies a belief and the emotional driving force that motivates individuals to act on a belief. The *volitional* dimension refers to the application of the will to overcome constraints that prevent individuals from acting on a belief. The *mnemonic* dimension refers to the memory of a belief, while the *temporal* dimension identifies whether the awareness and memory of a belief is punctual or continuous over time. The *relational* dimension refers to the adoption of a belief from the collective historical-cultural context of the person and the sharing of that belief with others. The *behavioural* dimension refers to the actions that result from a belief. According to this typology, to be consistent in one's belief, most of these dimensions must be congruent.

To make the examination of lived beliefs more manageable for this study, I will limit my discussion of the interplay among these various dimensions of belief to the cognitive, the affective, and the behaviour dimensions. Having stated this limitation, I must add that at times I will refer to the interplay among the other dimensions if appropriate to further understanding.

I will attempt to substantiate my claim that lived beliefs do generate meaning from lived experience. To do so, I will describe the close association I observe between the cognitive dimensions of a lived belief and appraisal as used in the generation of meaning and emotions according to the cognitive model of emotions in psychology.

From the discipline of psychology, proponents of appraisal theory argue that an individual's cognitive interpretation of an event, rather than the event itself, generates cognitive meaning and an accompanying emotional response ([Roseman & Smith, 2001](#)). Put differently, what an individual cognitively *believes* about an event generates the meaning of that event and the corresponding emotions for the individual.

Other authors both in psychology and sociology affirm this close relationship between belief and cognitive appraisal. Ellsworth supports this association in the field of psychology.

It is possible that anger and the urge to hurt might be the initial reaction even of the pacifist, but appraisals and emotions are not frozen in the moment of the initial perception, but constantly evolve as other *beliefs*, values, and memories come to mind and as the situation changes ([Ellsworth, 2013, p. 127](#)). (emphasis added)

Appraisals of nonhuman agency also allow for many possibilities: I could see my misfortune as caused by fate, God, evil spirits, bad luck, the conjunction of the stars, or even regression to the mean, and these variants of the situational agency appraisal will affect my emotional experience ([Ellsworth, 2013, p. 127](#)).

Fields, Copp, & Kleinman supports this association in the field of sociology.

Beliefs about gender, race, class, sexuality, age, occupation, and physical and mental ability shape our sense of place, agency, and self and thus may also inform our emotional experiences ([Fields, Copp, & Kleinman, 2006, p. 161](#)). (emphasis added)

From these quotes, I observe that the cognitive meaning attributed to an event is in relationship with other dimensions of an individual's belief. Within the cognitive dimension, an individual may reflect on the meaning of the event by initially interpreting his physiological, affective, and mnemonic responses to the event rather than interpreting the event itself.

For example, the reflective meaning of an event experienced may be influenced both by what an individual cognitively believes about the event and by the emotional saliency (affective dimension) of the event experienced. If the experience of an event is not emotionally salient, the importance of the event may be diminished by the individual. This results in the belief about the event not being questioned. The belief remains taken for granted. On the other

hand, if an individual experiences an event that is emotionally salient, he may cognitively appraise the event as being important. The emotional experience will lead to the cognitive belief either being reinforced, if aligned with his previous belief about the event, or reassessed, if not aligned with his previous belief about the event. In addition, an individual may cognitively appraise a salient event as being either a benefit to be welcomed (if the emotional response is pleasant) or a threat to be avoided (if the emotional response is unpleasant).

Steinberg (2011) labels a cognitive belief that is accompanied by a salient affective response as a *passionate belief*. Steinberg describes passionate beliefs as either being in an individual's awareness (occurred) or not in her awareness (tacit). Building on the Punnett square (Figure 1), in section 1.4.3 of this chapter, a *reflective occurred passionate belief* would fall into the reflective-awareness (RE-A) category (Figure 2). The person experiences an emotional impact and is aware of the meaning of the experience. In Figure 2, a *reflective tacit passionate belief* refers to a belief that would fall into the reflective-unawareness (RE-U) category.

For example, an individual may have disgust for pickled pig's feet. However, if this belief is a *reflective tacit passionate belief* (RE-U), at any given moment, she is not cognitively aware of this disgust. However, if circumstances unfold that lead to a host serving her this dish, the feeling of disgust from the affective dimension brings the tacit belief into the realm of cognitive awareness.²² The cognitive dimension of the belief then becomes a *reflective occurred passionate belief* (RE-A) as she cognitively associates the feeling of her disgust with the source of her disgust.

I observe from the above discussion that both the cognitive and affective dimensions of a belief may or may not be in an individual's conscious awareness. In fact, the two dimensions may be out of sync. For example, a person may be aware of an emotional or physiological

²² An *unreflective tacit passionate belief* (UE-U) would differ from a *reflective tacit passionate belief* (RE-U) in that the former would never have been experienced or anticipated by the person up to that point in time. With respect to the latter (RE-U), though not cognitively aware in the present moment of one's reaction of disgust to an experience, once the experience is recalled, the feeling of disgust from the affective dimension would bring the tacit belief into the realm of cognitive awareness (RE-A).

sensation within (occurred) but be unaware of the cognitive meaning of that sensation (UE-A). An example would be feeling frustration or anger without realizing the source of this anger. I refer to this type of belief as an *unreflective occurred passionate belief* (UE-A) in Figure 2. In contrast, an individual may not sense any danger (tacit at the affective level) even though she may cognitively realize that she may be in a dangerous situation (occurred at the cognitive level). Though not in Figure 2, I would refer to this event as a *reflective occurred non-passionate belief*.

	Unreflective Event (UE) No Meaning	Reflective Experience (RE) Meaning
Awareness/ Occurrent (A)	<p>A passionate event in which an individual is aware of a salient emotional sensation but is not aware of the meaning of the experience.</p> <p><i>Unreflective Occurrent Passionate Belief</i></p>	<p>A passionate experience in which an individual is aware of a salient emotional sensation, and aware of the meaning generated as a result of the experience.</p> <p><i>Reflective Occurrent Passionate Belief</i></p>
Unawareness/ Tacit (U)	<p>An event in which the generated meaning is not known. Since the meaning is not known, no emotional sensation associated with the event exists.</p> <p><i>Unreflective Tacit Passionate Belief</i></p>	<p>A passionate experience in which an individual is not presently aware of a salient emotional sensation, nor of the meaning generated as a result of the experience. But when brought into conscious awareness both the salient emotional sensation and the generated meaning will be recalled.</p> <p><i>Reflective Tacit Passionate Belief</i></p>

Figure 2 – The Relationship between Experience and the Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Belief

To summarize, during my review of the literature, I observed that my expression *cognitive dimension of belief* was synonymous with the psychological expression *cognitive appraisal*.

Therefore, I concluded that cognitive beliefs appear to be at the source of the meaning that individuals assign to their experiences. At the same time, I observed that an interconnected relationship appears to exist between the various dimensional responses of an individual (affective, physiological, and behavioural) and an individual's cognitive beliefs about the event. Therefore, by combining these two observations together, I concluded that the emotional, physiological, and behavioural responses attributed to an individual's experience become a window to identifying the cognitive meaning an individual attributes to his experience and what she truly believes about the event.

Now, I will apply the above understanding to the pilot corpus. During the interview, pilots held cognitive beliefs about themselves and their combat experiences that they had previously reflected on and brought back into awareness (RE-A). In Chapter 5, I look at these *reflective* *occurred* *passionate* beliefs (RE-A) about combat, and I will present my analysis of pilots' verbal descriptions of their emotionally salient combat experiences.

Pilots also held beliefs about combat experiences that were unreflective and not in awareness at the cognitive level (UE-A). However, I suggest that some of these beliefs were accessible to the researcher. Although the cognitive dimension of the belief was unreflective and not in awareness, the affective and physiological dimensions were in pilot awareness. In Chapter 6, I will present my analysis of these *unreflective* *occurred* *passionate* beliefs (UE-A) about combat.

1.4.5 Phenomenology

The aim of phenomenology is to extend scientific study into the realm of human subjectivity ([Wertz, 2011b](#)). Originating in continental Europe, phenomenology was developed as a philosophical method to investigate human experience ([Cloonan, 1995](#)). Amedeo P. Giorgi and Barbro Giorgi ([2003](#)) note that phenomenology as a philosophy dates back to the German/Austrian philosopher Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938) publication of *Logical Investigations* in 1900. Husserl transformed his ideas into a philosophical method a few years later

when he published his monograph *Ideas* in 1913. Husserl's phenomenological method influenced several well-known continental philosophers of the succeeding generation, such as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre. With time, some of these second-generation phenomenological philosophers saw the potential for the phenomenological method to clarify fundamental concepts in the human sciences, especially in psychology.

As a result, psychological researchers began to embrace phenomenology, imagining how the study of subjective human experience could lead to advances in their discipline ([Cloonan, 1995](#)). Though useful in identifying assumptions and providing new ways to conceptualize the taken-for-granted meanings that individuals attach to subjective human experience, the initial application of the phenomenological method to psychology led to interesting philosophical analysis rather than psychological analysis. With time, the need became evident to work out a phenomenological approach that would permeate down to the level of psychological methods. Psychological researchers, such as Raymond J. McCall ([1983](#)) and Amedeo Giorgi ([1985](#)) took up the challenge. Thomas F. Cloonan ([1995](#)) credits the American psychologist Amedeo Giorgi with successfully developing a phenomenological method applicable to psychology.

According to the American professor of psychology Fredrick J Wertz ([2011b](#)), a phenomenological method requires the researcher to adopt two essential elements when studying the subjective life-world experiences of research participants: a *phenomenological attitude* (with two aspects) and a *phenomenological procedure*. If a researcher does not adopt these two essential elements, the inquiry cannot be considered undertaken within the family of the phenomenological research genre. These two essential elements, described below, are integrated into the following three steps of the phenomenological method developed for use in psychology by A. P. Giorgi and Giorgi ([2003](#)).

Step 1 – Participant-Generated Corpus Compilation: The researcher collects raw data that consists of a description of the experiences of participants other than the researcher. This data from more than one participant forms a textual corpus for analysis. The researcher adopts the

first aspect of the *phenomenological attitude*, by bracketing or setting aside all psychological theories – such as behaviourism, cognitivism, or psychoanalysis – so that assumptions from these theories are not imposed on the corpus being interpreted. The adoption of this attitude is to ensure an openness on the part of the researcher while interpreting the corpus. However, Bert Smith and Kerry R. McGannon ([2017](#)) argue that it is impossible for a researcher to bracket his epistemological and ontological assumptions when interpreting a corpus. Recognizing this reality, Mark T. Bevan ([2014](#)) recommends that fuller phenomenological bracketing begins at the data collection or interview stage. As a result, the researcher adopts this aspect of the phenomenological attitude by becoming critically aware of his own attitude and beliefs about the phenomenon in question. In turn, research questions are formulated in a way that allows the participants interviewed to describe their experience of the phenomenon under investigation in their own words.

Step 2 – Empathic Motivated Corpus Interpretation: The second aspect of the *phenomenological attitude* addresses the researcher's stance towards the corpus to be analyzed. Referred to as a *phenomenological reduction*, the researcher takes the participant's description of the phenomenon as corresponding to the participant's experience without questioning its actual objective existence or truth validity. In other words, the researcher takes an empathic stance towards the corpus.²³ Rather than being suspicious of the participant's experience, the researcher is open to the participant's portrayal of characters, events, and experiences as described.

Step 3 – Crystallized Phenomenological Variation Portrayal: Finally, at this third stage the researcher adopts the second essential element: the *phenomenological procedure*. The researcher analyzes the corpus by identifying a robust essence or structural invariance of the phenomenon being investigated. This crystallized structure of the phenomenon being studied can then be clarified by comparing it with experiences of this phenomenon in other situations.

²³ An empathic stance towards a corpus to be interpreted is not limited to a phenomenological approach. Other qualitative research approaches also take an empathetic stance ([Stiles, 1993](#)).

This third step is referred to as the *eidetic reduction*. I would like to draw the reader's attention to three qualities of the *eidetic reduction*.

First, the *eidetic reduction* is contrasted with statistical analysis found in the quantitative research tradition. In statistical analysis, researchers using a quantitative approach seek empirical generality by eliminating variation by statistical means. In contrast, researchers at the step of the *eidetic reduction* highlight variation and practice what Husserl called *free imaginative variation*. By use of his imagination, a researcher clarifies the essence of the phenomenon under study and differentiates the essential from the accidental elements of the phenomenon.

Second, the *eidetic reduction* can be applied by the researcher at three possible conceptual levels ([Wertz, 2011b](#)). At the most abstract level, the structural invariance may apply universally to all examples of the phenomenon being studied. For example, when describing the phenomenon of stress, a researcher would crystallize the essential elements of stress experienced by all humanity. At a middle level of abstraction, the structural invariance of the phenomenon may apply to examples from a context-bound grouping of people such as the structural invariance of the phenomenon of stress experienced by all CF-18 fighter pilots. At the least abstract level, the description of stress may apply to a number of specific examples within a grouping of participants in a unique context. For example, the description of stress might be limited to the experiences of fighter pilots flying into a combat zone for the first time in their lives, with armed weapons on their aircraft.

At any of the three conceptual levels, if the elements essential to the phenomenon are absent, the researcher is to judge the phenomenon under study as another phenomenon of experience within human consciousness. For example, as discussed above, the phenomenon of guilt is to be distinguished from the phenomenon of shame. Although both phenomena are considered moral emotions that result in a common unpleasant experience, one can posit that the phenomenon of guilt centres on the interpretation of a person's behaviour with respect to a moral standard while the phenomenon of shame centres on the interpretation of a person's

worth. If a degree of worthlessness is not present in an experience, the phenomenon in question cannot be labelled as shame. This approach to the phenomena of shame and guilt assumes that the affective dimension of these phenomena is categorized using a *discrete model* of emotions where each emotion possesses unique, discrete, characteristics and functions.

Finally, the *eidetic reduction* can also be considered as an unarticulated interpretive step used by researchers that is incorporated into the phenomenological method. By this interpretive step, distance is created between the experience of the participant and the psychological meaning constructed by the researcher. The researcher, using this interpretive step constructs meaning from the taken-for-granted experience of a participant and compares this meaning with similar experiences in other situational contexts.

Since the development of Amedeo Giorgi's phenomenological method used for research in psychology, other researchers have taken advantage of this interpretive space in order to open up a somewhat rigid phenomenological procedure. Methods from other qualitative research genres have been grafted onto this basic phenomenological approach. As a result, a family of phenomenological approaches are used in psychology and in other academic disciplines ([Fischer, 2006](#)). For this reason, I have borrowed the terminology of Piantanida and Garman ([2009](#)) and refer to the approach used in this research inquiry as falling within the *phenomenological research genre*.

In an attempt to undercover the meaning pilots attributed to their combat experiences, I have undertaken this inquiry using the phenomenological research genre. In other words, I adopt a *phenomenological attitude* and use an *eidetic reduction* as a research procedure. However, common to the qualitative research tradition, I have borrowed methods from the following qualitative research genres to supplement my phenomenological approach: narrative, grounded theory, and intuitive (see section 9.3 of Chapter 3).²⁴

²⁴ For a description of the various qualitative research genres see Denzin & Lincoln ([2013](#)) and Wertz ([2011b](#)).

A pure phenomenological study investigates a single emotion, such as anger ([de Rivera, 2006](#)) or joy ([Robbins, 2006](#)), or more abstract notions such as forgiveness ([Halling, Leifer, & Rowe, 2006](#)) or thought ([Pollio & Ursiak, 2006](#)). The phenomenon I have chosen to study is the experience of air-to-ground combat of CF-18 fighter pilots. The experience of combat is a combination of, but not limited to, a number of psychological dimensions, such as behaviours, thoughts, emotions, and beliefs. Combat experience also takes place in a sociological context. A sociological context is defined as “interpersonal attachments, shared beliefs, and systematic interconnections that structurally locate people in relation to others” ([Powers, 2010, p. 17](#)).

At the time when Husserl was developing his ideas on phenomenology, structuralism was the dominant approach influencing human science research ([Karlsson, 1993](#)). Structuralism as an approach lost favour with researchers in the 20th century because of its deterministic presupposition. Since then, *symbolic interactionism* and *exchange theory* have replaced structuralism as primary approaches used in the human sciences ([Powers, 2010](#)). Put simply, *symbolic interactionism* is founded on the axiom that humans are volitional, active agents who construct meaning from their experience by means of the symbols of language ([Wertz, 2011a](#)). It challenges both structuralism, that holds that the meaning of a phenomenon is based on the phenomenon’s relationship to a larger structure, and positivism, that holds to realism and to objectivity in quantitative inquiry as the *only* means of scientific inquiry. *Exchange theory* claims that “people tend to make benefit-maximizing decisions based on their priorities” (p. 211). I rely on both the approaches of *symbolic interactionism* and *exchange theory* as opposed to *structuralism* in this dissertation.

Within the phenomenological research genre, different researchers emphasize different interpretive keys for the determination of meaning. According to a pure phenomenological approach adapted from Husserl’s philosophical method, *awareness* was the most important phenomenon for the human ([McCall, 1983](#)). One of Husserl’s protégés, Heidegger, took phenomenology in a different direction by shifting the understanding of a phenomenon away from *awareness* to *meaning*. Other researchers followed suit and emphasized their own brand

of determining meaning. According to Sandra P. Thomas (2005), Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is first and always a phenomenology of *perception* which provides meaning. Combs, Richards, and Richards (1976),²⁵ as cited in Cloonan (1995), focus on *adequacy* as according meaning. I have chosen to use the phenomenon of *belief* as an interpretive key to construct meaning from the corpus of pilot combat experiences, since belief is at the interface of psychology and theology.

I hypothesize that belief underlies the interpretation of experience. What one believes is a fundamental interpretive notion that determines how one thinks, how one feels, how one behaves, and what one values. Rather than being a causal relationship, the directional movement of this relationship can be referred to as being perichoretic.²⁶ How one thinks, how one feels, how one behaves, what one values, and what one believes mutually weave together and influence each other. For example, a belief about a phenomenon elicits an emotional response, and the emotional response may influence a person to reinforce or question that belief.

1.4.6 Interpretation and Hermeneutics

In this dissertation, I chose to use the term *interpretive* in the place of *hermeneutical* as an adjective to describe the acts I took to derive meaning from the pilot corpus. The difference between the two terms is subtle but important. According to John McLeod (2001), interpretation conveys the idea of making clear or making sense of any humanly-generated phenomenon, be it an action, an utterance, or a behaviour.²⁷ Each of these humanly-generated phenomena is referred to as a text. Hermeneutics is also a cognitive act by which one seeks to

²⁵ Reprinted in 1988

²⁶ A perichoretic relationship is the term used to describe the intimacy and reciprocity among the three Persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

²⁷ Specific examples would include emotions, body sensations, therapy sessions, interviews, artistic work, etc.

understand the meaning of a text. However, hermeneutics is differentiated from interpretation by the type of text being interpreted.

For McLeod, an interpretative act becomes a hermeneutical act when the following two conditions are met: first, when the text being interpreted originates in a historical-cultural context that differs from the interpreter; and second, when this text is situated in the public domain. According to the first condition, when performing a hermeneutical act, interpreters must differentiate between their own pre-understandings forged in their historical-cultural context and the understanding of the author of the text forged in a foreign historical-cultural context. According to the second condition, the text must be in the public domain so that other interpreters could construct their own interpretation of the same text. As a result, interpreters can evaluate the meaning of the text both from their own point of view and from the perspective of others.

Deriving the meaning from Scriptural texts meets both conditions of hermeneutical acts. This is not surprising since hermeneutics originated in the interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. These rules of hermeneutics were then applied to interpreting other non-Scriptural texts.

In this inquiry, I undertake both *interpretive* and *hermeneutical* acts.

The *interpretive* acts I performed to understand stress and honour/shame in the pilot corpus are presented in Chapters 4 to 6. The pilot corpus originates in my own socio-cultural context. In addition, because of ethical considerations imposed by the Université Laval Ethics Committee on Research with Humans and by the Surgeon General's Health Research Program to protect pilot confidentiality, I have not yet made the pilot corpus available to the public for interpretation. For these reasons, I have labelled my acts that construct meaning from the pilot corpus as *interpretive* rather than *hermeneutical*.

However, although I refer to my acts to construct meaning from the pilot corpus as *interpretive*, I would like to distance myself from the methodological assumption associated with an

interpretive inquiry. An *interpretive inquiry* is a research genre within the quantitative research tradition commonly used within the academic field of education ([Piantanida & Garman, 2009](#)). Researchers using an *interpretive inquiry* assume ontologically that no objective truth correspondence exists between the reality of the event described by a research participant and the meaning of that event. Rather, because the event and its meaning are socially constructed, researchers value a coherent, verbal description of the participant's experience of a phenomenon. This leads to the following practice when forming the corpus of participant experiences (experiential text) for analysis. In an *interpretive inquiry*, researchers take the transcriptions of the participant interviews (the scenario), identify the different meanings socially constructed, and categorize the meanings into similar themes. The themes are then rewritten into a coherent experiential text. Piantanida and Garman note that when a researcher "crafts the scenario to serve a particular rhetorical purpose, it [the scenario] is transformed into an experiential text [corpus]" ([p. 112](#)). The experiential text [corpus] becomes the groundwork for the theoretical interpretation of the researcher. In my view, such researchers present a circular argument. Researchers do not interpret the raw texts as the corpus to draw their conclusions, rather they interpret a text they themselves have prepared (the experiential text). The experiential text is crafted by the researcher from the very bits and pieces of the scenario (participant corpus) that the researcher wants to highlight. I do not support this approach.

Following my *interpretive* acts applied to the pilot corpus, Chapters 7 presents the results of my *hermeneutical* inquiry on honour/shame from the gospel corpus. In Chapter 8, I present my results from two specific passages in the gospel corpus: Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 15:11-32. During my study of these two passages, I spent considerable effort reading and interacting with the interpretations of other authors who studied these same biblical texts.

In summary, I perform *interpretive* acts – but do not undertake an *interpretive inquiry* – on the pilot corpus and *hermeneutical* acts on the gospel corpus.

1.4.7 Perspectival Realism

The approach I use in this inquiry falls within the family of phenomenological approaches. Although the family of phenomenological approaches is usually associated with an anti-realist ontology ([Guba & Lincoln, 2004](#); [Piantanida & Garman, 1999](#)), I distance myself from this belief about reality.

In contrast to the anti-realist belief that no objective truth correspondence exists between an external event and a human account of that event, I identify with *perspectival realism*, a position that holds two assumptions in tension. The first assumption is that a correspondence exists between an actual event and a description of that event. In other words, a description of a real event can be given. The second assumption is that the meaning of that same event may differ among individuals based on the differing perspectives and beliefs held when interpreting that event.

Theodore Arabatzis ([2001](#)), a historian of science, gives the example of Joseph John Thomson (1856-1940), the English physicist and realist, who experimented with cathode rays and is credited with the discovery of electrons. When Thomson manipulated cathode rays with an electromagnet in his laboratory, he did not claim to have manipulated electrons “since the existence of electrons was still controversial” (p. S535). Today Thomson is recognized as having manipulated electrons since present theory describes cathode rays as being composed of electrons. Arabatzis goes on to give the probable perspective of an anti-realist to the same experiment. Such a phenomenologist would describe the manipulation of the cathode rays in terms of a subjective experience.

Moreover, an antirealist could give an even less theory-laden description, by avoiding the term ‘cathode rays’ and using instead the phenomenological expression ‘spot on a phosphorescent screen.’ The only thing that we know, the antirealist would argue, is that by activating an electromagnet Thomson could move a spot on a phosphorescent screen. (p. S535)

The point I want to make is as follows. Whether interpreted first, as unknown particles or electrons, or second, as moving spots of light on the screen, the taken for grantedness basic

to both observers, whether realist or anti-realist, is that they both experienced the same real event. What is different is their perspectival interpretation of the meaning of the event. The realist interprets the meaning as scientific theory-laden contingent on his temporal location in the history of science. The anti-realist interprets the meaning of his experience phenomenologically according to its appearance as a spot on a screen. In summary, the same event is real to both, but the meaning each derives from his observation is based on his belief about what constitutes this shared reality.

Researchers in the academic field of the philosophy of science are currently investigating the relationship between truth and the real world by means of an approach they call *Perspectival Realism*. They have established an extensive research project that seeks to ask if scientific knowledge can be both perspectival and true. In other words, can perspectivism be made compatible with realism ([Massimi, 2015](#))?

The basis of an evangelical theology is that we live in a real world, and we can understand the truth that corresponds to this real world. For the Montreal-born New Testament scholar D. A. Carson ([1996](#)), truth exists as an extra-mental reality. Carson argues that the truth content of the biblical text is objective, transcendent revelation. However, it is also expressed in culture-laden ways. The truth of the text can be known, albeit imperfectly, and believed by finite, culturally-restricted people. Nevertheless, to do so, one has to adopt a certain worldview.

Building on John W. Cooper ([1993](#)), Carson also describes his epistemology as *perspectival realism*.²⁸ He avoids what he believes to be a reductionist dialectic that in both cases negate

²⁸ According to R. K. Meyer ([2007](#)), critical realism is a philosophy of science that was developed by Roy Bhaskar in response to post-positivism perspectivism. It was developed as an approach to understanding what can be empirically known through science. Critical realism holds to a real world, but limits the description of the real world to the “objects of science”. Perspectival realism, coined by Cooper ([1993](#)), differs from critical realism in that perspectival realism was developed as an apologetic approach from the neo-Calvinist perspective which has shaped the Christian Reformed Tradition. Both perspectives are similar in that they provide a middle ground between the positivism of modernism and the absolute relativity of post-modernism. However, critical realism could be described as a naturalistic version of perspectival realism.

special revelation: first, a modernism that claimed humans could achieve objective truth corresponding to a shared reality by means of human rationality and empirical methods; and second, an extreme post-modernism that has absolutized relativism.

I borrow from both the philosophy of science and from an evangelical theology promoted by Carson to support the following beliefs that I bring to this study: first, an ontological belief – the belief that the experiences of the pilots I interviewed correspond to a shared reality that can be studied; second, an interpretive belief – the belief that the meaning pilots attribute to their experiences may be similar or may differ depending on the common and idiosyncratic beliefs that individual pilots hold; and third, an epistemological belief – the belief that the beliefs of pilots can be compared to beliefs of characters portrayed in the gospel corpus.

I bring these beliefs to this study with the hope of finding meaning that can be compared to fine particles of gold suspended in the stream of combat experiences flowing in the life-world of fighter pilots. Such meaning might escape the attention of researchers using a purely psychological or sociological approach to understanding the target corpus.

2 Theology

2.1 Theological Methods Using Practical and Public Theology

According to Joel Hardy ([2006](#)), the 20th-century American theologian David Tracy is an important voice in Western theology. Tracy, in his writings, has attempted to articulate an approach for undertaking theology in a post-modern era. Hardy claims that Tracy intended to write a trilogy of works to unveil his post-modern theological approach. His first monograph articulated his approach for foundational theology ([Tracy, 1975](#)). The second provided an approach for systematic theology ([Tracy, 1981](#)). At the time of Hardy's writing, Tracy had not yet published his third monograph, which was to provide an approach for practical theology.²⁹

²⁹ However, Tracy published several articles on practical theology ([Tracy, 1983, 1987, 2011](#)).

According to Tracy, a theological work in today's post-modern context consists of a conversation on the pressing theological questions of our day between "an interpretation of the contemporary situation and an interpretation of the Christian tradition" ([Tracy, 1994, p. 56](#)). Referred to as a *mutually critical correlation*, this conversation is considered an interpretive dialogue between two equal conversation partners. Each partner holds equal weight in this critical dialogue on a theological phenomenon, and each partner is open to the ideas of the other that allows each to welcome a challenge from the other.

Interested in Tracy's conversation motif on theological phenomena from both a horizontal stance (contemporary situation) and a vertical stance (Christian tradition), I was attracted to a similar approach for practical theology. Swinton and Mowat ([2016](#)) developed such an approach to reflect on Christian practices within the context of the church. Their approach encourages a conversation on a subject in practical theology using various research genres within the qualitative research tradition developed in the human sciences. I adapted their approach for my own purposes, since it has proven successful when using qualitative research methods to reflect on "the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world" (p. 7). Their approach provided me with the flexibility to undertake theological research on a non-religious phenomenon (pilot combat experiences) by engaging in an interpretive dialogue between the human sciences and the Christian Scriptures.

What distinguishes Swinton and Mowat's approach from the one proposed by Tracy is not only their use of a qualitative research method originating in the human sciences. They also propose a critique of Tracy's mutual critical correlation. Unable to accept the naturalist paradigm that knowledge generated by authors of the human sciences has epistemological priority over knowledge generated by the authors of biblical texts inspired by the Spirit of God, Swinton and Mowat turn to the late renowned protestant theologian Karl Barth (1886 – 1968). Echoing Van Deusen Hunsinger's ([1995](#)) reflection on Barth's theology ([1956/2004](#)), Swinton and Mowat propose that the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) provides a model for the dialogue between the human sciences and theology when researching Christian practices.

They propose an asymmetric interpretive conversation where the role of the theological partner takes precedence over the human science partners. Their justification for this asymmetry is warranted by the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ while on earth. Although Jesus Christ embodied the two natures in a complementary and equal fashion, the essential role of his divine nature took precedence over his accidental human nature.

In their model, Swinton and Mowat distinguish between Christian beliefs and a community of practices that embody those beliefs. Borrowing from the metaphor of theatre and drama production, for these authors, practical theology researchers investigate the performance of people (practices) and not just the script of the play (source of beliefs). Consistent with my dimensional conceptualization of the phenomenon of belief presented in section 1.3.2 of this chapter, I would reword their drama metaphor by distinguishing beliefs from practices in the following way. Practical theology is similar to systematic theology in that both focus on the cognitive and verbal dimensions of belief (the articulation of what one believes about the Christian Scriptures). However, practical theology also extends that focus to the behavioural, affective, and volitional dimensions of belief by its study of human agency as witnessed by human practices.

Swinton and Mowat's model for research in practical theology is designed to be conducted within a matrix of theological approaches and qualitative research genres. Researchers can use theological approaches that range from liberal to conservative. Similarly, researchers are free to use any one or a combination of the research genres found in the qualitative research tradition within the human sciences. Among the diverse possibilities of theological perspectives and research genres emerging from this matrix, I undertook my research inquiry using an evangelical theological tradition and a phenomenological research genre. I chose to situate this research inquiry within a narrower evangelical Christian theological tradition rather than a more inclusive Christian or generic spiritual tradition. The reason for this decision is that finding a commonality within an inclusive Christian tradition or within a generic spirituality would limit the shared core values. In other words, the limited core values shared by too broad of an inclusion would have made my analysis too shallow. In addition, it would have

stripped evangelical Christianity of some of its core beliefs, such as realism and divine revelation in human history ([Jones, 2010](#)).

Though Swinton and Mowat developed their model to understand the practices within a Christian tradition, I have chosen to use this model on a phenomenon in a secular context (fighter pilot combat experiences). As a result, I transferred my research inquiry from the sub-discipline of practical theology to the sub-discipline of public theology.

The South African theologian Andries Van Aarde ([2008](#)) argues that public theology should not be conducted by Christian theologians who engage in a theological discussion of phenomena in the public square. Rather, public theology should be reserved for those in the public square who are involved in a reflection on phenomena in the public square, for example, “a hospital nurse, a choir leader, a migrant, a professional artist, philosopher, poet, film director [sic]” (p. 1215). Christian theologians are to engage with people who do public theology.

In my opinion, however, Van Aarde’s understanding of public theology appears too dogmatic. I agree that non-theologians should have the opportunity to engage in theological reflection on a non-theological subject in the public sphere. Within the evangelical tradition, all of life is to be reflected on by all believers through the lens of the Scriptures. However, I question if reflection on phenomena in the public square is to be limited to non-theologians? Using Husserl’s *free imaginative variation*, as described by Wertz ([2011c](#)), I evaluate the validity of Van Aarde’s belief by situating it in another context. Are migrants, professional artists, philosophers, poets, film directors, and pop psychologists the only ones allowed to reflect and write on phenomena in the public square from a psychological perspective? If so, trained psychological researchers cannot engage in the public square, which limits critical reflection on the phenomenon in question.

Therefore, I situate this research inquiry in a space created between the borders of practical and public theology. I chose to limit my theological reflection on the phenomena identified from my readings of the pilot corpus: stress, and honour/shame. I then examine these same

phenomena from a sampling of the New Testament: the four Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus which I refer to as the gospel corpus. Could the gospel corpus, written in another age and in a different cultural context add meaning to the phenomena identified in the pilot corpus? In addition, could observations on the above phenomena from the discursive communities of contemporary psychology and sociology contribute to a richer understanding of the gospel corpus?

At this point, I now introduce my research bias.

I come to this interpretive dialogue between the human sciences and the Christian tradition with a pre-understanding that is evangelical and more in line with Swinton and Mowat's approach than with the Enlightenment thinking that informs Tracy's approach. Other researchers who would enjoy enriching this dialogue are invited to interpret the pilot corpus using their own unique theological pre-understandings and research approach.

In the section that follows, I inform the reader of the evangelical context within which I take my theological stance.

2.2 Evangelicalism

The various traditions within the evangelical movement have a shared heritage and common tendencies. This section describes both the heritage of the movement and the tendencies that distinguish evangelicals from non-evangelicals. I begin by borrowing from the American evangelical reformed theologian Richard Lints ([1993](#)) to provide the reader with a brief historical understanding of evangelicals within a North American context.

2.2.1 Shared Heritage

Prior to the 19th century, protestant believers identified with their own particular faith tradition rather than a collective *evangelical faith*. Events such as the *Second Great Awakening* in the United States (c. 1790-1840) led to a cooperation among conservative protestant denominations. As a result, an evangelical alliance formed, and the seed was sown for protestant faith communities to think in terms of both an idiosyncratic denominational distinctive and a

common evangelical faith. Revivalists and itinerant preachers who ministered outside of their denomination grew in popularity capturing financial support from believers across many denominations. At the same time, the democratic suspicion of political authority in the hands of a few extended into the Church. Spiritual authority shifted from the authority of the creeds to an individual's personal experience with the Holy Spirit. As a result, attachment to the denominational faith traditions eroded. Believers valued their own subjective interpretations of the Scriptures over interacting with the Scriptural interpretations of previous generations within their denomination. As a result, theologians from particular faith traditions lost their pre-eminence within the broader evangelical movement. The perceived leaders of the movement were Bible conference preachers who spoke and wrote for popular audiences.

The Enlightenment, introduced centuries earlier, influenced this process. The shift of authority from a common tradition to human reason contributed to a crisis of authority within the broader protestant Christian tradition. By the 19th century, the questioning of religious tradition and ecclesiastical authority led to the questioning of biblical revelation. If God could not communicate with humanity through words and actions, in what sense was the Bible considered divinely inspired and authoritative? In response, to protect the doctrine of special revelation, evangelicals focused on defending themselves from theological liberalism. Other concerns, such as Darwinism and important doctrinal differences within the evangelical faith tradition, were set aside. As a result, a unity developed among evangelicals not due to a common theological heritage but due to a common perceived enemy. Evangelicals with a theology constructed along this unified front tended to pre-occupy themselves with the war against modernity.

While engaged in this battle with modernity, however, evangelicals appeared to have lost the battle for the soul of the nation. Universities became liberal and Protestantism lost its privileged status with most of the population. In response, evangelical leaders developed a strategy that by-passed the universities and went directly to the people. Evangelical leaders learned the techniques of mass media and packaged the gospel in simple, attractive ways. Success, for some, became a criterion for determining the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In summary, evangelicalism today is trans-denominational and characterized by organizational pluralism rather than a cohesive institutional authority. Equating this movement as the Universal Church, evangelicals, to different degrees, tend to identify with this movement more than with a traditional denominational structure.

2.2.2 Common Tendencies

Evangelical authors find it difficult to define the theological movement associated with evangelicalism. One reason is that more and more faith communities are applying the label to themselves ([Carson, 1996](#)). Jonathan Merritt ([2015](#)) writes, “[since] they [evangelicals] span a range of denominations, churches, and organizations, there is no single membership statement to delineate identity” (p. 1). Lints ([1993](#)) concludes that a realistic definition of evangelicalism will be vague and ambiguous. Although those who identify as evangelicals differ in various parts of the world, within North America those who attempt to define the movement will do so by focusing on similarities based on a sociological stance, a theological stance, an experiential stance, or a combination of the three.

Political pollsters have contributed to a social definition of Evangelicals. Pollsters tend to differentiate Evangelicals from non-evangelicals on sociological grounds based on a voting bloc in the United States. Evangelicals are described as politically conservative Christians who refer to themselves as *born again* ([Keller, 2017](#)).

Other evangelical authors take offence at defining this religious movement using sociological criteria. They distance themselves from the above *big-E Evangelicalism* and identify with a lower profile *lower-case evangelicalism* ([Keller, 2017](#)). Their preference is to define evangelicals based on theological grounds: a set of core beliefs originating from the interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. Cognitive beliefs are important to evangelicals; one must not only believe, one must believe certain truths ([Lints, 1993](#)). The warrant for these core beliefs must be rooted in the Scriptures themselves rather than the product of human rationalism or tradition. Evangelicals hold that the biblical text inspired by God has epistemological precedence over any other texts.

Although descriptions of evangelical core beliefs may vary, Harold A. Netland and Keith E. Johnson ([2000](#)) use the term *particularism* to refer to the set of core doctrinal beliefs that distinguish evangelicals from other faith traditions. For these authors, evangelicals hold to the following core beliefs: first, the authority of the Scriptures to the effect of rejecting other human claims when incompatible with the Scriptures; second, the divine and human nature of Jesus as God incarnate; third, the availability of salvation only through faith in the person and work of Christ; and fourth, the inability of religious phenomena to mediate salvation. They also note that holding these core beliefs (cognitive dimension) does not exempt evangelicals from making every effort to be culturally sensitive and tolerant of people from other religious traditions (behavioural dimension). Evangelicals should also acknowledge that truth and value exist in other religious traditions (relational dimension) due to common grace.

Though not in disagreement with Netland and Johnson, Lints's ([1993](#)) articulation of the core evangelical beliefs extends a bit farther. Those identifying as evangelicals, for Lints, come from a number of Christian religious traditions. They are united in the core beliefs of "affirming the final authority of Scripture, the deity of Christ and the sufficiency of his atoning work on the cross" (p. 30). However, he also articulates an experiential element to cognitive belief. Evangelicals are those who have had a conversion experience. In addition, they value evangelism, mission, and the call to a sanctified life. In other words, there are not only cognitive and verbal dimension to their theological beliefs, but also behavioural, affective, and volitional dimensions congruent with their cognitive and professed beliefs.

As Lints points out, however, apart from these core cognitive beliefs and the experiential element congruent with these beliefs, the theological differences between these faith traditions identifying as evangelical are as important as the similarities. For simplicity sake, Lints categorizes these evangelical traditions into four main groups: first, the Baptist tradition with its emphasis on individual subjective faith and personal volition in the salvation process; second, the Pentecostal tradition with its emphasis on personal piety and the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification; third, the Anabaptist tradition with its emphasis on faith expressed in

more objective and rational ways within a communal context of social concerns; and fourth, the Reformed tradition with its emphasis on rationality and concerns with education.

To conclude, one's identity as an evangelical is not established by professed beliefs alone. One must hold to the core doctrines as articulated above by Netland and Johnson ([2000](#)) and Lints ([1993](#)). This cognitive recognition of certain theological truths must also be supported by other dimensions of belief as observed in the Epistle of 1 John – the behaviour dimension (refusal to continue in sin), the verbal dimension (profession of Jesus as Christ), the affective/relational dimension (love for brothers and sisters in Christ) – and in the Book of Hebrews: the volitional dimension (perseverance of the saints).

2.2.3 Summary

This diversity of faith traditions within the evangelical movement is a critical observation for my research project. At the inception of my research, I chose not to take a flight path that explored the combat experiences of fighter pilots from a human sciences' perspective. As a counterpoint, I also wanted to venture into new horizons by exploring combat experiences from a theological perspective. This led to the paradox of analyzing pilot transcripts from an evangelical theological perspective when a detailed evangelical theological framework does not exist. What does exist are divergent theological families within the evangelical faith tradition along with a handful of core beliefs.

As I undertake this research inquiry, I am aware that my evangelical faith tradition influences my pre-understanding in at least the following ways. First, my tendency is to lean more towards the Baptist family tradition with its emphasis on individual subjective faith and personal volition in the salvation process. Second, I identify more with the core beliefs of the evangelical faith tradition than with the particulars of the Baptist family tradition. Finally, because of a personal conviction that the core beliefs of evangelicalism referred to above are rooted in the metanarrative of God's redemptive work in the Scriptures, I hold that these beliefs take epistemological precedence over any other texts or traditions that may be at odds with the Scriptures.

3 My Path to Answering the Research Question

I began this investigative study by examining the phenomenon of air-to-ground combat experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots. I did not know what other phenomena would emerge from the interviews. As I read and interpreted the pilot corpus, I was drawn to investigate two other key phenomena that emerged, stress and honour/shame. However, the phenomena of stress and honour/shame are not of the same nature as the phenomenon of air-to-ground combat. In this last section, I bring together section 1 of this chapter (the definition of terms) with section 2 (my theological pre-understanding) to summarize the flow of the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

3.1 Pilot Corpus Narrative: A Descriptive Portrayal

I began my inquiry by seeking to understand the phenomenon of air-to-ground combat. I set out to compile a pilot corpus for analysis by interviewing pilots, recording their responses, and transcribing the recordings. During the interview, pilots recalled their combat experiences and described them in concrete situational terms. From this pilot corpus, I crafted a composite narrative that summarized the situational context as described by pilots. This composite narrative, found in Chapter 4, presents a descriptive portrayal of the events leading up to and following the actual deployment of weapons. It provides the situational context for the phenomena of stress and honour/shame in Chapters 5 and 6.

Conceptually, CF-18 pilots with combat experience form a small subset of all humanity. In the flow of human history, few people have engaged in air-to-ground combat. Similarly, the phenomenon of air-to-ground combat forms a small subset of all phenomena experienced by humanity.

3.2 Pilot Corpus Interpretation: An Empathic Portrayal

The pilot corpus for this study presents a detailed, descriptive portrayal of pilots' combat experiences. As researcher, I applied the first aspect of the *phenomenological attitude* described in section 1.4.6 of this chapter. I took an empathic stance as I read the pilot corpus.

In other words, I took the experiences that pilots were describing to me at face value. I assumed that pilots presented me with a true account of the experiences they lived.

In the process of moving from the pilots' descriptive portrayal of experience to my empathic interpretation of the corpus, I moved out of the concrete, situational horizon of pilot experiences into a more abstract, conceptual sphere. In this conceptual sphere, my focus changed from the particulars of the phenomenon of combat experiences to the more abstract phenomenon that stood out to me in the pilot corpus: the phenomenon of stress.

The phenomenon of stress has a different nature than that of air-to-ground combat. While air-to-ground combat is a phenomenon experienced by a small subset of humanity, stress is a phenomenon experienced by the collectivity of humanity. In addition, although the phenomenon of stress is common to all of humanity, individuals may experience it corporately or idiosyncratically in a plurality of settings.

In other words, the experience of stress is universal to all humanity while the experience of air-to-ground combat is particular to pilots engaged in combat. Although humanity faces stress in multiple situations, the fighter pilots interviewed are unique in the sense that they experienced stress both within and outside of the phenomenon of air-to-ground combat.

To understand the pilots' experience of the universal phenomenon of stress, in the context of air-to-ground combat, I used another phenomenological method. Using an *eidetic reduction* (section 1.4.6 of this chapter), I conceptualized a framework that helped me interpret the meaning of stress for pilots. This framework for understanding pilot stress is what I call the *empathic, interpretive portrayal*, which is found in Chapter 5.

What led me to choose stress as the key phenomenon for understanding the combat experiences of pilots? From the pilot corpus, I observed that pilots referred to stress or lack of stress when describing events associated with salient emotional responses. Pilots referred to stress when describing events eliciting both pleasant and unpleasant emotional responses, and they referred to a lack of stress when describing events that were boring. The description of these

events and the description of pilot emotional responses to those events were *reflective* on the part of the pilots. This means that pilots identified, attributed meaning, and verbally expressed how they responded emotionally to certain combat experiences they remembered.

Although future researchers examining this same pilot corpus may discern otherwise, the phenomenon of stress became my core interpretive portrayal of meaning as I made an empathic reading of the pilot corpus.

In Chapter 5, I begin my description of the phenomenon of stress with the research by Selye ([1974](#)). I develop a conceptual framework that allows me to explore the different contours of this reflective phenomenon within the particulars of pilot combat experiences.

3.3 Pilot Corpus Interpretation: A Critical Portrayal

After identifying this first interpretive core phenomenon from an empathic reading of the pilot corpus, I next questioned the experiences that pilots shared. In other words, I undertook a critical reading of the pilot corpus. From this critical reading, I sought to identify a deeper, unreflective interpretive core phenomenon embedded in the phenomenon of stress at the root of salient emotional responses of pilots. This second interpretive core phenomenon is similar to the phenomenon of stress in that it is a universal phenomenon experienced by all humanity. At the same time, this second interpretive phenomenon differs from stress in that it is unreflective on the part of pilots. In all probability, the pilots interviewed were not aware that this phenomenon contributed to the meaning they attributed to some of their air-to-ground combat experiences. This second interpretive core phenomenon that provides meaning to the idiosyncratic combat experiences of pilots is the dual phenomenon of honour/shame. One of the pilots brought this interpretive phenomenon to my awareness when he referred to the fighter pilot community. He stated that for pilots, “Your credibility is like your honour . . . and you don’t give that up easily.”

Although I identify honour/shame as a second core phenomenon, in reality, honour/shame are two distinct phenomena. Having identified the unreflective interpretive core phenomenon of honour/shame by means of a critical reading of the pilot corpus, Chapter 6 presents my

conclusions of an *eidetic reduction* that denotes the differences between the dual phenomena of honour and shame. To undertake his *eidetic reduction*, I focused on selective literature from the discursive communities of sociology and psychology. I then present examples from the pilot corpus where I identified stress as a marker associated with pilots either pursuing their personal reputations and collective honour or avoiding personal embarrassment and collective shame.

3.4 Gospel Corpus Analysis: An Empathic Hermeneutical Portrayal

Since the phenomena of stress and honour/shame are universal to all humanity, an understanding of these phenomena may be enriched by comparing contemporary experience with the experiences of those in the past. In Chapter 7, I further explore the phenomena of stress and honour/shame by drawing on selective, theological literature from a pre-Enlightenment era: a description of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. A selective account of the life of Jesus is presented through the writings of four authors in the canon of the New Testament. Referred to as the gospel corpus in this inquiry, these four documents provide a combined, pre-scientific corpus of the life-world of Jesus. From the gospel corpus, I identified examples of the phenomena of stress and honour/shame. These examples, summarized in Chapter 7, form the backdrop for a more thorough analysis of honour/shame from two specific episodes in the Gospel of Luke.

3.5 Gospel Corpus Analysis – An Experiential Interpretation

In Chapter 8, I examine the dual phenomena of honour/shame in Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 15:11-32. Both episodes narrate an event where honour/shame was withdrawn from biblical characters. Though the terms honour and shame do not appear in these episodes, the patterns of honour/shame do. My intent in analyzing these two episodes is to gain additional insight on honour/shame from the gospel corpus. I then apply these insights in the dialogue I undertake in Chapter 9.

3.6 Discussion – Dialogue between Contemporary Culture and the Christian Tradition

In Chapter 9, I engage in a dialogue between contemporary culture and the Christian tradition on the subject of stress and honour/shame. Since the dialogue partners of contemporary culture and the Christian tradition are too inclusive, I attempt to make this dialogue more manageable. On the one hand, contemporary culture is represented by my interpretation of the psychological and sociological literature of the human sciences reviewed to undertake this inquiry. On the other hand, the Christian tradition is represented by my interpretation of selected texts of the gospel corpus, found in the New Testament, using interpretive methods from a textual, a sociological, and an experiential orientation. The goals of this dialogue are first, to enrich the understanding of the phenomena of stress and honour/shame in both the pilot and gospel corpora; and second, to offer recommendations that will assist in the formulation of policies and practices that will improve the well-being of our CF-18 fighter pilots as they prepare for and participate in future air campaigns.

3.7 Conclusion

In the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I present the practical implications, the limitations, and the future research potential of this study.

Summary

In this chapter, I began by describing my understanding of the key terms used in this inquiry. For some of these terms, my resume is brief since I will develop the contours of these terms in subsequent chapters. For others, the descriptions were complete enough to provide a larger context to this inquiry and to clarify my logic in undertaking this inquiry. Next, I briefly introduced the theological component of this inquiry by situating this inquiry first, with respect to its academic field, at the border of practical and public theology; and second, with respect to my faith tradition, from an evangelical stance. Finally, I presented the flight path for answering my research question as I briefly summarized the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

However, before examining the various portrayals within the pilot corpus in Chapters 4 to 6 and within the gospel corpus in Chapters 7 and 8, it is necessary that I expound, in Chapter 3, the research strategy used for this inquiry and my justification for using this strategy.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH STRATEGY

What were the experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots supporting the multinational coalition air campaign over Iraq? What meaning did pilots consciously and unconsciously attribute to their combat experiences?

To answer these questions, I used a diachronic framework ([Weiss, 1994](#)) that looked at the present beliefs of pilots with respect to their pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment combat experiences. To gain access to these present beliefs, I had two strategies to choose from. I could prompt pilots to talk about their resilience to adverse psychological outcomes resulting from their combat experiences. Alternatively, I could simply prompt pilots to share their combat experiences.

If I pursued the former strategy, I would metaphorically suit-up with interview questions that would take me where I wanted to go. As an outsider, I would put on my army boots, helmet, and frag vest. By my questions, I would investigate a sampling of targets destroyed by pilots on the ground. I would then invite pilots to join me as I revisited those sites. I would ask them about their thoughts, feelings, and body sensations as I pointed out my interest in their resilience to adverse psychological outcomes.

If I pursued the latter strategy, I would metaphorically suit up in flight gear at the pilot's invitation. I would step up to his jet, enter the cockpit as his guest, buckle up in the seat behind him, and take off into the pilot's life-world. I would be flown to the heights of experience chosen by the pilot. Not only would I feel the g-forces of his life-world, but the pilot would point out the targets he chose, share the sensations he felt, and reveal the thoughts he had.

To be consistent with my exploratory interests, I chose the second strategy for my research design. In this chapter, I describe the process I followed to create and interpret the pilot corpus used for this study.

1 Project Overview

The first step in my research strategy was finding a way to gain access to pilots on the flight line. Although I was a military chaplain stationed on the same air force base as fighter pilots, I needed credibility to have research access to the pilots. Therefore, I approached the squadron commanders and wing commander asking for their approval to conduct interviews. Next, I needed research security clearance. I sought authorization to conduct research on military members through the office of the Surgeon General of Canada. Finally, with all this in place, I metaphorically suited up with my interview strategy and approached a jet. I climbed the ladder and knocked on the cockpit canopy. I then entered the life-world of a CF-18 fighter pilot. Taking off by means of the interview, I was exposed to the combat experiences that the pilot chose to describe. As his guest, I chose an attitude of empathy in place of an attitude of suspicion. My intent was to stimulate the affective and cognitive memory of the pilot. With my curiosity aroused and his emotions kindled, I observed that at times the pilot momentarily forgot that he was being interviewed. He was reliving those salient, subjective combat experiences ([Grigsby, 1991](#)). From this rich description of experience, I was able to compile a corpus of texts that became the focus for the interpretive element of this inquiry.

2 Research Setting

As a retired military chaplain, I have a personal interest in this study. For seven years, between August 2009 and September 2016, I was stationed at 3 Wing, Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Bagotville in Alouette, QC, Canada. I was part of a chaplaincy team alongside two other military chaplains. In addition to overseeing the protestant chapel, I had a ministry of presence to the members of the air force base at large. This ministry of presence allowed me to minister to some squadron members (ground crew and pilots) and to accompany the fighter squadrons on a handful of exercises outside the country. In 2015, I was deployed for six weeks to Op IMPACT ministering to CAF personnel in Kuwait.

I began my doctoral program in the fall of 2013 at Université Laval, in Quebec City. A dissertation committee from the *Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses* at Université Laval approved my research proposal in the late summer of 2015. That same fall, I met with

the base Wing Commander and the squadron commanders at both 425 and 433 Tactical Fighter Squadrons (TFS). I communicated my desire to conduct a research inquiry with their fighter pilots. After reading an executive summary of my research proposal, all three commanders expressed their support for me to proceed.

3 Ethical Considerations

It is well known in Canadian military research that the *human factor* has an effect on military operations, and military operations have an effect on its members ([Mantle, 2013](#)). I initiated this study with the assumption that exposure to air-to-ground combat had an effect on pilots. To what extent, I did not know. However, susceptibility to psychological risk is not only a concern at the operational level of a multinational air campaign. Ethical considerations require that participants be protected from any inherent risk associated with a research inquiry ([Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014](#)). As a result, I became sensitive to the possibility that pilots might be susceptible to potential psychological risks when reliving previous combat experiences during the interview. Conscious of this risk, my objectives for the interview were twofold: first, I wanted to obtain an experientially rich, first-person narrative of pilot experiences; and second, I wanted to be sensitive to the pilots' welfare during the interview.

To pursue ethical and military authorization for conducting interviews with fighter pilots, I submitted my project proposal first to the Université Laval Ethics Committee on Research with Humans and to the Surgeon General's Health Research Program. After some revisions, I received approval from the Université Laval Ethics Committee on Research with Humans (2016-086/21-06-2016) and the Surgeon General's Health Research Program (E2016-06-193-003-0001) in the summer of 2016.

4 Participant Induction

The interview sample, controlled for vulnerability,³⁰ was taken from a small cohort of CF-18 fighter pilots, stationed at CFB Bagotville, who supported Op IMPACT. One of the squadron commanders forwarded my recruitment letter by e-mail to all eligible pilots on base. Because fighter pilots form a small, tight-knit brotherhood, maximum participation was encouraged in the following manner.

First, due to the perceived stigma of psychological injury and the hesitancy of possible association with Mental Health clientele ([M. M. Thompson, 2015](#)), pilots were not asked in the initial contact letter if they had consulted CAF Mental Health Services for a persistent psychological difficulty. Any hint that this study was being conducted to evaluate the mental health of pilots was avoided.

Second, to establish credibility, I received authorization from Wing and squadron commanders to send an initial contact letter, by e-mail, to the 40 or so pilots targeted for this study. To avoid giving the impression that participants were recruited by military commanders in positions of authority, I, the researcher, signed the recruitment letter. The letter described the study and invited pilot participation (see [Appendix A](#)). My goal was to recruit a small sample of six to ten participants with air-to-ground combat experience.

Many qualitative research projects are conducted to give voice to vulnerable persons in society ([Honos-Webb et al., 2006](#)), but that template is inadequate for this study. Fighter pilots are the elite in the RCAF and honoured in their profession by the military community. However, one might question whether pilots are in a vulnerable position with respect to me, the researcher/chaplain. This possibility is unsuitable. First, I was a captain in the military, while operational pilots are captains, majors or lieutenant colonels. I, holding the lowest of these

³⁰ Each pilot interviewed had been in combat over Iraq. Thus, each pilot was vulnerable to the same degree. In contrast, I avoided interviewing pilots who had not deployed to the mission because they did not engage in combat.

ranks, was in no hierachal military relationship with the participants. Second, I served as a military chaplain on base. Chaplains in the CAF do not have any administrative or operational authority over military members. Therefore, no Command and Control (C2) authority was at play in the researcher/participant relationship. Finally, military chaplains are viewed as resources to approach when in need of assistance or of a listening ear. Therefore, to avoid any ethical concerns based on a possible dependent relationship between the research participants and me as the researcher/chaplain, I refrained from interviewing pilots who had consulted me as a resource in the past.

5 Interview Episode

For the six pilots who agreed to participate, I conducted in-person interviews during two research episodes at a location suggested by the pilots. Interviews were held either at squadron headquarters or at a neutral location on the air force base. The first episode lasted on average 30 minutes. During this session, I described the framework and the specific purposes of the study. I informed pilots of both the possible risks of recalling unpleasant combat experiences and the possible benefits of the study for future pilots. I reminded pilots that their participation in the study was voluntary and that their withdrawal from the study without consequences was guaranteed. If they chose to withdraw from the study, I would destroy their recordings and any transcripts. I explained the steps I would take to ensure the confidentiality of their identity and the security of their digitally recorded interviews. I then addressed any questions before asking them to sign a consent form in my presence (see [Appendix B](#)). The signed consent form is the only document that records the names of the pilots who participated in this study. I placed all of these forms in a sealed envelope and had them locked in a Protected B security cabinet located in the office of one of the squadron commanders.

Finally, I distributed a questionnaire and asked individual pilots to handwrite their answers in my presence (see [Appendix C](#)). I had two objectives in distributing this questionnaire.

First, to ensure anonymity, I asked pilots to create a fictitious name or call sign that was not associated with any present or former Canadian military pilot to the best of their knowledge. During the interview, I referred to the pilot by this pseudonym.³¹ I assured participants that I would not refer to their real identity in any reports.

Second, by means of this questionnaire, I provided sample interview questions to introduce the pilot to the depth of experience I would be seeking during the subsequent interview. Answers to this questionnaire were helpful for the following two reasons. First, the answers provided me with background information on each pilot. This information allowed me to compare the pilots' initial written responses with the experiences given during the oral interview. Second and more importantly, pilots, like other professionals, lead busy lives. Their experiential awareness is focused on present life issues with their previous combat experiences possibly situated in the periphery or outside of their awareness. As a warm-up to the second interview, briefly answering questions in a written format provided pilots the opportunity to re-experience the mission from a post-deployment perspective.

Within a few days, I conducted a second interview with the consenting pilots. All interviews took place face-to-face and were digitally recorded. During the second interview, of approximately 90 minutes duration, I asked questions of a broad, open-ended nature using my Interview Guide (see [Appendix D](#)). By means of this guide, I sought to understand the current emotional experiences of CF-18 pilots from their perspective. The questions encouraged the conscious description of the pilots' past and present experiences. Although problems with recall or distortions of memories of the past are proposed limitations of this method ([J. Lewis, 2003](#)), this study aimed to investigate the present appraisal of past experiences. The retrospective interpretations shared by pilots represent the reconstruction of their past experiences

³¹ Pilots chose the following call signs for this research study: Auto, Canuck, Christo, Dodge, McSnail, and Smokey.

at the time of the interview and not necessarily the experience of the event at the time it occurred.

I invited pilots to share their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and memories of combat in an empathic, non-judgmental environment allowing the pilots to use their own words. At the beginning of the interview, I made it clear that answers to questions would not be evaluated as either right or wrong. Pilots were free to refrain from answering any of the questions. Experiences shared in the interview would remain confidential. In the event that parts of the interview were included in a research publication, the anonymity of the participant along with anyone else mentioned would be carefully protected.

In order to access both the *reflective* *occurred passionate* beliefs (RE-A) and the *unreflective* *occurred passionate* beliefs (UE-A) of pilots (recall Figure 2 in section 1.4.4 of Chapter 2), I asked questions during the interview that elicited the affective dimension of pilot combat experiences. I hoped to tap into these cognitive beliefs through the pilots' recall of occurred emotions, physiological sensations, and behaviours associated with combat. Remembering and recounting their combat experiences during the research interview brought salient emotions associated with those experiences back into awareness ([Robbins, 2006](#)).³² Put differently, beliefs became occurred at the emotional level but may have remained unreflective at the cognitive level.

6 Interview Guide

Rather than asking a series of direct open-ended questions, I guided the interview to ensure a rich experiential description (see [Appendix D](#)). My interview guide loosely followed the structured phenomenological research genre developed by Bevan ([2014](#)). He entitled his three steps contextualization, apprehending the phenomenon, and clarifying of phenomenon. I adapted his three steps in two ways. First, I added an additional step, ultimate concern,

³² See Chapter 3 (section 6.2) for further elaboration.

between his second and third steps. And second, I unintentionally omitted the initial stage of his third step when clarifying the phenomenon.

6.1 Contextualization

First, in order for combat experiences to have meaning, the researcher must understand the broader context of the pilot's life-world. Bevan refers to this initial stage of the interview as *Contextualization*. I began by inviting pilots to describe the events associated with their choice of the fighter pilot profession. How was the pilot's interest in his profession stimulated, and who were those instrumental in his career choice? I then asked pilots to describe a typical working day on their operational base in Canada.

6.2 Apprehending the Phenomenon

In the next stage, which Bevan entitles *Apprehending the Phenomenon*, my questions explored three general themes. The first theme explored the pilot's deployment experiences. I began by eliciting a cognitive description of his non-combat experiences. What was a typical day for a combat pilot on deployment? How did the pilot prepare for the mission? What did the pilot experience during the non-combat portions of the mission? These questions allowed the pilot to describe his experiences in detail. After asking questions of a cognitive nature about the pilot's combat experiences, my question shifted to an affective-oriented focus allowing the pilot to express his memories of feelings and body sensations while engaged in combat. The last question of this theme provided the pilot with an opportunity to express any discomfort in sharing his personal experiences at this depth and to withdraw from the study, if he chose. All the pilots interviewed expressed a desire to continue with the interview.

I then asked questions developed under Bevan's second theme in *Apprehending the Phenomenon*. I explored the effects of combat on the pilot's perception of self, the pilot's perception of self as viewed by significant others, and the pilot's perception of self as viewed by military stakeholders. These questions targeted first the pre-deployment phase, then the post-deployment phase, and finally the phase of being in combat.

The third theme of interest under Bevan's stage *Apprehending the Phenomenon* focused on the pilot's strategy to ensure general well-being in a post-deployment context. I hoped to elicit the coping strategies of the pilot (before, during, and following combat exposure) and his outlook for the future.

My purpose in asking pilots to recount the memories of their thoughts, feelings, and body sensations associated with combat was to encourage the pilots to momentarily forget they were being interviewed, to relive some of these experiences, and to verbalize what they really believed about those experiences.

The American professor of psychology Brent Robbins ([2006](#)) reminds us of the principle of "state-dependent memory" (p. 193). In simple terms, the retrieval of memories is facilitated when the emotional state of a person during retrieval is similar to her emotional state during the initial experience. In other words, a person recalls past experiences when presently living the emotions associated with those experiences.³³ Similarly, Grigsby ([1991](#)) observed that ground soldiers crave the exhilarating experiences of combat rush once they return home from the battlefield. Talking over their experiences with their buddies brings back those emotional memories and temporarily satisfies that craving.

By inviting pilots to recall their past inner states, I intended that these awakened emotions would allow pilots to be absorbed in their oral descriptions of combat experiences and to forget that they were being interviewed. As a result, this emotionally awakened state would facilitate access to the various dimensions of pilot beliefs through the expression of thoughts, feelings, and physiological sensations they did not consciously intend to reveal.

Gadamer ([1989](#)), echoed by Tracy ([1994](#)), refers to this phenomenon of being caught up in one's present oral descriptions of past emotional experiences as an authentic *game of conversation*. The American professor of psychology Emalinda McSpadden ([2011](#)) played the

³³ For a neurological description of how the amygdala serves as the brain's memory bank and is a repository for all of our emotions including fear, anger, pleasure and hope, see Goleman ([2011](#)).

role of both researcher and participant in her qualitative research inquiry. She noted that during her interview, she was caught up in the moment and as a result disclosed information that she had not expressed before.

6.3 Ultimate Concern and Conclusion of the Interview

At this point in the interview, I broke from Bevan's approach and added an additional stage between his second and third stages. I attempted to identify the *ultimate concern* of the pilot based on the understanding of faith as proposed by Tillich (1957). I led the pilot through an imaginary scenario of ejecting from the plane over enemy territory. The pilot progressively renounced *activities, people, possessions, and qualities* that he valued as important. This vignette provided a means for identifying beliefs (values) that are important to the pilot with minimal direction on the part of the researcher (see [Appendix E](#)).

Finally, at the end of the interview, I asked a series of questions that acted as a debriefing. These concluding questions allowed the pilot to reflect on and share anything else that he may have omitted when answering the previous questions. One question focused on the pilot's perception of the interview itself. The goal was to ensure the restoration of the emotional equilibrium of the pilot after having recalled some intense emotions ([Levers, 2006](#)). My last question invited the pilot to share any pieces of advice to future pilots who may, one day, read the results of this research inquiry.

After turning off the recorder, I lingered with the pilot for about five minutes building rapport and expressing appreciation for the interview. While ensuring the interview ended in a positive manner, I was also alert to new information that may have been revealed up to this time ([Miller & Crabtree, 2004](#)). In the end, pilots added nothing of particular significance in the area of my research interest.

6.4 Clarifying of Phenomenon

I then returned to Bevan's third stage of structuring interviews, which he labelled *Clarifying of Phenomenon*. To obtain a richer understanding of experience, a phenomenological inquiry

encourages the researcher to perform an *eidetic reduction* on the phenomena under study. By use of an imaginative variation, the phenomenon in question is imagined by the researcher in other contexts. Husserl's free imaginative variation procedure was described earlier in Chapter 2 (section 1.4.4). In psychology, this procedure undertaken by the researcher usually occurs during the post data analysis stage to refine the qualities of a given phenomenon. Bevan, however, also introduces imaginative variation earlier at the interview stage to ensure a richer description of the phenomenon under study. In hindsight, one of the weaknesses of my interview strategy is that I did not use imaginative variation earlier during the interview stage because I was not able to anticipate the descriptions of pilot combat experiences. If I were to continue this research and interview other pilots in the future, I would include imaginative variation at the data collection stage.

For example, one pilot described being in his Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ). Being tasked for a strike, he was then transferred to another ROZ. He recalled experiencing frustration because a coalition pilot from another country was tasked to replace him and carry out the strike. The reason for the replacement was that the Canadian ROE were too restrictive, and the target had to be destroyed immediately. Using imaginative variation to explore the response of this pilot, I could have asked the following question. In this scenario, what would have changed if the Canadian ROE were as permissive as those of other coalition countries? An answer to this question may have provided an elaboration of the pilot's combat experience.

Although I did not use free imaginative variation at the data collection stage, I did use it during the *eidetic reduction* at the analysis stage (see section 9.3 below).

7 Interview Experience

As a novice researcher following a qualitative approach, I wanted to approach pilots with an attitude of respect, patience, empathy, and tolerance. I also wanted to be sensitive to any possible negative impact on the welfare of the participants due to collecting a first-person narrative of combat experiences ([Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014](#)). I

sought to balance the uncovering of highly emotional, personal narrative with protecting the welfare of the pilot providing the narrative. As the interviewer, I wanted to uncover any layers of resistant emotional armour to access the feelings, sensations, and beliefs associated with combat experiences. I reasoned that the possible harm of a pilot telling his story was balanced by the greater harm of not telling his story. However, how was I to overcome the hesitancy of pilots to disclose such intimate content?

To my surprise, as I conducted one interview after another, I found the six pilots enthusiastic about telling their stories and describing what they had experienced. Supporting the air campaign by engaging in combat was the climax of their careers up to that point! They wanted to tell their stories! Not only were they proud of what they had done, they also expressed frustration over the sudden termination of the CF-18 contribution to the air campaign by the Canadian government.

8 Post-Interview Corpus Compilation

The recorded interview of six pilots was transcribed verbatim into a word-processing document. For analytical purposes, these six documents became the pilot corpus. From this corpus, I began the interpretive phase of making sense of fighter pilot combat experiences.

The Belgian social scientists Raymond Quivy and Luc van Campenhoudt ([2006](#)) remind researchers that participants in a semi-directed discussion may have difficulty collecting their thoughts, putting them in order, finding the right words, and then expressing them. This difficulty is accentuated when participants are asked to put their feelings and physiological sensations into words. I found this true, to some extent, with the pilots I interviewed. Therefore, the pilot corpus includes false starts, half-finished phrases, and significant pauses. In addition, some pilots used many pause fillers during the interview. I deleted some of these interruptions to the flow of the text when citing pilots in this dissertation. I did this to protect pilot anonymity since pilots, when reading these quotes, may recognize the oral characteristics of their comrades.

9 Corpus Interpretation

After an initial review of literature in preparation for my project proposal, I chose phenomenology as my qualitative research approach to interpret the pilot corpus. I committed myself to the phenomenological genre of the qualitative research tradition when applying for ethical approval from the Université Laval Ethics Committee on Research with Humans and from the Surgeon General’s Health Research Program. In my subsequent readings, I learned that the research methods used within the phenomenological research genre were numerous, because researchers constantly borrow from other qualitative research genres. In fact, the late American professor of psychology Arne Collen ([2006](#)) counsels against future phenomenological research being linked only to one’s favoured methods. In addition, the British professor of psychology Anna Madill ([2006](#)) cautions researchers against legitimizing certain genres of qualitative research at the risk of marginalizing others. The American psychologist Susan L. Morrow ([2006](#)) proposes that an emergent design of research methods provides flexibility in the collection and the analysis of data by the researcher. This flexibility is important because both the thought processes of the researcher and her findings are evolving during the analysis of data. Finally, qualitative researchers [Ormston et al. \(2014\)](#) note that in the academic discipline of sociology, much discussion is taking place on transdisciplinary research that draws on multiple approaches and a range of methods.

In contrast to a quantitative approach, a phenomenological approach favours the following: first, it understands the human “as a cognitive, verbal, affective and physical being and assumes a chain of connection between a person’s oral recollection, thinking, and emotional state” ([J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 54](#)); second, it favours human meaning as the key to experience rather than causal variables ([Ashworth, 2008](#)); and third, it allows for an in-depth exploration of human experience in a situational context rather than reducing a phenomenon to identifiable variables in a controlled environment.

Jonathan A. Smith and Pnina Shinebourne ([2012](#)) propose that a phenomenological approach works well in research areas that have not been previously explored. According to Quivy and

van Campenhoudt ([2006](#)), a phenomenological approach broadens the horizons of the researcher, opening up the possibility of discovering new dimensions to a dilemma. For these reasons, a phenomenological approach seemed the most appropriate for an exploratory study of pilot combat experiences.

The steps I took to analyze and interpret the pilot corpus are as follows.

9.1 The Observation Step

When reading the corpus, I attempted to the best of my ability to apply the two aspects of a *phenomenological attitude* ([Wertz, 2011b](#)). I adopted an empathic attitude concomitant to setting aside all psychological theories. Put differently, I became a *theoretical agnostic* ([Charmaz, 2011](#)) and made a conscious effort to read the pilot corpus several times refraining from imposing any specific pre-existing phenomenon of investigation, such as trauma or resilience to trauma. My goal was to grasp the meaning in the recollection of pilot combat experiences in their overall life-world. I documented my initial personal reflections as I read each transcript of the corpus. I noted my insights, questions, uncertainties, observed connections, and preliminary interpretations. In addition, I summarized what I considered essential elements of the pilot corpus into third-person descriptions.

9.2 The Composite Narrative Formulation Step

Having worked through the corpus, I then prepared a composite narrative. This is a combined narrative of situational details from each transcript of pilot interviews. The details included in the composite narrative were void of pilots' emotional meaning of events ([Collen, 2006](#)). By its very nature, a composite narrative creates space between the experience of an individual pilot and the overall context of where all pilot experience is situated. This narrative also gives both the researcher and the reader a broader context in which to situate individual pilot experiences ([Becker, 1998](#)). The composite narrative found in Chapter 4, begins with the nascent interest of participants in the fighter pilot profession and spans to the participants' combat experiences. This composite narrative allowed me to trace the meaning of a given

phenomenon across the life-world of pilots during the interpretive step of the inquiry ([Karlsson, 1993](#)).

9.3 The Interpretive Step

As I read and reread the pilot corpus concomitant to furthering my understanding of qualitative research methods, my interpretive approach evolved. My methods for interpreting the corpus became more pluralistic. By using methods borrowed from the narrative, grounded theory, and intuitive qualitative research genres, I adapted my use of phenomenology as a research genre while preserving the essential phenomenological attitude and *eidetic reduction*.

Conrad ([1990](#)) notes that within some qualitative research genres, researchers code participant content, remove it from the context of participant narratives, categorized it, interpret it, and then reincorporated this content into a new narrative (experiential text) that warrants the interpretation of the researcher. I avoided this method. Rather, because of my biblical studies background, when interpreting the pilot corpus, I borrowed a technique from the narrative genre of the qualitative research tradition. Using a narrative technique, I attempted to interpret a pilot's response within the context of the pilot's own narrative. I sought to minimize the surgical removal of content from its life-world context to allow the stories of the pilot to remain an integrated whole.

I started my analysis by using an adapted *constant comparative method* ([Rennie, 2006](#)). Originating in the grounded theory genre of the qualitative research tradition, I took note of any pilot's reference to experiencing salient emotions, which was my adaptation to the method. To reduce the data so that it would be somewhat more manageable, I conceptualized categories of meaning and grouped my observations into these meaning units. I initially included both positive and negative emotional responses in the same meaning unit. For example, when pilots associated an event with salient emotions such as awesomeness or anxiety, I placed those experiences in the same meaning unit. Initial meaning units were grounded in the text of pilot transcripts. Higher-order themes were then grounded in these initial meaning units. I

juxtaposed statements from the transcripts that represented a common theme. This allowed me to follow themes through each pilot's interview as well as across multiple pilot interviews. For example, I noted the salient events that provided the most exhilaration and the most anxiety for pilots. In addition, I noted events that led to the opposite pole of boredom. I wanted to understand the idiosyncratic meaning reported by a particular pilot in addition to the meaning common to all pilots. I then repeated the same process for my critical reading of the corpus. As a result, an understanding of the meaning of pilot experiences emerged that went beyond any individual participant's ability to articulate ([Stiles, 1993](#)).

I associated the meaning of pilot experiences with the cognitive beliefs held by pilots to interpret the event. The cognitive beliefs are associated with other dimensions of belief such as the emotional, physiological, and behavioural. By noting the terms pilots used to describe their emotional, physiological, and behavioural experiences, I looked for patterns to identify the cognitive belief associated with these experiences. As a result of this analysis, I interpreted stress as the core occurrent belief or what I simply call the *reflective* phenomenon and honour/shame as the *unreflective* phenomena that were at the source of pilot stress (see Figure 2 in section 1.4.4 of Chapter 2).

At this point in my research, I had a choice to make. Was I to label these themes in the pilot's own words or in my terminology? By using themes labelled in the pilots' terms, I would remain closer to a descriptive phenomenological approach. If I chose the words to label pilot experiences, I would be using an interpretive phenomenological approach. I chose to integrate the two labelling strategies. I chose to use pilot vocabulary when they labelled salient emotions (awesome, boring) and when those labels were part of aviation vocabulary (low-intensity combat). At other times, I used terms that I considered more precise when describing psychological, sociological, or theological concepts (undesirable-stress, shame). When using my own vocabulary, I realized that it conceptualized themes in ways that were more abstract than those originating from the pilot corpus.

I had another choice to make. Would I invite others to review the transcripts and compare their readings with mine? If so, this would prolong my research. In addition, I would have to find readers who would be interested and thus intrinsically motivated to read the transcripts. They would also need to have some previous exposure to phenomenological and theological backgrounds. Would I choose readers of an evangelical Christian tradition, from a non-evangelical Christian tradition, an agnostic tradition, or even an atheistic tradition? In addition, I imagined the possibility of other researchers interpreting the pilot corpus using a different research genre within the qualitative tradition ([Wertz, 2011b](#)). In the end, I decided not to go this route before completing my dissertation. I would be open to other researchers interpreting the pilot corpus for future research, using other qualitative genres, if pilots who participated in the study gave their permission.

While interpreting the corpus, I undertook an *eidetic reduction*. I sought to crystallize the essential qualities of stress and honour/shame by imaging these phenomena from various perspectives while reading selected literature from various discursive communities in the human sciences.

In addition, I borrowed a method of developing categories proposed by Vipassana Esbjörn-Hargens and Rosemarie Anderson ([2006](#)), from the qualitative research genre of intuitive inquiry (which I adapted to my needs), I organized my understanding of the pilot corpus according to three categories: first, an understanding that surprised me as totally new; second, an understanding that challenged my previous thinking; and third, an understanding that had existed in seminal form but germinated as a result of the data analysis. Here is an example of each.

- 1) What totally surprised me was that pilots enjoyed their combat experiences. Dropping bombs was exhilarating for pilots. One pilot interpreted the possibility of not having the opportunity to bomb a single target during his deployment as shameful. Engaging in combat was the culmination of their careers to date. Pilots felt a deep

sense of accomplishment knowing that they had helped friendly forces on the ground by destroying enemy targets.

- 2) Because of my expectation that pilots were experiencing some degree of adverse psychological outcomes, I thought they would be hesitant to describe their combat experiences in detail. My thinking was challenged. In fact, pilots were open to describe their deployment experiences.
- 3) From my previous experience with pilots, I knew they did not tend to open up to mental health professionals in a patient/client dyad. For that reason, I approached pilots in a research context. At least for the six pilots I interviewed, this hesitancy was confirmed.

There is no one correct way of understanding this research material. Different perspectives resulting from a phenomenological or another qualitative research genre can honour the complexities of pilot experiences. As a fallible researcher, I attempted to consider all theoretical possibilities (within my limited pre-understanding) to explain the findings.

10 The Citation of Pilots

Using a narrative technique, I quoted pilots in context to support my interpretation of the phenomena under inquiry. Swinton, Bain, Ingram, and Heys ([2011](#)) affirm that in a phenomenological study, direct quotations from research participants provide an internal validity “that enables the reader to assess the potential for generalisation (sic) into other settings” (p. 645). Though some interviews were conducted in French, all quotes have been translated into English in order to ensure pilot anonymity. At times, I do not give the pseudonym of the pilots I quote. I use expressions such as *one pilot recalled* or *another pilot referred to*. I did this because pilots know one another. Pilots reading the dissertation may associate an oral characteristic or event with a certain pilot. It would then be possible to trace the pseudonym to each quote of this pilot throughout the document.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed my research strategy for prompting pilots to share their life-world experiences of air-to-ground combat. I described the unique research setting I experienced, the ethical considerations I encountered, the recruitment and interviewing methods I applied, the compilation of the transcribed interviews I oversaw, the interpretive steps I took, and the strategy for citing individual pilots I quoted. My interpretation of the corpus evolved as I read the corpus, reflected on my reading, reviewed literature from various discursive communities, and returned to repeat the cycle.

In the next few chapters, I present the results of this research strategy. I begin in Chapter 4 with the descriptive portrayal: the composite pilot narrative.

CHAPTER 4: PILOT CORPUS NARRATIVE – A DESCRIPTIVE PORTRAYAL

Like everyone else, fighter pilots have beliefs. Many of those beliefs are identifiable in the pilot corpus. The purpose of this dissertation is to interpret a sampling of those beliefs using an interdisciplinary approach integrating the human sciences and theology. With respect to theology, I use an evangelical theology to provide the horizon for this analysis. An evangelical theology is a Christian theology that is “rooted and bounded in the canon of Scripture” ([Abbott, 2013, p. 6](#)). From the disciplines of the human sciences, I have gleaned ideas from the family of phenomenological approaches. At its most basic level, a phenomenological approach, according to the British professor of educational research Peter D. Ashworth ([2008](#)), seeks to describe and understand what appears to people and what they take for granted. “[We] act according to taken-for-granted understandings about our life-world which are for the most part pre-reflective [sic], so elucidating them can often be a revelation” (p. 13).³⁴

In this chapter, I present a description of the shared reality that forms the backdrop of fighter pilot combat experiences. In other words, from the corpus of individual pilot transcripts, I piece together a composite narrative that corresponds to the observable shared reality that situates individual pilot combat experiences. This composite narrative becomes the situational context for the phenomena of pilot stress and honour/shame I examine in Chapters 5 and 6.

I have chosen to describe this composite narrative in terms of fundamental beliefs held by pilots about their combat experiences. In doing so, I distance myself from a limited and dysfunctional understanding of the term *belief*, whereby belief is defined as irrational wishful

³⁴ I personally think that most of these taken-for-granted understandings or beliefs fall into one of two categories. First, originating as the beliefs of others, an individual uncritically incorporates them into his own historical-cultural pre-understandings. In this sense, beliefs may be referred to as pre-reflective. And second, as beliefs that were reflective on in the past, they have now become habitual and thus assumed or taken for granted by an individual (see section 1.4.4 of Chapter 2).

thinking. During interviews, pilots recalled past events that they believed to have lived through. In this chapter, I took these recollections or beliefs at face value.

1 Common Beliefs of Pilots

From the pilot corpus, I observed four general taken-for-granted beliefs common to all pilots interviewed.

1.1 Pre-pilot Experience

First, each research participant believed (cognitive and mnemonic dimensions) to have experienced a time when he dreamt about becoming a fighter pilot. Of the six participants interviewed, five pointed to their childhood. This interest could be traced back to the influences of entertainment, significant others, and the public media. With respect to entertainment, five of the six participants stated that their interest in becoming a fighter pilot was awakened by the following activities: two mentioned attending air shows; another spoke of watching the film *Top Gun*; a fourth contemplated a poster of a CF-18 jet; and the last read books about pilots and played video games that simulated flying. With respect to significant others, three of the six participants recalled the major role these individuals played in sparking an interest to become fighter pilots. The family members of one participant brought him to an air show and stayed late so he could talk to fighter pilots. Another recalled the influence of his father's love for aviation. A third heard interesting aviation stories from friends of the family who were RCAF members. Finally, with respect to the public media, one participant associated the reporting on the First Gulf War with playing a role in sparking his interest to become a fighter pilot.

The second taken-for-granted belief I noted was that each participant believed that his interest in becoming a fighter pilot grew and that decisions made contributed to the realization of that interest. Although others contributed to sparking their childhood interests, five of the six participants subsequently made decisions to actively pursue a pilot career. Whether it was joining Air Cadets, applying to the Royal Military College of Canada, or enrolling in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), each credited his autonomous decision to pursue his dream

with the success of becoming a fighter pilot. One participant recalled a less active pathway. He followed the interests of a friend when joining Air Cadets and the CAF. However, this participant became more active in his pursuit once he entered military college. He credited both a factor outside his control (luck) and a factor under his control (hard work) with the opportunity of being accepted into the program of becoming a military pilot.

Research participants referred to two levels of training that qualified them to become CF-18 fighter pilots. The first level was military flight training. Pilots referred to this training as a stressful time that qualified them as military pilots. Pilots then advanced to a second level: jet flight training. Pilots described this training as another intense and stressful time when personal goals in the non-professional areas of their lives were set aside in order to become fighter pilots. When pilots passed their final training flight, they officially became CF-18 fighter pilots. These novice fighter pilots were then posted to a fighter squadron and began the next step of their profession: fighter combat training.

In summary, all participants believed that early in their lives they were not fighter pilots. They believed an interest was awakened in them that lead to an autonomous decision to begin the process of becoming fighter pilots. They believed that their military and jet fight training was stressful but prepared them for the positive experience of being in the fighter pilot profession.

1.2 Domestic Pilot Experience

The third taken-for-granted belief I observed was that each participant believed he was a fighter pilot and as a result had responsibilities to fulfill while on squadron. At home in their squadron, a fighter pilot has two main roles: being a pilot and being an officer. A pilot often juggles the two roles on the same day. As a pilot, he loves flying. As an officer, he fulfills the administrative duties that come with his profession. Each pilot interviewed held common beliefs about both roles.

Since pilots believe that flying is the locus of their profession, they interpreted their secondary duties either as being necessary to prepare for flying or as being in competition with

flying. Pilots identified secondary duties as follows: first, manning the Operations Desk for several hours a day and acting as the ground link for pilots who are flying training missions; second, fulfilling instructor duties by preparing relevant learning material and by completing grading sheets for newer pilots; third, acting as an Operations Officer by setting up daily schedules and by planning all fighter pilot operations and training; and fourth, participating in specialized pilot refresher training so as to maintain high-readiness levels.

Pilots believe that flying should take precedence over secondary duties. One pilot stated that a pilot's "goal is to become the best fighter pilot you can." He then supported this professed belief with a statement about what he believed new pilots should focus on. He advised the lightening of the administrative load on new captains when they first arrive on squadron.

It takes a lot of focus, a lot of energy . . . take away a lot of the admin stuff and other duties, and literally have them focus a 100%, if they can, on being the best fighter pilot they can.

When assigned to their first squadron, pilots focus on their studies. They become part of a mentorship program and begin flying training missions as a wingman. It takes about six months for pilots to achieve their combat readiness upgrade (CRUG) and another three to six months to complete their night vision goggle (NVG) phase. At this point, a pilot becomes a combat-ready wingman and is ready to be deployed to a theatre of combat.

Domestically, pilots fly two to three times per week. These training missions take six to eight hours from initial mission planning to final debrief. Some of the training missions are at night. As pilots progress in their career and gain experience, more secondary duties are assigned. These secondary duties account for the busyness of pilots.

In spite of a busy workload, the six pilots I interviewed chose to spend about two hours with me over the course of two meetings. This valuable time with me took them away from their secondary duties. I interpret this first, as an act of generosity with their time to help me undertake this research project, and second, as a desire to provide insights for research that may contribute to pilot well-being in future combat missions.

1.3 Deployment Pilot Experience

The fourth taken-for-granted belief I observed was that all pilots interviewed believed to have been deployed to the multinational air campaign Op IMPACT. The following is a composite description of the common experience associated with that belief.

1.3.1 General Description - Summary

Smokey began by specifying that deployments to Kuwait in contribution to Op IMPACT were for two months. According to Auto, in contrast to a typical day domestically, life for pilots while on deployment was quite simple. Pilots did no training, had very few secondary duties, and had no requirements to prepare for upgrades. They only flew specific *combat sorties* that were tasked to them the day before. These tasked *sorties* were similar “day in and day out.” Canuck added that pilots flew about three times per week. Christo specified that the pilots were split into two teams: a “day” team and a “night” team. The “day” team flew *sorties* over Iraq during the day while the night team flew the night shift. Pilots flew *sorties* six days per week. On the seventh day, the pilots from the two teams, along with the Fighter Deck Commander, met together for what one pilot called a *Hot Wash*. During that time, the pilots informally reviewed the important strike attacks of the previous week, pulled out lessons learned from those attacks, and went over general pilot house-keeping duties.

1.3.2 General Description – Typical Flying Day

The pilots believed to have experienced days during the deployment when they flew *combat sorties*. A typical flying day was broken down into four general stages: prepare, brief, *combat sortie*, and debrief. The third stage, the *combat sortie* itself, will be explained in more detail in section 1.3.3.

The pilots met in the cafeteria on base to begin their workday. They had already received the tasking for the mission over Iraq the previous day. Over a meal, they discussed the day’s mission at an unclassified level. Two of the pilots would fly the *sortie*, one as the flight lead, the second as his wingman. A third pilot remained in radio contact with the flying pilots at the Operations Desk. This third pilot also assisted the flying pilots during the preparation of

materials and the suit-up for the mission. Although the remaining two pilots on this shift were available to assist the flying pilots during the preparation stage, they were primarily occupied with preparing for the next day's *sortie*.

The three pilots active in that day's mission would begin the preparation stage after driving 10 minutes to the flight line. At the flight line, the flight lead and the wingman went through their checklist and reviewed the mission material prepared the day before. This was followed by an update from intelligence sources informing the pilots of threats in their area of operations, issuing escape/evasion material in case of ejection from the plane, and providing search and rescue (SAR) codes. During the second stage, the flight lead and the wingman attended a briefing to review their strategy for the mission, their flight plans, and the weather. The pilots entered the change room for their suit-up and received their material checklist before heading off to the jet for the start-up. The jets were started up and checked. Weapons systems were programmed and checked. Pilots checked their defensive suite³⁵ and electronic counter-measures before they taxied off to a secluded area near the airstrip where their weapons were armed. Finally, the two pilots received permission from the control tower to take off on their *combat sortie*.

After the *combat sortie*, about 6 hours later, the planes landed, and the above process was reversed. The two pilots went through the same checklist and returned their material. They then attended a series of debriefings. The pilots met with intelligence personnel to give an account of what they had observed during the mission. This was followed by a review of the video recordings taken from the Sniper pod on the plane. During the mission, pilots had noted the times when they made pertinent observations of anything suspicious on the ground. The video recordings taken at these specific times were reviewed along with the footage of weapon strikes on targets. This review of taped material took up to an hour and a half of their time. The pilots then debriefed together discussing lessons learned from the *combat sortie*.

³⁵ Defensive measures to counter any attack on the jet.

Finally, if weapons were deployed, the pilots met with both the fighter deck and base commander for a Strike Debrief. During this important debrief, all details of the strike were reviewed including the assessment of target damage (strike outcomes) and the legality of the strike. The legality of the strike had been ensured before the release of weapons by the senior Canadian officer located at the CAOC, in Qatar. Pilots then returned to the cafeteria and finished their day by enjoying a meal together. They were then free to relax and Skype with their families.

1.3.3 General Description of a *Combat Sortie*

A typical *combat sortie* was described in the following stages. Pilots took off from their base in Kuwait, flew north across the border into Iraq, and headed to their area of operations, the Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ). If the ROZ was situated near the northern border of Iraq, the flight time was around one and a half hours. On the way to the ROZ, the two pilots would perform weapons checks to ensure the bombs were ready. Next, the planes would *rendezvous* with the refuelling tanker. Once the jets had enough fuel, the pilots would transit to their assigned ROZ.

Pilots referred to this section of their *combat sortie* as the *vul* or vulnerability period. This is the time when the pilot and aircraft are vulnerable to harm from the enemy ([VanderMeulen, 2011](#)). On average, pilots flew in a designated airspace over an assigned ROZ for a period of three hours. At times, the *vul* was extended up to two or three hours longer if their replacements, that is, planes from other nations, were late showing up. To ensure that planes always had enough fuel to return to Kuwait at any time, the pilots would leave their designated ROZ and meet up with the air-to-air fuel tanker every 45 minutes. Back at the ROZ, the pilots would be in regular contact with their Joint Terminal Air Controller (JTAC). These were specially trained coalition soldiers providing an on-the-ground perspective of the battlefield to the pilot. Being embedded in Iraq, these cells of controllers were the link between the coalition ground troops, the pilot, and the CAOC.

Pilots believed to have experienced flying two types of *vuls*. The first was a *Deliberate Mission* or *Dedicated Strike*. During these missions, bombs were to be dropped on specific targets. Pilots knew the location of the targets ahead of time and had 48 hours to prepare. Some of the targets, such as warehouses, had no one inside them. Pilots would fly to the target, “show up, drop the bombs, and go back home.” During these missions, pilots programmed and then dropped GPS-guided bombs or deployed laser-guided weapons. Pilots controlled the trajectory of these weapons by pointing a laser at the target during the final moments. From start to finish, the attack could be as short as 10 minutes or as long as an entire *vul*. The extended time was due to discussions taking place between senior commanders who gave permission for the strikes, Collateral Damage Estimate (CDE) analysts who verified if procedures were being followed, and a military lawyer (JAG) who gave input on the legality of the specific strike. All these individuals were stationed at a C2 centre officially named the CAOC, in Qatar.

The second and more common *vul* was more dynamic because the pilot did not know before leaving Kuwait whether he would be given a target or even see a target that day. Pilots would have to respond to whatever they might face as they flew over the ROZ assigned to them. This type of *vul* was referred to by pilots as either a Strike Coordination Armed Reconnaissance (SCAR) or a Close Air Support (CAS). During SCAR *vuls*, pilots would fly reconnaissance *vuls* over designated areas. They were looking for the enemy. If pilots found a target judged as a high priority due to its threat to friendly forces and received legal authorization from the CAOC to make a strike, they would proceed with the strike ([Fox, 1999](#)). Another dynamic *vul* was the CAS. During CAS *vuls*, pilots flew missions over a ROZ in support of friendly forces on the ground who may have only been kilometres away from the target. When on a CAS *vul*, pilots were on call, ready to deliver weapons and protect ground troops below them.

One of the pilots provides a helpful description of a SCAR *vul*, where his main responsibility was looking for the enemy in a specific ROZ. This pilot refers to the ROZ as a *kill box*.³⁶

We would do air-to-air refuelling on the way north to our kill box. And then from there once we had enough fuel we would transit into the kill box. You'd check in with your JTAC, which is your Joint Tactical Air Controller. And he's the guy working out of the JTAC cell, which is, there's a couple of them in Iraq. They're on the ground. And then, basically you start working with them. They'll give you a check in. You tell them how you can help them today: basically, I have this many bombs, we're a formation of two aircraft, we have this much gas today, we have night vision goggles, we have laser, we have three bombs, all of that kind of normal, tactical kind of information that he needs to know in order to best employ you to the war. And then you start, flying circles. And most of, most of the flights were you looking for things. You'd be given taskings, what's called a sensor tasking, and that could be a list of, you know, 5, 10 coordinates, whatever. And the JTAC just wants you to move down through those coordinates and look to see if you can find anything suspicious. So, you're looking for vehicles, fighting-age males walking around places they shouldn't be carrying weapons, weapons caches, armored-up vehicles, buildings, trucks moving to and from buildings, irregularly. You know, anything you would think would be suspicious. And with time, you learn what to look for, where to look, how to look. And then that is interspersed with going to your tanker about every hour or so. And we'd usually have about 3 tanker brackets, and then that would fill up our 3-hour mission time, on-station mission time. So, once your 3 hours were done, you'd go get gas usually, and then you'd fly home. You'd check out, and away you'd go.

However, at times these dynamic *vuls* would turn out to be routine, low-intensity flights. One of the pilots recalled the seat in the cockpit becoming uncomfortable after about an hour of flying. This discomfort was more noticeable if the *soutie* was flown at night. If nothing was happening during a night *soutie* to focus their attention, pilots noted being conscious of feeling alone in their cockpits and conscious of feeling cold. This awareness would be interspersed with observing streaks of light on the ground. These streaks of light were interpreted as bullets being exchanged between ground troops and enemy targets. Pilot's also described

³⁶ When using the term *kill box*, the CF-18 pilot interviewed knowingly used the term incorrectly. A kill box is a geographical grid location where offensive fire is coordinated. Everything in the geographic box is a legitimate target for dropping warheads. Friendly forces are restricted from entering that zone ([Wikipedia Contributors, 2017](#)).

having to urinate in a bag as being unpleasant. Under these conditions, the pilot was glad to return to base when the *sortie* was over for the night.

2 Discussion

The starting point of this analysis is the identification of the most basic taken-for-granted beliefs of fighter pilots as they relate to pilot preparation and execution of *combat sorties*. Each believed (cognitive and mnemonic dimension) that he had become a CF-18 fighter pilot. All pilots interviewed were members of the same wing, domestically, though deployed to different rotations of the air campaign. Each was qualified to engage in combat and found himself deployed for 56 days or more in a multinational air campaign over Iraq. The conclusion I draw from these common beliefs is that they point to an ontology that is real rather than one that is anti-real, whether it be of an interpretive, a critical, or a de-constructivist paradigm ([Piantanida & Garman, 1999](#)).

Adopting a *perspectival realist* stance, I interpret that these pilots did experience the events that they described. They participated in real *sorties* and dropped real bombs on real targets. Their experiences were triangulated by Canadian media sources reporting on the air campaign over Iraq/Syria and personally by my own experience. Media sources were part of a discursive community that accused Canadian pilots of dropping bombs and killing civilians ([Chase, 2015](#)). As a result, they confirm that pilots participated in this real air campaign. Before conducting this research, I, myself, was deployed for six weeks to coalition military bases in Kuwait. As a chaplain, I was present on the Canadian flight line. I saw CF-18 jets positioned on the flight line, loaded with bombs. I witnessed pilots step to their jets and fire them up. I witnessed the arming of bombs by Canadian weapon technicians, just before the

jets took-off. On one occasion, I was aboard a Canadian fuel tanker flying over Iraq as coalition planes took on fuel and then returned to their area of operations.³⁷ Therefore, the pilot experiences are supported by both media reports and my own deployment experience.

Though being a realist and believing that pilots did experience a shared reality, I affirm that each pilot did add his own perspective when interpreting the meaning of the reality encountered, whether domestically or during the air campaign. It is this individual perspective, whether reflective or remaining unreflective, that is at the heart of this inquiry.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I describe the broader context that provides the horizon for pilot combat experiences as well as the *perspectival realist* stance that I bring to this study. In the next chapter, I will begin my analysis of pilot combat experiences. From my perspectival understanding of the pilot corpus, I will explicate the meaning which pilots constructed that provides insight into the phenomenon of stress.

³⁷ Fortunately for this inquiry, as a researcher, I did not face the ethical dilemma of interviewing pilots who were in a relationship of dependence with me as a chaplain. When I was in Kuwait, the combat pilots deployed were from a squadron in Cold Lake, AB. Therefore, I did not have contact, in Kuwait, with any of the pilots I interviewed.

CHAPTER 5: PILOT CORPUS ANALYSIS – AN EMPATHIC, INTERPRETIVE PORTRAYAL

When panning for gold in a streambed, the glitter of fine particles embedded in dull-coloured gravel attracts the treasure-seeker's attention. Similarly, in my attempt to uncover fine particles of meaning in the pilot corpus, I sifted samples of the reflected experiences of pilots that were deposited into the streambed of their life-worlds. The glitter that first caught my attention was the emotional diversity that pilots associated with their combat experiences. The labelling of emotions within the pilot corpus ranged from "boring" to "thrilling," from experiencing "legs shaking" to feeling "like a million bucks." To make sense of these particles of meaning, I categorized them according to the typology of stress that I developed from the literature and will summarize in this chapter.

Having reflected on their involvement in the air campaign over Iraq, pilots recalled various types of experiences associated with the phenomenon of air-to-ground combat. These experiences included events, thoughts, behaviours, decisions, beliefs, feelings, and body sensations. The oral accounts were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and collected together into the pilot corpus. By means of an empathic strategy, I identified a subset of these reflected combat experiences that pilots recalled using the lattices of emotional intensity and emotional valence. With respect to the dimensions of emotional intensity, I identified emotions pilots recalled as salient, for example, "awesome" or "boring." With respect to the dimension of valence, I identified emotions that were pleasant or unpleasant. On the one hand, I assumed that the pleasant emotional responses recalled by pilots were associated with the belief that these events were either emotionally pleasant or instrumentally beneficial to the pilot. On the other hand, I assumed that the unpleasant emotional responses recalled by pilots were associated with the belief that these events were detrimental to the well-being of the pilot, either emotionally or instrumentally.

My observations on the salient, reflected, emotional experiences recalled by pilots led me to the phenomenon of *stress* as the core interpretive key to account for all of the pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences of pilots.

The reader will recall in Chapter 2 (section 1.4.5) that when researchers use a phenomenological strategy to analyze human experience, they adopt a phenomenological procedure. According to Wertz ([2011c](#)), the phenomenological procedure is referred to as a *phenomenological reduction*. This means the researcher applies an *eidetic reduction* and seeks to crystallize the essential elements of a given phenomenon experienced by means of *free imaginative variation*. By performing an *eidetic reduction*, I sought to crystallize the essential qualities of stress by reflecting on stress as it was described in selected literature read within the discursive communities of the human sciences. I then categorized the emotional experiences recalled by pilots with my conceptual understanding of stress.

When I make the claim that stress is the core reflective interpretive phenomenon of salient pilot emotional experiences, I mean the following:

- 1) As research participants, pilots were aware of their combat experiences. They reflected on those experiences, recalled them during the interview, and labelled some of those experiences in terms associated with either pleasant or unpleasant emotions;
- 2) As the researcher, I identified the pleasant or unpleasant emotional experiences of pilots. I then interpreted these affective experiences by categorizing them according to the typology of stress developed from my reading of the literature.

I begin this chapter by developing a conceptual understanding of stress that will act as a sieve allowing me to sift the references to stress I identified in the pilot corpus. Next, I look within the psychological health discourse at the phenomenon of stress and its association with known risk factors applied in the Canadian professional work environment. I follow with a classification of stress experiences observed in the pilot corpus using an empathic stance and the conceptual sieve I develop in this chapter. Finally, I conclude with a few brief observations that summarize my analysis.

1 A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Stress

1.1 Differentiating Stress from Distress

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Selye ([1974](#)) defined stress as “the body’s nonspecific response to any demand made upon it” (p. 27). When exposed to various physical agents such as intense cold, heat, or muscular effort, Selye found that the human body produces identical physiological reactions that help the body regain homeostasis. These physiological adjustments involve the heart, the endocrine glands, the immune system, and the nervous system. Selye observed that the physiological stress produced on the body is proportional to the intensity of the agent. Selye also noted that physical or biological agents are not alone in producing a physiological effect on the body. Stressors that trigger intense emotional, psychological, or behavioural reactions, whether pleasant or unpleasant, produced the same physiological effects.

For Selye, stress was not something negative or to be avoided. The body is always under stress in its normal functioning. In fact, complete freedom from stress is equivalent to death. However, the energy consumed by the body when resisting and adapting to an intense physical or psychological stressor must be replenished. If not, the energy is depleted, and the body becomes exhausted.

Selye used the term *distress* when an individual is under excessive physiological stress due to an illness. Selye proposed a model called the *General Adaptive Syndrome*. When the human body is exposed to an intense stressor originating from the environment, Selye’s model identifies a three-stage reaction: an alarm reaction, a stage of resistance, and a stage of exhaustion.

When used in this dissertation, the term *distress* will refer to a person’s subjective experience of stress which exceeds her psychological *tipping point* ([Gladwell, 2002](#)). A person can tolerate prolonged exposure to lower levels of *chronic stress* or higher levels of *acute stress*. However, when it exceeds a person’s coping capacities, *stress* becomes *distress*. A person

experiencing *distress* is no longer able to function normally. Due to exhaustion, the person's psychological and physical health is threatened ([Leclerc & Bourassa, 2013](#)).

1.2 Differentiating Models of Stress

The assumption in Selye's model is that stress originates from *stressors* in the person's environment that constantly impose demands and place constraints on a person. One weakness of applying Selye's physiological conceptualization of stress to the psychological realm is that an individual may avoid taking any personal responsibility for the source of his stress. The source of stress may be blamed either on *stressors* originating in an individual's environment or on decision-makers having an influence on the presence or absence of these *stressors*.

Another way of conceptualizing the source of stress is to shift the blame from the environment to the individual experiencing the stress ([Leclerc & Bourassa, 2013](#)). Leclerc & Bourassa claim that if the responsibility for stress is reallocated to the individual, determinism is avoided. Responsibility is transferred from environmental factors to the individual's ability to mobilize strategies to tolerate the stress or to transform the situations triggering the stress. However, they also point out a weakness of this second approach. In a work environment, Leclerc & Bourassa note that this shift in blame from decision-makers to the individual is unrealistic when systemic problems exist. Frequent interruptions, long work hours, a hostile climate, and a lack of remuneration or recognition are systemic work-place stressors for which the individual cannot be expected to bear the full responsibility.

Lazarus and Folkman ([1984](#)) approach the source of stress by proposing a third model. These authors locate the source of psychological stress neither in the environment nor in the person but in the interaction of the person with his environment. Known as the transactional model, stress is conceptualized as originating in the subjective evaluation of the difference between the internal resources needed to cope with the threats originating in the environment and the internal resources available to face those threats ([Leclerc & Bourassa, 2013](#)).

For this inquiry, following transaction theory, I have chosen to integrate all three sources to construct my sieve for identifying stress in the pilot corpus: stress associated with environmental stressors, stress associated with personal factors, and stress associated with our subjective evaluation of (beliefs about) environmental stressors and inner resources to cope with these stressors. This decision stems from my evangelical theological perspective and my understanding of the Christian Scriptures. The Apostle Paul described sin entering this world (Ro 5:12). As a result, with respect to environmental factors, we humans live in an imperfect, fallen world. This fallen condition generates unjust events and stressors that place both demands and constraints upon us. With respect to personal factors, we live with our own human limitations, and we constantly face the reality deep within us that we cannot always be who we would like to be or always do what we would like to do (Ro 7:18-24). With respect to our beliefs about environmental stressors and our inner resources to cope, due to our fallen human nature, our tendency is to use self-serving grids. We appraise phenomena from a self-oriented perspective and respond, at times, with inappropriate words, behaviours, and attitudes (Ro 3:9-18). From this theological perspective, stress stems from the complex interactions between the demands and constraints of an imperfect world that we interpret as impeding our plans, threatening our reputation, and causing our suffering (Ro 8:18a).

Our self-serving grids have also been observed by psychological and sociological researchers in their study of human social interactions. For example, Imada and Ellsworth ([2011](#)) present a list of self-serving biases that have been observed in numerous psychological studies. Researchers have observed that individuals tend to select the information that portrays themselves in a positive light, to believe that they contributed more than their partners in collaborative tasks, and to de-evaluate others in the domains in which they themselves excel, thus depreciating others to feel good about themselves. In addition, Charles H. Powers ([2010](#)), professor of sociology at Santa Clara University in California, labels one model of human interaction using self-serving grids as *exchange theory*. According to this theory, the offering of goods and services that others want becomes a fair transaction if exchanged for something of equal value. However, a natural human tendency has been observed by sociologists. A person with perceived power has a tendency to generate compliance from others. The more

a wanting person is dependent on another for his survival, the more power dynamics come into play. As a result, those possessing the power can dictate the terms of the relationship for their own advantage ([Thiessen, 2015](#)).

In summary, for this study, I think it most helpful to integrate all three of the above conceptualizations of the sources of stress. As a result, pilot stress and its effects are understood as arising from the personal psychological resources of pilots, the deployment environment, and the pilots' beliefs about their available resources to respond to events related to the deployment environment.

1.3 Differentiating Intensities of Stress

According to my conceptualization of stress described above, the subjective evaluation of (belief about) an event results in an emotional stress experience. According to a dimensional model of emotions, the intensity of an emotional stress experience may be categorized phenomenologically according to the dimensions of emotional saliency (weak or strong) and valence (unpleasant or pleasant). By means of these two elements, I constructed the lattices of the metaphorical sieve used to categorize emotional stress experiences identified in the pilot corpus.

If an individual believes himself to have deficient inner resources to meet an event and if the event is believed to jeopardize his reputation or well-being, the experience will most likely be interpreted as emotionally strong and unpleasant. In this inquiry, I have labelled this unpleasant stress experience as *undesirable-stress* ([Adler et al., 2003](#)).

If an individual believes himself to possess adequate resources to meet an event and if the event does not jeopardize his reputation or well-being, the experience will most likely be interpreted as mildly unpleasant to neutral. I have labelled this stress experience as an *event*.

If an individual believes himself to have a slight deficiency ranging to a surplus of resources available to meet an event and if the event is interpreted as being beneficial in some way by

contributing to his reputation or well-being, the resulting experience will most likely be evaluated as a pleasant, stimulating challenge. In addition, this challenge may be interpreted as a means to lift oneself out of boredom, thus contributing to an individual's motivation to interact with his environment. Selye ([1974](#)) referred to this form of stress as *eustress*. In this inquiry, I have labelled this stress experience as *motivational-stress*.

In this dissertation, I use the term *stress* as a general description that includes both *undesirable-stress* and *motivational-stress*.

By describing the experience of stress in the above way, I am assuming the nature of stress as proposed by the American psychological researchers Seta, Seta, and McElroy ([2002](#)) in their average/summation model. According to this model, an individual may integrate undesirable-stress by using either a summation strategy or an averaging strategy. Using a summation strategy, adverse consequences from a negative event are added to the adverse consequences of other negative events. An individual then ruminates indiscriminately on the sum of all negative events in life and experiences the resulting higher levels of undesirable-stress. Using an averaging strategy, the addition of a less negative event or a positive event to a highly negative event would offset the initial experience of undesirable-stress by averaging out the two experiences. This happens to a point. Even if using an averaging strategy, stress events can build up or an acute event may be so intense that an individual will cross his *tipping point* and experience distress.

In this study, it appears that pilots used an averaging strategy as they integrated additional undesirable-stress into their lives. I observed from the corpus that pilots portrayed themselves as continuing to function when experiencing acute *undesirable-stress*. My observation can be accounted for by the possibility that the satisfying experiences of *motivational-stress* in one area of life offset the *undesirable-stress* negatively experienced in another area of life. As a result, the overall stress imposed on the pilot was averaged out or reduced by concomitant experiences of *motivational-stress*. This possibility can be verified by future research directed to this subject.

However, an exception to pleasant experiences that reduce overall stress has been noted by the late American Christian psychologist Craig W. Ellison ([1994](#)). Ellison observed that an individual may become more susceptible to long term distress and dysfunction by maladaptive avoidance coping strategies. In other words, an individual may choose to avoid *undesirable-stress* by indulging in addictive, pleasant experiences.

As mentioned above, a continuum of the phenomenological experience of stress exists as an individual responds to his cognitive appraisal of events originating from the environment. On the one hand, one's belief of not possessing sufficient personal resources to meet the threat leads to *undesirable-stress*. On the other hand, one's belief in possessing sufficient resources and then succeeding in meeting the challenge can reduce *undesirable-stress* or contribute to *motivational-stress*. This conceptualization of stress is dynamic rather than static. Does anyone experience *undesirable-stress* in all areas of one's life? Does anyone experience *motivational-stress* in all areas of life? Reality is much more complex. It may be better to envision an individual being exposed to different degrees of stress from numerous threats and challenges originating either from within the individual or from her environment. So, at any one time, an individual may experience *undesirable-stress* due to demands and constraints in one or more areas of life concomitant to having the resources and motivation available to meet challenges in other areas of life.

For example, an individual may experience undesirable-stress in his professional life concomitant to experiencing the motivational-stress of an intimate relationship with another in his personal life. Or an individual may believe herself to have the resources to cope with her present undesirable-stress, but that belief may change if the constraint intensifies and continues for an undetermined period of time.

According to this conceptualization of stress, an individual showing signs of distress would be an individual with an accumulation of high levels of undesirable-stress leading to a dysfunctional outcome in one or more areas of life ([National Defence and the Canadian Armed](#)

[Forces, 2013](#)). This is in contrast to an individual who is experiencing high levels of undesirable-stress in one area of life, but at the same time receives support from significant others to help cope with this unpleasant experience.

1.4 Summary

In the above discussion, I constructed a metaphorical sieve that allowed me to classify the reflected experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots. The grates of this sieve are my conceptualization of stress. The twofold elements that form the lattice bars of my grating are emotional saliency and emotional valence. As I sifted pilot experiences recorded in the pilot corpus through this sieve, different categories of stress experiences emerged. In the following sections, I present the results of this analysis, quotes from pilot transcripts that support these results, and a preliminary discussion of those results.

In my empathic interpretation of the pilot corpus, I have made a few assumptions based on my perspectival realist stance and my reading of psychological literature. First, a dynamic interplay exists between stressors from the environment (the non-self) and the beliefs one holds (the self) about the resources available to respond to the demands and constraints imposed by either the self or the non-self. Second, undesirable-stress in life is counterbalanced by motivational-stress. If there is nothing to attenuate undesirable-stress, it will accumulate. When the accumulation of undesirable-stress approaches an individual's tipping point, exhaustion is triggered. As a result, undesirable-stress becomes distress, disrupting normal human performance.

2 Risk Factors Contributing to the Accumulation of Undesirable-Stress

For conceptual purposes, factors affecting the accumulation of undesirable-stress leading to the experience of distress can be grouped together into two broad categories: *non-self* factors originating in an individual's environment and *intra-self* factors originating within an individual. In relation to section 1.2 of this chapter, *non-self* factors would correspond to stress due to environmental factors while *intra-self* factors correspond to the combination of stress

due to personal psychological resources and stress stemming from beliefs about environmental stressors and one's inner resources to cope.

2.1 Non-self Factors

From their review of the literature on the psychological health discourse applied to the Canadian professional work context, Leclerc and Bourassa ([2013](#)) present seven categories that synthesize the numerous psycho-social risk factors compromising psychological health in the Canadian work environment. These categories provide an initial means to categorize and understand the sources of undesirable-stress originating from stressors in the pilots' external environment. The discussion below describes each category of environmental factors identified by Leclerc and Bourassa as well as my assessment of how pertinent these factors are to pilot air-to-ground combat experiences.

The first series of factors leading to undesirable stress are the constraints imposed on professionals associated with tasks. The quantity and complexity of assigned tasks, ranging from the monotonous to the overburdened, whether imposed from one's environment or self-imposed, have been identified as a risk factor for undesirable-stress ([Leclerc & Bourassa, 2013](#)). In the pilot corpus, I observed that some pilot tasks were associated with undesirable-stress. For example, pilots were overwhelmed by the task of processing vast amounts of information during military flight training and fighter pilot training.

However, having successfully met course standards during this training, fighter pilots grew accustomed to functioning normally at higher levels of undesirable-stress. In paradox, this resilience to higher levels of undesirable-stress led to another constraint during combat. The pilot corpus revealed situations during the combat *sortie* when a surplus of resources, in this case, competency, led to boredom. Routine surveillance *sorties* were described as being boring. Boredom led to the reduction of motivational-stress for some of the pilots.

Leclerc and Bourassa identified another risk factor associated with tasks in the work environment: contradictory demands. These demands leave the individual frustrated or confused with an ambiguity of roles. I identified one example of a contradictory demand in the pilot

corpus. Canadian pilots were asked to support friendly ground troops in a specific Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ). In one specific situation, when it was time to conduct a strike to protect ground troops, the Joint Terminal Air Controller (JTAC) asked a Canadian pilot to leave his ROZ. The JTAC then brought in a pilot from another country to carry out the strike. The Canadian pilot expressed frustration with being replaced. The reason for his replacement was that other coalition countries had less restrictive rules of engagement (ROE) than the Canadians. As a result, the target could be destroyed more quickly if Canadians were not involved in that strike. The pilot corpus reveals the pilot's frustration with this seemingly contradictory demand to support his ground troops and then be asked to leave before conducting the strike.

The six other series of factors presented by Leclerc and Bourassa proved to be of less significance for the experience of pilots. First, in general, pilots had good relationships with their colleagues. The only incident in the corpus to the contrary was one pilot witnessing a conflict between two other pilots about the way of conducting a strike. He attributed this conflict to the undesirable-stress of the deployment. Otherwise, there were many references to pilots supporting each other. For example, they recalled discussing what they would do if one of their colleagues had to eject from his jet during combat.

Second, with respect to factors associated with their physical environment, pilots recalled that being physically separated from family for under two months was acceptable. They reported some undesirable physical stress on the body during long combats *sorties* when there was no action and they were feeling bored. Their seats were uncomfortable, space was cramped, and it was often cold in the cockpit. However, these physical discomforts may have been less relevant as a risk factor for pilots because their actual time in the cockpit represented only a minority of their total working time. In addition, due to the excitement of the moment, this discomfort was forgotten when pilots engaged in combat.

Third, pilots did not mention any problems or express any emotional response with respect to how their work was organized. From an organizational perspective, their daily routines

were similar to their domestic training. Fourth, pilots did not indicate any problems with respect to how they were managed. They expressed appreciation for their chain of command (COC). They were managed in ways similar to the ways the COC managed them domestically.

Fifth, no one mentioned any issues with career factors such as remuneration or promotion. When asked about their future, some pilots expressed their desire to continue to fly in their next posting season. One expressed anticipating a ground position so that he would have a more regular schedule and start a family.

Sixth, pilots are in an elevated socio-economic class in the military context, so socio-economic constraints were not an issue for pilots.

To summarize, applying Leclerc and Bourassa's categories of risk factors compromising health in the Canadian work environment has provided some initial reflection on pilot experiences. It was found that only one of the series of factors was pertinent to dimensions of emotional saliency and valence: constraints associated with tasks.

2.2 Intra-self factors

To arrive at a fuller understanding of stress associated with pilot combat experiences, *intra-self* factors must be added to complement *non-self* or environmental factors. Intra-self factors are themselves composed of at least three phenomena: first, beliefs about the threats imposed on an individual from his environment; second, beliefs about an individual's inner resources available to cope with external threats; and third, other beliefs held by an individual such as beliefs about the metaphysical realm. As a result of these beliefs, an individual constructs meaning from an event which in turn is experienced as neutral, pleasant, or unpleasant.

How did the beliefs of pilots contribute to their subjective evaluation of threats from the *non-self*? To answer this question, I sifted the phenomenological experiences of pilots through the metaphorical sieve of stress grated with the lattices of emotional saliency and valence. Positive motivational-stress experiences would suggest a belief that the event experienced

was somehow to the pilot's advantage while undesirable-stress would suggest a belief the event experienced was to the pilot's disadvantage.

Sections 3.1 to 3.3 provide the observations I made.

3 Classification of Phenomenological Combat Experiences of Pilots

In this section, I present a classification of the pilot combat experiences according to their saliency and valence. I begin by providing examples of events from the pilot corpus that either contributed to or reduced undesirable-stress. Next, I provide examples of events that either contributed to or reduced motivational-stress. Finally, I provide examples of post-deployment events that contributed to undesirable-stress.

3.1 Events Contributing to and Reducing Pilot Undesirable-Stress

Undesirable-stress in this study refers to the unpleasant emotional experiences of pilots due to their interpretation of events as a threat to pilot well-being. The presence of undesirable stress would suggest that pilots believed that these events were in some way to their disadvantage. Though tolerable if experienced occasionally and within the pilot's coping capacities, an accumulation of undesirable-stress undermines the positive effects of motivational-stress. Assuming that pilots used an averaging strategy in their coping of undesirable stress, the events that pilots interpreted as contributing to undesirable-stress were averaged out so that pilots did not reach their *tipping point*. This section describes events pilots recalled that both contributed to and reduced undesirable-stress. Please note that not all pilots would have experienced each of these events.

3.1.1 Pilot Training

According to Selye ([1974](#)), certain levels of stress are required to function. As levels of stress increase, so does performance. Beyond an optimum range, additional undesirable-stress reduces performance. A retired officer of the United States Army and former professor of psychology at West Point, LCol Dave Grossman and his associate Loren W. Christensen describe how soldiers and law enforcement officers experience increased performance at high

levels of stress that are normally detrimental to the average person ([Grossman & Christensen, 2007](#)). Through training, what would naturally be a source of undesirable-stress or even *distress* for an average person becomes motivational-stress for *warriors*. This same phenomenon is observed in fighter pilots.

Undesirable-stress was observed when pilots spoke of their previous training in a high-stress environment. The pilot Canuck recalled his training to become a military pilot as difficult and demanding. He recalled setting aside his personal life and devoting all his time to the goal of becoming a military pilot.

... when I was going through flight training, I didn't really have a life apart from flight training. That was also very difficult for me. And then, being away from family, having to put your personal life aside, to kind of accomplish your professional dreams, essentially.

Although this training period was a very stressful time of his life, he achieved his goal by being single-minded. His exposure to high levels of stress continued as he progressed in his training to become a fighter pilot and then as he acquired higher levels of combat proficiency.

Although both the preparatory training to become a fighter pilot and the domestic training that equipped pilots for combat contributed to undesirable-stress, I observed that this training resulted in reducing undesirable-stress in at least three ways once pilots were involved in the actual air campaign.

First, because of their training, pilots felt ready for combat. Canuck mentioned that the training he received surpassed the abilities required for this air campaign. As a result, he was ready for combat.

But once I got out there flying I found it very, very easy, because everything that I had done in training was harder, was more dynamic, there was more trainingisms that we had put into the scenarios to really make sure we were ready, so by the time we got there, it was, most of us found it was pretty *bo-bo*. Really, I mean, it was very, kind of straight forward, which is good. I mean, you don't want to go to war and be surprised.

Second, due to their training, pilots did not recall experiencing any stress due to unpredictability. According to Ellison ([1994](#)), undesirable-stress is magnified the more frequent, intense and unpredictable it is. Canuck believed that the preparatory workups before going to war corresponded to what the pilot experienced in air-to-ground combat. As a result, Canuck was prepared for his *sorties*. McSnail also made a similar comment with respect to his domestic training. He found that because combat *sorties* were longer than training *sorties*, he had more time to relax and reflect while in the theatre of combat. Auto noted that pilots train to a higher standard domestically compared with what they faced in their combat missions over Iraq. Domestically, pilots only had the morning to plan for their mission. While deployed, pilots on a SCAR *sortie* could plan a day before. For deliberate strikes, pilots had two days to plan. In most cases, pilots could anticipate the targets they were assigned thus alleviating one of the contributors to undesirable-stress: unpredictability ([Adler et al., 2003](#); [Ellison, 1994](#)). This allowed pilots to feel more in control in the unfolding of the scenario.

Third, Auto described how training kicks in during combat, allowing pilots to temporarily put their emotions on hold. During combat, pilots entered a default training mental state concentrating on following procedures while programming and deploying weapons. While in this default mental state, pilots had complete control of their emotions.

So, when I was doing an actual strike, I remember feeling very calm, just taking it step by step, reading my checklist. I had my checklist out every single drop, follow it line by line, and record everything. I remember talking to myself, talking into the radio so that it was captured on the tapes, just step by step by step, very, like very much in training, and I think that goes back to what I was saying about our training is very, very good, because you just, your mind kinda just clicks back into this training, let's do this right.

It was only when the strike was completed that the physiological sensations associated with his emotions broke through his controlled mental state. Pilots then experienced the reality and accompanying emotions of what they had just done.

It was interesting, that when it came to the actual deployment of the weapon, training took over, weapons were employed, as we train day in and day out. After the fact is when my body started shaking.

The above observations support the interpretation that fighter pilots can be compared to elite soldiers and law enforcement members who are trained to function optimally at higher stress levels than the general population ([Grossman & Christensen, 2007](#)). Thus, I conclude that the undesirable-stress of training experienced earlier in their careers reduced undesirable-stress and contributed to pilot well-being during combat.

3.1.2 Secondary Duties

Auto stated that prior to deployment, whether training for upgrades or being tasked with secondary officer duties, pilots are constantly exposed to high levels of stress. Even domestically fighter pilots on squadron can never relax. Never satisfied with their present level of competence, pilots are always motivated to improve their skills.

Auto went on to say that while deployed, pilots had minimal officer duties, and they were not exposed to other sources of undesirable-stress, such as training and preparing for upgrades. Auto recalled that during deployment the pilot's main responsibility was to concentrate on preparing and flying their *sorties*. Being freed from secondary duties while on deployment reduced undesirable-stress.

3.1.3 Lack of Combat Experience

The initial lack of combat experience contributed to pilot undesirable-stress on the mission. During the first few combat *sorties* of the air campaign, one pilot recalled experiencing anxiety. He stated, "As tough as we all like to say that we are, it is nerve-wracking." By using this phrase, he contrasted the professed belief that pilots are resilient to undesirable-stress with the emotional reality of combat inexperience. Another pilot recalled flying his first *sortie* as very stressful. While walking to his jet, he momentarily questioned his role and competence as a combatant. However, he overcame these hesitations. He then recalled how this experience helped reduce the undesirable-stress for his future combat *sorties*. As the mission progressed and pilots gained more experience, this undesirable-stress subsided and flying a *sortie*, in the words of this same pilot, "became the norm."

But even with experience, pilots experienced undesirable-stress for short periods of time at specific occasions. Another pilot recalled two routine occasions during a *sortie* when he experienced higher than normal levels of undesirable-stress. On every *sortie*, he would experience undesirable-stress when he was suited-up and walking towards his jet. However, once the jet had taken off, his level of stress returned to normal. He would experience undesirable-stress again when he was in the process of deploying weapons. Like other pilots, he attributed the undesirable-stress of weapon deployment to the desire of not wanting to make an error. Once the weapon was released and had struck the intended target, the pilot's stress level returned to normal.

On a specific *sortie*, this pilot recalled seeing an unidentified streak of light in the sky coming from the ground. He prepared to defend his plane, thinking that it might be a missile launched at him. After a few moments, he realized it was a “power flare” shot from the ground. This gave him an excellent view of what was happening below using his night vision goggles. This experience, though threatening, allowed him to gain experience. The next time he experienced this same event, he already knew what to expect and was able to explain the streak of light to his two-ship flight lead.

3.1.4 Making Errors

For some of the pilots interviewed, a major source of undesirable-stress was the fear of making an error. One pilot stated, “So for me, my apprehension was just not screwing up.” He recalled the fear of losing his reputation over one of the following errors: first, by not conducting air-to-air refuelling successfully and being the guy who had to divert to another location to refuel; second, by not staying with his flight lead and getting lost; and third, by making a tactical error while entering the coordinates of the target. This pilot had to battle his excitement of a strike with clear thinking so as to not make an error in the programming of the bomb. Should such an error occur, he states, “You have a 500-pound weapon not going where you want it to, which is bad, which is very, very bad.”

Similar to the above pilot's third fear, another pilot's greatest source of undesirable-stress was making an error that resulted in killing a non-combatant or a member of the friendly forces. The possibility of making this error was more stressful to him than getting shot down.

The thing I was most afraid of was screwing up, was making an error, killing the wrong person. *That* was what I was most afraid of the whole time I was over there. It wasn't getting shot down, it wasn't getting shot at, which happened, it wasn't any of those other factors, it was doing my job incorrectly, making a mistake that would result in either people getting killed that weren't supposed to die, me going to jail, who knows? Right? Loss of face for the whole Canadian Forces. I mean *huge* ramifications. (emphasis original)

As pilots conducted more and more *sorties*, experience gained led to relief from the undesirable-stress due to the fear of making errors. The first pilot mentioned above recalled that the stress was relieved as he became more comfortable refuelling his plane in the air.

Yah, just like for myself not having done a lot of air-to-air refuelling, and after doing it a whole bunch of times you start to get really comfortable with it, and also just really comfortable with how the mission goes. That relieves a lot of the stress because you've seen it all before.

3.1.5 Chronic Physical Discomforts

Chronic physical discomforts refer to the routine physical irritations that pilots experience during their long *sorties* cooped up in their cockpit. By this wear and tear on pilots' bodies during the deployment, these discomforts contribute to the undesirable-stress of pilots.

First, more than one pilot referred to the long five to six hours *sorties* as being problematic. One pilot provided a good summary of the sources of chronic physical discomforts that can accumulate during the deployment. His list included flying long missions that are hard on the body, not eating properly by snacking on junk food, not sleeping enough, consuming energy drinks to stay awake, and not really hydrating (to avoid having to urinate in the cockpit). The following are quotes from other pilots who confirmed some of the items on this list.

Physical discomfort:

You were guaranteed a long mission, five hours. Five hours sitting by yourself in a CF-18, it's not comfortable. It's not, it's all right, but it's not easy on the body . . . Once you sit in a cockpit, the body just figures out, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna rest my back for the next 5 hours.

Not having a good meal:

You don't eat, you can bring some granola bars, but it's not for a meal.

Having to urinate in a bag:

. . . sitting for six hours, seven hours in a cranked, cramped cockpit, not being able really to eat very much, and staying hydrated is a struggle, and having to pee in a bag, and your back hurts and your ass hurts.

To overcome these physical irritations, several of the pilots interviewed spoke about physical exercise and working out as contributing to their general well-being during their deployment.

Auto recalled the following.

I'm in better shape now than when I was before, and it is probably because we had nothing else to do on the camp and we were confined to the camp, and no alcohol, just eat, do the job, and workout, and Marines³⁸ love their ah, love their gyms and there's two awesome gyms, and I had nothing else to do but work, eat, sleep and fly and workout.

Smokey developed a routine that sustained him during his deployment. After describing his routine, he concludes that it was a great deployment.

I would go for a run. And I would run an hour or two hours around the compound or work out. Hit the gym. And then listen to podcast music. And then I would go to bed . . . And I did that every day, for, every day. I ran, like a marathon a week. In mileage, yah. So, I worked out every single day . . . and I felt great. That was a great deployment.

Physical exercise helped reduce undesirable-stress as a result of physical discomforts during the mission.

³⁸ The Canadian contribution to the air campaign was stationed on an American base in Kuwait.

3.1.6 Inter-pilot Relationships

Relationships between pilots either contributed to or reduced undesirable-stress. Within the pilot corpus, one pilot referred to witnessing conflicts during his deployment. Conflict is a normal part of human relations. However, unresolved conflict between individuals may be a potential source of undesirable-stress as it may produce feelings of anger, bitterness, and damaged self-esteem ([Ellison, 1994](#)). Pilots gave no indication of these conflicts being resolved or if they remained unresolved.

One pilot recalled an incident when he saw two pilots argue over different techniques of engaging in an attack. After mentioning that no one way exists to conduct an attack, he stated the following:

I've seen arguments, two guys arguing over just, let's say how to do an attack. There's no perfect way, or there's no one set way to do it, let's say. And so, they were arguing about different techniques and how to do it. I don't know if it was due to stress or just personality conflict, but I've seen arguments over something very minor kind of boil over into much worse.

Conflict between pilots was not the only source of undesirable-stress. Association with another pilot also led to undesirable-stress for one CF-18 pilot. On his first combat *sortie*, Canuck recalled the media coverage of the Jordanian pilot who ejected from his plane. He was then captured and killed by “being burned alive in a cage.” By associating himself with this unfortunate comrade within his own profession, Canuck experienced undesirable-stress while recalling this event.

Whether it be inter-personal conflict or associating with the misfortunes of others in similar circumstances, words of encouragement and mutual support have the potential of reducing undesirable-stress. Canuck recalled the support he received from his flight lead just before he went out on his first *sortie* over Iraq. His lead assured Canuck that he would return from the *sortie* safe. These words of encouragement were powerful and had a soothing effect on Canuck.

On my first flight out my lead took me aside before and said, ‘Hey, no matter what happens today, you’re coming home safe. I’m getting you home safe.’ ‘You’re gonna do that for me, and I’m gonna do that for you.’ And that was very powerful. I mean, obviously, you know that, right? But it, to have someone say it to you before you go on your first combat mission is, is pretty reassuring.

Though the possibility of having to eject and face either the harsh climate of the desert or being captured by the enemy was a possible source of undesirable-stress, Christo mentioned that talking together in a joking manner with fellow pilots was a stress reliever. Through humour, pilots provided social support and reassured one another of their commitment to protect each other if circumstances led to one of them having to eject from the jet. When asked about what helped him overcome his fear of having to eject, Christo responded in the following way.

Ok, well, I think one way I kind of overcame it, and maybe this was like amongst everyone is we always kind of talked about it a little bit, like almost jokingly, like, ‘What would you do? What would you do if you were shot down?’ And some guys joked about, ‘Oh, I’m gonna, I’m gonna steal a car, and I’m gonna drive back to Kuwait,’ and like, so everyone was kind of joking about it and talking about what they would do. And we also talked a lot about if one guy were to eject what would the other jet in the formation do to try and keep him safe. And I can’t talk about that specifically about what we do, but. Just, I think, just that level of talking helped to kind of ease the stress a bit. Like the joking about what you’d do on the ground, but then also like, knowing that another guy is talking about what he would do if you ejected, and how he would try and keep you safe. So, that was, I think, a big stress relief.

The above quotes are congruent with the observations of Dyer ([1985](#)). Dyer notes that men, in war, will risk their lives for others if they are confident that others will risk their lives for them. The pilots assessed the verbalization of this commitment to one another as reducing undesirable-stress.

Pilots were not only concerned about each other’s lives. They were also concerned about each other’s well-being. Christo recalled the invitation made by pilots to fellow pilots to talk about anything that was troubling them. Though no one expressed the need to talk, mutual support was being offered to pilots by their comrades.

The pilot corpus revealed that social relationships between pilots have the potential of either becoming a source of undesirable-stress if ruptured or a source of encouragement that reduces undesirable-stress if reinforced.

3.1.7 Deprived the Opportunity to Drop Bombs

One pilot openly declared his greatest sources of undesirable-stress during the air campaign. Associated with pilot reputation, he stated, “My biggest fear was, I hope I get, or I hope I’m not the guy who never gets to drop something the whole time I’m here.” He did not want to be the pilot who was denied the opportunity to deploy a weapon on a target. When he finally did drop a weapon, he experienced the positive sensation of a release of undesirable-stress.

Yah, basically, missing out on getting to drop a weapon. And I know it had happened in one case of one guy only ever dropping one bomb on his tour. Just through pure luck. And so that was, that was going through my head, like, what if he hadn’t had that one bomb? Then he wouldn’t have had the chance to drop anything. And so, that was my fear that I wouldn’t actually get to do my job, and drop a weapon. And so, when I did get to drop my first bomb, then *that was a humungous stress relief.* (emphasis added)

3.1.8 Taking of Life

The reality of taking life influenced some of the pilots during the early stages of the deployment. This contributed to their undesirable-stress. One pilot recalled his realization that the deployment of weapons was no longer associated with training; his weapons destroyed the assigned target. He also recalled having to set aside that realization after his first bomb hit the target and continue to concentrate on the *sortie* and the possibility of releasing more weapons. Although calm while following the step by step procedures of programming the weapon before the strike, the pilot described his surprise to the reaction of his body once the strike was completed. However, as the mission progressed, strikes became more routine. Taking of life no longer had the same effect on the pilot. He recalled, “It just became a normal everyday thing for, for me to release weapons. Um, but compare that to the beginning when I started releasing the weapons, I mean *my legs were shaking*” (emphasis original).

The undesirable-stress associated with the taking of life was reduced by its shared responsibility. A few of the pilots explicitly mentioned having no guilt for taking the life of the enemy. Once given the authorization to strike a target, pilots did not question if the target was legitimate or not. They had full confidence in those who were responsible for authorizing the targets. The responsibility for taking life was not interpreted by the pilots as falling uniquely upon their shoulders. Rather, the responsibility was shared with the JTACs and those making authorization decisions at the CAOC in Qatar.

This diffusion of responsibility in the Canadian context is in contrast to the American context where ground soldiers were diagnosed as experiencing PTSD as a result of taking life in Iraq. Rita Nakashima Brock, the Senior Editor in Religion with New Press in New York, and Gabriella Lettini, a professor of theological ethics, in Berkeley, California ([2012](#)) note that American ground soldiers tend to shoulder the whole responsibility for taking life. The responsibility of taking life shifts from the more global responsibility for war (which includes the individual, his buddies, the COC, the government, media, citizens, the enemy, etc.) to the individual concerned. This, in turn, leads to additional undesirable-stress placed upon the ground soldier. In contrast, within the Canadian air-to-ground combat context, the diffusion of responsibility for taking life may have contributed to reducing deployment and post-deployment undesirable-stress.

3.2 Events Contributing to and Reducing Pilot Motivational-Stress

Not only did pilots interpret events as either contributing to or reducing undesirable-stress, pilots also experienced motivational-stress. Earlier in this chapter, I defined motivational-stress as a pleasant activation state due to a pilot's belief that the event he is experiencing is beneficial in some way and that he possesses the inner resources to respond to the challenge. The pilot's interpretation of the following events either contributed to or reduced their motivational-stress.

3.2.1 Intrinsic Motivation

First, the corpus portrays pilots as autonomous in their decision to become fighter pilots and to be deployed to a theatre of combat. As seen in Chapter 4, each pilot had an interest in becoming a fighter pilot at an early age. That interest grew. They then made decisions that led to the realization of their dream. Pilots were intrinsically motivated to be in their profession, to be part of the air campaign, and to engage in combat.

An example of this intrinsic motivation is observed in an event mentioned by Dodge. This pilot recalled the need to be well rested for his *sorties*, even if he was being tasked at strange hours. He was always at a peak energy state by adjusting his personal schedule to coincide with his *sorties*. He contrasted his combat experience with his domestic experience.

Like, we're, we're pretty terrible when it comes to ah, getting the right, right amount of rest, or, eating at proper times, but over there I was really careful about that. I need to eat here so that I'll be at my peak energy state there.

This intrinsic motivation of fighter pilots is contrasted with research done on American ground troops where men and women join the military because of debt or other extrinsic motivational factors ([Brock & Lettini, 2012](#)). Brock and Lettini claim that many American ground soldiers do not want to be in combat. Finding themselves in a place they did not want to be and witnessing events they did not want to see contributed to experiences associated with moral injury.

3.2.2 Length of Deployment

The length of the deployment contributed to the motivational-stress of pilots. CF-18 fighter pilots were deployed to Kuwait for 56 days. One pilot mentioned how he felt about having to leave the air campaign after such a short period of time. He describes himself as very motivated at the two-month point and sorry that he had to leave.

I had done some pretty big strikes, just before I finished. Which was awesome. But then you stop, and especially because we were only there for about two months, that's really when you're getting into the swing of things. You're extremely comfortable in the operating environment, in the jet. You know how to

fly the jet now to get the best sniper look. You know where to find the guys, you're finding them. You're engaging more because you have that experience built up and then they say, 'No, you got to go home.' And I found that it passed really quickly, too quickly. Those two months passed really too quickly.

Two other pilots spoke about the adverse consequences if the length of deployments were to be extended beyond this two-month period. The first adverse consequence would be an increase of undesirable-stress on the family which in turn would affect the pilot.

. . . if we start to extend these tours, regardless of it probably being more cost effective or whatever the reasons may be, but I think it really needs to be looked at in terms of some significant studies on the effects to the family members, because my view point is that if you lose the family, you're gonna lose the member, and we can't afford to lose members.

In addition to the effects on the family, extended missions may also have a direct effect on the pilots by reducing motivational-stress and contributing to pilot complacency.

And then, there's, a time where complacency sets in, right? So, it becomes Ground Hog Day. So, after one month, you kind of get it. And after month two, that's when you start becoming complacent, and that's dangerous. So, doing a shorter two-month deployment actually is not bad for that reason. Doing a longer deployment, you really have to be careful of the complacency.

3.2.3 First-Time Experiences

First-time combat experiences, though at times a source of undesirable-stress (see section 3.1.3 of this chapter), were also a source of motivational-stress for pilots. These events contributed to motivational-stress by allowing pilots to accomplish what they had been trained to do. Canuck described his experience of flying into Iraq from Kuwait for his first combat *sortie* in this manner.

Ah, but I've never felt that amount of adrenaline as when I first crossed over the line into Iraq, you know, when you look down, and your flight lead says, ok dude, here we go, we're in Iraq now, this is war time.

At the same time, Canuck described his fear, during his first few *sorties*, of being shot down and captured as he recalled the Jordanian pilot who ejected and was killed by the enemy. In the field of psychology, this experiencing of painful and pleasurable feelings at the same time

has been labelled as the phenomenon of dialectic, complex emotions ([Grossmann et al., 2015](#)). In the specific context of combat, it is also referred to as *combat rush* ([Grigsby, 1991](#)). Canuck's mention of his craving for that "adrenaline rush" now that he is back home is similar to Vietnam War veterans experiencing their own combat rush.

Looking down under your wings seeing real bombs hanging there, that's pretty cool. And ah, yah. I just remember that adrenaline rush; it was just almost overwhelming. You crave that. And I even have that now here back home where you crave that rush. But it's hard to find (laughs). Yah.

3.2.4 Deployment of Weapons

Another strong source of motivational-stress for pilots was the deployment of weapons. Of the six pilots interviewed, some pilots deployed weapons more often than others. When asked an open-ended question about their salient feelings during air-to-ground combat, without exception each pilot associated the most pleasant emotional experience with the deployment of weapons. For example, McSnail described *sorties* when bombs were dropped as "thrilling." Other pilots consistently used pleasant emotional labels when describing the deployment of weapons: "exhilarating" (Auto), "awesome" (Canuck), "felt like a million bucks" (Christo), "exciting missions" (Dodge), and "awesome because of the adrenaline" (Smokey). During these occasions, pilot stress levels were described as more intense and with a positive valence (pleasant).

In contrast to the excitement of weapon deployment, Canuck described the ebb and flow of his emotional experiences during his two-month deployment. He experienced periods of intense weapon deployment activity followed by a lull around Christmas when no bombs were dropped. Whether it was during this quieter period or on specific *sorties* when cloud cover prevented him from having visual contact with the ground, these circumstances were described as "boring." Canuck framed non-motivating experiences in economic terms. "Ah, why are we doing this? It's a waste of time and money."

Pilots consistently refer to more bodily discomfort during these quiet portions of their *sorties* than when dropping bombs. McSnail recalled becoming cold at night on the quieter *sorties*.

The seat became uncomfortable after an hour and he felt alone. So, he was glad when these *sorties* were over.

This lack of weapon deployment siphoned off pilots' motivational-stress.

You get frustrated. You're going and flying these long missions thinking, 'Why are we doing this? It's a waste of time and money.' And my, my butt hurts after six hours doing nothing in the jet and, or, you go up in bad weather and there's clouds everywhere and you can't see anything for six hours, and they just have you turning around in circles. It's just, it's just kind of frustrating.

The boredom of these quieter *sorties* changed again to delight and excitement when the situational context changed in January, and Canuck was once again dropping bombs.

But then things picked up again into January and, dropped lots of bombs and, you're feeling gung-ho, and during the flights you're super excited, you're waiting for that call on the radio.

3.2.5 Intensity of the Conflict

The intensity of the conflict reduced both undesirable-stress and motivational-stress. First, with respect to reducing undesirable-stress, Christo mentioned that this air-to-ground conflict was of low intensity when compared with combat experiences of other fighter pilots in the past.

Like if it had been a much more high-intensive combat, like say, like what the American fighter pilots saw over Vietnam, or even the First Gulf War, then that might have changed me. Where they were actually seeing, like friendly guys getting shot down, losing friends, fighting enemy aircraft, dropping a lot more weaponry, then maybe that would have changed me. But I think, because I never really, like felt *hugely* in danger, I know there was always the risk of having to eject, and if we ejected there was a good chance of us getting, being goners from that. Basically, being tortured, then having our head cut off or something on live TV. But there was always that little bit of fear. But I don't think that's nearly as bad as like knowing you might have to go face like enemy aircraft or significant surface-to-air threats, which is probably much more deadly. (emphasis original)

In the theatre of Op IMPACT, Canadian pilots did not face the threat of enemy fighters in the air, and the enemy was not known to possess the surface-to-air missiles needed to be a threat to pilots. These realities reduced undesirable-stress.

However, the low intensity of this conflict also reduced motivational-stress. This was evident in the pilot corpus by pilots describing some of their SCAR *sorties* as boring. Rather than contributing to pilot motivational-stress, these events were challenging for pilots because of the lack of stress. One pilot described *sorties* when flying over dense cloud cover in the following way.

Now, there is, there is some missions where, where we were, bored. I was just waiting for the mission to finish. Those missions where ah, you're, we're flying a certain, a certain level and there's clouds below, below us. Not only there's nothing to do. I've got nothing to look at. And ah, we have to stay here. These were, these were missions where, bored was the main feeling.

Another pilot referred to low-intensity reconnaissance *sorties* this way.

We'd spend 3 hours or whatever inside of the ROZ, overhead of the battle scene, talking to a JTAC at all times. But a lot of times they didn't have anything for us to do. So, honestly, it was boredom, or just trying, trying to help out, trying to find something going on.

Though many of the pilots found these reconnaissance *sorties* boring, Dodge had a different perspective. Dodge distinguished himself from the other pilots by saying that did not find the surveillance missions boring. He kept himself busy and motivated by looking for the enemy and trying to learn as much as he could about the habits of the local population.

People said that. Like, 'This mission was boring. Nothing happened. We turned in circles for three hours.' Like, that's not the way I saw it. Because, like I said, I was trying to look for, for the enemy. And not, not always the enemy. Sometimes it was just looking around. Like, like, the example I just said. Watching people. Kids run in a, in a town. Ok, well, that's how they behave. That's how the, the local population behave. Therefore, if I see that on the next mission, it's not a suspect behaviour. It's normal behaviour. So, even in those missions, I would look, look around. Scan, scan the ground. I don't know, people find it boring. I don't. I found it motivating, try to get better. So, so I stayed motivated

for most of those missions. Three hours, even if nothing was happening, I was making myself busy.

Dodge's example supports the conceptualization of stress used in this study. The origin of psychological stress, whether it be motivational or undesirable, is not located uniquely in the environment nor in the person. Rather, the origin of psychological stress is associated with the beliefs of an individual about the constraints from the environment, his inner resource to confront those constraints, and the advantages or disadvantages of confronting those constraints. Dodge found ways to take an unpleasant situation and transform it into a challenge. He believed that a boring situation could be transformed to his advantage.

3.2.6 Appreciation

I observed motivational-stress when pilots spoke of the appreciation they received for their contribution to the air campaign. Appreciation is a fundamental human need. Employees respond positively to appreciation expressed through recognition of their good work because it confirms their work is valued. When employees are valued, their satisfaction and productivity rises, and they are motivated to maintain or improve their good work. ([Rhéaume, 2008](#)).

Receiving recognition for one's good work contributes to psychological well-being. Rhéaume notes that recognition for professional work completed can be expressed for its *utility, quality, and relevance*. Recognition for the *utility* of professional work is a vertically-orientated recognition by the institution that pays for the work and affirms that the work achieved aligned with institutional goals. Recognition for the *quality* of professional work is a horizontally-orientated recognition by fellow colleagues who can appreciate the excellence of the work accomplished. Recognition for the *relevance* of professional work is another horizontally-orientated appreciation expressed by those having personally benefited from the work realized. All of these forms of recognition confirm that the job was well done. From these three forms of recognition, the professional constructs a sense of accomplishment that brings satisfaction thus generating an experience of well-being.

References to recognition for the *utility*, *quality*, and *relevance* of the pilots' work were all found in the pilot corpus. Christo believed that the government in power at the time supported the mission. As an example of vertical appreciation for the *utility* of his work, he recalled members of the government coming to his base in Kuwait for a visit. He interpreted the visit as the government showing public support for the pilot contribution and the alignment of pilot work with government institutional goals.

I felt supportive of the mission. I even met some of them when they were overseas, because they came to visit, some members of government. And they seemed very supportive.

Christo also provided an example of recognition for the *quality* of his professional work by fellow colleagues and his superiors. After making his first strike and destroying the target by releasing a weapon, Christo recalled the positive comments pilots receive during the debriefing following the *sortie*.

Yah and you get, generally I, whoever is there will watch it and, as long as everything goes well, you'll usually get, like a 'well done' from everyone else, and those who are superior to you, especially if it's your first bomb.

Canuck provided a concrete example of horizontal appreciation when the *relevance* of his work was recognized by coalition ground soldiers in the context of military combat. According to Canuck, on one *sortie*, pilots were the only ones who could help friendly forces on the ground who were soon to come under attack by enemy forces driving vehicles with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). Canuck made a strike that saved the lives of a number of coalition ground troops. The simple words of appreciation he received from the JTAC brought him great satisfaction and became the highlight of his deployment.

I did one strike in support of . . . in Iraq, who were about to get attacked by a convoy of vehicle-born IEDs. And you're talking to those guys and they're calling in the air strikes. And there's, you can hear it in their voice, like they need your help, otherwise . . . And we took, we dropped all the bombs that we had, me and my lead, we dropped 6 bombs, we took out 5 of these vehicles, huge explosions. And you essentially saved their bacon for that day, right? And when they come back on the radio, and, and they say to you, like 'Thanks, guys.' Like that, 'Thank you. Tonight was gonna suck if, if you hadn't done that work'. And, it

doesn't get any better than that. That's what you trained, that's what I trained for like five, six years. To do that. You're finally doing your job, and you feel like you're doing something meaningful, and for a purpose, for a, a higher cause.

In contrast to the motivation pilots experienced when receiving appreciation from those who were benefiting from their combat, pilots at times had this motivational-stress reduced due to not feeling useful. One pilot recalled not feeling useful at times during the air campaign. This happened during the *vuls* when he could not see the ground because of cloud cover. Note that he repeats the phrase “we’re not useful” twice and then states “[we’re] here for nothing.”

Now, there is, there is some missions where, where we were, bored. I was just waiting for the mission to finish. Those missions where, you’re, we’re flying a certain, a certain level and there’s clouds below, below us. Not only there’s nothing to do, I’ve got nothing to look at. And we got to stay here. These were, these were missions where, bored was the main feeling. There was nothing else. We just wanted to go back home, because, we’re not useful. We’re not useful. We’re here for nothing.

3.2.7 Media Reports of Collateral Damage

Finally, the Canadian media presented their interpretation of pilot combat outcomes to the Canadian population. In response, pilots’ significant others constructed their own meaning of the mission from these media reports, their only source of information on the air campaign. These interpretations were then reflected back to pilots during the deployment in personal conversations between significant others and pilots. Pilots had to respond to questions about civilian deaths without being able to go into details for operational security reasons. I interpret these conversations with family members during the deployment as having the effect of reducing the pilots’ motivational-stress. Pilots had their integrity and competency questioned.

I talked to my, talked to my dad about it a lot, and he was mostly just supportive. And then, he would talk like, he would talk about stuff he’d read in the news and then try and ask me stuff. And most of the time, ‘Sorry, I can’t talk about it.’ (laughs) This is like while it was happening, ah, ‘I can’t talk about that really. I can just tell you generally what’s going on,’ like very, very general.

Another pilot recalled the following:

I remember, there was [sic] some media reports coming out that we had killed innocent people, that there was [sic] civilian casualties, collateral damage, which was totally wrong. I remember talking to my mom on the phone saying, ‘Is this true? Did this happen? I saw a report on Fifth Estate that you guys dropped a, some bombs on a bunch of villagers in a factory,’ or something. It’s, no, we, we didn’t. That’s just total bullshit. It didn’t happen.

3.3 Examples of Post-Deployment Undesirable-Stress

This final section provides examples from the corpus of situations that pilots believed detracted from their post-deployment well-being. These examples are salient enough to be remembered by pilots and believed important enough to be expressed during the interview.

First, the lack of pilot-oriented administrative support contributed in some degree to undesirable-stress. In response to my question on who was concerned about pilot well-being, one pilot provided an insightful response. For this pilot and to my surprise, well-being was not associated with psychological or emotional support. Pilots felt no need to talk to mental health support personnel. One pilot described the relationship between pilots and medical professionals, in general, by stating that a certain flight surgeon, “didn’t realize the hostile inherent relationship between a doctor, a physician, and a pilot.” This pilot was referring to an incident in a previous air campaign.

Rather than medical or mental health support, pilots interviewed are more interested in pilot-oriented administrative support. To use a metaphor popularized by the Christian counsellor, author and speaker, Gary Chapman, the love language that speaks to these pilots are acts of service ([Chapman, 1992](#)).

It was not that those involved in administrative support were intentionally dis-interested in pilot well-being. The administrative support staff on deployment, according to the pilot, were doing their job by trying to keep the expenses for the mission down. However, by the way financial decisions were being made, it was apparent that financial considerations took precedence over pilot well-being, that of their families, and the needs of the Fighter Detachment.

For example, the pilot mentioned the lack of flexibility in spending a few more dollars for an airline ticket to either accommodate a pilot rotation plan for deployment or to accommodate a previous commitment made by a pilot to his family. By saving a few dollars on a ticket, the pilot or his family had to suffer in some way. Life for pilots and for the fighter detachment in Kuwait would have been easier if administrative support staff were more flexible in accommodating fighter pilots.

Speak about pilot rotation plan, well they'll get a cheaper ticket with this airline to get them in on the different date, but that affects [the] entire rotation plan of, of pilots and they had plans with this family back home so can't ask them to do it. So, when I always think about how much money is being spent on any given operation the ticket costs an extra 500\$. I mean, well that's, that's dust in the wind in grand comparison. So, but I mean that's not to say that they're not looking out for their people, I mean, they're, they're doing their job, they're trying to be as, in this case as economical as they can be.

Another pilot also mentioned the lack of administrative support as a factor that contributed to undesirable-stress. However, in contrast to the previous pilot, and to my surprise, his answer was in reference to the pilot's domestic environment. For this pilot, concern for pilot well-being was associated with good administrative support for pilots back home. He believed that military support staff should free him up from much of the military administrative paperwork that needs to be done.

I feel like, in the military you should be provided that [administrative support] by the support personnel. We have support trades for a reason. And I think that a lot of times they forget that, that they're support trades. They're there to support the operators. So, I struggle when I get bogged down in these day-to-day military bullshit stuff, paperwork, whatever, that I feel I shouldn't have to deal with or worry about.

As the researcher, the intent of my questions with respect to pilot support was to elicit pilot beliefs about emotional or psychological support. Instead, pilots spoke about administrative support. This is an example of how the researcher and participant may construct two different meanings from the same term: in this case, the term *support*.

Second, one pilot recalled his experience on the return trip home from his deployment. He felt he was in a compromising situation with his helmet in hand as he was waiting for his civilian flight at the airport in Kuwait. Added to this, he found himself home, so quickly, without any opportunity to experience a time of decompression to demilitarize.

But then you stop, and within a few days you're on a civilian flight home. I found that really weird, especially flying out of Kuwait. It was uncomfortable, you're one of the only white people in the airport, and you're carrying around your helmet bag, which you've turned around so they can't see the patches. You can't check your helmet. It's worth too much money, and if it gets stolen or damaged or whatever. So, you're in an airport, in a 'friendly' quote, unquote country, but you're surrounded by people who maybe don't have the same world views as you, or support what the government is exactly doing there, and it's, pretty uncomfortable. And then within a day or two you're at home with your wife and with your relatives, and you're eating a hotdog at Costco. And you're back to normal life. You know, I found that a really, kind of weird, stark transition.

Third, one pilot experienced the intrusion of some battle images in his daily life back home though he was not concerned by them. He accepted these intrusions as part of his life. He felt that he did not have the need to talk to anyone about these flashbacks. He was able to cope with these flashbacks by responding to them in a calm fashion.

I don't know. I think I mentioned to you before, but I mean, there's, there's just certain strikes for no rhyme or reason, I can be driving in the car . . . and I'll, I'll think of a, think of a strike, and I don't do anything about it, I don't . . . I don't think I need to go see anybody to, to talk about it. But I accept the fact that some images will never leave me, no matter how old I am or what I'm doing or where I go, so I don't know if there is any . . . coping that is required? I don't think I'm stressed about it, but I accept the fact it's gonna be a part of my life, no matter what I'm doing that some imagines will not just go away.

The fourth and final example, recalled by all six pilots, is an event that I interpret as detracting from pilot post-deployment well-being. As described in section 3.2.6 of this chapter, appreciation of the pilot's work by different stakeholders contributed to pilot well-being during the deployment. Unfortunately, in the post-deployment phase, a lack of appreciation or a withdrawing of recognition may have had the opposite effect. A withdrawal of recognition may

have neutralized to some degree what was previously interpreted as being a positive experience. For all pilots interviewed, the experience of participating in the deployment continued to be a positive experience up to the end of the Canadian contribution to the mission. However, the termination of fighter detachment in the mission to Iraq/Syria was not. Pilots interviewed expressed disappointment with a lack of public recognition for the utility of their work by the institution that sent them, the Canadian government. One pilot associated the abrupt ending of the mission with a lack of appreciation by the government.

I think so. I just, especially how abruptly they stopped the mission. All of a sudden, the missions were over. I felt for the other rotation that was in-house at the time, because that rotation would have had a 100 plus people other than the fighter detachment all with asking their commanding officer, so now what? And they didn't have any answers; they stayed there for a few weeks with no mission, no flights, no strike missions. It was just all of the sudden the strike missions ended. So, I, so I was a bit disappointed in that, in that respect.

This lack of appreciation, reinforced by the media accusation of pilots killing civilians, led to the pilots' belief that bringing the planes home implied that the CF-18 fighter pilot contribution was insignificant.

But it felt in, in some ways that the fighter force, just the way they were selling it in the media, wasn't doing enough, that pulling us out of the mission wouldn't have made a big deal anyway. Which, which is kind of like a hit on the head after being there for a year and a half. To say that we're not, that our contribution isn't gonna make a big difference, because we were making a difference.

Another pilot expressed how this decision affected him personally.

I don't support the government saying that we should just have our tanker over there. Obviously, that's my personal opinion and my professional opinion is that I do the job that the government mandates me to do, and I do that job as well as I can. But personally, I found that very difficult.

And then, like I mentioned, I did struggle to get back into the swing of things, back into the training-isms. Especially with the cancellation of the mission.

To take this a step further, the lack of public recognition by the sending institution and media implied that the sacrifice on the part of the families of deployed members was belittled. The

families of deployed pilots appeared to be those who suffered the most from the deployment. When making reference to the sacrifice of his own spouse and children due to the deployment, one pilot stated, “[When] I talk about my mom, and my sister stuff like that, they, they know the effects that it [being deployed] has on the, on the home front, with family.”

This lack of public appreciation from the sending institution and the media may have contributed to Canadians’ sense of discomfort in acknowledging the mission and to their reluctance to talk about it with pilots. One pilot expressed his frustration as he recounted a family gathering not too long after his return from deployment. At that gathering, significant others did not acknowledge the mission nor his participation in the mission. No one asked him any questions about the deployment. He felt that these significant others ignored his involvement in the air campaign over Iraq as a pilot.

. . . the rest of my extended family, sometimes it almost kind of angers me a bit, because it seems that they have no idea, they’ve never asked me about it, they’ve never talked about it. It’s just like a, *whatever* kind of thing.

Was this because significant others were not aware of the mission? Did they not care about the mission? Or were they uncomfortable about bringing up the subject because of critical media reports that led them to be unsupportive of the mission?

3.4 Summary

A rapid review of the pilot experiences categorized in this chapter confirms that positive experiences outweighed the negative. This observation led to the interpretation that although pilots interviewed experienced undesirable-stress, this type of stress did not accumulate to dysfunctional levels of distress. All pilots interviewed expressed their overall combat experience in positive terms. In addition, they expressed having adapted well to their post-deployment return to domestic life. The only negative experience recalled by five of the six pilots interviewed was the lack of appreciation for their professional work by the Canadian government and accusations by the media. Not only have pilots added their combat experiences to their professional portfolio, they also felt no need to talk to mental health professionals about their combat experiences.

Canuck's overall evaluation of his combat experience reflects the general attitude of all pilots interviewed. He frames the evaluation of his combat experience in terms of his career once he returned from his deployment.

And it's this awesome, enriching experience. You come back, you're validated, you're recognized as a guy that's, a good, combat-proved wingman, who, who can get the job done, who's dependable in high-stress situations, didn't make mistakes, did the job.

Having taken this empathic interpretation of pilot experiences, the following chapter will question this initial interpretation as we look at the beliefs that lay beneath the surface of the combat experiences recalled by pilots.

CHAPTER 6: PILOT CORPUS ANALYSIS – A CRITICAL, INTERPRETIVE PORTRAYAL

In Chapter 2 (section 3.3), I proposed that the stress response may provide a clue to what a pilot truly believes about his circumstances. During the research interview, pilots recalled their stress responses during combat. They orally labelled their stress responses, which, in turn, were recorded and transcribed in the pilot corpus. By means of an empathic strategy, I identified and categorized these labelled stress responses according to the dimensions of saliency and valence in order to uncover pilot beliefs. I proposed that when pilots recalled experiencing pleasant motivational-stress, they believed that their successful involvement in a given situation was to their advantage. Conversely, when pilots recalled experiencing unpleasant undesirable-stress, they believed that the possibility of being unsuccessful in a given situation was in some way to their disadvantage.

In this chapter, I undertake a more critical reading of pilot stress responses. By means of a critical reading, I propose that pilots' *reflective* *occurred* *passionate* beliefs were at work in inciting emotional responses to events. However, those beliefs may have been influenced by *unreflective* *occurred* *passionate* beliefs, of which pilots may not have been consciously aware.

I propose that the pleasant experiences of success are markers associated with *unreflective* *occurred* *passionate* beliefs of being honoured, while the unpleasant experiences of possible failure are markers associated with *unreflective* *occurred* *passionate* beliefs of being shamed. Put differently, the dual phenomena of honour/shame provide an interpretive key to understanding the beliefs that underlie the motivational-stress and undesirable-stress associated with the combat experiences of pilots.

This chapter begins with a theoretical conceptualization of the contours of the phenomenon of shame. I then distinguish shame from its contrasting phenomenon: honour. Next, I situate honour/shame in the matrix of individual-self, collective-self, being, and doing. This is followed by examples from the pilot corpus where I interpret salient fighter pilots' undesirable-

stress experiences as a response to pilots having their personal reputation or their collective honour threatened.

1 Contours of Shame

As a result of attempting an *eidetic reduction* to crystallize my understanding of the phenomenon of shame as described in the human sciences literature, I present the following contours.

Shame is a social phenomenon. Shame exists in a relational context where a person-subject directs negative attention towards a person-object. The person-subject perceives the person-object as unworthy to some degree, for some reason. The outcomes for the person shamed may include a perceived loss of personal value at the cognitive level, an unpleasant experience at the affective level, and other negative outcomes at the behavioural and volitional levels.

Shame is also understood as both a self-conscious phenomenon and a moral phenomenon. As a self-conscious phenomenon, the unpleasant experience of shame takes the centre-stage of an individual's conscious awareness ([Dearing & Tangney, 2011](#)). For M. M. Thompson ([2015](#)), the affective dimension of shame is classified in the sphere of moral emotions. Although most authors of affect theory classify shame as a negative emotion in light of its association with unpleasant experiences, some claim that this emotion serves a positive purpose in society. In their view, shame is a means to enforce social conventions ([Cunningham, 2017](#)). In other words, people who are threatened by shame are more likely to conform to society's expectations.

Everyone has experienced the feeling of shame at some moment in time due to a triggering event. However, Dearing and Tangney ([2011](#)) distinguish this common experience of shame from shame proneness. Shame proneness is the tendency to experience the emotional dimension of shame over a number of situations. In this dissertation, I will consider the term *shame proneness* as being similar to the term *internalized shame*.

1.1 Shame versus Guilt

Although both shame and guilt elicit emotions with a negative valence, shame is a more salient experience. The American practitioner and psychological researcher, Helen Block Lewis (1913-1987), is credited with making the following distinction between guilt and shame as the nexus of the focus of attention. Using a discrete model of emotions, guilt focuses on a person's behaviour with respect to a moral standard. With guilt, acts contrary to a social standard or one's own moral standard may be amended and corrected. Shame, on the other hand, has as its focus a person's being. Shame is characterized by the desire to hide from the presence of the other and the corresponding unbearable feeling of being the victim of another's disgust ([Tangney & Dearing, 2002](#)).

1.2 Internalized Shame

The reader will recall that in the definition of terms in Chapter 2 (section 1.2.1), Wilkinson ([2015](#)) understood the concept of internalized shame as the self finding disgust with the self. He wrote that internalized shame “no longer needs an external shaming other. The internal eye now self-activates shame” (p. 31). Internalized shame is characterized by self-directed disgust and has its origins in infancy. For Wilkinson, it results from repeated, unrepaired experiences of rupture in the mother-infant relationship. As the child develops, this shame experience is internalized and becomes a template for the person to interpret future experiences. In Kaufman’s words ([1992](#)), cited by Wilkinson, “internalized shame is now experienced as a deep abiding sense of being defective, never quite good enough as a person” ([2015, p. 31](#)).

Because of this toxic belief about self, shame undermines a person's well-being. Citing Cook, Kostecki-Dillon, Wilson, and Coccimiglio ([2001](#)), Wilkinson points out that shame lies beneath other negative, emotional responses, such as disgust and anger. Since individuals who experience internalized shame or shame proneness may be unaware of its existence, shame proneness may be experienced unconsciously through other unpleasant emotions. For this reason, I refer to the possibility of shame being *unreflective* and *occurred* in this study. Pilots

experiencing the emotional threat of shame, may not have been cognitively aware of its presence. This was probably due to the corresponding affective awareness of shame being masked by other unpleasant emotions such as anger or frustration.

According to the influential Canadian-born psychologist Albert Bandura ([1977](#)), shame proneness results when an individual, faced with environmental demands and constraints, associates his unpleasant experience with intra-personal deficiencies. The individual believes that the self is inadequate to meet the environmental challenges. In turn, the individual focuses on the deficiencies of self rather than on the task. As a result, the individual becomes emotionally paralyzed and incapable of accomplishing the task. Bandura writes, “People will approach, explore, and try to deal with situations within their self-perceived capabilities, but they will avoid transactions with stressful aspects of their environment they perceive as exceeding their ability” (p. 203). My observations from the pilot corpus is that the pilots interviewed did not exhibit shame proneness to the degree described by Bandura. They did not become emotionally paralyzed. Rather, pilots consistently showed their ability to rise above the challenges imposed upon them. This was especially evident in their commitment and drive to succeed, first, when becoming military pilots; second, when qualifying to fly CF-18 jets; and third, when deploying weapons in combat.

However, shame proneness in adults is not only demonstrated by paralysis, self-blame and self-derogatory remarks. Wilkinson also draws attention to the individual experiencing shame proneness who is motivated to prove to self and others that he is worthy of admiration. Wilkinson’s observation would suggest that if any shame proneness is experienced by pilots, it may be manifested by attempts to prove to self and to others that they are worthy of admiration.

Callister, King, Retzlaff, and Marsh ([1999](#)) studied personality characteristics of U.S. Air Force student pilots. The researchers found that when compared with American men in the general population, the average student pilot “is more assertive and physically active, and he seeks excitement and stimulation . . . he is highly competitive, skeptical, and tough-minded”

(p. 887). They go on to say that the average female student pilot showed similar characteristics.

In the Canadian context, individuals with the above mapping of personality traits would be labelled as having a *Type A* personality. According to Ferguson and Ferguson's (2001) popular and humorous work, Canadians believe that *Type A* personalities "work hard, play hard" (p. 75). For Ferguson and Ferguson, the Canadian who has a *Type A* personality is saying that his or her personal life is suffering because of being overworked and stressed out. More serious writers in the academic field of psychology such as Weiten and McCann (2016) claim that *Type A* personalities are known to be ambitious, hard-driving, and time-conscious.

The pilot corpus reveals that pilots share this common belief about personality types. Dodge believed that fighter pilots are stereotyped as having *Type A* personalities.

Apparently, to be a fighter pilot you need to be (sic) *A-type* personality, people that don't accept failure, always looking to get better and show that they're the best, and so on.

Auto describes fighter pilots as being driven and possessing determination. They are never satisfied with their level of competence in their training. Auto knows that he could never attain a "level where, I'm as good as I can be." The fighter pilots interviewed for this study appear to be comparable to their American counterparts in their personality traits.

Not only were CF-18 pilots achievement-oriented, these once typical Canadian citizens entered the CAF with differing degrees of shame proneness. In his review of the literature on shame in civilians, Wilkinson (2015) uncovers a three-fold typology of narcissists who use an avoidance strategy to protect themselves from feelings of internalized shame: an *exhibitionist narcissist*, a *devaluing narcissist*, and a *closet narcissist*.³⁹ For Wilkinson, narcissism

³⁹ In this inquiry, I am not addressing narcissism as a psychological personality disorder. Rather, I address narcissism as does Capps (1993) who views narcissism not only from a clinical perspective but also as a reflection of our general society and who cites Kohut & Wolf's (1978) view that some types of narcissism as variants of normal human behaviour.

has both a positive and a negative element. Using a needs-based approach, he believes every person needs a certain amount of narcissism to care for self in a hostile world. However, when certain emotional needs are not met in the earlier developmental stages of life, a healthy narcissism is deformed to protect the person from internalized shame. For Wilkinson, an *exhibitionist narcissist* is identified as an individual whose behaviours are motivated by the desire for the admiration and praise of others. The *devaluing narcissist* is identified as an individual who puts others down to prop up his own self-worth. The *closet narcissist* is identified as an individual who derives value and worth from associating with other narcissists.

Although pilots' experiences did not appear congruent with Bandura's model for explaining shame proneness, pilots may have been susceptible to a subtler desire to prove to self and others and that they are worthy of admiration. Wilkinson's typology of shame-avoidance strategies may provide a more appropriate explanation of pilots' undesirable-stress.

One participant described being a pilot in terms of being part of a brotherhood. Once inducted into the fighter pilot brotherhood, pilots need to establish their credibility. For this pilot, "Your credibility [reputation] is like your honour . . . and you don't give that up easily." By using this phrase, I believe that this pilot provided an interpretive key to best understand the reason behind the differing intensities and valences of pilot stress observed in Chapter 5. Underlying both the pleasant motivational-stress and unpleasant undesirable-stress is a belief that pilots need to prove they are worthy of admiration by pursuing both their personal reputation and their collective honour. At the affective level, pilots do not want to relinquish the pleasant feelings of pride associated with the honour of being fighter pilots. Neither do they want to experience the unpleasant feelings of shame associated with personal failure.

1.3 Self-inflicted Shame

Self-inflicted toxic shame is the negative attention a person directs towards self due to a depreciation of self. This depreciation may take the form of his belief in a lack of goodness or in a lack of self-worth. This self-inflicted shame is associated with adverse psychological outcomes both in the non-military literature ([Herman, 2011](#)) and more recently in the CAF

context ([M. M. Thompson, 2015](#)). In contrast to fear and horror, which are traditionally associated with the source of PTSD symptomology, the self-inflicted guilt and shame associated with moral injury have been more recently linked to adverse psychological outcomes. Litz et al. ([2009](#)) observed that combatants were more vulnerable to self-inflicted shame leading to moral injury, if they either killed in combat by violating the ROE or if they contributed to such a killing by inaction. Their susceptibility to moral injury was even greater if self-inflicted shame was reinforced by the general public due to negative media coverage of the war. To cope with the feelings of self-inflicted shame, a perpetrator or inactive observer of a violent act may expend an increasing amount of psychological energy engaging in maladaptive coping strategies. The most common strategies are addictions and isolation. Litz et al. also suggested that those with a predisposition for shame proneness are more susceptible to moral injury than those without the predisposition.

My observations from the pilot corpus is that at the time of interviewing, the six pilots did not exhibit the adverse psychological outcomes associated with moral injury. They did not profess to violate the strict ROE established by the Canadian military, though pilots were accused of killing civilians during the air campaign ([Chase, 2015](#)).

From the above, what is most important to remember about shame is the following: first, it is distinguished from guilt by its focus on *being* rather than *behaviour*; second, the pilots interviewed may have experienced shame but it was masked by emotional effects of undesirable-stress; and third, if pilots experienced shame, it was neither to a degree that paralyzed them during combat nor intense enough to be considered as a post-deployment moral injury.

2 Contours of Honour

As a result of attempting an *eidetic reduction* to crystallize my understanding of the phenomenon of honour, I expand my theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of honour by bringing to light some of its taken-for-granted characteristics.

Similar to shame, honour is also a social phenomenon. Honour exists in a relational context where a person-subject directs positive attention towards a person-object. This positive attention is a perceived social value that a person bestows on self or on others ([Neyrey, 1998](#)). The outcomes of the bestowal of honour includes both an increased sense of personal worth at the cognitive level, a pleasant experience associated with this worth at the emotional level, and other positive outcomes at the behavioural and volitional levels.

2.1 Individual Honour

From a sociological perspective, honour is the *extrinsic value* of a person's identity associated with a stable, institutional role ([Berger et al., 1974](#)). Honour can either be *ascribed* or *achieved*. For example, honour may be bestowed upon a person as a result of the person's origins or bloodline. A child born into an honourable family is *ascribed* the honour of that family. Honour may also be *achieved* by means of personal effort and excellence. The retired professor of New Testament at Notre Dame, Jerome H. Neyrey ([1998](#)), notes that in the ancient Greek world, “excellence was generally demonstrated in various types of prowess: military, athletic, aesthetic, and the like” ([p. 41](#)). Parallels can be observed between achieving honour in the ancient Greek world and in the modern Western world.

To better grasp the phenomenon of honour, it is helpful to contrast honour with the phenomenon of dignity. Human dignity is the *intrinsic value* of a person that remains once all institutional roles and resulting identities have been stripped away ([Berger et al., 1974](#)). If honour is ascribed to a person because of her association with an honourable family or achieved by becoming a member of an honourable institution, human dignity can be conceptualized as honour ascribed to an individual solely for being human.

The phenomenon of honour includes a number of dimensions that can be described both from the perspective of the person-subject bestowing the honour and from the person-object receiving the honour. Examining the cognitive, affective, volitional, mnemonic, temporal, behavioural, and verbal dimensions of honour will lead to a fuller understanding of this phenomenon from a psychological perspective.

First, I will briefly amplify the above dimensions from the perspective of the person-subject who bestows honour upon another person. With respect to the *cognitive* dimension, the person-subject must perceive that the person-object is worthy of the honour being bestowed. The *affective* dimension provides the emotional driving force motivating the person-subject to bestow honour. The *volitional* dimension complements the *cognitive* and *affective* dimensions since one must be autonomous to freely bestow honour. If not, the honour bestowed is coerced. The *mnemonic* and *temporal* dimensions refer to the memory of honour that was previously bestowed and its punctual occurrence or continuity over time. It can be expected that the honour bestowed upon the person-object in the past will be reinforced in the future if the circumstances influencing the *cognitive* and *affective* dimensions of the person-subject have not changed. The *behavioural* and *verbal* dimensions refer respectively to the actions posed and the praise extolled by the person-subject as honour is bestowed upon another.

Second, these dimensions can also be described from the perspective of the person-object who is the recipient of honour from another person. With respect to the *cognitive* dimension, a person-object must perceive that she is the beneficiary of another person's positive attention and associate this attention with an increase in personal worth. Within the *affective* dimension, a person may experience a pleasant, subjective feeling when being honoured.⁴⁰ The *volitional* dimension refers to the choice the person-object has either to accept the honour that has been bestowed or to refuse it. The *mnemonic* and *temporal* dimensions refer to the expectation of being honoured in the present based on the memories of being honoured in the past. Finally, the *behavioural* and *verbal* dimensions refer respectively to the reception by the person-object of the actions posed and the praise extolled by the person-subject.

⁴⁰ Even though pleasant emotional experiences are associated with honour, I am not suggesting that all pleasant emotional experiences are associated with being honoured. Pleasant emotional experiences are at a higher level of abstraction than honour. For example, the pleasure an individual experiences when watching a sunset falls into the category of the phenomenon of pleasure but is a different phenomenon than honour.

2.2 Collective Honour

In Chapter 2 (section 1.4.1), I presented an understanding of self by assuming a Western construct of the self. The Western self is a conscious, autonomous entity that is the locus of decision-making ([McLeod, 2001](#)). In other words, the self ends at the frontiers of one's own body. Our Western understanding of the self is determined by our historical-cultural pre-understanding and is conceptualized in an individualistic sense. However, another way of understanding self also exists.

The other way favours a collective understanding of self over an individual understanding. For example, the sociologists Berger et al. ([1974](#)) provide the institution of knighthood as an example of a group of people who historically shared a corporate understanding of self. Existing as an institution before the influence of the Enlightenment, knighthood provides a contrast to the individualistic sense of self as well as a means of differentiating honour from human dignity.

Knights formed a cohesive community that protected the king and his subjects from their enemies. In return, knights were the beneficiaries of honour, which was bestowed upon them by the members of their society. Honour was attached to the office of being a knight rather than to the individual. Although an individual knight may have engaged in questionable behaviour, his reputation was preserved by the honour bestowed upon the institution of knighthood.

Berger et al. note that since the Enlightenment, collective sources of authority have eroded and have been replaced by the authority of the individual. As a result, honour, as a virtue, has been replaced by human dignity in contemporary Western society.

However, a few institutions in Western society still preserve the vestiges of collective identity. One of those institutions is the military. For example, fighter pilots form a tight-knit brotherhood within the military context. An individual is inducted into the fighter pilot brotherhood after passing a demanding process of basic military training, military flight training, and jet flight training. Being part of this institution where the collective-self takes precedence

over the individual-self, the pilot now shares the achieved honour that the military community and Canadian society bestow upon them. Therefore, when referring to shame in this research inquiry, the possibility of being shamed not only threatened the individual reputation of pilots but also the collective honour achieved by becoming pilots.

3 The Matrix of Individual-Self, Collective-Self, Being, and Doing

In the first section of this chapter, I made a distinction between the phenomena of shame and guilt. Simply put, the negative attention of shame focuses on *being* while the negative attention of guilt focuses on *doing* with respect to a moral standard. In the second section, I made a distinction between an *individualistic* understanding of self and a *collective* understanding of self as it relates to the positive attention of honour. In this section, I examine the passionate beliefs associated with the dual phenomena of honour/shame by combining the concepts of *being* and *doing* with the concepts of an *individual* and a *collective* understanding of self. The result will be a matrix of eight possible combinations of beliefs that help differentiate honour from shame and differentiate honour/shame from other closely related phenomena.

3.1 Beliefs about Individual-Self and Being

When a person is shamed, shame as a passionate belief is experienced both within the *cognitive* and *affective* dimensions. *Cognitively*, the person believes or perceives self as being unworthy. *Affectively*, the person experiences the unpleasant feelings of shame (Figure 3).

This individualized conceptualization of shame can be contrasted with an individualized conceptualization of honour. *Cognitively*, rather than being the victim of another person's shame and disgust, the honoured person receives affirmation that the self is worthy because of another person's positive attention. *Affectively*, in place of shame's unpleasant feelings, honour's experience is pleasant (Figure 3).

The distinguishing feature at the root of both individual shame and individual honour is the cognitive belief about one's own worthiness (*being*). This leads to the first two possible beliefs about self: the person may either believe self to be unworthy (as a victim of shame with

its accompanying unpleasant feelings) or worthy (as a recipient of honour with its accompanying pleasant feelings).

	Negative Attention	Positive Attention
Beliefs About Being	Shame	Honour
Cognitive Dimension	Unworthy	Worthy
Affective Dimension	Unpleasant Feelings of Shame	Pleasant Feelings of Honour
Beliefs About Doing	Unsuccessful Achievements	Successful Achievements
Cognitive Dimension	Guilt (Moral Standard)	Personal Recognition
Affective Dimension	Dissatisfaction due to Failure	Satisfaction of Authentic Pride

Figure 3 – Shame and Honour: An Individual Understanding

3.2 Beliefs about Individual Self and Doing

There is a second combination of beliefs that help differentiate honour/shame from other closely related phenomena. The cognitive belief about the unworthiness/worthiness of an individual (being) may be contrasted with the cognitive belief about the unsuccessful/successful achievements (doing) of an individual. Just as an individual may experience the unpleasant feelings of shame or the pleasant feelings of honour as a result of beliefs about personal worthiness (being), so an individual may feel dissatisfaction or satisfaction with self as a result of the respective failure or success of that individual's undertakings (doing). This distinction provides us with the third and fourth possible beliefs about self (Figure 3): whether individuals either believe their actions to have been unsuccessful (with the accompanying feelings of dissatisfaction due to failure) or to have been successful (with the accompanying satisfaction of authentic individual pride).

3.3 Beliefs about Collective-Self and Being

These combinations of beliefs associated with being and doing also exist according to a collective understanding of self (Figure 4).

In the same way that an individual believes another to be unworthy or worthy (being) in a given situation, members of society may either scorn or highly value an institution and its

members. In this research inquiry, the scorn received by the members of an institution – with the accompanying unpleasant feelings experienced – is referred to as *collective shame*, while the worth bestowed upon the members of an institution – with the accompanying pleasant feeling experienced – is referred to as *collective honour*.

In contemporary Western society, some institutions are regarded more highly than other institutions. As a result, contemporary society, in general, may bestow more honour on members of some institutions than on others. For example, society, in general, bestows more honour on members of the medical profession than they do on members of the religious profession. The reason is that society, in general, believes, rightly or wrongly, that medicine is more valuable than religion. The defining feature of collective honour/shame is society's belief about the worthiness of an institution or collectivity.

3.4 Beliefs about Collective-Self and Doing

The belief about the unworthiness/worthiness of an institution (being) may be contrasted with the belief about the institution's unsuccessful(successful achievements (doing). The behaviour of an institution's members may either be unsuccessful or successful in the eyes of society. If unsuccessful, the institution and its members are collectively unappreciated. If successful, the institution and its members are collectively appreciated. If unappreciated, the members of the institution may experience feeling of dissatisfaction due to failure. If appreciated, the members of the institution may experience the satisfaction of collective pride.

	Negative Attention	Positive Attention
Beliefs About Being	Collective Shame	Collective Honour
Cognitive Dimension	Unworthy	Worthy
Affective Dimension	Unpleasant Feelings	Pleasant Feelings of Honour
Beliefs About Doing	Unsuccessful Achievements	Successful Achievements
Cognitive Dimension	Collectively Unappreciated	Collectively Appreciated
Affective Dimension	Dissatisfaction due to Failure	Satisfaction of Authentic Pride

Figure 4 – Shame and Honour: A Collective Understanding

3.5 Observations from this Matrix

Having described the matrix of eight contours of honour/shame resulting from the different combinations of beliefs about self, being, and doing, I would like to make the following observations.

First, in my opinion, according to an individualistic understanding of self, the being/doing distinction is best described as falling on a continuity/discontinuity spectrum. Some individuals experience a discontinuity between feelings of dissatisfaction with their lack of achievement and feelings of shame. They are able to dissociate their achievements (doing) whether successful or unsuccessful from their inherent human dignity or self-worth (being). When experiencing unpleasant feelings due to the failure of a task, they are able to distance themselves from beliefs of unworthiness. I would consider these individuals as resilient to shame proneness. In contrast, other individuals may experience a continuity between poor performance and feelings of unworthiness. I would consider these individuals more susceptible to shame proneness.

Second, the above observation can be applied to individual fighter pilots. Some pilots tend to experience a continuity between their worth as an individual (being) and their achievements (doing). As a result, these pilots may be susceptible to shame proneness when encountering failure. Other pilots, in contrast, may tend towards the pole of discontinuity between their perception of self-worth (being) and their perception of personal achievements (doing). As a result, these other pilots would be more resilient to shame proneness when compared with the previous group. Most pilots probably fall somewhere between these two poles, experiencing both a continuity and discontinuity depending on the circumstances. However, in making the above assertion, I expect that when compared with the Canadian population in general, fighter pilots would be situated more on the discontinuity end of the spectrum due to the collective sense of self, which is reinforced in their military training. I arrive at this conclusion based on the following observation.

Military training is designed to change the perspective of the new member. As the individual becomes assimilated with the identity of his unit or squadron, an individualistic understanding of self gives way to a collective understanding of self. Dyer ([1985](#)) notes that “A soldier is no longer an individual but part of a group” (p. 114). Individual identity is replaced by group identity as pilots train together and endure shared hardship.

Dodge recalled what attracted him to the military lifestyle. It was the camaraderie.

I really enjoyed the lifestyle of the army. The camaraderie, the team spirit. It was something that attracted me right from the beginning, when I joined the Forces.

Later in the corpus, Dodge describes putting the needs of the collectivity over the needs of the individual.

I don't care about my own performance. I care about the team. We're, we're a team. If we're all gonna get better, then that's good. If, if I'm not the best, I don't care. Because if we all become the best, then it doesn't matter. That's my way of doing it.

As a result of this team spirit or putting the collectivity ahead of the individual, it seems logical that pilots inducted into the fighter pilot brotherhood with some degree of susceptibility to shame proneness would have learned to modulate the feelings of shame by some cognitive means.

Third, with respect to individual honour, this continuity/discontinuity between achievements (doing) and self-worth (being) helps explain the nuance between two types of individual pride that may be associated with a personal reputation. Canadian researchers in exercise science Catherine Sabiston and Jennifer Brunet ([Sabiston & Brunet, 2016](#)) note two different types of pride in their writings on body image in sport and exercise: *hubristic pride* and *authentic pride*. *Hubristic pride* is a pleasant emotional experience associated with feeling superior to others. It is narcissistic and outcome-oriented. In contrast, *authentic pride* is the state of a pleasant experience associated with the satisfaction of fulfilling personal goals. Though both focus on one's achievements, *hubristic pride* is outcome-oriented and focuses on social comparisons (being better than others) while *authentic pride* is process-oriented and focuses on

internal comparison (being better than one's past capabilities). Using the terminology of this present study, an individual experiencing *authentic pride* dissociates his achievements from his personal worth (Figure 3). However, with *hubristic pride*, an individual blurs the achievement/worth distinction. Using a strategy of continuity, this individual praises his own achievements at the expense of others and draws his personal worth from those achievements.

Fourth, the beliefs concerning the being/doing of individuals situated on a continuity/discontinuity spectrum may also apply to a collective understanding of self. For some institutions, society acts as if a continuity exists between the honour (being) bestowed upon an institution and the behaviour (doing) of its members. Accordingly, when individual members of an institution behave in either a morally acceptable way (to incite praise) or unacceptable way (to incite critique), as evaluated by society, the behaviour of these individual members influences the honour that society bestows upon or withdraws from the institution. I observed this phenomenon in the pilot corpus when a pilot recalled being personally accused of killing babies. The person accusing the pilot had seen a media report on CF-18 pilots striking civilian targets. The accusation was then generalized to every pilot within the CF-18 fighter pilot community.

However, for other institutions, society acts as if a discontinuity exists between the behaviour (doing) of its members and the honour (being) bestowed upon or withheld from the institution. For example, in the medical profession, a discontinuity appears to exist between the honour bestowed upon the medical profession, in general, and the questionable practices of individual physicians. The questionable behaviour of one physician does not weaken the honour that society bestows upon the collective medical profession. Likewise, the positive ex-

ample of a religious leader, like Mother Theresa or Billy Graham, did not contribute considerably to the enhancement of the honour society bestowed upon all leaders of the respective religious institutions they were associated with.⁴¹

Finally, though honour may be bestowed upon or withdrawn from an institution by society, members within an institution still regard one another according to the individualistic conception of self. For example, though fighter pilots may be honoured as an elite brotherhood of military members by Canadian society, among themselves fighter pilots seek the pleasant experience of recognition from each other for their personal achievements. Correspondingly, an individual pilot would want to avoid situations where he exposes his personal reputation to shame by members of the fighter pilot community. For example, a pilot would expose himself to shame if he betrayed a norm of the community, demonstrated incompetence, or showed any weakness in the eyes of his colleagues.

3.6 Summary

To expose our taken-for-granted beliefs associated with the dual phenomena of honour/shame in this research inquiry, it is important to distinguish the following: first, an individual understanding of self from a collective understanding of self; second, being from behaviour; third, a belief in one's own or another's worthiness contrasted with a belief in one's own or another's unworthiness; and finally, the difference between the cognitive dimension of these dual phenomena and their corresponding affective dimension.

4 The Pursuit of Reputation: I. Strategies Described and Elaborated

Having distinguished some of the contours of shame, I will now attempt to build on the conceptualization of shame proposed by Wilkinson. The purpose is to construct a means of categorizing salient pilot experiences as they relate to individual pilot reputation (honour). I first

⁴¹ One factor that may contribute to the continuity/discontinuity phenomenon of institutions is the social capital earned by the institution over the years.

present an adaptation of Wilkinson's shame-avoidance strategies. Next, I situate pilots' motivational-stress and undesirable-stress experiences into the categories conceptualized. Finally, I re-interpreted some of salient pilot experiences identified in Chapter 5 considering the possibility that pilots were unaware of seeking to avoid individual/collective shame to pursue their personal reputation and collective honour.

Building on Wilkinson's three-fold typology of shame-avoidance strategies presented in section 1.2 of this chapter, I present four strategies pilots may have used to pursue their individual reputations within the fighter brotherhood. This classification provides me with broad categories for identifying the possibility of shame in the pilot corpus. I begin with labelling and describing the first three strategies before identifying the fourth.

Pilots established, reinforced, or preserved their individual reputations by means of a *performance-based strategy*, a *depreciation-based strategy*, and an *association-based strategy*. Using a *performance-based strategy*, a pilot is motivated to excel in certain behaviours and competencies to pursue his reputation within the community. Employing a *depreciation-based strategy*, a pilot establishes, reinforces, or preserves his reputation by depreciating others. Implementing an *association-based strategy*, a pilot pursues his reputation by associating with persons or non-persons perceived as being valuable to the fighter-pilot community.

These strategies can be used in both a direct and indirect way. First, when a military pilot is inducted into the fighter pilot community, the new fighter pilot adopts the identity of the brotherhood.⁴² The collective honour bestowed upon the community of fighter pilots by Canadian society is now transferred to the new fighter pilot. However, at the same time, the newly-inducted member does not have his individual reputation established within the broth-

⁴² By being inducted into the fighter pilot community, a pilot can use an *association-based* strategy to prop-up his hubristic pride when comparing himself to others not in the fighter pilot community. I do not address this use of an *association-based* strategy in this inquiry because my focus is on the combat experiences of pilots and not the more global perspective of being a fighter pilot.

erhood. Therefore, the motivating force behind the pilot engaging in one of the three strategies is to establish his individual reputation within the brotherhood. Second, when an established fighter pilot believes himself to be inadequate in some way, the motivating force behind the pilot engaging in one of the three strategies is to reinforce his reputation already established within the brotherhood. Finally, when a fighter pilot believes that his reputation is threatened, the motivating force for engaging in one of these three strategies is to preserve his reputation already established within the brotherhood.

The use of one or a combination of these strategies implies that the pilot believes that interactions with other pilots along with non-personal events will contribute in some way to establish, reinforce, or preserve his reputation in the brotherhood.

In contrast to the direct strategies, this typology also suggests a more indirect use of pursuing his reputation. A pilot using an indirect pursuit invites the subtle collaboration of others to accomplish the same goal. I have labelled this fourth and more indirect pursuit as an *attention-based strategy*. A pilot establishes, reinforces, or preserves his reputation by giving positive attention to others who are using one or a combination of the other three strategies to pursue their reputation by personal/group performance, depreciation of common enemies, and association with important people, objects, or values. Put differently, the *attention-based strategy* is reciprocal in that the benefactor contributing to another pilot's reputation may be motivated by a need to have his own reputation established, reinforced, or preserved by a beneficiary.⁴³

Although seeking the attention of others is a common experience for all humans, the goal of encouraging others to establish, reinforce, or preserve their reputation may be narcissistic or authentic. If encouraging others is done *only* to advance one's own reputation, the strategy is motivated by narcissism. An authentic motivating force for the use of this strategy would be

⁴³ This conceptualization would fall under the exchange theory approach briefly referred to in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.

to encourage the reputation of other fighter pilots for the benefit of the squadron and for the interests of Canadian society.

In conclusion, I would like to add that the pilot employing any one or combination of the above strategies may or may not be consciously aware of its use. In other words, its use may be intentional or unreflective.

5 The Pursuit of Reputation: II. Strategies Identified in Pilot Transcripts

In this section, I present examples from the pilot corpus that I interpret as being congruent with the strategies elaborated above. In giving these examples, I am not implying that the pilot whose example I draw from was consciously aware of pursuing his reputation. On the other hand, from an evangelical theological stance, I cannot avoid the observation that the needs to pursue one's reputation and to avoid shame are attached to our human nature. It is a common experience for all humans, whether perceived from a theological or psychological perspective ([McNish, 2004](#)). Therefore, out of respect for pilots interviewed at times, I purposefully avoid associating pilot quotations with their pseudonym. In doing so, I attempt to preserve the anonymity of the pilots interviewed.

My intent is to advance our understanding of the phenomenon of shame and not to evaluate the degree of shame proneness associated with each pilot.

5.1 Examples of a Performance-Based Strategy

By means of a *performance-based strategy*, a pilot is motivated to excel in certain behaviours and competencies in order to pursue his reputation within the pilot community. To identify instances of the possible use of these reputation-building strategies, I identified pilot descriptions of events that elicited higher than normal levels of undesirable-stress. What follows is a sampling of higher levels of undesirable pilot stress when recalling performance-based duties.

5.1.1 Pre-deployment Performance-Based Examples of Undesirable-Stress

An important theme that surfaced from pilot interviews was the belief that military and jet flight training was difficult and demanding. Pilots consistently recalled devoting all of their time and energy to be first, successful military pilots, and second, successful fighter pilots. Their personal goals were set aside for professional goals. One pilot recalled this stressful period of his career in the following way:

It's extremely difficult, and very demanding. When I was going through flight training, I didn't really have a life apart from flight training. Ah, most of my time, if not all of my time was devoted to being successful. Ah, it was very difficult just due to the stress. I struggled with stress a lot, the fear of failure, that kind of stuff. That was also very difficult for me.

Another pilot recalled his undesirable-stress in these terms:

. . . [training] required a ton of studying, and a ton of time spent at work, was the big one. And then the other one was learning, one big one was learning to overcome failure, which, I think, is tough on a lot of guys because they've gone through their whole life as an overachiever, and they've never failed at anything before . . . So, going on flights and then failing them, learning to kind of overcome that was challenging. That was probably one of the biggest challenges.

This pilot went on to describe how he felt about failing. He gave the classical, shame response of feeling disgust towards his own person because of his poor performance. “[Initially] it’s pretty bad. You feel, you almost feel like you’re an awful human being for having failed a mission.” This pilot was the only one who closely associated his performance during his training with shame.

This unpleasant experience of undesirable-stress has been commonly observed in the American air force training context. Ragan refers to Callister et al. (1999) who reports that

. . . student pilots are frequently referred to military and civilian psychologists for evaluations of manifestations of apprehension (MOA) that may be affecting his or her performance and ability to successfully complete training. Manifestation of apprehension is considered by USAF medical leadership as a non-phobic fear

associated with flying that significantly impairs a flyer's ability to perform effectively. ([Ragan, 2010, p. 4](#))

This undesirable-stress and accompanying unpleasant feelings were experienced either as dissatisfaction due to poor performance or as shame due to the poor performance being interpreted by student pilots as personal unworthiness. Unfortunately, in their inquiries on poor performance and apprehension in American student pilots, neither Ragan (2010) nor Callister et al. (1999) examine the phenomena of dissatisfaction with poor performance (doing), shame (being), or the difference between poor performance and shame.

However, not all fighter pilots I interviewed were drained of their motivation due to stress during pilot training. One pilot expressed overcoming failure in terms that made no reference to shame for failure. He focused uniquely on mistakes in his performance:

And then, you go through a process where you rationalize, figure out why you made those mistakes. And then slowly start to think, ok, I can't just let myself be down about it. I got to think, 'how am I going to get over these mistakes?'

A fourth pilot stated that pilots should not be discouraged by mistakes. His attitude concerning mistakes was not a shame response. He preferred to learn from his mistakes. For this pilot, there existed a discontinuity between his worth as a person and his achievements in training.

So, I think the more prepared you are, the better you will execute, and even, everyone makes mistakes, and it's, you shouldn't hamper on the mistakes, but you learn from your mistakes, and you take the time afterwards to reflect.

Another pilot, who was treated for extreme stress during his fighter pilot course, had the ability to be single-minded about finishing the course. With help, he reached his goal. Success for this pilot was measured by accomplishing his goal and passing the course but not without the anxiety due to a fear of failure.

During my fighter pilot course. Ah, which I just had a really hard time dealing with. The fear of failure, the fear of not being successful, struggling . . . You know, getting physically ill. That all ended as soon as I finished that course.

I interpret this undesirable-stress which led to adverse physiological outcomes as a shame response on the part of the pilot even though he did not profess any diminishing of self-worth. If I were to conduct the same interview today, I would ask follow-up questions concerning how the pilot felt about himself during his struggle with his fear of failure. If shame was indeed lying beneath his fear of failure, it was not experienced to a degree that paralyzed this pilot as compared to student pilots in Callister et al.'s ([1999](#)) study. This pilot had the resources and the support to help him overcome his fear of failure. The unpleasant experience of failing before stakeholders, course peers, family, and friends became a great motivator for success.

Dyer ([1985](#)), in his book entitled *War*, refers to basic training as a time when military recruits are placed in stressful situations where it is impossible for them to succeed. The intent of this training is to develop resilience so that recruits learn to function at higher than normal levels of undesirable-stress. In the case of fighter pilots interviewed, all were successful in their training to become military pilots. Their determination extended on to jet pilot training. Each pilot interviewed was stretched to overcome either the shame associated with his unworthiness due to failure or the dissatisfaction associated with his poor performance. The experience of overcoming shame and dissatisfaction with poor performance enabled pilots to reinforce a mindset that would enable them to overcome other undesirable-stressful situations in future fighter pilot combat training and in combat itself.

The pilot corpus revealed few examples of undesirable-stress associated with the domestic training of pilots. Undesirable-stress was associated both with pilot training before entering the pilot brotherhood and then again in combat. I account for this void during domestic training by the fact that the interview focused on the phenomenological experiences of pilots during the air campaign. Pilots were asked about obstacles when becoming fighter pilots and then were asked open-ended questions about their combat experiences. Domestic training was only a transitional point in the interview. I would suspect that if pilots who had not engaged in combat were interviewed about their lived experiences as fighter pilots, examples of undesirable-stress would surface in domestic *upgrade* missions as well. Future research

could either validate or discredit this hypothesis. However, in this present inquiry, salient flight training and combat experiences overshadowed domestic training experiences.

Although the pilot corpus did not include many examples of undesirable-stress associated with domestic training, I did observe two examples.

As a novice pilot, one pilot was anxious about his performance as a pilot. Initially, he tried to establish his reputation in the brotherhood. With time and experience, he began to relax.

I used to be a lot, very concerned about the way I performed any work-related or anything I had to face . . . I think I've learned with time to control that. I don't feel anxious, too much anymore. I just deal with every task as they show, and my stress level is, much lower than what it used to be.

In addition, novice pilots on occasion admitted that they had made mistakes. This point was recalled in the context of the importance of pilot honesty as a pilot norm within the brotherhood. Pilots expressed the importance of admitting errors to their supervisors rather than hiding their errors.

One pilot described a scenario in which a novice pilot may lose visual contact with the formation lead for a considerable duration of time. The novice pilot may hide this fact not wanting to feel embarrassed. The pilot clarified that losing the lead does not happen often, but it is a possibility. This possibility exposes the belief that a novice fighter pilot wants to establish his reputation within the brotherhood. In doing so, a pilot may be tempted to be dishonest by hiding his error so as to not be placed in a situation of being judged unworthy by his fellow pilots.

This possibility of hiding errors provides an example of the difference between a shame-avoidance response and a dissatisfaction-avoidance response. Using a shame-avoidance response, a pilot hides his error to avoid being judged as unworthy by fellow pilots. Using a dissatisfaction-avoidance response, a pilot hides his error to avoid exposing his poor performance to other pilots. I would suspect that pilots who are honest in admitting errors are pilots who are secure in themselves. They have no need to preserve their self-worth. Their worth is

based on their dignity or value as persons rather than on their performance. These pilots would recognize their poor performance, admit it, and seek ways to make improvements. Such a pilot may confess during the combat training debrief, “I lost you for about 40 seconds there. What can I do to maintain better visual contact in a similar situation in the future?”

The pilot corpus presents evidence that a common belief or norm among pilots was that hiding errors from other pilots was a breach of honesty or integrity in the brotherhood. Moral integrity was the quality one pilot valued most in his Ultimate Concern scenario.

For this pilot, lying in the brotherhood is unacceptable. In the context of collective honour, honesty and loyalty to the brotherhood are the most virtuous.

Your credibility is like your honour, like it's, it's your thing. And you don't ah, you don't give that up easily. You don't, I've never, ever-. If I would catch a guy lie, I've never, never seen that. Like a guy wouldn't lie to me. I would hope not. Right? Ah, a guy makes a mistake, you better own up to it, right, right away. Like, you know what I mean? If a guy is, hides his mistakes, or lies, he's done. That is unacceptable, completely unacceptable. Like, especially when your, your life is in that guy's hands, right, at times?

This honesty not only reinforces collective pilot honour, it also contributes to a healthy work environment for pilots by contributing to individual well-being. Erving Goffman ([1952](#)), a sociologist associated with the second “Chicago School” of sociology writes,

[Any] event which demonstrates that someone has made a false claim, defining himself as something which he is not, tends to destroy him. If others realize that the person's conception of self has been contradicted and discredited, then the person tends to be destroyed in the eyes of others. If the person can keep the contradiction a secret, he may succeed in keeping everyone but himself from treating him as a failure ([p. 461](#)).

5.1.2 Deployment Performance-Based Examples of Undesirable-Stress

When focusing their attention on the air campaign itself, some pilots recalled experiencing undesirable-stress when imagining the possibility of making errors, especially during the initial stages of combat.

One pilot recalled feeling apprehension over the possibility of making errors while flying *sorties*. For this pilot his personal reputation was important. Making an error would tarnish his reputation in the eyes of other pilots. As outlined in Chapter 5 (section 3.1.4) the possible errors that were the source of undesirable-stress for him were as follows: first, not succeeding in air-to-air refuelling within the limited time window thus being the pilot who had to divert to another location to refuel; second, not being able to stay with his lead pilot and thus getting lost; and third, making a tactical error in the programming of the bomb or in typing the co-ordinates of the target due to being “overexcited” about having the opportunity to deploy weapons.

So, if you failed to, let’s say, get your gasket on the hose, then you knew you’d be diverting somewhere a little more sketchy [sic]. And then you would be that guy who did that. So, your reputation, I guess. So, that was probably, at least initially, on the first probably 4 or 5 missions I did, was the biggest apprehension I had, was just not screwing up on air-to-air refuelling.

Once the task was completed successfully, the pilot had established his reputation in those flying/combat skills and his apprehension was relieved.

This pilot succeeded in his tasks. He overcame battle apprehension over making errors in refuelling thus establishing his reputation by mastering another domestic skill. He was able to stay with the lead pilot during his two-ship *sortie* thus preserving his reputation in flying. He battled the excitement of getting to drop a bomb on a target with clear thinking while programing the weapon thus establishing his reputation in combat. This pilot was not paralyzed by severe shame proneness. His experiences, however, are congruent with a pilot establishing and preserving his reputation in the pilot brotherhood during his initial experiences of combat.

Another pilot also recalled difficulties at the beginning stages of the air campaign. During his first *sortie* flown in a theatre of combat, he questioned his presence in a combat situation and his ability to handle the pressure. However, after returning from his first *sortie* he found that the combat mission was manageable. His positive experience during his first combat *sortie* helped reduce the undesirable-stress for future *sorties*.

Having recalled his fear of making mistakes in the initial stages of deployment, a third pilot referred to the mistakes made by other pilots. He expressed the belief that when pilots made a mistake, supervisors and other pilots were not severe towards the erring pilot. In other words, pilots were not shamed for their mistakes by their peers. The shame response associated with possible mistakes appeared to be self-inflicted. To some degree, these pilots held the belief that their performance was associated with their self-worth.

In contrast to the anxiety of making mistakes, improving flying competencies was described as a positive experience by one pilot. When this pilot recalled a positive deployment experience, it was associated with being able to refuel using night vision goggles. Being able to refuel an aircraft from a tanker was recalled as difficult for any pilot. However, this pilot succeeded in mastering this skill even at night and reached a milestone thus establishing his reputation within the pilot brotherhood.

5.1.3 Distinguishing Shame from Guilt

One pilot recalled a strike he had made in a previous air campaign flown under less restrictive ROE that made an impact on his life. This strike illustrates the difference between shame and guilt associated with the performance of pilots with respect to a moral standard. Following the destruction of the target, the pilot was on an emotional high. However, everything changed the next day when more information about the target became available. In his story, the pilot describes his response to this change by referring to a change in his emotional state. When he believed the target struck was legitimate, he was feeling great. When his belief about the target changed, that the target was now illegitimate, he felt awful. This change in emotional state provides an example of *dialectic diachronic* complex emotions as seen in Chapter 2 (section 1.2.3) when experiencing pleasurable feelings about the strike was followed by unpleasant feelings over a short period of time.

And you're kind of like excited, and you go, 'Whoo-hoo, that was awesome!' and then you, that was great because of adrenalin [sic], for a few, about a few minutes, right? And then you're basically, you're out of weapons, and you're going home. You go land, and you're in the debrief, and you're analyzing stuff, and sometimes, in that case, everything was good to go, everyone was like, 'Ah,

great. That's awesome. Good.' And then you go home, and then you get waken up in the middle of the night, going, 'Hey, there's an investigation. That was a wrong target,' or whatever. And you have to go in and give a statement, and then you feel like crap.

The pilot then went on and described how he cognitively experienced this strike after the fact. He replayed it over and over in his mind. This is a classical way of experiencing guilt according to Tangney and Dearing ([2002](#)). This pilot focused on his behaviour and not on his worth as a person.

(Oh, you feel) terrible, right? But you go through it. Did, could I have done, did I do something wrong? Could I have done something right? And you didn't do anything wrong, because you struck what you meant to strike, what they meant you to strike. Like, there was nothing wrong with what you did. But then you replay it and go, 'Was there some evidence there that I *could* have seen that would have tipped me off that that was the wrong, not the right thing.' So, you think about that quite a bit. Yah, for sure. Absolutely. So, that's happened to me once. And that's probably one that was the hardest strike ever I've ever done. Because I, you keep reanalyzing it, and you'll find things that you could have done. Even though it's ridiculous. The most ridiculous. (emphasis original)

With respect to collateral damage and accidentally killing civilians, this pilot admitted that it is inevitable in an air campaign. The pilot, however, was not talking about his experience over Iraq/Syria but referring to a previous air campaign. What allowed him to get over the guilt was that he was able to talk to significant others about his experiences as well as being cleared by his COC. He received the support confirming his belief that his actions resulted in an unfortunate accident rather than an intentional act.

Yah, well, it's not that. But ah, you just, nah, wow, shit happens. I mean, like you're gonna know, that's gonna happen. Like that, that is gonna happen. Guaranteed. If anyone thinks that ah, collateral damage doesn't happen, or you don't kill civilians, that is completely wrong, completely wrong. I mean we will go there with complete intention not to. We'll have a zero civ-cast framework, we'll have methodologies and procedures in place, but when you are killing people, you're it, that stuff's gonna happen. So, you just have to accept that on the get-go. First off, that's on the get-go. And you do everything you did correct, like, nothing else, you're really, nothing else you can do. So, you can beat yourself up over it, and like I beat myself up over that one for, for quite a while, for months. Ah, till I talk, and the only thing that made it better is that I talked to a lot of

people and everyone's like, 'You're an idiot. Like there's nothing you could have done. That was, that was good to go.' Like you got investigated and you got cleared within an, a couple hours and were flying the next day. Like, you know what I mean, like, it, there's, you're fine. Like, and ah, I completely stopped thinking about it, I would say, I would say a year after. Yah. It takes, everything takes time, right?

I would like to make two further observations from this quote. First, the pilot professes his belief (verbal dimension) that killing civilians is to be avoided as much as is humanly possible. At the same time, we learn that he did kill civilians accidentally. If the accidental killing of civilians had not been addressed by the pilot, it may have resulted in the adverse outcome of a moral injury. However, the pilot did address this issue by talking to significant others. This unfortunate incident presents a possible example of how a moral injury can be avoided. The pilot sought the support of others and shared the struggles with his thoughts and emotional reactions to this incident. He did not engage in maladaptive practices such as destructive habits, addictions, and isolation to avoid the unpleasant feelings of shame.

Second, when seeking the support of others, the pilot recalled significant others reassuring him about the incident. He humorously refers to them as calling him an *idiot*. From the pilot's description, though the pilot is describing a guilt response for an unfortunate incident, I also observe a lingering *unreflective occurrent passionate belief* (Chapter 2, section 1.4.4) about this incident. The pilot is also experiencing subtle shame about the incident. This shame is expressed not directly for accidentally killing civilians but for his emotional response towards accidentally killing them. He tacitly shames himself by recalling that others call him an *idiot* for his lingering feelings of guilt.

5.1.4 Dropping Bombs

One pilot mentioned a fear that may have surpassed all his other fears in the air campaign. It was a fear based on a belief associated with establishing his reputation in the pilot brotherhood. In his own words, he stated: "my biggest fear was, I hope I get, or I hope I'm not the guy who never gets to drop something the whole time I'm here." This pilot feared being the pilot who went into combat but never had the opportunity to drop a bomb on the enemy. He

wanted to establish his reputation as a fighter pilot by receiving the positive attention of pilots because of his achievement. He did not want to be singled out by other pilots as the guy who never dropped a bomb. He then described dropping his first bomb as a “humongous stress relief.” This is emphatic language describing a salient positive experience as undesirable-stress is released.

5.2 Examples of a Depreciation-Based Strategy

By means of a *depreciation-based strategy*, a pilot establishes, reinforces, or preserves his reputation by depreciating others. Although there were fewer examples of this strategy in the pilot corpus compared to a *performance-based* strategy, I did observe the following.

5.2.1 Depreciation of Other Pilots

Pilots establishing their reputation in a context of competition with other pilots may tend to depreciate other pilots. Although pilots form a cohesive team environment, at times I observed a subtle competition between pilots. For example, a pilot can jokingly point out the lack of experience of other pilots and use it to boost his own reputation.

As recounted in Chapter 5 (section 3.1.3), one pilot recalled seeing a streak of light in the sky coming from the ground and did not know what it was. He prepared to defend his plane, thinking that it might be a missile. After a few moments, he realized it was a power flare shot from the ground. Following this experience, he then recalled witnessing a similar event when flying as a wingman with another more experienced lead pilot. This lead pilot had never seen a power flare shot from the ground before. So, the lead pilot was understandably anxious when he saw this light in the sky. The wingman recalled that he had laughed in a friendly way at his lead’s lack of experience. I present this incident as an example of establishing one’s own reputation at the expense of another. Playing this joke on the lead pilot made this pilot feel better about himself since a more experienced pilot had the same doubts about the mysterious projectile that he had previously had.

Another example of the subtle *depreciation-based strategy* observed in the pilot corpus was the description of pilot error labelled in terms of costing the taxpayer money. A pilot mentioned the importance of drawing lessons from training *sorties*, “so we are not just burning gas in the sky.” Burning gas aimlessly is contrasted with drawing lessons or “drawing conclusions” from errors during training. I interpret this phrase as expressing a common pilot belief that the phrase “just burning gas” would be a term used to critique the incompetence of another pilot, thus propping up his own reputation.

The corpus provided one example of the tendency of pilots to talk about the mistakes of others rather than being honest about their own mistakes.

Other things known for fighter pilots: we don’t talk about our mistakes . . . Nobody talks about them . . . You’re going to talk about other people’s mistakes if you see them. But you’re not gonna talk ah, about your *own* mistakes.

5.2.2 Depreciation of the Enemy

According to a pilot, whom I will call pilot 1 for this example, one of the squadron norms was that the life of the enemy was not to be taken lightly. Pilots were to respect the enemy. They were not to joke, ridicule, or dehumanize the enemy among themselves.

Nobody takes life lightly. It was never something that we joked about; it was never something that you laugh about. ‘Aw, I killed these, whatever.’ I never tried to dehumanize the enemy. I would never use derogatory names for the enemy. I felt that there was, you have to respect your enemy.

However, as already mentioned in Chapter 4, another pilot referred to the enemy as the “bad guys.” A third pilot referred to the enemy as people he wished were not out there, as those who cut off the heads of their own mother because she does not approve of her son being part of ISIS. He does not refer to them as bad people. He shows respect for them. However, he does not approve of their actions.

For a fourth pilot, the enemy was described in derogatory terms, as terrible people and not like pilots from an enemy nation. The enemy pilots have respect in this pilot’s eyes; ISIS does not.

And then in, I think in terms of too, like who we were actually fighting, if we were fighting like another nation let's say, if I was fighting like another guy kind of like me, then I might feel a lot more remorse if I had killed one of them. But killing someone like ISIS, who are, I consider to be just the scum of the earth, I don't feel any remorse from that, because I just consider them just, just terrible, terrible people.

A fifth pilot expressed his beliefs about ISIS in the following manner, "cuz, we're not there to just drop bombs; we are there to get rid of ISIS. They're evil people."

So, by labelling ISIS as evil people, he is situating himself at the opposite pole: not being an evil person. In this way, he builds himself up in his own eyes. In addition, this belief would temporarily justify dropping bombs on ISIS without remorse.

Why this apparent contradiction between the respect pilots should hold for the enemy and some of the pilots' derogatory references to the enemy? One possible answer is that, in general, CF-18 fighter pilots hold a belief about enemy pilots in air-to-air combat that allow them to treat the enemy with respect. Pilots can identify with members of their own profession. Pilot 1 generalized this belief during the interview by applying it to the enemies in the air-to-ground conflict. He did not deprecate the enemy of the air campaign under study. The other pilots did not generalize this respect for enemy fighter pilots to the enemies of this multi-national air campaign and as a result, depreciated the enemy on the ground. This depreciation-based strategy served to build up their own personal worth in their own eyes.

5.2.3 Depreciation of those with PTSD

In response to my question about having talked to others about his combat experiences, one pilot introduced the subject of PTSD. He then recalled having spoken to other pilots about other military members claiming to have PTSD from watching videos of strikes. Based on what he had observed overseas, he believed that people not involved in combat take advantage of the system by claiming to have PTSD. This pilot is not referring to other fighter pilots, but either to those who are not directly connected with a traumatic event or to Canadian military support personnel who view strikes for intelligence purposes. Apart from not being aware of the possible nuances that may differentiate PTSD from moral injury as a result of

the vicarious witnessing of human injury, I interpret this pilot as establishing his reputation by depreciating those who are not part of the pilot brotherhood and who do not view the taking of life in the same manner as pilots.

The pilot in question may not have thought about the possibility that ground support personnel may have assembled the data on every strike and reviewed every strike, whereas pilots viewed only a small proportion of strikes and deployed their weapons based on decisions made by others.

5.2.4 Depreciation of Medical Support Personnel

One pilot provided an example of using humour as he subtly used a *depreciation-based strategy*. He told a story about pilots having fun by playing tricks on a military flight surgeon. The story was told in the context of pilots not having the need to talk to mental health support personnel. Pilots have an antagonistic relationship with military medical personnel because these personnel have the authority to ground pilots. Pilots want to preserve their personal reputation within the brotherhood by not being singled out as the pilot who was grounded because of a physical or psychological weakness. In addition, a long-term grounding could lead to an inability to fly for life ([Saitzyk et al., 2017](#)) thus, threatening the livelihood of the pilot.

And [the flight surgeon] didn't realize the hostile inherent relationship between a doctor, a physician, and a pilot. Is this an unwritten rule? Right. So, pilots don't like doctors. We don't like hospitals. Why? Because doctors ground pilots. So, you know, it is, it's, it's true. It makes no sense, totally get it. They're, they're there just to make sure your, your welfare is good, make sure you're not gonna crash a jet. We totally get that. But inherently there is, there is a bit of a, like they have to kind of treat you like a hostile witness a bit. And it is, it's kind of like that. I mean, it's less like that the older I get. But, certainly, when you're a young guy, this is the kind of perception that you, you. There's a, there is a bit of a, not a hostile relationship, but there, there is, there's some tensions in that relationship between doctors and pilots, right?

5.3 Examples of an Association-Based Strategy

By means of an *association-based strategy*, a person establishes, reinforces, or preserves his reputation by associating with persons or non-persons perceived as valuable to the cohesive community.

One pilot recalled feelings of authentic pride when he passed his final training flight to become a CF-18 fighter pilot. He had attained his goal and could now share in the collective honour associated with being a fighter pilot.

A second pilot referred to younger pilots that he now trains domestically in the following way:

So, I'm trying to make them understand that it, it's not all about flying jets and being awesome.

Here we have an example of this experienced pilot perceiving young, novice pilots as demonstrating hubristic pride because of their association with the fighter pilot brotherhood. A continuity exists, in these novice pilots, between the honour associated with flying jets and their own feelings of worth as an individual. The trainer pilot tried to counter this attitude.

A third pilot, on the other hand, associated more with intelligence personnel during the deployment than did other pilots. He recalled that during his deployment, he spent most of his free time in the intelligence tent. He wanted to have the latest updates of the battle. He believed that he was different from other pilots in this respect stating that other pilots probably did not do this.

From the first two examples, I observed that novice pilots naturally identify with the pilot brotherhood because they have a new identity that they are proud of. This new identity and collective honour associated with the pilot brotherhood allows these pilots to distance themselves from their previous non-pilot identity. With respect to the third pilot, for some reason, it was more advantageous for him, during the deployment, to distance himself at times from

the pilot brotherhood by spending more time with the intelligence personnel. This allowed him in some way to preserve his reputation in his own eyes.

In summary, according to the typology used in this section, examples of an *association-based strategy* are not as prevalent in the pilot corpus as are examples of *performance-based* and *depreciation-based strategies*.

5.4 Examples of an Attention-Based Strategy

As mentioned above, by use of an *attention-based strategy*, a benefactor pilot establishes, reinforces, or preserves his reputation by giving positive attention to beneficiary pilots who are using one or a combination of the other three strategies to pursue their reputation. Using an *attention-based strategy*, the advantages of this strategy is reciprocal in that the benefactor pilot contributing to a beneficiary pilot's reputation may be motivated by a need to have his own reputation established, reinforced, or preserved in the eyes of the beneficiary pilot.

I did not observe any uses of an attention-based strategy in the pilot corpus. This was due to my restricted research design. I conducted personal interviews but chose not to perform case studies by observing pilots in their interaction with one another. Future researchers may conduct case studies to harvest even richer descriptions.

However, I did observe two situations where I, as a researcher, used an *attention-based strategy* with pilots during the pilot interviews. I benefited by giving positive attention to beneficiary pilots. First, I observed this strategy in the context of a rare occasion when a pilot subtly depreciated another pilot. In Chapter 5, we saw how the words used in oral interactions between pilots could be used to support and encourage pilots or be used in a conflictual context. In response to a question about ever recalling pilots talk about their feelings, one pilot recalled two pilots arguing about "how to do an attack." This event provided an example of pilots expressing anger. Even though the pilot witnessed undesirable-stress in other pilots that manifested itself, on occasion, by inter-personal conflict, he never gave an example of being in a conflict himself or getting angry with another pilot. Everyone gets angry at times and loses

control of one's emotions to different degrees with the result of saying unkind words. I interpret the recollection of this incident not only as a subtle means of depreciating others but also as a means of establishing his reputation with me, the researcher.

A second example is when a pilot, who I interpret as seeking to establish his reputation with me, frequently distinguished himself from the defaults of fellow pilots by framing himself in a unique situation. When critiquing other pilots, he referred to them using the impersonal term *people*. Other pilots critiqued pilots occasionally during the interview but not to the same degree as this pilot.

So, that feeling of absolutely having to take matters into your own hand is, is very common amongst, amongst fighter pilots, and people have difficulties when they're put in the subordinate role.

In turn, as the benefactor, I re-enforced those descriptions of critique by nodding my head and providing positive attention and support to their reputation. However, not only was I the benefactor, I was also the beneficiary in this exchange because I was receiving experience-rich data!

6 Preserving Collective Pilot Honour from the Canadian Population

In this section, I examine shame in the pilot corpus as it relates to a collective understanding of self. Put differently, I will examine shame as a threat to collective fighter pilot honour.

As mentioned above, I propose in this study that undesirable-stress is a marker that helps identify when a pilot is attempting to establish, reinforce, or preserve his reputation (honour) with pilots within the brotherhood. However, as a cohesive community, pilots also wanted to preserve the collective honour that had been bestowed upon them by Canadian society. In this section, I present examples of pilots manifesting the anxiety associated with undesirable-stress because of wanting to preserve their collective honour. By withdrawing the collective honour of the pilot brotherhood, some Canadians may have been subtly shaming not only individual pilots but also the CF-18 fighter pilot brotherhood.

6.1 Withdrawing of Collective Honour: The Government

I observed the salient negative emotions associated with undesirable-stress when pilots recalled the action of the Canadian government to abruptly end the combat mission for fighter pilots on 15 February 2016. Without prompting, this act on behalf of the Canadian government was recalled by five of the six pilots interviewed.

One pilot recalled how the mission was ended abruptly and that the reasons given for bringing the planes home were weak. He shared some emotional hurt as he spoke collectively for pilots and for the flight detachment present in Kuwait during the pull-out. This pilot believed that appreciation was not shown by the Canadian government for the contribution of the pilots in this mission and for the sacrifice on the part of the families of deployed members.

A second pilot recalled how he felt angry and annoyed about the decision to bring the jets back.

Ah, but I did feel a lot of anger towards the decision to bring the jets out, and the kind of saying like, Oh, ah, the, the kind of fake reasons that were given for bringing them home, was, I found, annoyed me.

During the discussion on emotions in Chapter 2 (section 1.2.3), I noted that discrete emotions may be experienced in a complex fashion or blended together ([Grossmann et al., 2015](#)). Earlier in this chapter, Wilkinson ([2015](#)), citing Cook et al. ([2001](#)), draws attention to the possibility that shame may lie beneath other negative emotional responses, such as disgust and anger. As a result of these observations from the literature, I interpret the anger experienced by the above pilot as a reaction to feeling shamed by the government. Since shame experienced may be unreflective, those who experience shame may experience it through other unpleasant emotions such as anger ([Tangney & Dearing, 2002](#)).

A third pilot recalled that the cancellation of the mission by the government somehow demotivated him. This emotional response provides support that the cancellation of the mission is

somehow tied to pilots' collective identity. My interpretation is that pilots did not feel appreciated as a brotherhood and their honour was threatened by the government's decision. Pilots interpreted this decision as the government not valuing their contribution.

As noted in Chapter 5 (section 3.2.6), appreciation is a fundamental human need. Rhéaume (2008) informs us that the recognition of one's good work is a fundamental need and contributes to psychological well-being. He also brings to our attention that appreciation for the *utility* of professional work is a vertical recognition by an institution who pays for the work and affirms that the work achieved aligned with institutional goals. From the emotional response of pilots when recalling their response to the cancellation of the mission, I interpret that pilots believed that the government did not appreciate the utility of their professional work and that their work did not contribute to Canadian interests.

. . . that pulling us out of the mission wouldn't have made a big deal anyway.
Which, which is kind of like a hit on the head after being there for a year and a half, to say that we're not, that our contribution isn't gonna make a big difference.

By not appreciating pilot utility, the government unintentionally withdrew honour from the pilots, thus resulting in feelings of shame experienced by the pilots.

6.2 Withdrawing of Collective Honour: Canadians in General

In the context of the mission being ended by the Canadian government, one pilot also expressed the belief that Canadians were uninformed and uninterested in the mission. This lack of interest on the part of some of the Canadian population implied that pilot involvement and their families' sacrifice was irrelevant to the daily lives of these Canadians. From the pilot's perspective, the honour of being an elite pilot and undergoing specialized training to do a specific job was not recognized by the Canadian population. Though this pilot did not mention his own family suffering because of his deployment, a second implied it. Due to the withdrawing of honour from Canadians in general, pilots experienced the unpleasant feelings of shame.

To go one step further, this second pilot experienced not only withdrawing of honour by Canadians in general, he was also shamed by individual Canadians. After his deployment, he recalled being accused by some individuals as “killing babies and innocent people.” I interpret this personal accusation of an individual fighter pilot of such immoral behaviour as a generalized shaming of the collectivity of pilots. There was no way that the accuser could determine if this specific pilot, did in fact, kill civilians.

Of course, these were isolated events and not a continuous barrage critiquing the mission and shaming pilots as was the case for American military members during and following the Vietnam War.

In contrast to these isolated, negative incidents recorded in the pilot corpus, other events experienced by pilots depict positive feedback and support that pilots received from significant others. One pilot shared about the support he received from a friend living in another country.

I’ve got a friend. She has really no idea about world events and stuff like that, but even she would take the time to give a shout out and say ‘thanks for what you’re doing, not sure exactly where you’re, but stay safe and you’re making us all proud.’

It appears that significant others carried more weight for pilots than public opinion.

6.3 Shame from the Canadian Media

Two of the six pilots interviewed commented on the Canadian media reporting possible civilian casualties in Iraq/Syria due to strikes by CF-18 fighter pilots. One pilot stated that he took what the media wrote with a grain of salt. In his opinion, the media gives a point of view to make a headline and not to present a balanced view.

[I take the] media with a bit of a grain of salt because at the end of the day the headlines, or whatever the headlines is [sic], the most popular headline is gonna get the most attention.

A second pilot recalled that the public media misrepresented the mission by saying that pilots killed civilians. He had to explain to his mother that what she had seen in a Canadian documentary was wrong.

I remember, there was some media reports coming out that we had killed innocent people, that there were civilian casualties, collateral damage, which was totally wrong. I remember talking to my mom on the phone saying, ‘Is this true? Did this happen? I saw a report on . . . that you guys dropped a, some bombs on a bunch of villagers in a factory,’ or something. It’s, no, we, we didn’t. That’s just total bullshit. It didn’t happen.

It’s interesting to note that the media report of a pilot killing civilians in one strike may be generalized to all pilots by some in the Canadian population. One example came up in the interviews.

Pilot: Where you get people saying, ‘Oh, you’re baby killers,’ and, y’know, ‘You killed all these innocent people,’ and ‘How could you do this?’

Interviewer: You’ve had people mention that to you?

Pilot: Yah

Interviewer: Personally?

Pilot: Yah

In this example, there is a continuity between the reported morally unacceptable act of one pilot and the collective shame or unworthiness of all CF-18 pilots in the air campaign. There is no way that the person making the accusation could have known if this particular pilot had dropped that bomb. I previously noted in section 3.5 of this chapter that in contrast to the fighter pilot profession, a discontinuity exists between the actions of an individual doctor and all doctors. The morally unacceptable behaviour of one physician is not transferred to all within the medical profession.

Whether it was the lack of interest in what pilots were doing over Iraq or the accusations made against this pilot, the reputation of this individual pilot and the collective honour of the pilot brotherhood were being threatened. This threat to honour was interpreted as an act of

all Canadian pilots involved in the air campaign being shamed. Though unreflective at the cognitive level, this pilot was feeling the effects of shame at the affective level.

In spite of this shame directed to his personal reputation and his collective honour, this pilot proved resilient to this shame and was able to see the benefits of his experience in combat now that he was back home.

I would say it's definitely gotten better too, because you come back with that wealth of experience. And you can tailor the training to what you've seen, and what you've learned, and the weapons that you've used, and how you've used them, and the things that you've learned about them, and what works, what doesn't work, and you can, you have that experience of, how we actually go to war now, as a fighter pilot, what that process means . . .

Once you go and you do the real thing and you realize how it's done and what you've been maybe doing wrong, prior, in the training, and how you can help that. So, I think that's better. And I think I've grown as a person from my experiences. It's such a rich experience. It's like, the things that I experienced.

Conclusion

Based on an empathic reading of pilots' salient emotional experiences in Chapter 5, I identified stress as the core reflective interpretive phenomenon explaining those experiences. In this chapter, I advanced my analysis of pilot experiences by means of a critical reading. Based on a critical reading of salient pilot emotional experiences, I identified individual and collective shame as the core unreflective interpretive phenomena explaining those same experiences.

When I make the claim that individual and collective shame are the core unreflective interpretive phenomena of salient pilot emotional experiences, I mean the following:

- 1) As research participants, pilots, in all probability, were not aware of individual and collective shame as being at the source of the different aspects of stress they were experiencing. By being unreflective, pilots have not been able to associate these phenomena as being at the root of their salient emotional experiences.

- 2) As researcher, I used stress as a marker to interpret pilots' affective stress-related experiences by categorizing honour and shame according to the typology adapted from my reading of the literature.

Similar to the psychological literature consulted, the examples of individualized shame drawn from the pilot corpus tended more to the feelings of unworthiness (*being*) at the level of the individual (*self-imposed shame*) rather than actually being the victim of another's shaming. In contrast, fighter pilots as a brotherhood were victims of collective shame perpetrated by the government, Canadians in general, and the Canadian media. The government withdrew collective honour traditionally credited to pilots and some Canadians and some public media presentations shamed pilots collectively by accusations of killing civilians.

In Chapter 9, I will expand my examination of pilot experiences beyond a purely horizontal stance (whether psychological or sociological) by adopting a vertical or theological stance. Having done so, I will enter into an interpretive dialogue between the human sciences and the Christian tradition. But before entering into this dialogue, in the following two chapters, I will introduce a second corpus of text to supplement the corpus of pilot experiences. This other corpus, associated with the Christian tradition, will extend our understanding of the phenomena of stress and honour/shame by helping us to observe their characteristics that are common to humanity throughout the ages.

CHAPTER 7: GOSPEL CORPUS ANALYSIS – AN EMPATHIC, HERMENEUTICAL PORTRAYAL

Having completed an interpretive phenomenological analysis of the salient emotional experiences of pilots in Chapters 5 and 6, I now attempt to enrich my understanding of the phenomena of honour/shame. To do so, I undertake a similar analysis of these same phenomena in an additional corpus in order to draw comparisons between the two corpora in Chapter 9.

In their thematic study on thinking, Howard R. Pollio, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Tennessee and co-author Michael J. Ursiak ([2006](#)) used a text by the noted American psychologist William James (1842-1910) ([1890](#)) as the 85th participant in their research study. Pollio and Ursiak proposed that a qualitative study gains robustness by comparing contemporary texts with a text written in the past. If contemporary human experience shares patterns with human experience from the past, this mutuality supports the claim that some experiences are common to humanity across cultures and generations.

Following Pollio and Ursiak's lead, I have chosen to supplement the pilot corpus with a pre-Enlightenment corpus of literature that provides an account of the life-world of a figure from a more distant past. The figure I have chosen is Jesus Christ. I have not chosen this figure arbitrarily. Rather, I base this decision on the following three arguments.⁴⁴

First, Jesus Christ is a decisive figure in Western civilization. His influence has left a mark on Western society and around the world. Even in a post-Christian Western society, the life and the teachings of Jesus remain a fundamental reference of huge historical importance. For example, most Western believers and non-believers alike would agree with Jesus' teaching

⁴⁴ As mentioned earlier, I direct this dissertation to those who identify more with contemporary culture than with Academia or the Christian tradition. For readers identifying with the Christian tradition, my reasons for choosing the life-world of Jesus Christ to supplement the pilot corpus rather than another Biblical figure such as the Apostle Paul may be less obvious. I chose Jesus to limit my analysis to the manageable gospel corpus. If I had chosen the Apostle Paul, I would have analyzed the Book of Acts along with the epistles written by Paul. The analysis of the life experiences of the Apostle Paul would be an interesting study to undertake in the future.

that every human life is of equal value, that it is wrong to judge others by means of random external standards, and that it is nobler to suffer than to inflict suffering.

Second, as a theologian from an evangelical Christian tradition, Jesus Christ is my source of ultimate concern. Having grown up in an agnostic tradition, as a student in university I had a conversion experience in which the redemptive figure of Jesus played a significant role in overcoming my own guilt and shame before a holy God. With this experience as part of my pre-understanding, I find it appropriate to choose the four accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as a supplementary corpus for this research inquiry.

Finally, though I situate this interdisciplinary study at the crossroads of the academic fields of the human sciences and theology, most readers will evaluate this dissertation from a theological stance. Therefore, I find it appropriate to include a corpus that has generated much theological discussion. As the late evangelical scholar Frederick Fyvie Bruce (1910-1990) wrote in the Introduction to the book *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* ([Blomberg, 1987](#)), the gospel corpus⁴⁵ has been the focus of the most stringent analytical study of any text within the past 200 years.

The life of Jesus, as portrayed in the gospel corpus, spanned approximately 33 years of which the last three were dedicated to public ministry. During his public ministry, Jesus was similar in age to a number of pilots interviewed for this study. The similarity of age provides for an interesting comparison between the experience of contemporary participants interviewed for this study and the experiences of Jesus portrayed in the gospel corpus.

⁴⁵ Within the evangelical tradition, the Christian Scriptures are composed of the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament (OT) refers to the recorded accounts centring on the theme of God revealing Himself to the children of Israel. These books are believed to have been written prior to 400 BCE. The New Testament (NT) refers to the 27 books written over a period of about 50 years in the late first-century. In the first four books of the NT, the evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – provide separate written accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In this dissertation, I refer to these four books as the gospel corpus.

In a non-phenomenological research context, Anderson ([2011](#)) writes about empathic identification where writers, actors, and psychotherapists attempt to inhabit the life-world of another person. Whether it be a character or a client, by making the effort to see the world through the eyes of another, alternate possible meanings of life events surface. Thus, to better understand the life-world of research participants, Anderson encourages qualitative researchers using an *Intuitive* research strategy to take an empathic rather than suspicious stance when interpreting their data.

In a theological context, many evangelical theologians use a strategy of empathy rather than suspicion when interpreting a text of the Christian Scriptures. Although these theologians approach the text with their own pre-understanding, they seek to understand the meaning in light of the historical-cultural context and personal interest of the original author within the flow of the history of salvation ([Carson, 1996](#)). If not, they claim that the reader may tend to be suspicious of the original intent of the author and consciously or unconsciously substitute his own historical-cultural pre-understanding and personal interests to derive meaning from the text.

Consistent with the essential elements of a phenomenological study referred to in Chapter 2 (section 1.4.5), while interpreting the gospel corpus, I attempt to adopt a phenomenological attitude ([A. P. Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003](#)). With respect to this attitude, rather than being suspicious of the author's narrative rhetoric, by means of an empathic reading I allow the implied author⁴⁶ to persuade me to view characters and events in the way that he portrayed them. In addition, by means of an empathic reading of the gospel corpus, I attempt, to the best of my ability, to bracket or set aside the theological significance of the events in the life-world of Jesus and other characters to shed light on the taken-for-granted aspects of the events.

⁴⁶ Within the narrative approach, the implied author refers to the author of the text as revealed in the text. This self-revelation of the author in the text is based on the beliefs, values, and perspective that the author chose to highlight ([Osborne, 2006](#)).

In my analysis of the gospel corpus, I attempt to remain consistent with the approach I took to analyze the pilot corpus. In Chapter 4, I presented a description of the shared reality forming the backdrop of fighter pilot combat experiences. To do so, I pieced together a chronological, composite narrative from pilot transcripts corresponding to the observable shared reality that situated individual pilot combat experiences. This composite narrative became the background context for my inquiry into the phenomena of stress and honour/shame in Chapters 5 and 6.

In this chapter, I undertake a similar but not identical approach in my analysis of the gospel corpus. One adaptation I make is that I do not present a chronological, composite narrative of the life and ministry of Jesus from the four gospel accounts as I did of pilot experiences in Chapter 4.⁴⁷ Another adaptation is that I refer to but do not heavily focus on the experiences of stress in the gospel corpus. This is mainly due to my preferred interest in focusing on the dual phenomena of honour/shame. Therefore, I analyze a sampling of the dual phenomena of honour/shame experienced by Jesus and other characters in the gospel corpus. My aim is not to say everything there is to be said about honour/shame in the gospel corpus. Rather, my aim is to enrich the essential elements of the phenomenon of honour/shame gleaned when applying the *eidetic reduction* to the pilot corpus in Chapter 6. In Chapter 8, I will propose a more detailed analysis of the phenomena of honour/shame from two specific passages situated in the Gospel of Luke.

The reader will recall in Chapter 2 (section 1.2) that when using a *dimensional model* of emotions to describe human experience, the phenomenon of honour may be experienced in a positive way, while the phenomenon of shame may be experienced in a negative way. From the perspective of the beneficiary, this individual may interpret the positive attention of hon-

⁴⁷ Readers not having an adequate background in the life of Jesus can refer to the chronological account proposed by Ziman ([2010](#))

our as enhancing the worth of the person. Similarly, the phenomenon of shame may be experienced in a negative way. The victim may interpret the negative attention as diminishing the worth of a person.

I begin my interpretation of the gospel corpus by identifying a sampling of the events associated with pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences as portrayed in the life of Jesus. Next, I identify events in the gospel corpus that portray Jesus as a victim of shame. Then, I provide examples when Jesus used shame for both the detriment and the benefit of the person he shames. Finally, I focus on honour by providing examples in the gospel corpus where honour is understood as either a positive or negative phenomenon.

My intent in this chapter is to enrich the understanding of the dual phenomena of honour/shame acquired up to this point in the research inquiry.

1 Phenomenological Analysis of the Salient Emotional Responses of Jesus

According to the evangelical Christian tradition, the biblical text portrays Jesus as being fully divine and fully human. The 20th-century American evangelical theologian, Wayne Grudem ([1994](#)), refers to this doctrine as “The Incarnation: Deity and Humanity in the One Person of Christ” (p. 553). According to this doctrine, the humanity of Jesus does not diminish his divinity. From a psychological perspective, in his humanity, Jesus is portrayed as experiencing the full range of human emotions from deep sorrow (Mt 26:38) to marvel (Mt 8:10). However, in contrast to our experience of humanity, Jesus differs in that “he was without sin, and he never committed sin during his lifetime” (p. 535). The implication of this doctrine for this present inquiry is that, though tempted, Jesus did not exhibit any human emotion classified as morally sinful. In other words, he did not commit any emotional sin that would have placed him in a state of rebellion with respect to his Heavenly Father.

When identifying the emotional response of Jesus as portrayed in the gospel corpus, I concede that some of the events I refer to do not explicitly mention Jesus’ emotional response. On this subject, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921), a past president of Princeton

Theological Seminary, wrote the following with respect to the emotions of Jesus portrayed in the gospel corpus.

What we are given is, no doubt, only the highlights. But it is easy to fill in the picture mentally with the multitude of emotional movements which have not found record just because they were in no way exceptional. Here obviously is a being who reacts as we react to the incitements which arise in daily intercourse with men, and whose reactions bear all the characteristics of the corresponding emotions we are familiar with in our experience ([1912, p. 83](#)).

I have the conviction that the interpretation I propose with respect to the emotional response of Jesus to events he experienced is congruent with the normal response of a rational person in our contemporary Western society living a similar situation.⁴⁸ To rephrase this last statement in the terms of the contemporary qualitative research tradition, the interpretations I propose with respect to the emotional response of Jesus to events borrows from the criteria of resonance or vicarious identification with experience ([Fischer, 2006](#)). If the interpretation I offer of Jesus' emotional response from the gospel corpus resonates with readers of this research inquiry, the generalization of these findings is applicable to these readers in similar situational contexts.

This means of interpretation – which admittedly is tentative and hypothetical – will allow for the comparison of a pre-scientific corpus of the Christian tradition with the contemporary corpus of CF-18 fighter pilot experiences presented in Chapter 9.

1.1 Pleasant Experiences of Jesus

This first section provides a sampling of the events recorded in the gospel corpus that elicited pleasant emotional experiences in the life of Jesus. I chose only those pleasant emotional experiences that I interpreted as being associated with the honouring of Jesus. I categorized

⁴⁸ One possible critique of comparing Jesus' emotional responses to those of a normal, rational person in contemporary Western society is that Jesus was both human and divine, while the contemporary person lacks divinity. My response to this critique is that Jesus provides the ideal emotional response that contrasts with the fallen human emotional responses we take for granted.

these events under the following themes: events occurring in the initial stages of Jesus' public ministry, events triggered by Gentiles in need, events triggered by Jesus, and events affirming Jesus' unique ministry apart from any healing miracles.

1.1.1 Events Occurring during the Initial Stages of Jesus' Public Ministry

Although Jesus was born into a humble family, I interpret the following events occurring during the initial stages of his public ministry as being an exhilarating and honouring experience for him. During his baptism and his anointing by the Holy Spirit for public ministry, Jesus is attributed the honour of being the son of the voice from heaven (Mt 3:16-17). Following his temptation in the Judean wilderness and his ministry initiative in Judea, the imprisonment of John the Baptist led Jesus to move his focus of ministry to the town of Capernaum (Mt 4:12). In this new phase, Jesus summoned his disciples to join his ministry team (Mt 4:18-22). A number of successful initiatives in his teaching and healing ministry followed this call. As a result, Jesus grew in popularity and the Jewish people pursued him to heal their physical and spiritual ills (Lu 4:40-42). Jesus' popularity during this stage implies the honouring of Jesus by the Jewish population.

1.1.2 Events Triggered by Gentiles in Need

On rare occasions, the gospel corpus records Jesus' amazement at the faith he observed in certain non-Jewish individuals who initiate contact with him. Jesus responds with amazement to the request made by the Centurion to heal his servant (Mt 8:5-13) and to the request made by the Canaanite woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon to heal her demon-possessed daughter (Mt 15:21-28). In both episodes, Jesus, amazed at their faith, grants their request. I suggest that Jesus' interaction with both the Centurion and Canaanite woman were motivating, pleasant experiences. The individuals honour Jesus both by approaching him with their requests and by responding to him in faith. In return, Jesus honours both for their faith and grants their requests.

1.1.3 Events Triggered by Jesus

On other occasions, Jesus witnesses changed hearts in the lives of people with whom he initiates contact. I interpret that this, in turn, leads Jesus to experiencing pleasant emotions associated with honour. First, at Jacob's well outside the town of Sychar, Jesus engages in a conversation with a Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-42). Through that conversation, Jesus reveals that he is the living water she is searching for. As a result, the woman experiences a change of heart. In turn, she bears witness to the Samaritans of Sychar that Jesus is the Messiah. While interpreting these events to his disciples, Jesus refers to the changed hearts of the Samaritans by using a joyful, agrarian metaphor of fields ripe for harvest. Later, the people of Sychar honour Jesus by urging him to stay with them. Many of those who hear Jesus' teaching over the next two days became believers.

Second, as Jesus passes through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, he initiates contact with Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Addressing Zacchaeus personally, Jesus invites himself to Zacchaeus's home (Lu 19:1-10). Because of Jesus' initiative, Zacchaeus experiences a changed heart. Honouring Jesus with his changed heart, Zacchaeus joyfully professes his decision to repay anyone of whom he has taken financial advantage and to give a portion of his wealth to the poor.

1.1.4 Events Affirming Jesus' Unique Ministry Apart from any Healing Miracles

Although Jesus performed many healing miracles drawing positive attention to himself, specific events apart from his miracles also led to the honouring of Jesus. First, in Matthew 17:1-9, during the transfiguration, Jesus receives a second audible affirmation from his Heavenly Father. His closest disciples (Peter, James, and John) witnesses this affirmation. Second, in Matthew 21:1-11, Jesus rides into Jerusalem seated on the colt of a donkey. The crowds call out *Hosanna* as an expression of praise and honour to Jesus as he enters Jerusalem as king.

1.1.5 Summary

From the above sampling, I interpret the honouring of Jesus as being associated with the pleasant, motivating, emotional experiences he would have felt on these occasions. I also

observe that the phenomenon of honour before the Enlightenment is not uniquely a collective phenomenon. I noted in Chapter 6 that the sociologists Berger et al. (1974) documented the eroding of collective honour in Western societies since the Enlightenment. From a sociological perspective, individual honour in the form of human dignity has replaced the collective honour associated with pre-Enlightenment societies. However, from these gospel accounts, set within a pre-Enlightenment society, I observed that the phenomenon of honour extends beyond collectivities to individuals. Jesus received honour as an individual and he honoured individuals apart from their collective identity. Later in this chapter, I will return to the phenomenon of honour in the gospel corpus and give examples of honour not only as a healthy phenomenon but also how the need for honour can become a toxic phenomenon.

1.2 Unpleasant Experiences of Jesus

Not only does the gospel corpus portray Jesus as experiencing pleasant emotions, the gospel corpus also records Jesus' salient unpleasant experiences. Individuals triggered some of the events that led to Jesus' unpleasant experiences, while other events were provoked by Jesus himself.

1.2.1 Unpleasant Events Triggered by Others

Some events Jesus experienced would certainly challenge the coping capacities of a normal, rational person in Western society. For example, Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the Judean wilderness challenges him physically and emotionally, leaving him vulnerable to the three-fold temptation by his adversary, the devil (Mt 4:1-11). Sometime later, Jesus is deeply distressed over the stubborn hearts of the Jewish religious leaders (Mk 3:5). These leaders accuse Jesus for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Then, Jesus grieves over the death of his colleague, John the Baptist, by withdrawing to a solitary place (Mt 14:13). These intense, unpleasant experiences continue during his public ministry. In Matthew 26:36-38; John 12:27-30 and 13:21, the gospel corpus portrays Jesus as experiencing intense sorrow as he anticipates his betrayal at the hands of Judas, one of his 12 disciples. This betrayal instigates the traumatic events commonly referred to as the Passion, which culminates with Jesus' death on the cross. During his prayer on the Mount of Olives, Jesus expresses his troubled soul (Jn

12:27-30). His prayer points to the internal struggle he faces at that moment. On the one hand, he seeks liberation from his impending death. On the other hand, he chooses to face his death for the glory of his Father's name. In Luke 22:42-44, Jesus is alone and prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives to the east of Jerusalem. The gospel corpus portrays Jesus as being in anguish as he anticipates his betrayal. The psychological anguish is so great that the gospel corpus records that sweat from Jesus' forehead were like drops of blood rolling onto the ground.

The unpleasant experiences of undesirable-stress may have crossed over into distress when Jesus was crucified on the cross, though this can be debated. If distress is defined as an individual facing an event that exceeds his psychological *tipping point* (see Chapter 5 section 1.1), then Jesus may have been in distress. His coping capacities may have been overwhelmed leading to some degree of personal dysfunction. This possibility is suggested if the culmination of his distress occurs when he cries out in pain to his Heavenly Father, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Mt 27:45-46; Mk 15:34). On the other hand, other quotes in the gospel corpus give the impression that although Jesus was in great pain and turmoil, he did not become dysfunctional while experiencing this abandonment by his Heavenly Father. They are "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit'" (Lu 23:46), and "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (Jn 19:30).

My interpretation is that whether Jesus crossed the frontier between intense undesirable-stress and dysfunctional distress, any rational person in contemporary society would experience intense undesirable-stress or distress when his physical life is threatened. This is a normal response common to all humanity.

1.2.2 Unpleasant Events Provoked by Jesus

Not only did Jesus experience unpleasant events triggered by others, Jesus also provoked people in ways that resulted in an unpleasant backlash. Below, I briefly summarize events initiated by Jesus that stirred up the anger of his human adversaries.

First, in Matthew 9:1-3, Jesus pronounces the forgiveness of sins to a paralyzed man. In response, the scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy.⁴⁹ Second, the gospel corpus depicts Jesus in an intense emotional state when he drives Jewish vendors and moneychangers out of the temple in Jerusalem (Mt 21:12; Mk 11:15). Because of Jesus' action, the chief priests respond by plotting to kill him (Mk 11:18). Third, during Jesus' ministry, many of his followers choose to abandon him because of his offensive teaching. In John 6:60-71, the gospel corpus records Jesus, when teaching his followers, as using the offensive metaphor of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. As a result, not only do scores of people leave Jesus, the corpus also hints at an experience of discouragement, in his words, when he asks his 12 disciples, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" (Jn 6:67). Finally, throughout his ministry, Jesus receives numerous death threats. In Matthew 12:13-14, Jesus receives a death threat for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. In John 5:16-18, Jesus receives a death threat for claiming God as his own father and thus making himself equal to God. On two other occasions in John 8:52-59 and 10:31-33, Jesus refers to himself using terms that were interpreted by his adversaries as claims of divinity. On both occasions, his adversaries pick up stones to kill him for blasphemy.

1.2.3 Summary

From the above examples, I observe that, at times, Jesus' claims and actions provokes others to reciprocate in negative ways. In turn, this increases his vulnerability to experiencing undesirable-stress that increases in intensity through the unfolding of the narrative in the gospel corpus. The intensity of this undesirable-stress may have crossed over into distress while Jesus is on the cross. However, nowhere in the gospel corpus do we read how Jesus experiences these negative events. Nevertheless, I am convinced that a normal, rational person today, if placed in a similar situation, would find these events unpleasant. This undesirable-stress would be most intense when one's life is threatened.

⁴⁹ My interpretation is that it would not be a pleasant experience for a religious leader seeking the welfare of others to be accused of blasphemy.

2 Phenomenological Analysis of Jesus as a Victim of Shaming Behaviour

Similar to the portrayal of Jesus experiencing events that made him vulnerable to unpleasant emotions, the gospel corpus also portrays Jesus as being the victim of shame. Among those occasions, some of the circumstances were beyond his control, while other circumstances were not. First, I draw attention to those occasions when circumstances beyond his control contributed to Jesus being a victim of shame.

2.1 Jesus Shamed by Life's Circumstances

Jesus' life circumstances, such as his birth and family background, are the first examples of Jesus being the victim of shame in his society. Matthew portrays Jesus as conceived out of wedlock by an act of the Holy Spirit who came upon his mother, Mary (Mt 1:18-25). Conception out of wedlock, according to the social consciousness of Jewish society at the time, would have been a potential source of shame for Jesus ([McNish, 2004](#)). In other passages, Jesus is referred to as the carpenter's son (Mt 13:55), the carpenter (Mk 6:3), and the son of Joseph (Lu 4:22; Jn 6:42). Both in Nazareth and in Capernaum the Jewish community knew the humble family background of Jesus. As a result, the Jews voice their public skepticism which borders on shaming, when they challenge Jesus on his claim to have come "down from heaven" (Jn 6:42).

The above examples warrant the interpretation that life's circumstances contributed in some way to the negative attention directed to Jesus. In my estimation, if a normal, rational Canadian today were to live similar events, he would experience some degree of shame.

2.2 Jesus Shamed by Others

In contrast to being shamed by circumstances beyond his control, it is more common to find Jesus exercising control over the events that exposed him to shame. I propose the following examples as events likely to elicit feelings of shame in a normal, rational individual in our contemporary society.

2.2.1 Shamed by His Family

Jesus' own family has doubts about him. For example, in Mark 3:20-35, members of his family consider Jesus to be "out of his mind." They come looking for him as the teachers of the law accuse him of being possessed by an evil spirit. In another passage, John 7:1-5, the gospel corpus portrays his family as not believing in him. They subtly mock Jesus by suggesting that he go to Jerusalem during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles to perform miracles for his disciples. Acting prudently, Jesus refuses to take their advice because he is aware of the plot by the Jews in Judea to take his life.

2.2.2 Shamed by His Hometown Community

All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.

They got up, drove him out of the town,
and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built,
in order to throw him off the cliff.

But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.
(Luke 4:28-30)

In Luke 4:16-30, we read of Jesus returning to his hometown of Nazareth early in his ministry. While in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus reads a passage from the Jewish Scriptures (Is 61:1, 2) referring to the coming of God's kingdom on earth. Then, sitting down, he claims the fulfillment of this prophecy in their presence. Aware of the hearts of his listeners and his inability to perform miracles because of their lack of faith, Jesus shares the axiom of Jewish prophets not being welcome in their hometown. He then backs that claim from the Jewish Scriptures. He reminds his listeners of two occasions in their Scriptures when the prophets Elijah and Elisha could not perform miracles in their Jewish community. Rather, God led these prophets to heal Gentiles from neighbouring enemy lands. The narrative then portrays Jesus' words as provoking his listeners to anger. This anger response may have been due to the bitter hatred for Gentiles that developed as a result of Jewish nationalism stemming from the Maccabean revolt ([Blomberg, 1997](#)). This anger leads to the unsuccessful attempt of the listeners to take Jesus' life. Matthew 13:53-58 presents a parallel account. Although the details in Matthew's are summarized, the result is similar. The honour normally bestowed upon a Jewish prophet was denied Jesus in his home town ([Malina & Neyrey, 1991c](#)).

2.2.3 Shamed by a Gentile Community

He said to them, “Go!”

So, they came out and went into the pigs,
and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this,
including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus.

And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

(Matthew 8:32-34)

In Matthew 8:28-34, Jesus is implicitly shamed in the eyes of his disciples when the citizens of the region of the Gadarenes ask him to leave. Although Jesus casts out several demons from a possessed man, Jesus chooses to allow the demons to go into a herd of swine. Because of the drowning of the herd, the implication is that Jesus wiped out part of this non-Jewish community's livelihood. Taking this event at face value by bracketing any theological reason for Jesus sending the demons into the herd of pigs, one could imagine Jesus having other options for dealing with the demons. I interpret the request by the local population for Jesus to leave the area as implicitly shaming Jesus in the eyes of his disciples. Instead of looking up to Jesus because of the success of his ministry, the disciples observe the apparent closing of the door for further ministry in that region.

2.2.4 Shamed by the Jewish Community

He went in and said to them,

“Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.”

But they laughed at him.

(Mark 4:39-40)

In Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5: 21-43, and Luke 8:40-56, Jesus is on his way to the home of a Jewish leader by the name of Jairus. Jairus's daughter is deathly ill. As he approaches Jairus's house, the Jewish crowd informs Jesus and Jairus of the girl's death. Jesus, however, ignores their interpretation of the event and provides an alternative: the child is only asleep. At this point, the gospel corpus notes that the crowd publicly laughs at Jesus. I interpret the laughing in this context as being equivalent to casting ridicule on Jesus for his refusal to accept the reality of the situation. Jesus, however, does not react to this shaming. He ignores it and focuses on healing the girl.

2.2.5 Shamed by the Jewish Leaders in Jerusalem and by the Soldiers

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them.

He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium)
and called together the whole company of soldiers.

They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.

And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!”

Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him.

Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him.

And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him.

Then they led him out to crucify him.

(Mark 15:15-20)

After the betrayal by Judas and while in the custody of different regiments of guards and soldiers, Jesus experiences verbal abuse and brutal physical acts intending to confer shame upon him. During his trial, recorded in Matthew 26:67, the chief priests and the Sanhedrin spit, slap, and hit Jesus. More specifically, the negative attention is directed to Jesus' face (Mt 26:67; Mk 14:65; Lu 22:64; Jn 18:22). In Matthew 27:26-31 and Mark 15:15-20, Jesus is shamed by being beaten and mocked by Pilate's soldiers. In Luke 23:11, Herod and his soldiers also have their turn to mock Jesus.

2.2.6 Shamed while on the Cross

Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying,
“So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days,

come down from the cross and save yourself!”

In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves.

“He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself!

Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross,
that we may see and believe.”

Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

(Mark 15:29-32)

During the crucifixion, Jesus endures his greatest public shame. Jesus is stripped of his clothes (shame relative to a visual source), mocked by the chief priests, and insulted by the criminals crucified next to him (shame relative to an auditive source). Finally, the greatest source of shame is his rejection and judgment by his own Heavenly Father (shame relative to a relational source). This is confirmed by Jesus' cry of desolation, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (Mt 27:45-46), a prophetic fulfillment of Psalm 22:1.

2.3 Summary

The gospel corpus identifies Jesus' emotional responses towards certain events and remains silent with respect to others. Some of Jesus' salient emotional responses were pleasant, while others were not. From the analysis of the gospel corpus to this point, the following two observations surprised me: first, even though the gospel corpus records events when Jesus is shamed, the corpus remains silent with respect to any susceptibility on Jesus' part to the affective dimension of the phenomenon of shame; and second, in most of the situations when Jesus is shamed, Jesus is portrayed as provoking this response in others by his teachings or by his actions. As a result, I conclude that Jesus did not intentionally avoid being exposed to shame. Being resilient to shame, Jesus may have even welcomed it!

When analyzing these accounts of Jesus' response to shame, I also observed that Jesus appeared to use shame in some of his interactions with others. To continue my *eidetic reduction* and further enrich my understanding of shame, I decided to explore further when Jesus used shame in his interaction with others. The result of this exploration led to the observation that shame is not always *detrimental* when viewed from the perspective of the gospel corpus. With this insight, I continue my hermeneutical phenomenological analysis of shame in the gospel corpus by focusing on the *beneficial* and *detrimental* uses of shame.

3 Phenomenological Analysis of Shame in the Gospel Corpus

Being a common human experience, we can expect that the phenomenon of shame is presented in various contexts within the gospel corpus. Having identified examples of the shaming of Jesus by both life circumstances outside his control and by people provoked by his teaching and actions, I turn my attention to other examples of shame in the gospel corpus.

Although shame is usually associated with an unpleasant emotional response, another way of categorizing shame is by looking at the intent of someone who resorts to the use of shame. The shaming of another is most understood as detrimental since it hurts the victim in some way by reducing self-worth. However, is it possible to shame a person for his benefit and not

associate it with reducing self-worth? In other words, if shaming occurs for the victim's detriment, the shaming is advantageous, in some way, to the interests of the perpetrator. I will refer to this shame as toxic shame ([Morrison, 2011](#)). Contrarily, if shaming occurs for the recipient's benefit, the shaming occurs with the best interests of the recipient in mind. I will refer to this shame as healthy shame. I begin the following section by noting incidents of shaming from the gospel corpus that I interpret as being toxic for the victim by reducing self-worth. Then I will draw attention to examples of shame that have beneficial intent for the recipient and is not associated with the devaluation of self-worth.

3.1 Toxic Shame

In the previous section, I observed Jesus as a victim of shame. In this section, I will identify examples in the gospel corpus where other characters portrayed in the gospel corpus become the victims of toxic shame. In each case, the act of shaming is advantageous for the perpetrator at the expense of the victim.

3.1.1 Shaming of Jesus' Enemies

Surprisingly, on at least three occasions the gospel corpus portrays Jesus shaming his enemies for their detriment. The first incident occurs when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness by Satan. Jesus resists the temptation and rebuffs Satan (Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lu 4:1-13). Although this event happens privately between Jesus and Satan, the recounting of the event in the gospel corpus brings it into the public domain. As a result, implicitly, Satan is publicly shamed.⁵⁰

The second occasion when Jesus shames his enemies occurs in John 12:31-33. In this passage, Jesus states that the prince of this world, Satan, will be driven out and judged when

⁵⁰ Another occasion when Jesus implicitly shamed Satan publicly was in Mark 8:31-33 when Jesus rebuked Peter. Peter had just audibly professed Jesus as the promised Messiah in the presence of the disciples. Jesus then predicted his upcoming suffering and death. In response, Peter rebuked Jesus for speaking about suffering. Jesus in turn rebuked Peter for Peter's human-oriented dismissal of Jesus' future death and resurrection. However, in the rebuke, Jesus addresses the spirit behind Peter's aversion to Jesus' suffering: Satan. Since the text is in the public domain, this shaming of Satan, by means of Jesus' rebuke of Peter, becomes a comparable public shaming event.

Jesus is lifted up. The driving out of a prince implies the stripping of his authority. In contrast to the shaming of Satan, Jesus will be lifted up. Because of his crucifixion, Jesus will receive honour and all men will be drawn to him (v. 32).

The third occasion is recorded in Matthew 22:43, 44; Mark 12:35; and Luke 20:42, 43. In these passages, Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, a Psalm of David. According to this Psalm, at some future date, the Lord God will defeat the enemies of David's Lord (the Anointed one) by putting these enemies under his feet. To defeat someone in the Psalms is to shame them (Ps 25:2, 20; 31:1, 17; 35:4). According to Jesus' interpretation of this verse, Jesus views himself as the one who will one day experience his enemies subject to him. And according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:26, the last enemy to be subjected to Jesus and shamed will be death itself.

Although Jesus used shame for the detriment of his enemies, I observed that in each case his enemies are not human. Rather, they are the enemies of humanity.

3.1.2 Shaming of the Jewish Multitudes by the Pharisees

In a discussion with the temple guards about their reason for not arresting Jesus (Jn 7), the Pharisees refer to the Jewish population as accursed. The Pharisees belittle the multitudes because the multitudes are enamoured by the teachings of Jesus, thus showing their ignorance of the oral traditions (Jn 7:49). I propose that to refer to a group of people as accursed is to shame them, even if they are not physically present.

Later in John 9:13-34, the Pharisees in Jerusalem investigate Jesus' healing of a blind Jewish man. After questioning the man and his parents, the Pharisees become frustrated over the conclusion of their investigation. To save face, the Pharisees shame the healed man by insulting him and calling him steeped in sin from birth (v. 34).

3.1.3 Shaming of the Citizens of Jerusalem by an Unnamed Army

In Luke 19:41-44, Jesus described the horrors that would one day fall upon the population of Jerusalem because of their rejection of him (Lu 23:29). The enemies of the Jewish people

would surround, conquer, and destroy the city. Jesus prophesies such great suffering perpetrated by the unnamed army that even women without children would be called blessed. This shaming of the city's population is implicit in the role reversal described by Jesus. Jesus re-interprets sterility as a blessing due to the horrors and trauma that would one day befall the population of the city. Under normal circumstances, in Jewish culture at that time, honour is bestowed upon women who bore children. In contrast, a married woman without a child experiences inconceivable shame ([Albers, 1995](#)). An example of the shame associated with sterility is found in Luke 1:25. Now in the fifth month of her pregnancy, John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth, expresses appreciation to God because He has taken away her disgrace amongst the people.

3.1.4 Shaming of Women

On two separate occasions, Jesus comes to the defence of sinful women who were shamed by segments of the Jewish population.

First, in Luke 7:36-50, an anonymous woman identified only as sinful, wept while pouring perfume on Jesus' feet. Simon the Pharisee devalues Jesus in his thoughts as he observes Jesus apparently oblivious to this woman touching his feet. In response, Jesus defends this woman's actions in the presence of the Pharisee and forgives the woman for her sins. As a result, Jesus removes the positional guilt and shame from this woman in God's eyes. We can assume that the righteousness she receives resulting from Jesus' forgiveness has a positive effect on her emotional state. However, the gospel corpus remains silent with respect to how the local Jewish population responds to the forgiven woman after this incident. Jesus uses this event as an object lesson to present his axiom that a person forgiven little loves little (v. 47). Those who depend on their self-righteousness have no need to demonstrate their love for Christ in such tangible ways.

John 8:1-11 provides the second example of Jesus coming to the defence of a sinful woman experiencing shame. The scribes and the Pharisees bring an unidentified woman caught in adultery to Jesus. They seek Jesus' opinion on her fate as specified by the Law of Moses.

Although the Mosaic Law requires her condemnation to public shame and death by stoning, Jesus defends this woman. He forgives her and uses this event as an object lesson to show that all are guilty of sin.

3.1.5 Summary

Several characters portrayed in the gospel corpus become the victims of toxic shame. In each case, the act of shaming is advantageous for the perpetrator at the expense of the victim. By means of personification as a figure of speech, the gospel corpus portrays Jesus as shaming his non-human enemies. By his authority, he claims victory over these non-human enemies. I observed that unnamed collectivities of people are shamed, such as prophetic prediction of the population of Jerusalem conquered and shamed by a foreign army or the shaming of the Jewish multitudes by the Pharisees. Finally, individuals are shamed as illustrated by the shaming of two Jewish women. These examples are not surprising. One would expect to find toxic shame in the gospel corpus since it is common to our human condition.

3.2 Healthy Shame

Although the act of shaming most commonly benefits the perpetrator rather than the victim, I surprisingly observed that at times Jesus used shame with a beneficial intent for its recipients. The most obvious context where healthy shame is used is in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus used shame as a means of warning his various audiences.

3.2.1 Shame Used by Jesus to Warn the Disciples

In Matthew 25, Jesus instructs his disciples by means of three different parables. The common element among the three parables is the contrast between those honoured and those shamed based on their preparedness for Jesus' return. In the "parable of the Ten Virgins", five virgins are shamed for being unprepared for the arrival of the bridegroom. As a result, they are prevented from entering the wedding feast. In the "parable of the Talents", the servant with one talent, who gained no profit or interest for his master, is judged as a worthless servant. Not only is his behaviour rebuked, he experiences shame when cast into the outer darkness. In the "parable of the Sheep and the Goats," Jesus metaphorically uses the term

goats to describe those who neglected concern for the weak. Because of their neglect of the needs of the least of Christ's followers, they are shamed by being excluded from the presence of the king and by being eternally condemned.

In Matthew 24:45-51 and Luke 12:35-48, Jesus uses shame in the “parable of His Second Coming” when he warns his disciples about the consequences of unfaithfulness in their daily responsibilities. In this parable, a master departs to attend a social event for an unknown duration of time. The servants are left responsible for the master’s possessions and especially the care of the master’s other servants. The servants are instructed to be watchful for the master’s return and to be found faithful in their duties. The servant found unfaithful at the master’s return will be shamed by being beaten at the hands of the master, while the servant found diligent and faithful at the master’s return will be honoured and placed in charge of all the master’s possessions.

3.2.2 Shame Used by Jesus to Warn the Pharisees

In Luke 14:7-11, referred to as the “parable of the Wedding Feast,” Jesus warns the Pharisees of the consequences of taking prominent seats at wedding feasts. According to Jesus, the bolstering of their pride by taking prominent seats exposes them to the possibility of being publicly shamed if requested to move to a less prominent seat due to the arrival of a more important guest. Jesus’ parable provides a beneficial warning to illustrate his axiom that those who exalt themselves will one day be humbled and that those who humble themselves will one day be exalted.

Jesus directs his most severe shaming towards the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. The gospel corpus records one account of this use of shame during a Galilean meal setting (Lu 11:37-54). In a parallel episode situated in Jerusalem, Jesus pronounces seven woes against these Jewish religious leaders (Mt 23:13-36). In both episodes, Jesus publicly shames these religious leaders for being hypocrites. According to Matthew’s account, the Pharisees excel in religious acts. They travel to win a single convert, they are diligent in tithing their posses-

sion to the point of including their spices, and they are meticulous when ceremonially cleaning every cup and dish. As a result, the image they present to the common observer is impeccable. However, according to Jesus, their achievement-based performance does not impress God. They will not enter the kingdom of heaven. God appears to be more interested in ascribing honour to people based on His grace rather than on honour supposedly achieved on meticulous human effort.

3.2.3 Shame Used by Jesus to Warn the Multitudes

First, during the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus introduces the possibility of God shaming his listeners. In Matthew 5:13, Jesus uses the metaphor of flavourless salt to describe those unfit for the kingdom; their shaming results from being considered worthless, fit only to be discarded. In the same chapter, Jesus speaks about those who break his commandments or teach others to break his commandments (v. 19). For example, those who contradict Jesus' amplification of the Mosaic Law on hate/murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, revenge, treatment of enemies, and respect for the needy will be shamed by being called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Second, at the conclusion of this sermon (Mt 7:15-23), using the metaphor of a fruit tree, Jesus compares himself to a fruit tree bearing good fruit, and he compares false teachers to a fruit tree bearing bad fruit. He then uses another metaphor comparing an obedient listener to a wise man who builds his house on a rock, and he compares a negligent listener to a foolish man who builds his house on the sand (Mt 7:24-27). In both cases, the false teacher and the negligent listener is shamed. According to Jesus, although the false teacher may display the supernatural gifts of prophesying, casting out demons, and performing miracles, he will be shamed at Christ's return by the words, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers" (v. 23). With respect to the negligent listener, like a house built on sand and exposed to a torrential rainstorm, the life of the foolish man will be washed away resulting in his shame (v. 27).

As a final example, in the “parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector” (Lu 18:9-14), Jesus addresses an unnamed audience composed of individuals who are confident in their own goodness but look down on others (v. 9). A Pharisee is contrasted with a tax collector while the two are worshiping in the Jewish temple. After worship, the Pharisee leaves the temple with pleasant, self-righteous feelings due to his religious achievements, while the tax collector leaves with his acknowledged unpleasant, positional shame as a sinner before God. However, according to Jesus, from God’s perspective, the shame experienced by the tax collector is healthy. By crying out to God for mercy because of his sense of unworthiness before God, the tax collector leaves the temple justified before God while the former worshiper does not.

I interpret the emotional response of shame on the part of the tax collector as a conviction of sin, prompted by the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:8), in his conscience before God. This undesirable experience of healthy shame led the tax collector to humble himself before a holy God and to cry out for God’s mercy.

3.2.4 Summary

From the above examples, I observe the beneficial outcome that can result from the experience of healthy shame. The benefits of healthy shame extend to those who are perpetrators of toxic shame, if they heed the warning and repent (the Pharisees) and to those who are the victims of human toxic shame (tax collectors) if they recognize their true state of shame before a holy God.

3.3 Resilience to Shame

In addition to shame as a warning in the parables, Jesus prepared his followers to anticipate shame because of their identification with him. By teaching about shame, it appears that Jesus was strengthening his disciples’ resilience to shame.

3.3.1 The Reality of Shame

Jesus taught that those who identify with his name would be insulted and persecuted (Mt 5:11; Mk 13:9; Lu 6:22; Jn 15:18; 17:14). This persecution could be expected at some future

date (Mt 10:23; 24:9; Mk 13:13; Lu 21:12, 17). The followers of Jesus could expect this shame and persecution because those who persecute Jesus will also persecute Jesus' servants (Jn 15:20). Therefore, before making a commitment to become a disciple, followers of Jesus must count the cost (Lu 14:25-33). For those who follow Jesus, they must renounce their lives and be ready to accept the shame associated with Jesus' name.

To be more specific about the coming persecution, in Matthew 23:33-36, Jesus describes how the Jewish leaders would persecute and shame the prophets and teachers Jesus would send. In the Book of Acts, the Apostles (Ac 5:17-18), Stephen (Ac 7:59-60), and the Apostle Paul (Ac 14:19) are examples of those sent out by Jesus who are persecuted for Jesus' name. This persecution by the Jewish leaders would result in their own shame when condemned for the blood of all the righteous martyrs from Abel to Zechariah son of Berechiah (Mt 23:35).

In Mark 8:34-38, Jesus teaches that those who fear the shame of identifying with Jesus in this life will be the object of Jesus' shaming in the life to come. In a sense, Jesus' followers could not escape shame. Either they willingly embrace the shame associated by identifying with Jesus in this life or endure shame, in the next life, for having neglected to associate with his name.

3.3.2 The Response to Shame

Jesus taught his followers the proper response when facing shame associated with his name. As victims of shame, Jesus commands that his disciples love, bless, pray for, and do good to their oppressors ((Mt 5:44; Lu 6:27, 28). As well, Jesus describes the affective state they are to seek while blessing their enemies. They are to rejoice (Lu 6:23). The reason they can respond in this humanly unnatural way stems from their knowledge of the future blessings they would receive (Mt 5:12). They would one day be acknowledged, thus honoured, by Jesus before his Father in heaven (Mt 10:32). In addition, Jesus himself would reward them at his return (Mt 16:27).

By means of his teaching, Jesus prepares his disciples for the unbearable shame associated with his name. However, Jesus did not only teach this *cognitively*, he also encourages his

followers *emotionally* as his own betrayal and public shaming approaches. Twice in John 14, Jesus urges his disciples not to be troubled (vv. 1-4; 27). Jesus assures his disciples, not only at a *cognitive* level but also at an *affective* level, that the events unfolding over the subsequent 24 hours are sovereignly controlled by the will of the Heavenly Father. In fact, Jesus is leaving them in order to prepare a place for them eternally so that they could all be together. Jesus assures his disciples that the unpleasant events about to transpire were to turn out for their benefit.

Jesus not only taught his disciples at a *cognitive* level and encouraged them at an *affective* level, he also became an example of resilience to shame for his disciples at a *behavioural* level. In Luke 23:17-25, Pilate releases Barabbas, who is guilty of insurrection and murder. Though innocent, Jesus replaces Barabbas as the victim for execution. By his death, Jesus becomes an example for His followers. Jesus accepts injustice consistent with how he had encouraged his followers to accept injustice on multiple occasions. In his epistle, the Apostle Peter picks up this same theme in 1 Peter 2:19-21 and 4:14-19. The Apostle Peter describes Jesus as being an example so that the implied reader could follow in his steps. The Apostle Peter adds that it is commendable, as Jesus did, to endure unjust suffering for doing good. Believers who are insulted or shamed for associating with the name of Christ are to display their resilience to shame by praising God for bearing that name, by committing themselves to a faithful creator, and by continuing to do good.

3.3.3 Summary

Jesus taught that his followers will be exposed to toxic shame because of associating with his name. Jesus also taught and modelled the healthy response needed to face that shame. This suggests to me that it is possible to disassociate the experience of being a victim of toxic shame (instrumental) from the experience of feeling (emotional) shame. I will explore this observation later in this chapter.

3.4 Guilt and Self-Inflicted Shame

Having surveyed events in the gospel corpus where the initiator of shame had either a detrimental or a beneficial intent towards the one shamed, I will now submit examples of guilt and shame from the gospel corpus where the perpetrator and the victim are the same person. In other words, I present examples where the self turns on itself. I observed four episodes in the gospel corpus where a character displayed what contemporary psychology labels as the self-conscious emotions of either guilt or self-inflicted shame. The reader will recall from Chapter 6 that when following a discrete model of emotions, the difference between guilt and self-inflicted shame is that guilt focuses on the inappropriate actions of a person relative to a moral standard while self-inflicted shame has as its focus the depreciation of self. However, insufficient detail in the corpus makes it difficult to determine whether guilt or shame is at the root of all of the self-inflicted responses in the following examples.

To begin, in Luke 5:1-11, Peter felt either guilt or shame for his response to Jesus at the shores of the Sea of Galilee. After a night of fishing without catching any fish, Jesus asked Peter to cast his net off the side of the boat. Peter obeyed Jesus with hesitation. As a result, and to his surprise, Peter's net overflowed with fish. Peter appeared to be ashamed by his initial lack of trust in obeying Jesus. This is evident in his oral response to Jesus; "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (v. 8). Albers ([1995](#)) argues that the human response of awe before a holy God is a healthy form of shame. Therefore, while seeing himself deficient in comparison to Jesus, this self-inflicted shame was not toxic. Rather, Peter also saw himself as accepted and worthy in Jesus' eyes, due to being the recipient of Jesus' grace. Experiencing healthy shame, Peter recognized the gap between the commonness of his humanity and the glory of Jesus' divinity.

The second example of a response of either guilt or self-inflicted shame is observed Peter's emotional response when he publicly denied Jesus (Mt 26:75; Mk 14:72; Lu 22:62). Here, we read that Peter wept bitterly after realizing he had denied Jesus three times. This self-inflicted emotional response experienced by Peter became more painful because Jesus had warned Peter, the night before, of this upcoming betrayal.

The third example of self-inflicted guilt or shame is found in John 20:24-29. In this narrative, Thomas, one of the 12 disciples, expressed skepticism concerning the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Only physical evidence could resolve his doubts. One week later, Jesus appeared again to his disciples, but this time he appeared in Thomas's presence. Jesus specifically addressed Thomas and requested that Thomas touch Jesus' wounds to alleviate his doubt. I interpret Thomas as experiencing the synchronic, complex emotions of first, guilt for his own stubbornness to believe, and second, the amazement of witnessing that Jesus was truly and physically alive!

In the above three examples, it is important to note that feelings of remorse over the person's behaviour led to a healthy response. As a result, the person overcame the negative effects of the event and matured through the experience. This is in contrast to the fourth and final example.

The final event in this section brings to light an example of intense, toxic self-inflicted shame. Self-inflicted, paralyzing shame is evident in the response of Judas to Jesus' condemnation described in Matthew 27:1-5. Judas was seized with remorse after he realized that Jesus would not escape condemnation by the religious leaders as he had with previous threats on his life. Jesus indeed would lose his life and be crucified because of Judas' betrayal. As a result, Judas chose to return the 30 silver coins to the Jewish leaders and to confess that he had betrayed an innocent man. In response, the Jewish leaders were compassionless towards Judas. Left alone, with no support, Judas committed suicide. I interpret that the emotional pain of the shame Judas experienced because of the betrayal was too great to bear. He was unprepared for the intensity of this toxic self-inflicted shame upon his moral conscience. In contemporary psychological terms, he was experiencing, with full force, distress because of a moral injury. Lacking the social support of both his former colleagues and his new associates, the Jewish religious leaders, he concluded that he had only one option to relieve his emotional pain: suicide.

3.5 Summary

To summarize my phenomenological of shame in the gospel corpus by means of an *eidetic reduction*, I have crystallized the following two qualities of shame.

First, not only is the act of shaming toxic by being some way beneficial to the perpetrator and detrimental to the victim. Healthy shame can also exist. When Jesus shames a person or teaches about shaming, his intentions are for the benefit of the recipient. In other words, he is warning them of the long-term and eternal consequences of continuing in the way they are living.

Second, by means of Jesus' teaching and example, it is possible to disassociate the experience of being a victim of toxic shame (instrumental) from the experience of feeling (emotional) shame.

4 Phenomenological Analysis of Honour in the Gospel Corpus

In this final section of the chapter, I analyze the pleasant experience of honour that is in contrast with the unpleasant experience of shame.

Back in section 1.1 of this chapter, I began my examination of honour in the gospel corpus by drawing attention to the pleasant, motivating, emotional experiences in the life of Jesus. I associated these pleasant experiences first, with Jesus being honoured by others and second, with Jesus honouring others because of these individuals placing their trust in him. I would now like to expand the understanding of the phenomenon of honour used in the gospel corpus. To do so, I have categorized the examples of the use of the term honour⁵¹ into two main sections: honour described in morally positive terms and honour described in morally negative terms. I use this categorization because of my observation that shame is the flip side of

⁵¹ The online NIV translation of the gospel corpus uses the American spelling for the term *honor*. In this dissertation, I prefer the Canadian spelling of this same term: *honour*.

honour. If shame can be healthy and toxic, then honour should be able to be described in similar terms.

4.1 Honour as a Healthy Phenomenon

I begin by citing examples where the gospel corpus refers to honour in morally positive or healthy terms.

4.1.1 Jesus Honours His Heavenly Father

“I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus,
“but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.”
(John 8:49)

During his brief life and ministry on earth, Jesus honoured his Heavenly Father. He honoured the Father by seeking the will of the one who sent him (Jn 6:38) rather than his own will (Jn 5:30). As a result, not only were Jesus’ actions always pleasing to his Heavenly Father (Jn 8:29), Jesus could profess audibly to his adversaries that he honoured his Father (Jn 8:49).

4.1.2 The Father Honours Those Who Honour Jesus

Whoever serves me must follow me;
and where I am, my servant also will be.
My Father will honor the one who serves me.
(John 12:26)

One honours Jesus by following in his footsteps. Since Jesus is a servant, so his followers must also serve. In John 12:26, Jesus calls Philip and Andrew, and by extension his other disciples, to serve him. Jesus also predicts his upcoming death on the cross. Those who follow Jesus and give their lives for him are compared to a grain of wheat that dies in the ground before producing more grain (Jn 12:24). As a result, the Heavenly Father will one day honour Jesus’ followers.

4.1.3 Honour the Son and the Father

. . . that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.
Whoever does not honor the Son
does not honor the Father, who sent him.
(John 5:23)

In John 5, Jesus draws on the Jewish cultural notion of the intimate relationship between father and son. A father normally passes on his knowledge and trade to his son. The Son (Jesus) observes the Father (Heavenly Father) and imitates all that the Father does (Jn 5:19). In response, the Father loves the Son and shows him all He does (Jn 5:20). The goal is that others honour the Son in the same manner as the Father is honoured. Jesus' teaching here implies that when Jesus (the Son) is honoured, the Heavenly Father is honoured. Correspondingly, when the one is dishonoured, the other is also dishonoured (Jn 5:24).

4.1.4 Summary

In the above examples, again nothing is surprising when I draw attention to the positive effects of honour on a person who merits this positive attention due to worth and status.

4.2 Honour as a Toxic Phenomenon

In contrast, to the healthy use of honour, the gospel corpus also describes honour in morally negative or toxic terms when it is sought for hubristic motives.

4.2.1 Irrelevance of Seeking Honour from others

So, when you give to the needy,
do not announce it with trumpets,
as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets,
to be honored by others.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.
(Matthew 6:2)

Everything they do is done for people to see:
They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long;
they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues;
they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others.
(Matthew 23:5-7)

On a few occasions, the gospel corpus records Jesus warning his listeners about seeking honour from other humans. For example, in Matthew 6:2, Jesus describes Jewish religious leaders as performing their religious activities with the goal of receiving honour from the Jewish people. Later in Matthew 23, Jesus once again refers to this same group as seeking honour in the public sphere by means of their clothing, by their placement at social events, and by their expectations to be greeted.

With respect to clothing, Milgrom (1983) brings to light the role of the hem and tassels in Jewish culture under the Law of Moses. First, the hem was the most elaborately decorated section of the garment. The decoration of the hem corresponded to the honour bestowed upon the person. Second, the tassel was the extension of the hem. Though the wearing of the tassel was symbolic of nobility in ancient Near East societies, for the Jewish people, tassels were “a mnemonic device to remind the Israelites to observe the commandments” (p. 65). Although the Pharisees were probably not seeking the honour ascribed to nobility by wearing such tassels, by the excessive use of tassels they were likely seeking undeserved honour and respect (Neyrey, 1998). In place of using the tassels as a reminder to observe God’s commands, they may have used the tassels to bolster hubristic pride. They were seeking honour by distancing themselves from the general Jewish population and thus displaying their achieved holiness.

The difference between hubristic pride and authentic pride in the academic field of psychology has its equivalence in the academic field of theology. Theologians recognize pride as either a vice or a virtue of a personal reputation. Using French terms, a distinction can be drawn between the reputation of a person stemming from either the virtue of pride (*fierté*) or the vice of pride (*orgueil*). For the late Rémi Parent (1996), a Roman Catholic theologian from Quebec, pride as a virtue (*fierté*) is associated with an individual who recognizes his own limits and imperfections. For this individual, a discontinuity exists between his worth (being) and his achievements (doing). Parent draws on the example of the Apostle Paul from the Book of Philippians to clarify the virtue of pride. With feelings of appreciation for God’s initiative in his life, the mature believer acknowledges his worth as an individual but at the same time recognizes with humility his imperfections. In spite of these imperfections, the mature believer presses on towards the goal of moral perfection, though humbly realizing that it is unattainable in this life. On the other hand, for Parent, pride as a vice (*orgueil*) is associated with an individual who muddles the being/doing distinction. By means of a continuity, this individual praises his own achievements and draws his personal worth from those achievements. When taken to an extreme, this individual has a reputation of not accepting his own limits and believes falsely that he has obtained perfection and deserves praise. From

the above discussion, it becomes apparent that the Pharisees, as portrayed in the gospel corpus, possess a hubristic pride: the vice of *orgueil*.

4.2.2 Withdrawing of Honour from Parents, Jesus, and God

Not only can a person desire honour for selfish reasons, an individual can withdraw honour from those who legitimately deserve it.

On occasion, I observed in the gospel corpus that Jesus accuses segments of the Jewish population of withdrawing honour from those who deserve it.

Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?

For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’
and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’

But you say that
if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’
they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it.
Thus, you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.
(Matthew 15:3-6)

For example, the Pharisees, by means of their oral tradition, encourages their listeners to dishonour their parents by neglecting to meet their parents' financial needs. Jesus interprets this teaching as dishonouring God by prioritizing oral tradition over the will of God as given in the Law of Moses.

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.
(Matthew 15:8)

In the same context, Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah and applies the quote to the Pharisees. Jesus points out that as with the rebellious people in Isaiah's days, the oral profession of the Pharisees do not line up with the affective and behavioural dimensions of belief. As a result, they are not honouring God.

4.2.3 Summary

From my *eidetic reduction* of the above examples of toxic honour, I observe that toxic honour seeks to fulfill a need to be seen worthy in the eyes of another. One can be active in fulfilling

this need though different means or it can be fulfilled by a more passive means. This passive means would take the form of withdrawing honour from those who legitimately deserve it.

5 Discussion

After engaging in an *eidetic reduction* of the dual phenomena of honour/shame in the gospel corpus, I also analyzed my observations using the approach of Esbjörn-Hargens and Anderson ([2006](#)), as I did in the pilot corpus. I organized my observations on honour/shame according to the following three categories: first, totally new insights that surprised me; second, observations that challenged my previous thinking; and third, observations that existed in seminal form that germinated as a result of the analysis. Here are my observations.

- 1) Two insights totally surprised me in my analysis. First, I observed that shame in the gospel corpus is not always have a toxic intent (be instrumentally detrimental). Shame may also be healthy and beneficial for the recipient. By an act of shaming, the initiator can draw negative attention to a recipient in order to warn the recipient of a future danger. For example, Jesus used shame in his teaching to warn his listeners of the great eternal danger they were facing if their moral attitudes and behaviours did not change. Second, I observed that Jesus, who proved resilient to shame, built resiliency to shame into his disciples.
- 2) I made two observations from the gospel corpus that challenged my previous thinking concerning the dual phenomenon of honour/shame:

According to my previous understanding, in pre-Enlightenment societies honour was collective. From a sociological perspective, honour was the *extrinsic value* of a person's identity associated with a stable institutional role (Berger et al., 1974). Society bestowed honour as an expression of status or value to members of a social institution. However, the gospel corpus presented pre-Enlightenment examples of Jesus being honoured as an individual and Jesus honouring individuals. As a result, I conclude that the phenomenon of honour may be applied both to an individual and to a collectivity throughout the ages.

The second challenge to my thinking was that initially I did not notice how the gospel corpus portrayed Jesus' response to shame. However, as a result of this study, I observe that although the gospel corpus is silent with respect to Jesus' affective experience of being shamed, there is no indication of Jesus being negatively impacted by feelings of shame. It appears that Jesus was resilient to the negative effects of shame. From this observation, I conclude that it is possible for a discontinuity to exist between the affective and instrumental dimensions of honour/shame. In other words, it is possible for a victim of shame or for a beneficiary of honour not to experience the feelings and behaviours normally congruent with being shamed or honoured. Conversely, it may also be possible for a person who is not shamed or honoured to interpret his circumstances in a way that leads to feelings and behaviours normally congruent to being shamed or honoured.

3) Finally, an insight that germinated because of my observations of the gospel corpus is that the dual phenomena of honour/shame appear to contrast each other. The phenomenon of honour, where a person's worth is the focus of positive attention, is contrasted to the phenomenon of shame, where the person's worthlessness is the focus of negative attention. Apart from the contrasting positive and negative experiences between the two, the structure of the two phenomena is similar.

Applying a *dimensional model* of emotions to the dual phenomena of honour/shame, I conceptualize honour/shame as being on opposite ends of a continuum with a segment in the middle where the phenomena counterbalance each other (Figure 5). The positive attention of honour can be bestowed upon a deserving recipient to different degrees along the continuum. At one extreme, one can bestow honour on a person to a degree that would be synonymous with worship. I observed that the gospel corpus reserved this high degree of honour for the Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus. Next along the continuum, one can be honoured to a lesser degree in specific circumstances. For example, Jesus honoured certain individuals, such as Zacchaeus, the Centurion, and the Samaritan woman by focusing positive attention on these individuals. Moving along the continuum, one reaches the mid-segment where shame normally bestowed upon a recipient is withdrawn. The result being that the person is

honoured. For example, I observed Jesus withdrawing shame from women and coming to their defence in the gospel corpus (Lu 7:36-50; Jn 8:1-11).

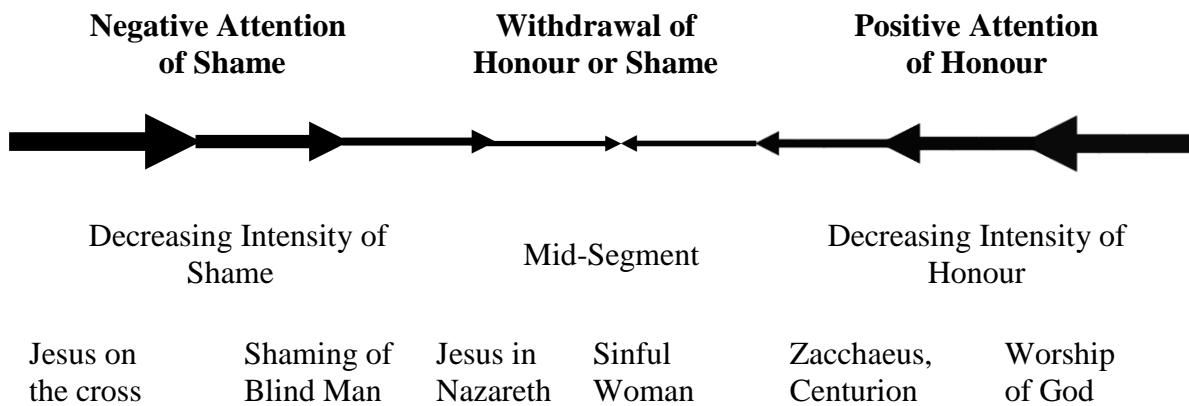


Figure 5 – Honour/Shame Continuum

In contrast to the positive attention of honour, I conceptualize the negative attention of shame as being directed towards a victim to different degrees along the honour/shame continuum (Figure 5). At the extreme, an aggressor can shame a victim to a degree that would be synonymous with the phenomenon of hell. I observe this degree of shame in the gospel corpus directed first, towards those in a parable of Jesus who missed out on the kingdom and were thrown outside, “into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt 8:12); and second, towards Jesus himself, while on the cross, when he was shamed by his contemporaries and judged by his Heavenly Father (Mt 27:45-46). Next along the continuum, one can be shamed to a lesser degree in specific circumstances. For example, the Pharisees shamed the blind man whom Jesus healed by insulting the blind man and accusing him of being steeped in sin from birth (Jn 9:34). Continuing along the continuum, one reaches the same mid-segment as described above but from the opposite direction. For example, though understood to be a prophet, the honour of being a prophet was withdrawn from Jesus by the population of his hometown. As a result, he was shamed (Luke 4:24, 28-30).

It is at this mid-segment on the continuum, where either shame or honour is withdrawn, that I observe certain subtleties. When withdrawing honour deserved, one may not only withdraw positive attention. The deserving recipient and his sympathizing observers may interpret the withdrawing of honour as an act of shame inflicted on the victim. Conversely, when withdrawing shame, the behaviour may not only be interpreted as withdrawing negative attention. The expecting victim and sympathizing observers may interpret the withdrawing of shame as a positive act of grace being bestowed upon the recipient.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to find additional particles of gold in the streambed of taken-for-granted experiences of honour/shame experienced by humanity across cultures and generations. To do this, I chose the pre-Enlightenment gospel corpus as an additional text to supplement my pilot corpus. With the lens of the essential qualities of honour/shame crystallized from my *eidetic reduction* on the pilot corpus and selected literature in the human sciences, I immersed myself in the gospel corpus. Using stress as a marker, I began by identifying a number of events eliciting salient, pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences in the life of Jesus. The pleasant experiences assisted me in identifying honour in the gospel corpus, while the unpleasant experiences enabled me to identify shame. Next, I identified episodes where Jesus was shamed in the gospel corpus. It became apparent that the gospel corpus remained silent with respect to any susceptibility on Jesus' part to the distress and unpleasant feelings normally associated with shame, except possibly for when facing his death on the cross. In many of these episodes, Jesus provoked a negative response in his audience by his teachings and his actions. This led me to conclude that the avoidance of unpleasant emotions and of the experience of shame was not a concern for Jesus. In fact, he encouraged his disciples to anticipate shame based on their association with his name. I then expanded my understanding of the gospel corpus's use of shame by looking at its beneficial and detrimental intents with respect to the one receiving the shame. Subsequently, I presented a phenomenological analysis of honour from the gospel corpus and noted that honour is not only a positive phenomenon. The seeking of honour for hubristic purposes was condemned by Jesus. Finally,

I discussed my observations on the withdrawing of either honour or shame from those deserving honour or shame.

This chapter provides the groundwork for my analysis of two specific episodes in the Gospel of Luke that I undertake in Chapter 8. In that chapter, I seek to understand the meaning of the text using different hermeneutical orientations before adding insights to the subtleties of honour/shame observed to this point in this inquiry. This analysis, in turn, will lead to a discussion in Chapter 9 on the phenomena of stress and honour/shame as I undertake a dialogue between contemporary culture and the Christian tradition.

CHAPTER 8: GOSPEL CORPUS ANALYSIS – AN EXPERIENTIAL INTERPRETATION

In the last chapter, I conducted a brief but sweeping overview of the dual phenomena of honour/shame in the gospel corpus. In this chapter, I examine more closely these dual phenomena in two specific episodes of the gospel corpus: Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 15:11-32. I chose these two episodes as a result of my analysis of the gospel corpus in Chapter 7. Both episodes narrate an event where either honour or shame were withdrawn from biblical characters. Although the terms honour and shame are not found in these episodes, the patterns of honour/shame are present. My intent in looking at these two episodes is to deepen my analysis of honour/shame in the gospel corpus so as to make comparisons with the pilot corpus in Chapter 9.

Before I begin my analysis of these two episodes, I present a simplified overview of the orientations interpreters have used over the centuries to understand the gospel corpus, I situate my approach within this overview, and I give the theoretical justification for the use of my approach in this inquiry.

1 Interpreting the Gospel Corpus

1.1 Orientations Used to Interpret the Gospel Corpus

Over the past 200 years, the gospel corpus has been the focus of the most stringent, analytical study of any written text ([Blomberg, 1987](#)). As with any other document in the New Testament, the first hermeneutical challenge has been to determine the meaning of the text (Hermeneutical Task 1). An additional challenge unique to the gospel corpus has been to account for the differences in the parallel accounts of the four evangelists (Hermeneutical Task 2). As a result, interpreters choose from a limited number of orientations to address these two challenges. I begin by presenting a simplified overview of the different orientations taken to draw meaning from the gospel corpus.

Following the first orientation, interpreters seek to draw meaning by focusing on the biblical text itself. Following a second orientation, interpreters seek to draw meaning by focusing on

the taken-for-granted sociological assumptions shared between the implied author and implied reader. These assumptions are undisclosed in the text and thus intuitively unknown to the contemporary reader ([Neyrey, 1991b](#); [Osborne, 2006](#)). Following a third orientation, interpreters draw meaning by focusing on the psychological or intra-personal experiences common to biblical characters portrayed in the text and contemporary humans. I now expand on these three hermeneutical orientations.

Following the first orientation, interpreters choose from the following approaches when interpreting the gospel corpus: a traditional approach, a historical-critical approach, and a narrative approach. Although each of these approaches are founded on different pre-suppositions, I combine them into one orientation because they share the following similarity: interpreters using these approaches draw meaning by focusing primarily on the biblical text.

During the first 1800 years following the gospel composition, interpreters using a traditional approach determined meaning (Hermeneutical Task 1) by an empathic reading of the biblical text so as to access the historical dimensions of the text and the authorial intention. Since the gospel corpus was understood to be historically reliable, a coherence of meaning (Hermeneutical Task 2) was ensured by harmonizing any apparent contradictions in parallel gospel accounts ([Blomberg, 1987](#)).

Second, in contrast to the traditional approach, the last two centuries saw the rise of the historical-critical approaches. Labelled after the pre-supposition that the contemporary reader takes a suspicious stance with respect to the historicity of the account, interpreters using these approaches tend to draw attention to the dissonance in the parallel accounts of the gospel corpus ([Blomberg, 1987](#)). By scrutinizing the text, source criticism seeks explanations for the diversity in parallel accounts by proposing different sources and different possibilities of author dependence on those sources (Hermeneutical Task 2). Form criticism draws attention to the form and structure of a passage within the gospel corpus (Hermeneutical Tasks 1 & 2). Passages with similar forms are identified, thus contributing to the interpreter's understanding of how biblical passages were organized by the evangelists. Redaction criticism draws

attention to the authors as editors who selected, arranged and reworded their account of the corpus (Hermeneutical Tasks 1 & 2). In summary, interpreters using the historical-critical approaches specialize in dissecting the text into parts.

Finally, and more recently, in contrast to the historical-critical approaches, narrative approaches returned to the empathic stance of emphasizing the unity of the text as a whole. To draw meaning from the text, interpreters adopt either an empathic stance or a critical stance with respect to the historicity of the corpus. Unity arises as episodes within the corpus are viewed as part of the larger sequenced story of the gospel itself. Thus, the analysis of both the parts and the whole provides the interpreter with a literary understanding of the biblical text (Hermeneutical Tasks 1 & 2).

To summarize, all the above approaches – whether traditional, historical-critical, or narrative – share a common orientation. The interpreter is drawn to the text of the gospel corpus itself to determine meaning.

Interpreters following the second orientation arose mainly in the latter half of the 20th century and sought to contribute a fresh understanding of the gospel corpus. A group of scholars called *The Context Group* examined the gospel corpus by focusing on totalities ([Neyrey, 1991b](#)). In place of turning to the text itself, these interpreters drew attention to phenomena outside of the biblical text: the phenomena making up the socio-cultural background portrayed in the gospel corpus. This socio-cultural background is intuitively unknown to the contemporary reader but assumed by both the implied author and the implied reader. Using methods and models from the social sciences, interpreters seek to shed additional light on the meaning of the gospel text by understanding the biblical characters in the broader sociological context of the authors who wrote these documents.

To do so, interpreters first recognize the historical and cultural differences that separate the implied reader from the contemporary reader. Second, interpreters propose a sociological model appropriate to the socio-cultural phenomenon under study to facilitate cross-cultural comparison. Third, interpreters examine the socio-cultural phenomenon under study in the

gospel corpus and identify social patterns that emerge from the comparison of this phenomenon with its sociological model. Finally, from these social patterns, interpreters bridge the divide between the implied reader and the contemporary reader by highlighting observations that either conform to or diverge from their sociological model. Those sociological phenomena that diverge from their model bring new insights to the possible meaning of the text (Hermeneutical Task 1).

For example, interpreters have investigated the biblical culture's perception of sociological phenomena such as cities and countryside ([Oakman, 1991](#); [Rohrbaugh, 1991](#)), illness and healing ([Pilch, 1991](#)), patronage and clientelism ([Moxnes, 1991](#)), honour and shame ([Malina & Neyrey, 1991c](#)), personality ([Malina & Neyrey, 1991b](#)), and conflict ([Malina & Neyrey, 1991a](#)). They have also investigated the biblical characters' patterns of behaviour through rituals ([McVann, 1991](#)) and ceremonies⁵² ([Neyrey, 1991a](#)). To summarize, approaches are categorized into this second orientation because the interpreter's attention is drawn to the socio-cultural assumptions shared by the implied author and implied reader to enrich the meaning of the text.

Interpreters following the third orientation propose to further clarify the meaning of the gospels (Hermeneutical Task 1). In place of using methods and models from the social sciences, interpreters use experiential phenomena and psychological models to examine the personal experiences of biblical characters portrayed in the text. Interpreters seek to understand the

⁵² According to a sociological model, a ritual is an irregular socially sanctioned event undertaken with the purpose of assisting an individual or collectivity to change roles in society. For example, when fighter pilots finished their basic military training, they were involved in a military graduation parade ritual that changed their social status from a civilian to a military member. In contrast, a ceremony is a frequent, predictable, regular event, presided over by an official, which confirms and reinforces roles and statuses within institutions. For example, Remembrance Day (November 11) or a military Mess Dinner would fall into this category. In the Gospel of Luke, an example of a ritual would be Jesus taking on the role of a prophet when being baptized by John the Baptist ([McVann, 1991](#)). An example of a ceremony would be the number of occasions when Jesus is portrayed in a meal setting with either sinners, the Pharisees, the crowds, or his disciples ([Neyrey, 1991a](#)).

intra-personal dimension of biblical characters either to enrich the meaning of the text (Hermeneutical Task 1) or to better understand humans and draw application for contemporary pastoral concerns.

The first interpreter known to have used this orientation was the theologian Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834). As an interpreter, Schleiermacher took the common human experience of absolute dependence on God to not only measure religious experience but also to reinterpret Christian doctrine ([Brown, 1968](#)). More recently, the late American pastoral theologian Donald Capps ([1993](#)) addressed the phenomenon of the contemporary Western narcissistic self. After developing a model of the narcissistic self, he used his insights to interpret the Book of Jonah and to propose a solution for the contemporary narcissistic depletion of the self. The phenomenon of shame has also been used by faith-based authors to draw pastoral applications for helping believers dealing with shame. Albers ([1996](#)) draws insight from psychology on the importance of love, acceptance, and forgiveness in the healing of disgrace shame, while Welch ([2012](#)) draws attention to how God uses the pain of shame for His purposes. With a slightly different intent, Burke ([2013](#)) uses the phenomenon of generosity as a hermeneutical key to understanding the episode commonly referred to as the “parable of the Prodigal Son”. To summarize, I group together approaches into this third orientation when the interpreter focuses on the intra-personal dimensions of biblical characters and of contemporary humans to shed insight on the meaning of the text (Hermeneutical Task 1).

1.2 An Evangelical Evaluation of these Orientations

The late American professor of New Testament studies, Grant R. Osborne ([2006](#)) can assist us in providing an evaluation of these three orientations from an evangelical perspective. For evangelicals, the biblical text must have priority over the interpreter. Because of the belief in the authoritative nature of the Scriptures for life and practice, an interpreter’s pre-understanding and pre-suppositions, whether external or internal, must be modified and shaped by the

text when necessary.⁵³ Referred to as the hermeneutic spiral, the interpreter not only addresses the text but allows the text to address the interpreter.

With respect to the first orientation, to restrain evangelical interpreters' tendency to read their prejudices into a biblical text, Osborne suggests including all of the approaches in the hermeneutical toolbox. Traditional approaches bring the semantic dimensions of the text into the interpreter's awareness. Historical-critical approaches bring the historical dimensions of the text into the interpreter's awareness. And the narrative approaches bring the literary dimensions of the text into the interpreter's awareness. All three approaches are important to control the natural tendency for an interpreter to use his prejudices as a hermeneutical tool.

The second orientation, using the methods and models from the social sciences, complements a textual orientation by providing both a corrective and an informative trajectory. First, as a corrective trajectory, a social science orientation balances the tendency of contemporary narrative interpreters to deconstruct the sense of the text. This recent tendency to deconstruction overstates the intra-textual dimension of an interpretation and may lead to an interpretation where the entire meaning of the text is taken out of its historical, geographical, and sociological context. As a result, the entire meaning is encapsulated in the experiential response of the contemporary reader, which in turn overlooks the dimension of meaning from sociological features shared between the implied author and the implied reader. Second, as an informative trajectory, a sociological orientation complements a textual orientation by informing the contemporary reader of the possibility of shared assumptions between implied author and implied reader, which are implicit in the text.

Though Osborne does not specifically comment on the third orientation, I assume that his corrective and informative trajectories provided by sociological tools and models would also

⁵³ Osborne notes that pre-suppositions may be external or internal to the interpreter. External presuppositions such as culture, theology, and ideology are more evident than internal presuppositions. The latter includes influences due to the pressure to publish, the desire to maintain one's status within the interpretive community, or the reticence to retract from a position on which one has taken a public stand.

apply to the psychological tools and models of the third orientation. This assumption is based on Osborne's statement that his cautions for the use of sociological studies of the Scriptures also apply to all background studies.

1.3 The Experiential Approach

1.3.1 Explanation

The approach I use in this chapter falls into this third orientation which I call an experiential approach. However, I view the experiential approach not as replacing approaches in other orientations, rather it supplements them. On the one hand, the experiential approach is directed to the text by focusing on the experiences of biblical characters portrayed in the text. On the other hand, this experiential approach also focuses on the taken-for-granted assumptions shared between the implied author, the implied reader, the biblical characters, and the contemporary reader. The experiential approach attempts to bring salient experiences of biblical characters, as portrayed by the author, into the conscious awareness of the contemporary interpreter to draw meaning from the text.

To examine the experience of biblical characters of the gospel corpus, I use the model developed in Chapter 6 on the dual phenomena of honour/shame. I then examine two episodes from the Gospel of Luke (7:36-50 and 15:11-32) to identify the responses of biblical characters portrayed in the text that either conform to or diverge from this model. The main difference between my approach and those of the second orientation is that the latter approaches restrict themselves to understanding an ancient culture's *perception* of sociological features – which is *cognitive* – and that culture's patterns of *behaviour*. Though not neglecting the *cognitive* and *behavioural* states of the biblical characters portrayed in the two episodes, I also want to draw attention to the *affective* states of biblical characters as they interact with one another in the respective narratives. In this chapter, my purpose in examining affective states of biblical characters is not primarily to draw contemporary pastoral applications through psychological insights. My purpose is to enrich our understanding of the meaning of the two episodes in Luke. Possible contemporary application from this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.3.2 Justification

This experiential approach builds upon approaches used by interpreters using a sociological orientation. Therefore, I will briefly justify the use of sociological phenomena to shed additional light on understanding a biblical text before justifying my use of an experiential approach.

In his reflection on the ability of the human to create and understand meaning, Kövecses ([2010](#)) proposes that cognitive processes used to make sense of experience are the same as those used to make sense of a text. Furthermore, in spite of cultural and linguistic differences, all rational humans share these same cognitive processes. Understanding language and identifying the meaning of an experience are two among a number of examples of the making of meaning common to humanity.

When it comes to making meaning of everyday experience, Kövecses notes that members of a community who share a similar social, historical, and physical environment will interpret common experiences in a similar fashion. By means of similar cognitive processes, common experiences lead to similar scenarios in the mind. These scenarios are understood as abstract concepts that are then communicated to others through a concrete verbal code. When taken as a cooperative enterprise among humans, this common meaning results in a common culture that unifies a group of people. This *scenario model*, which associates image schemes of common meaning derived from common experiences, forms the basis of a meaning-based approach to culture.

Malina ([1991](#)) describes how this *scenario model* is used by an author of a text to transfer meaning to readers through linguistic code. Through writing, the author transfers abstract thought of a scenario and its meaning into a written or linguistic code. The reader, in turn, interprets this linguistic code, calls to mind the scenario evoked by the text, and then makes adjustments according to his understanding of the scenario. According to the *scenario model*, effective communication of meaning between the author and reader depends on the similarity of the image schemes shared by the two. The greater the cultural distance between the implied

author (originating in one culture) and the contemporary reader (originating from another culture) the greater the possibility of misunderstanding. It is for this reason that Malina justifies the use of social science methods to enrich biblical interpretation by bridging the cultural distance between the implied author and the contemporary reader.

Kövecses ([2010](#)), in turn, argues from a linguistic perspective that certain conceptual metaphors, which he calls primary, are common to all humanity in spite of differences in languages and cultures. For example, the conceptual metaphor of associating a *subjective human experience* with a *physical experience* would be considered primary. A common subjective human experience such as anger can be described using different physiological experiences thus leading to a particular linguistic metaphor in a specific culture***. For example, in English culture, the subjective experience of anger is associated most with the physiological experience of heat due to an observed increase in skin temperature. This leads to the linguistic metaphor: *anger as heat*. In Chinese culture, however, Kövecses observes that the same *subjective experience*, anger, is associated with a different *physiological experience*: an effect on the flow of blood that leads to an increased pressure. The result is a different linguistic metaphor: *anger as pressure*.

In summary, the *scenario model* aptly illustrates first, how similar cognitive processes are used to construct meaning from both everyday experience and the reading of texts; and second, how similarities and differences in culture between the author and reader can either facilitate or complicate the transfer of meaning.

Having presented the *scenario model* as a justification for the use of approaches within a sociological orientation to assist in understanding a biblical text, I will now justify my use of an approach within an experiential orientation.

For my purposes, the scenario model, as applied by Malina to inter-personal sociological phenomena and by Kövecses to intra-personal experiences, justifies my use of an experiential interpretation of the texts of both the pilot corpus and the gospel corpus. This model accounts for two important dialectic assumptions that I bring to this study on the dual phenomena of

honour/shame. Because they are dialectic, these assumptions must be kept in tension. First, similar cognitive processes used to make sense of the phenomena of honour/shame, whether it be observed in everyday experience or in the reading of texts, point to the *commonality* of the constructing of meaning as it relates to honour/shame amongst rational humans across cultures and generations. And second, this common meaning associated with the dual phenomena of honour/shame leads to linguistic expressions that are *particular* to different languages and cultures.

Put differently, honour/shame is a universal experience but will be expressed across cultures using different linguistic metaphors. In addition, individuals and cultures may also differ in the degree of importance they attach to the different contours of the honour/shame phenomena.

Understanding the common experiences of honour/shame and comparing them with the experiences of fighter pilots and biblical characters allow for possible comparison and contrast. These comparisons and contrasts are observed first, at the level of abstraction *among* fighter pilots and *among* biblical characters respectively. Chapters 5 & 6 provide a sampling of contrasts and comparisons *among* fighter pilots. Chapter 7 and this present chapter provide a sampling of contrasts and comparisons *among* biblical characters.

However, comparisons and contrasts are also possible at a second, higher level of abstraction *between* fighter pilots and biblical characters. This has already been briefly addressed in the discussion on the dialogue between contemporary culture and Christian tradition in Chapter 2. It will be further developed in Chapter 9 where a sampling of contrasts and comparisons at the second level of abstraction *between* fighter pilots and biblical characters will be provided. It is the experiences of honour/shame that diverge from common experience that bring new insights to the possible meaning of the respective corpora. I propose that bringing common and taken-for-granted features of human emotional response and behaviour into awareness allows the unique to stand out.

In my analysis of the gospel corpus, I have chosen the following two episodes, Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 15:11-32, because both episodes narrate an event where honour/shame was withdrawn from biblical characters. By identifying this withdrawal of either honour or shame from biblical characters, I hope to compare the withdrawing of honour/shame from fighter pilots with the withdrawing of honour/shame from biblical characters (Chapter 9).

Having justified my using of the experiential approach for interpreting two episodes in the Gospel of Luke, I will now interpret each episode using insights from interpreters who have drawn meaning by using one or a combination of the above three orientations.

2 Interpreting Episode #1 (Luke 7:36-50)

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him,
he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.
37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house,
so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume.
38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears.
Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.
39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself,
“If this man were a prophet,
he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”
40 Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.”
“Tell me, teacher,” he said.
41 “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,
and the other fifty.
42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both.
Now which of them will love him more?”
43 Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”
“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.
44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon,
“Do you see this woman? I came into your house.
You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.
45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.
46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.
47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown.
But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”
48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”
49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”
50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”
(Luke 7:36-50)

2.1 Insights using a Textual Orientation

Luke 7:36-50, hereafter referred to as episode #1, falls into a larger section of the Gospel of Luke that is arranged geographically. This larger section, Luke 4:14 - 9:50, centres on events

during Jesus' ministry in the region of Galilee ([Blomberg, 1997](#)). Blomberg ([1987](#)) notes the differences in emphasis between the four authors of the gospel corpus. Luke portrays Jesus as a compassionate teacher and is “most concerned with the salvation of the outcasts of society” (p. 42). This episode confirms this portrayal of Jesus in that an outcast, a sinful woman, experiences the grace of Jesus’ forgiveness.

2.1.1 Insights using Source Criticism

First, interpreters using source criticism observe that each of the gospels contains a sequenced story with the following events: Jesus is invited into a person’s home, he is touched by a woman, someone present at the meal is offended by the action, and Jesus defends the person who has touched him (Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Lu 7:36-50; Jn 12:1-11). The most common response of differences between each parallel account is Mark’s assumed priority in the composition of the gospel corpus ([Bock, 2002](#)). However, across accounts, the details are different enough to suggest that two or even three separate events have been recorded ([H. A. W. Meyer, 1884/1979](#); [Morris, 1988](#)).

For the purpose of the present study, the sources of this episode are of less concern than the finished product. In contrast to source criticism, a narrative approach looks at a biblical text, whether episodes in the Gospel of Luke or the gospel itself, as a finished, unified, literary work ([Tannehill, 1986](#)). According to Tannehill, the advantage of a narrative approach over source criticism is that literary cues shed light on the overall purpose of the literary work. Since Luke’s account of this episode is sufficiently distanced in location, time, and purpose from the other accounts in the gospel corpus, Luke’s account merits reflection on its own ([Craddock, 1990](#)). Because of its focus on the unity of this episode, insights from redaction criticism prove more helpful in our understanding of this text.

2.1.2 Insights using Redaction Criticism

This episode, taking place during Jesus’ Galilean ministry, occurs in a series of events stretching from Luke 7:1 to Luke 8:3 ([Fitzmyer, 1981](#)). Within this Galilean sequence, several characters respond to Jesus: a Centurion, the widow of Nain, the disciples of John the Baptist, the

Jews of Jesus' own generation, the sinful woman, Simon the Pharisee, and the Galilean women-followers of Jesus. More specifically, episode #1 provides contrasting interactions between Jesus and two characters: a Pharisee named Simon and an unnamed female outcast.

Redaction criticism has helped interpreters identify narrative links that tie passages together and provide coherence through the arrangement of details ([Bock, 2002](#)). For example, authors such as Plummer ([1922](#)) and Nolland ([1989](#)) join episode #1 with the previous section on John the Baptist (Lu 7:18-35). Plummer identifies episode #1 as an illustration of Luke 7:35, "Divine wisdom was doing what was right" (p. 208). In the immediate context, Luke 7:18-35 addresses the ministry of both John the Baptist and Jesus. John the Baptist, who is in prison, is portrayed as questioning if Jesus is truly the one promised to come (v. 19). John dispatches messengers to obtain a response from Jesus. The messengers are assured by Jesus that his miracles and his preaching testify to the arrival of the kingdom of God. In verses 29-35, attention is now directed to the Jewish response to the ministry of both Jesus and John the Baptist ([Liefeld, 1984](#)).

The Pharisees and experts in the law, in contrast to the Jewish crowds and the tax collectors, reject both Jesus and John the Baptist. Their rejection is illustrated by the children in the parable who refuse the invitation of their playmates to either play the joyous flute, symbolic of a wedding, or to sing a dirge, symbolic of a funeral ([Blomberg, 1987](#)). As a result, the Pharisees reject the whole purpose of God for themselves (v. 30). This rejection is symbolized by Simon the Pharisee, who concludes that Jesus is unworthy of being identified as God's prophet (Lu 7:39). As a result, Simon the Pharisee is of the group that ignores the appeal of John the Baptist and is not prepared to accept Jesus as a prophet and an agent of God's wisdom ([Nolland, 1989](#)).

In contrast to this rejection by the majority, the sinful woman represents the faithful minority of the children of Wisdom who responds to John the Baptist's call to repentance. She is prepared for the message of forgiveness ([Nolland, 1989](#)). As a result, she acknowledges Jesus'

worthiness, and she expresses her appreciation of his worthiness by concrete acts of love and devotion ([Plummer, 1922](#)).

2.1.3 Insights using Form Criticism

Insights using form criticism have led to the classification of episode #1 as a pronouncement narrative. Bock ([2002](#)) characterizes a pronouncement narrative as a specific episode that concludes with a climactic oral response by Jesus. Tannehill ([1986](#)) is more specific and classifies Luke 7:36-50 as a quest narrative within the pronouncement genre. Common to Luke, a quest-pronouncement narrative has a character, the sinful woman, approaching Jesus in quest for relief from a constraint to wholeness. This dominant concern is addressed at the end of the narrative when Jesus publicly pronounces the forgiveness of her sins.

2.1.4 Insights Consistent with an Evangelical Christian Tradition

In this section, I attempt to interpret episode #1 in a manner consistent with an evangelical Christian tradition. An evangelical Christian approach aligns with a historical-grammatical approach. However, it also benefits from the insights of the other approaches from a textual orientation. Therefore, in this section, I share from evangelical and non-evangelical interpreters to better understand the meaning of this episode. Using a narrative technique of following the plot of the episode, I present the meaning using the following divisions: the occasion (a meal setting), the catalyst (the presence of a sinful woman), the action (the acts of devotion shown by a woman to Jesus), the issue (Simon's thoughts about Jesus), the response of Jesus to Simon (Jesus' reproach of Simon), and the response of Jesus to the woman (Jesus' commendation).

- The Occasion

Jesus is often invited to a meal in the gospel of Luke. On one occasion, Luke draws attention to Jesus eating with Levi and other tax collectors (Lu 5:29). However, on three other occasions, Jesus is invited to eat with Pharisees (Lu 7:36; 11:37; 14:1). On this specific occasion (Lu 7:36), Jesus is invited to dine by his host, Simon the Pharisee. From the perspective of Jesus, Craddock ([1990](#)) notes that Jesus avoids reversed prejudice by dining with both sinners

and Pharisees on different occasions. From the perspective of Simon, the host, Keener ([1993](#)) mentions that it would be virtuous to receive Jesus, as a dinner guest, after he had taught in the synagogue.

Drawing support from Jeremias's *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, Fitzmyer ([1981](#)) affirms that reclining at a table in Jewish culture was reserved for festive occasions, such as when receiving a guest. Thus, Jesus would be reclining with his left hand on the table and his bare feet stretched out behind him away from the table ([Keener, 1993](#); [H. A. W. Meyer, 1884/1979](#)).

- *The Catalyst*

In verses 37 and 38, attention is now drawn to a woman who enters the meal setting and begins to express love and devotion through actions directed towards Jesus' feet. The passage of time accelerates quickly at this point in the episode. Her entrance and acts of devotion provide the setting for what is to take place. Before considering her acts of devotion, I will highlight what interpreters speculate about her presence and her character.

With respect to her abrupt presence in the story, Keener ([1993](#)) notes that religious people, during such meals, often opened the door of their house to the poor. The poor could then observe the discussions if they remained quiet. Plummer ([1922](#)) speculates that the woman may have entered at the same time as Jesus or shortly afterwards.

With respect to her character, the text refers to her as a sinner. For Nolland ([1989](#)), sinner in this verse may be understood as a euphemism for a prostitute. Keener ([1993](#)) adds to this characterization by observing that this woman appears to be morally permissive because she lets down her hair in a public context. Together, these observations would account for her marginalized status in the eyes of Simon the Pharisee.

Meyer ([1884/1979](#)), on the other hand, identifies this unnamed woman as a *former* prostitute. As a morally renewed person, she had heard Jesus preach and had come to faith through

repentance. As a result, she expresses her love and gratitude to Jesus through concrete acts of devotion.

In spite of these different perceptions of her moral state, Morris ([1988](#)) follows Plummer ([1922](#)) in affirming that it took courage to enter Simon's house. If she had previously repented of her sin, social opinion about her, reflected by the Pharisee's thoughts, had not yet changed.

- *The Action*

At this point in the narrative, the passage of time slows down. More details of the interaction between characters in the episode are provided. In verse 38, the actions of this woman directed towards Jesus' feet are bracketed in an inclusio. In the Greek text, the term *μύρον* – equivalent to *perfume* – is the last word of both verses 37 and 38. For Keener ([1993](#)), this perfume would have been one of the tools of her trade. This perfumed oil would be poured out when the long neck of the container was broken ([Morris, 1988](#)). Though she came to anoint Jesus' feet with perfume, caught up in the moment, her emotions overwhelm her and her tears accidentally fall wetting Jesus' bare feet ([Nolland, 1989](#); [Plummer, 1922](#)). Both Plummer and Nolland note that in response, the woman unbinds her hair in public and wipes the tears off Jesus' feet with her hair. Though shameful for a woman to let down her hair in public, she makes this sacrifice. Having access only to Jesus' feet, she kisses them and anoints his feet with the perfume.

At this point in the story, some interpreters allude to honour. Meyer ([1884/1979](#)) notes that this event is portrayed through the eyes of public opinion at the time. According to custom, honour was shown to Rabbis by the kissing of their feet. Therefore, Jesus is deeply honoured by the woman's attention to his feet ([Plummer, 1922](#)). Fitzmyer ([1981](#)) also briefly comments on the marks of honour demonstrated by the woman as she kisses and anoints Jesus' feet. In addition, Keener ([1993](#)) affirms that by initially considering Jesus as a prophet, the Pharisee is showing great respect for him.

- *The Issue*

In verse 39, the narrator enters the mind of the host, Simon the Pharisee, who silently interprets the events unfolding before him. His first thoughts turn to the character of Jesus. This is followed by his thoughts about the character of the woman touching Jesus.

With respect to Jesus, Simon believes Jesus lacks knowledge of this woman's true status in the community: a sinner. As a result, he questions Jesus' status as a prophet ([H. A. W. Meyer, 1884/1979](#)). The popular opinion up to this point in the Lucan account is that Jesus is a prophet (Lu 4:23; 7:16; 9:8, 19). Surely as a prophet, shouldn't Jesus be able to discern the character of this woman ([Fitzmyer, 1981](#))? If Jesus is truly a prophet, shouldn't he be able to meet the social expectations of a prophet? In Simon's evaluation, as a holy man from God in the tradition of Jewish prophets, he would separate himself from all that was unclean. A true prophet would keep his distance from this woman, just as Simon himself does ([Nolland, 1989](#)). Thus, Simon questions the identity and mission of Jesus ([Plummer, 1922](#)).

With respect to the character of the unnamed woman, nothing is said of her except that she is stigmatized as a sinner. I observed that it is Simon who identifies her as a sinner. In doing so, Simon distances himself from her. As a result, he views himself as being at the opposite pole: one who is righteous.

- *The Response of Jesus to Simon*

In the next section, verses 40-43, Jesus answers Simon's thoughts by means of a short dialogue which has the chiastic structure of A, B, C, B', A' with the centre parable (C) bracketed by dialogue from Simon (B, B') and dialogue by Jesus (A, A').

The parable focuses on two debtors who owe money to a creditor. The parable ends with the creditor forgiving the debts of both debtors because of the debtors' lack of resources. Next, Jesus asks Simon's opinion concerning which of the two debtors would love the creditor most. Keener ([1993](#)) notes that Jesus uses the term *love* rather than *appreciate* because of the lack of a term for *thankfulness* in Aramaic. Morris ([1988](#)) presents the contemporary reader

with an idea of the value of the debt involved when he describes a denarius as a day's wage for a labourer at the time. Correspondingly, the debts are equivalent to 50 and 500 days of labour.

Up to this point in the story, Plummer ([1922](#)) observes that Jesus is portrayed as ignoring the woman. However, Jesus now turns to her, as he makes reference to her and interprets the parable for Simon.

Jesus interprets the short parable in verses 44-47 by applying the parable to the events unfolding in Simon's home. Jesus is the creditor, and both the Pharisee and the woman are the two debtors ([H. A. W. Meyer, 1884/1979](#)). For Meyer, the difference between the two debtors is the degree of the subjective consciousness of guilt experienced by Simon and the woman. The woman experienced much guilt for her lifestyle, while Simon experienced little guilt for his. This consciousness of guilt corresponds to the measure of forgiveness received by the debtors from Jesus, and the acts of love expressed by the debtors to Jesus for his forgiveness. Correspondingly, Simon felt he had little to be forgiven for, while the woman felt she had much to be forgiven for. Put in the form of an axiom, "The point of the parable is that the generosity of love will be proportionate to the awareness of how much one has been forgiven" ([Tinsley, 1965, p. 82](#)).

In verses 44-47, Jesus lists the differences between Simon's welcome and the welcome of the woman. Meyer ([1884/1979](#)) summarizes these contrasts by pointing out the Pharisee's acts of omission towards Jesus – no water for his feet, no welcoming kiss, and no anointing of his head with oil – with the woman's acts of devotion. Simon neglected to greet Jesus with the customs of courtesy, while the woman showed intense devotion by foot-washing, kissing, and anointing Jesus' feet with perfume. It is possible that Simon's welcome was not impolite according to cultural norms. Rather, it was the extra thoughtfulness of the woman that stands out ([Nolland, 1989](#)). She honours Jesus by her expression of love and gratitude going beyond what is culturally expected.

- *The Response of Jesus to the woman*

In the last section, verses 48-50, Jesus addresses the woman. I observe in these verses another example of an inclusio. At the centre of this inclusio (v. 49), is the response of the guests to Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness to the woman (vv. 48, 50).

It is in this last section that a theological pre-understanding informs the interpretation of the protestant interpreters consulted. It is this pre-understanding that also creates a problem in interpretation. Nolland ([1989](#)) addresses the problem for protestant (and evangelical) interpreters that surfaces in this story. The problem is how one pronounces “forgiveness on someone who is already forgiven?” (p. 359). One of the foundational beliefs of the Reformation is that “The just will live by faith” (Ro 1:17). A second is that works do not contribute to one’s salvation. Rather, works are the fruit of salvation (Ep 2:8-10). Therefore, for protestant interpreters, the story under consideration must reflect the theological position that the woman’s acts of devotion are not the cause of her forgiveness. Rather they are the fruit of her forgiveness.

Following this theological necessity, Meyer ([1884/1979](#)) concludes that the woman was already in a state of forgiveness and that her forgiveness is demonstrated by the actions of her faith. As a result, Jesus’ pronouncement that her sins are forgiven provides her with the objective assurance of her pardoned condition. The love demonstrated is the fruit of her forgiveness.

Fitzmyer ([1981](#)) also refers to the possibility that “the sinful woman comes to Jesus as one already forgiven by God and seeking to pour out signs of love and gratitude (tears, kisses, perfume)” (p. 687). This interpretation appears to be confirmed in verse 49 as the other guests watching this event unfold ask themselves the question, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Plummer ([1922](#)) and Morris ([1988](#)) view the woman’s love as proof that she had already been forgiven.

To supplement the above theological interpretation, I would add that Jesus proclaims this forgiveness based on a yet future event in the gospel corpus, his own sacrifice on the cross.

The above interpreters support the view that the woman has some degree of faith towards Jesus and some experience of repentance and sorrow at some point recently prior to her entering into Jesus' presence. This provides the motivation for her acts of love. Jesus then points out this change to Simon and pronounces his forgiveness. This pronouncement has the effect of confirming this forgiveness to the woman, conferring her change of status from Jesus' perspective to the guests, and confirming God's forgiveness of this woman to the implied reader.

My purpose for stating the above interpretation is that I want to emphasize that an interpreter naturally reads his theological pre-understanding into a text. Evangelical interpreters attempt to propose an interpretation of a text that is coherent with the gospel account in question and with the whole New Testament.

Nolland ([1989](#)), however, comes to this passage not with a theological understanding of faith but with a phenomenological understanding coherent with his observations of faith in the Gospel of Luke. A phenomenological understanding of faith, according to Nolland, is as follows: "Faith is seen when there is no break in the pattern of divine initiative and human response by means of which a restored relationship to God is established" (p. 360). There are four passages in Luke where Jesus pronounces that the faith of the person has saved them (Lu 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42). For example, the woman with the flow of blood approaches Jesus by faith. But it is only when she identifies herself (Lu 8:47) that Jesus responds with the pronouncement (Lu 8:48). Another example is the healing of the 10 lepers (Lu 17:11-19). Jesus initiates and only one of the 10 responds with appreciation to Jesus. As a result, his faith saved him. The relationship between God and the person is restored because there is both an initiative/response on the part of the person and an initiative/response on the part of Jesus. Applying this observation to Luke 7:36-50, the point is not to debate when the unnamed woman experienced faith. The point is that she experiences faith because both the divine initiative/response and human initiative/response are evident and mediated through Jesus.

Though the phenomenon of faith in Luke is an interesting study to pursue, it is not within the scope of this present chapter. This study has as its focus the dual phenomena of honour/shame.

2.2 Insights using a Sociological Orientation

Having gleaned insights on episode #1 from interpreters focusing on the text, I will now turn my attention to interpreters who interpret the episode using a sociological orientation.

First, Nolland ([1989](#)) observes that Jesus possesses the social standing of a well-known teacher since he is invited to supper by a Pharisee. This interpretation is confirmed by Rohrbaugh ([1991](#)), who looks at the eating practices of the inhabitants of pre-industrial cities. Normally, a host would invite a guest equivalent in social status to his home for a meal. Situations to the contrary, such as in the “parable of the Great Banquet” (Luke 14:15-24) were unheard of. In that parable, an unnamed, wealthy, urban elite invites outcasts – the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame, and those who live outside the city gates – to a banquet. By the breaking of social rank, Jesus makes his point to his hosts in a socially shocking manner. However, the hosts in Luke’s other stories, whether they be Pharisees or tax collectors, both of whom represent a higher social class, feel socially comfortable inviting Jesus for a meal.⁵⁴ This social ease implies that the honour attributed to Jesus, due to social standing, is at least equal to that of the Pharisees in Jewish society.

Second, for Malina and Neyrey ([1991c](#)), a social perspective of the dual phenomena of honour/shame is a pivotal value in the social context that forms the backdrop of Luke/Acts. Honour-conscious people are dependent on others to inform them of what is socially acceptable. Shame, on the other hand, is associated with violating these social norms. Malina and Neyrey

⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that in the Gospel of Luke, there are several recorded incidents of Pharisees inviting Jesus to a meal. But nowhere do the gospels record the religious leaders in Jerusalem offering such an invitation ([Carroll, 1988](#)). This implies that the Pharisees, at least in communities outside Jerusalem, viewed Jesus as having a somewhat equivalent social class as themselves, whereas the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem belonged to a higher social class.

describe this consciousness as a social map with dimensions that are both social and physical. The physical dimension of this social map is condensed and expressed first, by the parts of a person's physical body, and second, by the space occupied by a person's body.

With respect to body parts, the head and face are the most honourable parts of a person. Therefore, to anoint a person's head symbolizes great honour. Conversely, to strike a person on the head or spit in their face, would symbolize great disrespect for the person. An example of the latter was already referred to in Chapter 7 of this dissertation when, at his trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus' face was the target of such shameful acts (Mt 26:67; Mk 14:65; Lu 22:64; Jn 18:22).

With respect to the space occupied by a person's body, granting access to one's private living quarters or to one's body would display a trust and thus symbolize a display of honour to that person. Again, in Chapter 7 of this dissertation, I drew attention to Jairus granting Jesus access to his private quarters and his daughter. Jairus allowed Jesus to take his daughter by the hand in order for Jesus to raise her from the dead (Lu 8:51-54).

When applying Malina and Neyrey's sociological model of the social map to episode #1, I observed that during the meal and conversation with Simon, Jesus ignores the woman completely. By ignoring her, Jesus allows the woman access to his body. By allowing her to touch his feet with her hands, wipe his feet with her hair, and kiss his feet with her lips he was honouring her. Ironically, this honouring of the woman by giving her access to his feet was taking place at the same moment Simon was dishonouring the woman in his thoughts by labelling her as a sinner.

Next, although Jesus was honouring the woman, she did not see herself worthy to have access to Jesus' head. This observation is highlighted by the contrast with a parallel account that took place later in Simon the leper's house in Bethany near Jerusalem (Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9). In Matthew and Mark's version, an unnamed woman honours Jesus by pouring perfume on his head. In Luke's episode, the sinful woman expresses her affection to the members of Jesus' body furthest from his head.

Finally, the sinful woman had acquired a deviant status as a result of her past (and possibly present) behaviour that was socially unacceptable to her community. In spite of her deviant identity, which I would also label as shameful, she expresses love and devotion to Jesus. Jesus sees beyond her deviant identity as a sinner and pronounces forgiveness because of her faith and repentant attitude.

In summary, sociological considerations allow us to identify honour/shame in this episode at deeper levels than observed through purely textual considerations. Not only is Jesus honoured by someone kissing his feet, and not only is the woman shamed because of her lifestyle, but changes in the honour/shame status of characters are taking place in this episode. Jesus begins with a degree of honour in Simon's eyes that is diminished as the narrative unfolds, and the sinful woman is granted access to Jesus' feet which represents a reversal in her shameful status. Having noted the above observations on this episode by means of a sociological orientation, I will attempt to further elaborate on this reversal in honour/shame status by using an experiential approach with a focus on the dual phenomena of honour/shame.

2.3 Insights using an Experiential Orientation of Honour/Shame

Just as textual and sociological orientations assist a contemporary reader's understanding of an episode, so an approach using an experiential orientation can further enrich meaning for an interpreter. In this final section, I present examples of how an experiential approach of honour/shame can further enrich our understanding of this episode. I will limit my observations to shame and acceptance, shame and belief, and shame in relationship to honour.

2.3.1 Shame and Acceptance

As previously noted, guilt focuses on a person's behaviour: what a person does. Shame, on the other hand, focuses on a person's being/worth: who a person is. One way of interpreting episode #1 is by using Smedes's ([1993](#)) observations on shame. According to Smedes, the solution to the problem of guilt and shame is forgiveness and acceptance respectively. "When we forgive ourselves, we heal our guilt; when we accept ourselves, we heal our shame"

(p. 143). When applied to others, we forgive and accept others in the same way that we forgive and accept ourselves.

When considering forgiveness and acceptance in the episode under study, I observed that Jesus forgives the sinful woman because of her faith. Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness addresses the woman's guilt. In the process of forgiveness, Jesus also accepts the sinful woman by extending grace and peace to her (v. 50). As a result of this acceptance, Jesus addresses her shame.

Implicitly, the sinful woman also forgave herself and accepted herself. This acceptance allowed her to be courageous. In anticipation of Jesus' forgiveness by faith, she was able to enter the home of Simon the Pharisee, the perpetrator of the shame she deserved in her cultural context. She was able to perform acts of devotion towards Jesus without being paralyzed by the effects of shame. As a result, she provides an example for those who seek to be freed from the clutches of shame.

2.3.2 Shame and Belief

Another way of understanding this episode would be to look at the different dimensions of belief as they relate to the freedom from shame that this sinful woman experienced. As developed in the section on interpretation based on a textual orientation, I assume the following: first, through her former contact with the teachings of John the Baptist or Jesus, the sinful woman recognized both the guilt of her sin as well as the shame that her actions brought upon her; and second, having heard this message of forgiveness, she repented and by faith believed that she either had received or would receive forgiveness and acceptance.

That this sinful woman believed she was forgiven, or anticipated being forgiven, by Jesus and released from shame through acceptance can be demonstrated by filtering this episode through the lens of the dimensions of belief developed in Chapter 2.

- Cognitive Dimension – The text does not give the contemporary reader access to the sinful woman's cognitive belief that she was forgiven or anticipated being forgiven

by Jesus. The narrator does not comment on her thoughts as he does on the thoughts of Simon the Pharisee. However, we do have the additional dimensions of belief to assist our analysis. They point to what she truly believed;

- Affective & Behavioural Dimensions – The narrative portrays the sinful woman's devotion, love, and appreciation towards Jesus by means of her tears (affections) and her acts of devotions (behaviour) that focus on Jesus' feet. Her presence in Simon's house demonstrates that her devotion was stronger than any possible accompanying feelings of shame for being in the presence of the one holding the community to their socio-religious standards, Simon the Pharisee;
- Volitional Dimension – The narrative portrays the sinful woman as courageously entering Simon's house to express her love and appreciation to Jesus. There is no indication that she was forced to perform these acts of devotion against her will;
- Verbal Dimension – The sinful woman is portrayed as remaining silent during this event. Therefore, this dimension appears not to be relevant for the discussion. However, Jesus recognizes her faith. By means of an oral pronouncement, in the presence of Simon and the other guests, Jesus gives evidence of her faith and provides the assurance that her sins are forgiven;
- Physiological Dimension – The narrative is silent with respect to the physiological sensations the sinful woman experienced as she performed her acts of devotion. However, from our model of human emotions described in Chapter 2 (section 1.2), we know that a perichoretic relationship exists between the three components of an emotion: the physiological component, the subjective-experiential component, and the physical-expressive component. Because of our common human experience of associating a woman's tears with intense emotion, the display of the physical-expressive component (tears), presumes the subjective-experiential component (intense feelings), and implies the presence of the physiological sensations associated with her belief.
- Temporal, Mnemonic, and Relational Dimensions – From my reading of the narrative, I find no evidence of this woman's belief of being forgiven by Jesus as being

part of an interpersonal relationship with Jesus (relational) over a long period of time (temporal). Therefore, she would have had no opportunity over a period of time to remember his forgiveness (mnemonic). The narrative takes place at a punctual setting, during one meal, on a specific day.

However, interpreting this passage through the lens of the dimensions of belief suggests re-opening the question of the identity of this sinful woman. Is it possible, following early church tradition ([Plummer, 1922](#)), that the sinful woman is, in fact, the Mary Magdalene introduced in Luke 8:2? Support for this possibility comes from two sources.

First, an interpreter using a narrative approach attempts to identify the common themes that unify the episodes collected together in a gospel. This would suggest an intentional link between the episode of the sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50) and the description of the women who support Jesus in Luke 8:1-3. The theme of women honouring Jesus may be the narrative glue that binds these two episodes together. That Mary Magdalene is first on the list of women in Luke 8:2 may lend support to the idea that she and the sinful woman are one and the same.

Second, Malina and Neyrey ([1991c](#)) propose a model to describe the social context of first-century eastern Mediterranean society as it relates to gender, honour/shame, and social space. They argue that honour in that society was associated with gender roles. In turn, the roles of male and female gender were symbolized by the arrangement of space. While being male was associated with public space, being female was associated with domestic space due to the responsibilities of women in the home. The honour of a woman from a sociological perspective was to be under the authority and protection of a man, whether it be her father or her husband. Applying this model to the sinful woman, I observed that the sinful woman was unchaperoned at a public meal setting in Simon the Pharisee's home. She was a sinful woman in the eyes of her community. She was an outcast and in all likelihood a prostitute, who experienced a complete change of heart. As a result of Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness, she left in peace, possibly because only a man could reverse her shame status in that culture.

Implied in Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness heard by Simon and his guests is that she must now be reincorporated into the life of the local Jewish community.

Would it not be difficult for the local Jewish community to welcome her back? Would it not also be difficult for her to experience a changed lifestyle if she remained independent of male authority? What respectable Jewish male in the community would take her as his wife? If it was unlikely that she be taken in under the authority of a male, could not the emotional attachment to her previous lifestyle be broken by submitting herself to the authority of Jesus? If so, this woman *continued* to honour Jesus (temporal dimension) by *devoting her life* to him (relational dimension). And being incorporated into the new community of the Galilean women-followers of Jesus, she would be constantly *reminded* of her belief that she was forgiven by Jesus (mnemonic dimension).

Though the identity of this sinful woman who honoured Jesus remains a mystery, the speculation that she was Mary Magdalene or another of Jesus' Galilean women-followers enriches our understanding of this gospel narrative as we consider the various dimensions of belief that released her from shame.

2.3.3 Reversal of Honour/Shame Status

A third way of deepening our understanding of this episode is to examine the reversal of the honour/shame status in the three principal characters: Jesus, Simon the Pharisee, and the sinful woman. I will begin this interpretation with Simon's evaluation of Jesus.

As previously established, Simon initially honoured Jesus by inviting him for a meal. Simon considered Jesus at least an equal in his social class. In addition, he considered Jesus, to some degree, a prophet. These beliefs changed once Simon observed the interaction between the woman and Jesus. Jesus allowed the sinful woman to touch him, which resulted in the lowering of Simon's estimation of Jesus from prophet to something less.

To help understand the woman's evaluation of Jesus, I draw attention to the flask of perfume and the woman's tears. The woman brought an expensive flask of perfume into the meal

setting with the intention of honouring Jesus. This action, which was out of the ordinary and therefore recounted in the gospel corpus, implied some sort of previous change in her attitude towards herself. This, in turn, led to her positive evaluation of the person of Jesus. The woman at this moment considered Jesus in a favourable manner and intended to honour him by performing some act with this oil. The woman's tears suggest a recent change. Her emotions are still raw. The woman cannot regulate her intense emotional response by holding back her tears. Her emotional response is stronger than any hesitancy to enter the meal setting and expose herself to additional stigma by the possible negative responses of those present. Her emotional attention is focused not on the immediate setting but on expressing her love and devotion to Jesus. Her desire is to honour Jesus.

Now, I will turn the tables and examine Jesus' evaluation of both Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman. The omniscient narrator reveals the thoughts of Simon the Pharisee to the implied reader. Jesus evaluates those same thoughts by giving a parable. His application of the parable draws a contrast between Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman.

In Jesus' parable, the creditor did not shame his debtors into paying the debt by threatening to sell them into slavery as was the case in Jesus' parable recorded in Matthew 18:23-35. Rather, the creditor canceled the debt; he withheld the shame the debtors deserved. In return, the greater debtor honoured the creditor much more intensely than the lesser debtor. According to Jesus' application, the greater debtor, the sinful woman, honoured the creditor, Jesus, in every way that the other debtor, Simon the Pharisee, failed to. Jesus used the occasion to bring these observations into Simon the Pharisee's awareness. Though not culturally acceptable, these acts of omission by Simon the Pharisee as host amounted to withdrawing honour from Jesus when compared with the acts of devotion offered by the sinful woman. Jesus brought these observations to Simon the Pharisee's attention with gentleness and respect. Jesus did not condemn Simon the Pharisee as he did the Pharisees in another meal setting (Lu 11:37-44).

Although the implied reader knows the thoughts of Simon the Pharisee in this episode, the implied reader does not know the thoughts of the sinful woman. However, I propose, congruent with one of the themes of this dissertation, that the contemporary reader has at least limited access to her thoughts by her emotional and behavioural response and by the favourable response of Jesus to this woman.

With respect to the sinful woman, we have already observed that she honoured Jesus by her actions in a way that Simon the Pharisee did not. The bringing of the flask of perfume, the outpouring of tears manifesting her intense emotions, and the focusing of her devotion towards Jesus' bare feet, all point to her honouring Jesus. With respect to Jesus' response to her devotion, Jesus honours this woman. He allows her access to his feet. He does not reproach her in any way. Rather, she becomes the positive example that contrasts Simon the Pharisee.

In summary, the changes in the degree of honour/shame status observed using a sociological orientation become clearer when using an experiential orientation. The reversal of the status of characters comes into clearer focus. Simon the Pharisee, who initially honoured Jesus by inviting him for a meal, changed his assessment of Jesus. Simon the Pharisee withdrew honour from Jesus by not demonstrating a degree of devotion to him comparable to the devotion shown by the sinful woman. By withdrawing honour from someone to whom it is due, one may be interpreted as shaming the person. In contrast, the woman, who was initially shamed, also experiences a reversal of status. Unlike Simon the Pharisee, Jesus withdrew any shame attributed to the sinful woman along with the guilt for her previous behaviours. By withdrawing this shame, Jesus' actions can be interpreted as honouring the woman. Finally, Simon the Pharisee, by inviting guests to his home for a meal, reinforces his status in the community. As an honoured host, he also experiences a reversal of status. Not only would he have felt shame in the eyes of his guests for inviting an imposter for a meal, he may also have experienced a hint of shame by being publicly, though gently, rebuked by Jesus' interpretation of the woman's acts of devotion.

Having looked at the episode #1, I will now turn my attention to episode #2 in order to further our study of honour/shame in the Gospel of Luke.

3 Interpreting Episode #2 (Luke 15:11-32)

11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons.

12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’

So he divided his property between them.

13 Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country
and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 When he came to his senses, he said,
‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him:

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.””

20 So he got up and went to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him;
he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 The son said to him,
‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 But the father said to his servants,

‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate.

24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’

So they began to celebrate.

25 Meanwhile, the older son was in the field.

When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied,
‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

28 The older brother became angry and refused to go in.

So his father went out and pleaded with him.

29 But he answered his father,

‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders.

Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.

30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home,
you kill the fattened calf for him!’

31 ‘My son,’ the father said,

‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.

32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again;
he was lost and is found.””

(Luke 15:11-32)

3.1 Insights using a Textual Orientation

Luke 15:11-32, hereafter referred to as episode #2, also falls into a larger section of the Gospel of Luke that is arranged within a broad geographical framework. Talbert ([1982](#)) situates episode #2 in a section identified as a travel narrative (Lu 9:51 - 19:44). Entitled *Jesus' Teaching en Route to Jerusalem* by Blomberg ([1987](#)), this section is arranged topically, rather than chronologically, as Jesus heads to Jerusalem.

3.1.1 Insights using Source Criticism

Some scholars have argued that the main point of episode #2 concludes at verse 24 with the welcoming of the lost son and the ensuing celebration. As a result, the interaction between the father and the older brother is thought to be misplaced and distracts the contemporary reader from the main point of the parable ([Blomberg, 1987](#)). Rather than viewing this parable as two parables fused together as some source critiques have suggested, Aus ([1985](#)) argues for the original unity of the parable. Refuting any notion of a Hellenistic source as suggested by H. Conzelmann, Aus proposes that this parable and a similar rabbinic parable originate from common Jewish sources. As with episode #1, a discussion of sources is not especially relevant for my discussion considering my empathetic interpretive stance.

3.1.2 Insights using Redaction Criticism

Redaction criticism is used to help the contemporary reader observe the unity of Luke 15 with the unity of the whole Gospel of Luke. With respect to the unity of the chapter, Luke 15 begins with the Pharisees' murmuring about Jesus' eating with outcasts (vv. 1-3).⁵⁵ Episode #2 is the final of three parables given as a response by Jesus. The first two parables present the perspective of God who loves and seeks after those who are lost. In the "parable of the Lost Sheep" (Lu 15:3-7), the 99 sheep represent the righteous from the perspective of the Mosaic Law rather than from the perspective of inner character ([H. A. W. Meyer,](#)

⁵⁵ From the Pharisees' perspective, sinners was a broad term that included people such as "excise-men, tax collectors, shepherds, donkey-drivers, pedlars, and tanners" ([Jeremias, 1972, p. 132](#)).

[1884/1979](#)). Heaven is more joyful over the one lost sheep who repents than the 99 *righteous*. In the “parable of the Lost Coin” (Lu 15:8-10), emphasis is placed on the thoroughness of God, who in His love, seek outcasts as the woman searched for the one lost coin ([Geldenhuys, 1979](#)). In contrast to the first two parables, the final parable (episode #2) presents the human perspective: the love of the father and the change of heart of the younger son ([Plummer, 1922](#)).

Blomberg ([1987](#)) credits Mary A. Tolbert ([1979](#)) for demonstrating the unity of the final parable by means of the similarity in structure between verses 11-24 and verses 25-32. She observed a similar alternation between narration and direct speech in the two sections.

The unity of the parable has implications concerning the major theme of the parable. Craddock ([1990](#)), echoing Jeremias ([1972](#)), views contemporary Bible publishers as misnaming the parable with the words *prodigal son*. This misnomer highlights only a sub-theme of the parable. Horbury ([2017](#)), however, found that far from being contemporary, the title with the words *prodigal son* first appeared in English in Edmund Becke’s 1551 edition, and with the 1560 Geneva Bible, this title “appears with increasing frequency” (p. 186). In place of naming the parable with its negative connotation, the “parable of the Prodigal Son,” Craddock prefers to name it the “parable of the Loving Father”. He observes that the central character in the parable is not the prodigal son but the father who celebrates when his lost son is found. Episode #2 begins by stating that a man has two sons. The subject of the parable is the father. Relying on Joachim Jeremias, Burke ([2013](#)) also asserts that the father is the central figure in this parable. As a result, the parable should be understood from the perspective of the father.

With respect to the unity of the Book of Luke, Tannehill ([1986](#)) observes several themes that unify the Gospel of Luke. One theme often repeated is the reversal of society’s norms. For example, the hungry will be fed, and the weeping will laugh. Episode #2 fits this common theme of reversal in the Gospel of Luke. The son who squandered the family wealth shares in his father’s joy while the son who acted faithfully becomes estranged from his father and

family. This unity of Luke's gospel reflected in Luke's themes is also evident by the three parables in Luke 15. Tannehill sees Luke developing an earlier response to the question of why Jesus eats with sinners in Luke 5:29-32. The Pharisees' question in Luke 5:30 is answered by different episodes within Luke's gospel. In the introductory verses of Luke 15, the phrases *Pharisees complaining* and *eating with sinners* link the chapter back to Luke 5:29-32. In both episodes, the author draws a contrast between those who view themselves as righteous and those who repent in the context of a meal setting with publicans and sinners.

3.1.3 Insights using Form Criticism

Episode #2 is a parable. According to Bock ([2002](#)), parables, as a form, fit under the wider category of *sayings*. Doole ([2016](#)) classifies Luke 15 as a *dispute saying*, although no discussion takes place between the Pharisees and Jesus. Jesus speaks uninterrupted by giving a series of three parables. Craddock ([1990](#)) observes these three parables as forming a triplet. The use of triplets is a common form in this gospel (Lu 3:11-14; 4:3-12; 5:36-39; 9:57-62; 10:31-33; 11:42-52; 14:18-20; 20:10-12). The first two parables of Luke 15 have a similar length, form, and ending. This similarity appears to anticipate the final longer parable.

Lunn ([2009](#)) questions the three-fold parable structure in Luke 15 commonly recognized by interpreters. Using textual features, he observes an overall structure with verses 1-3 as the *Introduction* to one parable (vv. 4-32). This one parable is divided into two *Parts* (vv. 4-10 and vv. 11-32). Each *Part* is then subdivided into two sections: *Part 1* divides into (A) *The lost sheep* (vv. 4-7) and (B) *The lost coin* (vv. 8-10), while *Part 2* divides into (A') *The younger son* (vv. 12-24) and (B') *The older son* (vv. 25-32). Based on this structure, Lunn observes a movement. The object lost moves from the nonhuman to the human. From this A B A' B' structure, Lunn argues that first, the lost sheep straying from the rest of the flock portrays the younger son straying from home to a distant land; and second, the coin being lost at home portrays the older son, who never strays from home, as lost by his disrespectful reaction to the father. Tying this A B A' B' structure back to the *Introduction* (vv. 1-3), Lunn interprets Jesus as the loving father. Jesus receives tax collectors and sinners, who represent the younger son, while the Pharisees represent the older son.

In summary, redaction and form criticism point to the unity of the parable with the central character being the loving father who represents Jesus.

3.1.4 Insights based on an Evangelical Christian Tradition

In this section, I attempt to interpret episode #2 in a manner consistent with my approach to interpreting episode #1 (Lu 7:36-50) earlier in this chapter. Using a textual orientation, I share insights from both evangelical and non-evangelical interpreters that help me better understand this parable. Following the plot of the episode, a narrative technique, I describe the setting (the family land), the occasion (the request for the inheritance), the action (the squandering of wealth), the issue (the repentance), the response of the father to the younger son (reunion), the response of the father to the older son (invitation to reconciliation), and the application.

- *The Setting of the Parable*

The parable takes place somewhere in Palestine on family-owned, arable land. The land is under cultivation with neither sheep nor shepherds mentioned. The wealthy father has two sons, but there are no female characters in the story ([Aus, 1985](#)).

- *The Occasion*

The younger son asks his father for his share of the inheritance (Lu 15:12a) which would be equivalent to one-third of the estate (Dt 21:17). Plummer ([1922](#)) notes that a son receiving the inheritance before the death of his father, though unwise, was not unheard of. However, the son of Sirach, in the Apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, counselled against such practice.

Hear me, ye great men, and all ye people, and hearken with your ears, ye rulers of the church. Give not to son or wife, brother or friend, power over thee while thou livest; and give not thy estate to another, lest then repent, and thou entreat for the same. As long as thou livest, and hast breath in thee, let no man change thee. For it is better that thy children should ask of thee, than that thou look toward the hands of thy children. In all thy works keep the pre-eminence. Let no stain sully thy glory. In the time when thou shalt end the days of thy life, and in the time of thy decease, distribute thy inheritance. (Ec 33:19-24)

The parable implies that the property is sold to the older brother (Lu 15:31). Although it is further implied that the inheritance is converted into cash for the younger son, the property stays in the hands of the father until his death ([Morris, 1988](#); [Nolland, 1993](#)).

By the younger son asking for his portion of the inheritance and leaving for a distant country, he was severing the relationship with his father ([M. O. Tolbert, 1969](#)). In place of honouring his father by preparing to care for him in his old age, the son was liberating himself from the privileges and responsibilities of being a son. It would be expected that the younger son remain home and work the land, along with the older son, in order to support the father in his old age ([Burke, 2013](#)). According to Keener ([1993](#)), the listeners of the parable would interpret the request by the son as dishonouring the father and wishing he was dead.

Blomberg ([1987](#)) suggests that Deuteronomy 21:15-21 may provide the cultural background for the norms of Jewish inheritance. If this be the case, the younger brother, by asking for an early inheritance, would be considered a rebellious son. The father, in turn, would be justified in bringing this son before the community leaders who would decide his fate. Capital punishment by stoning was permitted in this case to prevent this young man's attitude from contaminating other young men in the community. However, in the parable, the father does not correct his son for this disrespectful act. Surprisingly, the father grants the request (Lu 15:12b) and generously gives his son the portion of the inheritance demanded ([Burke, 2013](#)).

- *The Action*

The passage of time accelerates after the granting of the request. The younger brother gets his possessions together, leaves for a distant country, which refers to an unknown location outside Jewish territory ([Liefeld, 1984](#)), and squanders all his wealth. This loss is accentuated by the additional providential onset of a famine. These unforeseen circumstances lead to the younger son being humiliated in different ways. Economically, he is compelled to work as a hired hand herding swine for a non-Jewish landowner ([Geldenhuys, 1979](#)). Socio-religiously, M.O. Tolbert ([1969](#)) reminds the contemporary reader of the Mosaic Law governing the Jewish attitude towards pigs, "You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are

unclean for you” (Le 11:8). As a result, the younger son would not be able to observe the Jewish Sabbath ([Jeremias, 1972](#)). And dietetically, he longed to eat carob beans, a pig feed that was disgusting to the Jews ([Aus, 1985](#)).⁵⁶ However, no one would even offer him any pig feed to eat (Lu 15:16).

- *The Issue*

The passage of time once again slows down in verses 17 to 20a. With the arrival of misfortune, this son becomes “the victim of his own self-will and self-deceit” ([M. O. Tolbert, 1969, p. 125](#)). As a result, he makes the decision to return home. The decision to return was triggered by practical reasoning, rather than moral or ideological grounds. Food for his stomach was available in his father’s household; in his present situation, he was starving. However, the implied reader is drawn into the character of the younger son by a first-person description of his decision. He will confess to his father his sins against God in heaven and against his father on earth. In humility, he will place himself at the mercy of his father, asking that he be given the status of one of his father’s servants. Morris ([1988](#)) notes that the younger son “expressed sorrow not for what he had lost but for what he had done: he had sinned” (p. 265). The son then gets up and sets out to execute his intentions.

- *The Response of the Father (Reunion)*

In verse 20, the father is portrayed as waiting for the younger son to return. As he comes into view, the father runs to meet him, not yet knowing the attitude of the son ([Plummer, 1922](#)). In order to run, the father pulls up his tunic and exposes his legs ([Keener, 1993](#)). Talbert ([1982](#)) uses Ecclesiasticus 19:30 as an intertext to interpret the attitude of the father. According to one interpretation of this verse, it is beneath the dignity of an aged man in Jewish culture to run or to expose his legs ([Keener, 1993](#)). As a result, the father humiliates himself.

⁵⁶ Carlston ([1975](#)) also describes the carob bean as a disgusting food for the Jew. He refers to G. Dalman’s monograph entitled *Jesus-Jeshua* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1929) to support this interpretation of dietary dislike.

Without restraint, he runs to welcome his son, showing his unexpected love in a public manner. He could have been more reserved and waited until his son first showed the fruit of repentance.

The father does not address the younger son in the parable. There is no indication of an exchange of words or questions. The only communication of the father towards his younger son portrayed in the parable is the father's action of joyfully hugging and kissing his son. This welcome speaks of the unconditional, full acceptance of the son by the father ([Burke, 2013](#)).

Jeremias ([1972](#)) notes that the father treats his younger son as an honoured guest rather than a servant. He supports this interpretation by the father's instructions given to the servants. His son is to receive the best robe, a sign of honour; a ring, the bestowal of authority; and scandals, the sign of being a free man rather than a slave. Furthermore, by instructing his servants to slaughter the fattened calf, the son becomes a guest of honour. By slaughtering the fatten calf, Geldenhuys ([1979](#)), following Plummer ([1922](#)), notes that the father is not just providing for the nutritional needs of his impoverished son. Rather, by means of the festive celebration, he is joyfully honouring the return of his lost son!

The honouring of the son is a key element of this section of the parable. First, as observed by Burke ([2013](#)), the son receives the best from the person he wounded the most. Second, Noland ([1993](#)) observes that the terms used in this section are to be understood from the perspective of the father. When describing the son as being lost and then found, the terms used are relational. The son who was dead from the father's perspective is now alive. Finally, the description of the actions of the father towards the younger son prepares the implied reader for the next section of the parable: the contrast between the father's response and the older son's reaction. This contrast, in turn, heightens the contrast between the Pharisees and Jesus in their response to sinners ([Liefeld, 1984](#)).

- *The Response of the Father (Invitation to Reconciliation)*

While returning from tilling the land, the older son hears music coming from the house (v. 25). Plummer ([1922](#)) understands that the music is provided by performers rather than those

who are part of the household. Informed that his brother has returned and that the father has killed the fattened calf, the older son angrily refuses to participate in the festivities (vv. 26-28a). By not going into the house, he displayed his discontent with the decision of the father.

The father then leaves the celebration, in view of the guests, to coax his older son to join in the party (v. 28b). Burke ([2013](#)) interprets the father as breaking social custom by leaving his guests, coaxing the son to enter, and neglecting to correct his son. The older son dishonours his father outside of the house in a public space, and the father does not correct his son.

The older son, in turn, vents his anger on the father. In a sermon by St. Bernardine of Siena (1380-1444), as presented by Karris ([2004](#)), the older son's anger is based on three complaints. First, the older son's sense of justice is offended. He had done what was right by serving the father and avoiding evil, by never transgressing his father's commands (v. 29a). Second, the older son's sense of injustice is provoked. Although he had served his father, he accuses the father of being meagre by never giving him even a goat to celebrate with his friends (v. 29b). And third, the older brother's disgust for his brother is stirred. The younger brother had squandered the estate on prostitutes (v. 30a). However, there is a fourth complaint. According to Craddock ([1990](#)), what irritated the older son the most was that the father killed the fattened calf for the younger son. This expensive act spoke of the father's great joy and the bestowing of honour on the younger brother.

The father responds to the accusations of the older son. With respect to the first two complaints, the father's presence and his riches are at the disposal of the older son. With respect to the second two complaints, according to the father, honour or dishonour is not the issue. Rather, he must rejoice because the son who was lost is now found ([Geldenhuys, 1979](#)).

At this point, interpreters offer various meanings to the complaints of the older son and to the response of the father. I begin by looking at different interpretations of the motives behind the anger of the older son.

Some interpreters find favourable motives for the anger of the older son. For Nolland ([1993](#)), who uses Proverbs 28:7 as an intertext, the older son interprets his brother's actions as dishonouring the father. "A discerning son heeds instruction, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father" (Pr 28:7). For Duff ([1995](#)), the older son interprets his brother's squandering of money with prostitutes as disgracing the whole family. In contrast, Craddock ([1990](#)) finds the older son angry not because of the return of his prodigal brother. Rather, his anger is directed to the celebration given for a brother who does not deserve it. In other words, the older son sees this celebration as cheap grace. For the older son, "Does the party cancel out sin and repentance?" (p. 188).

Other interpreters are more critical of the motives for the anger of the older son. Both Jermias ([1972](#)) and Keener ([1993](#)) observe the older son's disrespectful attitude towards the father by the way he addresses his father. The father addresses his son with the tender words "my son" when speaking to him in verse 31. In contrast, the older son does not address his father in a respectful manner by addressing him as "Sir." Aus ([1985](#)) labels the older brother as self-righteous and hard-hearted. The older brother cannot accept the father forgiving the younger brother who repented from leading a self-indulgent life. Geldenhuys ([1979](#)) understands the older son's claim that he had never transgressed any of his father's orders as evidence that the older son feels he has been taken for granted by the father. He has been living as one of the hired servants in his father's household. As a result, the older son feels he also deserves some honour from his father. This attitude would suggest that the older son has not taken pleasure in his relationship with the father any more than the younger son. Finally, according to Keener ([1993](#)), the older son's behaviour and attitude demonstrates that he is in conflict with both his father and his younger brother. Instead of putting himself in the position of settling the differences between his father and his younger brother, he puts himself in the centre of the conflict.

With respect to the response of the father, I offer a sampling of the interpretation of a few authors. From a perspective critical of the father's action, Aus ([1985](#)) views the jealousy of the older brother as rooted in the lack of attention paid to the son by the father. Nolland

(1993), as well, sees the older son as looking for recognition from the father. From the older son's perspective, the father was "failing to honor the honorable, while giving honor to the dishonorable" (p. 787). Doole (2016) interprets the father as treating the younger son too leniently. As a result, he is socially irresponsible, even foolish.

However, this apparent foolishness on the father's part can also be seen from a different perspective. The actions of the father have credibility when biblical interpreters realize that the father represents either God or Jesus in this parable. Burke (2013) points out that the father's patience and compassion for his sons is of higher priority than his personal honour or status in the eyes of the community. Geldenhuys (1979) follows Plummer (1922) as seeing the father treating both sons with equal tenderness. There is no favouritism shown between the brothers.

Therefore, if we accept the interpretation of unfavourable motives for the older son and favourable motives for the father, we can conclude that both sons are guilty of inappropriate behaviour towards their father. Both sons shame their father in public: one by asking for the inheritance, the other by not joining the celebration. In both cases, the father is resilient to the shaming by his sons. The father demonstrates his patience, compassion, and love, not only by welcoming and accepting his younger son back but also by patiently accepting the accusations by his older son and inviting him to join the celebration.

- *The Application for the Listeners*

Plummer (1922) provides a good summary of episode #2 as he links it back with the introductory verses of Luke 15. He notes that the responses of the two sons are left open. Both are agents who are free to act and to determine their long-term response to the father and to each other. In a similar way, both the Pharisees and the outcasts and sinners are free to respond to the generous love of their heavenly Father. For Plummer, "self-righteousness and exclusiveness are sinful, and may be as fatal as extravagance and licentiousness" (p. 377). Keener (1993) adds that rejoicing and celebration is the proper response from listeners and readers of Luke 15. A changed heart is observed in those who were lost and outside of the covenant

community. Duff ([1995](#)) associates this celebration with the future messianic banquet. It will be a celebration for the lost who have been found. So, the listeners (the Pharisees) and the readers (both implied and contemporary) are invited to set aside any jealousy of grace shown to undeserving outcasts in order to also enter the banquet.

3.2 Insights on Honour/Shame using a Textual Orientation

Before commenting on the meaning of episode #2 drawn from interpreters of this parable using a sociological orientation, I acknowledge that a few of the commentators consulted have contributed insights on the dual phenomena of honour/shame using a textual orientation. In this section, I note and respond to the observations of three such authors.

First. Geldenhuys ([1979](#)) refers to guilt and unworthiness in his understanding of episode #2. He notes the younger son is humiliated during the famine and during the herding of swine for a local landowner (loss of honour). He makes a distinction between the guilt of the younger son who sinned against God and his father (v. 19) and the younger son's unworthiness to be called his father's son. Although Geldenhuys links guilt with the confession of sin for wrong behaviour, he does not label shame as the phenomenon associated with unworthiness (devaluation of self). However, he clearly draws a distinction between the two phenomena in the following quote: "It is indispensable that there should be a sincere confession of sin [wrong behaviour] and of utter unworthiness [devaluation of self]" (p. 408).

As seen earlier, Geldenhuys also refers to the phenomenon of honour in his interpretation of episode #2. When the father commands the servants to bring the robe, ring, and scandals for the son, Geldenhuys interprets these actions as re-establishing the younger son to a position of honour. He also labels the older son as annoyed with the honour being shown to his brother by the father. Geldenhuys, however, does not make a distinction between the worth (dignity) of an individual and the merit of an individual as Smedes ([1993](#)) does. The human has worth or dignity before God by virtue of being human. But no one has merit before God based on his actions. None, including the prodigal son, deserve forgiveness. It is an act of mercy and grace bestowed on the human as the father bestowed mercy and grace on the younger son.

The second author, Park ([2009](#)), does refer to both shame and honour in his commentary on episode #2. Park observes that the family is portrayed as shamed in the eyes of Jesus' Jewish listeners and the implied readers. The family is exposed to shame when the younger son leaves with his inheritance. The humiliation intensifies as the son descends to squandering his fortune, tending pigs, and desiring to eat pig feed. The family is further shamed by the older son when he degrades his younger sibling and refuses to enter the celebration, accusing the father of mismanaging the household. This shaming of the family is contrasted with the honour given to the younger son by the father. "Thus, a would-be very shameful son/brother becomes a greater benefactor of joy and delight" (p. 516).

Third, in his commentary on episode #2, Nolland ([1993](#)) also draws attention to both phenomena of honour and shame. In the context of the paradox of the father "failing to honor the honorable, while giving honor to the dishonorable" (p. 787), from the elder's son perspective, Nolland writes, "This paradox was even more striking in the ancient world, where issues of honor and shame were of considerably greater importance than in modern Western societies" (p. 787). By his statement of contrasting the biblical society to modern society, Nolland assumes a sociological perspective of honour and shame rather than a psychological perspective.

From his review of the literature of shame and guilt, McConnell ([2015](#)) distinguishes the development of the two perspectives. Briefly, a sociological perspective of honour/shame was developed from cultural anthropological research early in the 20th century that conceptualized differences between shame and guilt cultures. Shame cultures, according to this paradigm are common outside of Western societies and are closer to biblical cultures. Shame cultures view the self as collective. In shame cultures-, the focus is on *behaviour*, namely social conformity to external standards. To ensure social conformity, individuals who do not conform are publicly shamed and ostracized, while acceptable behaviour is motivated by a sense of being honoured in the eyes of the community. In shame cultures, according to this perspective, the emotional dimension is minimized. In contrast, Western societies are known as guilt cultures. Wrongdoing is experienced *emotionally* by the individual self. It is this

internalized feeling of guilt that theoretically motivates a person to socially acceptable behaviour. The position of guilt and the accompanying feelings are addressed by a legal process where a payment is made to cover the offence. In summary, guilt is an internal private experience, while shame is an external public experience.

From a psychological perspective, McConnell considers a sociological model of shame as limiting. In contrast to a sociological model, first, shame and guilt in a psychological paradigm are understood as universal in spite of one's culture. Second, shame is not limited to a public experience and guilt to the private. And third, both shame and guilt are experienced as salient emotions. Rather, the difference between the two phenomena, according to McConnell, is how the self judges the self: "With guilt, the self judges one's actions or activity; with shame, the self judges 'the inadequacy of the *self* itself" (p. 172) (emphasis original).

3.3 Insights using a Sociological Orientation

Having gleaned insights on episode #2 from interpreters focusing on the text, I will now turn my attention to interpreters who commented on the phenomena of honour/shame using a sociological orientation.

3.3.1 Shame and the Sharing of Wealth

According to Plummer ([1922](#)), asking for one's inheritance was unacceptable in this society. Listeners of the parable would interpret the son as wishing his father was dead. In a patriarchal society, the granting of such a request would dishonour the father. By granting the son's request, the possibility existed that the portion of the land allotted to the younger son would be sold outside the family ([Keener, 1993](#)).

Using a sociological orientation, Oakman ([1991](#)) adds insight to the above comments. According to Oakman, wealth in Mediterranean culture was determined not by money but by the possession of land. The average father at the time would not have been so generous with his land. Oakman argues that the granting of the inheritance would be out of character with

a village patriarch. Sharing of wealth is part of a reciprocal relationship with the kin group. It is not to be squandered on complete strangers. Therefore, it is understood that the father would be shamed by the son's request for the inheritance and then shamed again by the community for granting the son's request.

3.3.2 Shame and Attachment to Non-Jews

Just as the son shamed the father, so the son is shamed by the Gentile landowner. Harrill ([1996](#)) and Talbert ([1982](#)) provide sociological insight into the younger son's employment while hiring himself to a citizen of the country. Because of his poverty, the younger son offered his services to a Gentile landowner as a general labourer. This type of contract, referred to as *paramonē*, obliged a worker "to remain with" (*παραμένειν*) a patron and to work in general service for a specified length of time" ([Harrill, 1996, p. 714](#)). This contract was different from a labourer offering his services for a day (Mt 20:1-16). With his commitment to do anything for a specific period of time, the younger son was chosen for the degrading work of having to feed pigs. According to Talbert ([1982](#)), when a citizen in Mediterranean culture wants to politely free himself of an unwanted guest, he delegates a responsibility that the guest will refuse. In this parable, the younger son accepts the task of herding pigs and remains attached to the Gentile landowner, rather than refusing the task and seeking help by associating himself with a diaspora Jewish community. As a result, the youth surely deserves to be shamed by Jewish listeners.

3.3.3 Honour as a Zero-Sum Phenomenon

Building on their observations of honour/shame that I used in the analysis of episode 1, Malina and Neyrey ([1991c](#)) understand honour as a zero-sum phenomenon among social equals in Mediterranean culture. If honour is bestowed on one person, it is taken away from another. This appears to be the view of the older son. His honour is threatened by the father bestowing undeserved honour on the younger brother. For Craddock ([1990](#)), the father loved both sons. He avoided any zero-sum way of thinking where one son is loved, and the other son is not. Rather than being portrayed in terms of either/or, the father represents Jesus who extends his love both to sinners and to the self-righteous.

3.4 Insights on Honour/Shame using an Experiential Orientation

In the same way that insights from interpreters using a textual and a sociological orientation have proven fruitful in understanding episode #2, I now offer my thoughts on this episode using an experiential orientation of honour/shame.

3.4.1 The Younger Son

As mentioned above, the younger son is honoured when his portion of the inheritance is granted by the father. With his fortune in cash, it is implied that the younger son achieves honour in the eyes of his new friends in a distant land. Following the squandering of his fortune and the onset of a providential famine, this achieved honour is reversed. Through this reversal of fortune, the younger son is now shamed by providential circumstances. Humiliated in his own eyes and in the eyes of his former friends as he attaches himself to a Gentile who raises pigs.

At this point in the episode, the toxic shame experienced by the younger son begins to be transformed into healthy shame, his unworthiness to be considered a son of his father. M. O. Tolbert ([1969](#)) observes that someone went searching for the lost sheep and the lost coin in Luke 15. In contrast, the father did not go searching for the son. A “person cannot be found until he himself desires to be found” (p. 125). The younger son had to come to his senses to be found (Lu 15:17). His suffering and the realization of his selfishness in renouncing his sonship led to healthy shame. He recognized not only the guilt of his actions, sinning before heaven and earth, but also his shame in being unworthy as a son. I consider this shame as healthy because it did not paralyze the younger son. He reasoned through his circumstances, made a decision, and acted in a way that recognized his faults before heaven and before his father.

During this process, the younger son reasoned that it was advantageous for him to assume the additional shame of humiliating himself and placing himself at the mercy of his father. Taking a public position on an issue and then having to backtrack on that position is humiliating. Normally because of hubristic pride, an individual would rather not admit to being

wrong. By asking to be given the status of one of his father's servants, the younger son was acknowledging his error.

In addition, by returning to his father, he was implicitly honouring the father. He envisioned the father as merciful and willing to extend that mercy to him, an undeserving son who had severed their relationship. This merciful understanding of the father by the younger son is in contrast to the servant in the “parable of Ten Minas” (Luke 19:11-27). In that parable, the servant who hid his minas (Lu 19:21) believed his master to be severe. In response, the master chose to live up to the expectations of the servant and treated that servant severely.

His master replied, “I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?” (Lu 19:22)

In both Luke 15 and Luke 19, I understand that the father/master, who represents Jesus, responds to the son/servant, who represents the listeners/readers, in the way that the son/servant perceives the father/master. In episode #2, the son no longer perceives the father as merely the source of wealth to fulfill self-centred desires. The younger son’s attitude changes. He now believes that the father is merciful. Interpreting this episode through the lens of the dimensions of belief, with a cognitive belief that the father is merciful, the younger son chooses (volitional dimension) to leave his present situation (behavioural dimension) and to plead with his father for mercy (verbal dimension) in making his request. The father, in turn, responds in mercy and in grace.

3.4.2 The Older Son

In his mind, the older son compared the treatment he received from the father with the treatment his brother received. Because the father had the fattened calf slain for the younger son, the older son concluded that he, the older son, had been wronged by the father. He had been taken for granted. His brother, who deserved shame, was honoured; he, who deserved honour, had his honour withdrawn. Up to this point, being taken for granted as a son may not have

been in the conscious awareness of the older son. However, when the younger son was honoured with undeserved grace, this awareness surfaced and led to feelings of being dishonoured or shamed.

The interpretation of the older son experiencing shame is supported by the emotional response attributed to the son in Luke 15:28. He became angry. The contemporary psychological literature reviewed in Chapter 6 demonstrated that shame lies beneath negative emotional responses such as anger ([Cook et al., 2001](#); [Tangney & Dearing, 2002](#); [Wilkinson, 2015](#)). The hurt from the shame experienced by the older son was transformed into anger directed at the father.

Rather than believing that it was a privilege to be in a relationship with his father, I interpret this emotional response of the older son as showing that his labour for his father was undertaken out of duty. Because of his duty-based belief, he was not joyful about his younger brother's return. He was jealous over the generosity extended to his prodigal brother.

The response of the older brother appears to be a normal human response towards others who are treated in an exceptionally positive, but seemingly undeserved way. This same response is observed in the “parable of the Workers in the Vineyard” (Mt 20:1-16). The workers who were hired at the beginning of the working day were paid the same workday wage (one denarius) as those who were hired one hour before the end of the working day. Those who were hired earlier in the day grumbled against the landowner’s treatment of those who were hired later in the day (Mt 20:11). This same grumbling appears to be repeated by the Pharisees who muttered against Jesus receiving publicans and sinners (Lu 15:2). The Pharisees, by not accepting with joy the sinners who were being welcomed by Jesus, were withdrawing honour from Jesus. They were subtly shaming Jesus and the Heavenly Father.

Applied to the reader, whether implied or contemporary, the reader can shame God by not accepting those He accepts. From a pastoral perspective, we are to struggle against any lack of joyfulness when the Heavenly Father accepts a person, we deem unworthy.

3.4.3 The Father

Embracing the interpretation that Luke 15 is a cohesive unit revolving around Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees over his acceptance of sinners and that the father represents Jesus in that discussion, I interpret the motives of the father in a positive light. With this understanding of episode #2, I conclude that both sons are guilty of inappropriate behaviour towards their father. Both sons shamed the father in public: one by asking for the inheritance and the other by refusing to enter into the festivities for the son who returned.

Experiencing shame from both of his sons, the father proves exceptionally resilient to this shame. In addition, the father withholds the additional shame that the sons deserve! The father is portrayed as demonstrating his patience, compassion, and love, not only by welcoming and accepting his younger son back, but also by patiently accepting the reaction of his older son and inviting him to join the celebration. On the one hand, the father sees beyond the initial selfish intentions of the younger son. He perceives the transformation in his younger son: the belief that the father is merciful and will accept him as a servant. On the other hand, the father hopes to see a similar transformation in the older son.

Not only is the father resilient to shame, he also addresses the shame experienced by the two sons. By accepting the younger son and reinstating his status as a son, the father addressed his son's shame. Similarly, when the father went out to the older son and patiently responded to his complaints, the father addressed the shame of the older son by acceptance.

I find it interesting to note that in episode #2, from the father's perspective, shame is addressed rather than guilt. Shame is addressed, when the father accepts the younger son, which leads to a reversal of the son's shame status to an honour status. There is no mention in the episode of any reversal of a guilty status to a forgiven status. There is no mention of retribution by the father or payment by the younger son. In addition, there is no mention of any corrective behaviour obliged by the father or undertaken by the son. The focus of this episode, from the perspective of the father, is on the phenomenon of *being* and not on the phenomenon

of *doing*. Shame is attended to by unmerited, gracious acceptance; guilt and the corresponding phenomenon of forgiveness is not explicitly addressed.

4 Summary of Observations on Honour/Shame from Episode #1 and #2

I observed the following similarities between the two episodes analyzed in this chapter: both episodes are found in Luke; both episodes are given in a context where Jesus addressed his opponents the Pharisees; both episodes have three principal characters; both episodes have a sinner as a central character; both episodes have a contrasting second main character who is initially portrayed as righteous; both episodes have these two principal characters experience a role reversal as the plot progresses; both episodes have a third principal character who contributes to this role reversal; both episodes have a principal character who perceives that honour was withdrawn from him.

For the purpose of deepening my insight into the phenomena of honour/shame, I observed two important differences between these two narratives. The first important difference is that in episode #1 both the shame and guilt of the sinful woman are addressed while in episode #2 only the shame of the younger son is addressed.⁵⁷ Contemporary psychological literature distinguishes shame from guilt. Guilt focuses on a person's behaviour: what a person does. Shame, on the other hand, focuses on a person's being/worth: who a person is. According to Smedes (1993), the solution to the problem of guilt and shame is forgiveness and acceptance respectively. By applying this experiential observation to Luke 7:36-50, we observed that both the shame and the guilt of the sinful woman were addressed by Jesus. However, when applying this experiential observation to the "parable of the Loving Father" (Lu 7:36-50) only the shame of the younger son was addressed. The reversal of a shame status to an honour status is observed in both episodes by the acceptance of the sinful woman and the younger

⁵⁷ The implication of this observation for evangelical theologians is that the doctrines of sin and the atonement should not only be understood with respect to the locus of guilt. The doctrines of sin and the atonement can also be understood with respect to the locus of shame ([McConnell, 2015](#)).

son respectively. The reversal of a guilt status to a forgiven status is observed only by Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness to the sinful woman.

The second important difference between the episodes is in the responses of the two principal characters who experienced the withdrawal of honour. In episode #1, Jesus perceived that honour due was withdrawn from him by his host, Simon the Pharisee. Although Simon initially honoured Jesus by considering him to some degree as a prophet and inviting him for a meal, this honour was withdrawn when Simon observed Jesus allowing the sinful woman to touch him. This withdrawal of honour is contrasted with the positive attention, given to Jesus by the woman who showed intense devotion by foot-washing, kissing, and anointing Jesus' feet with perfume.

In episode #2, the elder son perceived that honour was withdrawn from him by his own father. From the perspective of the elder son, in spite of his righteous behaviour of having served the father all his life and having never transgressed his commands, the father neglected to honour his son with a feast. Not only did he neglect to treat the righteous son in the way he deserved, he also neglected to treat the prodigal son as he deserved. In place of prudence, the father celebrated the prodigal's return with an honouring and joyful celebration. From the elder son's perspective, honour should have been associated with his own righteous behaviour and shame with his prodigal brother's behaviour. A person's worth should be associated with behaviour.

In each episode, honour was withdrawn from a main character and this omission could be interpreted as a gesture leading to shame. However, the response of Jesus and the response of the elder son to shame are quite different. The elder son reacts. He gets angry. He does not initiate a conversation with the person who he believes is the source of his shame. It is the father that initiates and goes to his son. Once the father invites his son to join the celebration, the elder son brings up his father's neglectful treatment. On the other hand, Jesus responds. He is not portrayed as being overwhelmed by emotion. He initiates and instructs Simon the Pharisee by means of a parable to point out first, Simon's neglect in his treatment of Jesus

when compared with the actions of the sinful woman; second, a lack of understanding of his own spiritual need; and third, the nature of who Jesus truly is.

However, the most important difference between the two responses to the omission of being honoured is as follows: the elder son used toxic shame when he shamed the father and his prodigal brother by his accusations; Jesus however, withheld toxic shame from the Pharisee and from the sinful woman. Withdrawing shame is as powerful as withdrawing honour. Withdrawing shame can be interpreted as honouring a person while withdrawing honour can be interpreted as shaming a person.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I used an experiential orientation to enrich the understanding of the phenomena of honour/shame in the gospel corpus. I admit that contemporary readers with a biblical or theological expertise may be hesitant with my approach. Not only am I reading the biblical text with my theological pre-understanding, interpreters may rightfully question my approach of imposing a scientifically based Western understanding of psychological phenomena on the pre-scientific biblical text. If one understands that by using this approach, no other valid interpretations may be advanced, I would agree with their evaluation. However, I avoid claiming that this is the only means to interpret the experiences of the characters in the gospel corpus. My claim is more limited. I propose that by applying a model of the governing dual phenomena of honour/shame that is common to humanity throughout the ages, a more nuanced understanding of the gospel corpus is possible. In turn, this richer understanding can be transferred to benefit the understanding of the CF-18 combatants of the RCAF community found in the pilot corpus.

With this nuanced understanding of the dual phenomena of honour/shame, in the next chapter, I will revisit my interpretation of the pilot corpus. I will go beyond a purely psychological or sociological stance by entering into a dialogue between the human sciences and the Christian tradition on both the gospel and pilot corpora.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION – DIALOGUE BETWEEN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Having enriched my understanding of the dual phenomena of honour/shame both in the gospel corpus and in the pilot corpus, I now turn my attention to the heart of this research inquiry: the interpretive dialogue between two seemingly disparate partners. The subject of the dialogue is the phenomena of stress and honour/shame which were identified by an empathic and critical reading of the pilot and gospel corpora. The dialogue partners are contemporary culture and the Christian tradition. Since these dialogue partners are too broad for this inquiry, I make this dialogue more manageable by the following substitutions. Contemporary culture is represented by my interpretation of the psychological and sociological literature of the human sciences reviewed to undertake this inquiry. Similarly, the Christian tradition is represented by my interpretation of selected texts of the New Testament informed by my evangelical theological pre-suppositions and by methods using a textual, a sociological and an experiential orientation. The goals of this dialogue are first, to enrich my understanding of the phenomena of stress and honour/shame in both the pilot and gospel corpora; and second, to offer recommendations to assist in the formulation of policies and practices to improve the well-being of our CF-18 fighter pilots as they prepare for and participate in future air campaigns.

1 Earth to Heaven: Enriching a Theological Understanding

I begin this dialogue by conversing on my interpretation of the gospel corpus using the insights gleaned from my readings of the human science literature reviewed. My aim is to enrich a theological understanding of the experience of undesirable-stress and honour/shame in the biblical characters of the gospel corpus.

1.1 Undesirable-stress

In Chapter 2 (section 1.1.8), military resilience was defined as, “the capacity of a soldier to recover quickly, resist, and possibly even thrive in the face of direct/indirect traumatic events and adverse situations in garrison, training and operational environments” ([Government of](#)

[Canada - Department of National Defence, 2015, p. 2](#)). In the gospel corpus, as far as the text allows us to see, Jesus never crossed his psychological *tipping point* when facing adversity ([Gladwell, 2002](#)). Even when experiencing high levels of undesirable-stress, Jesus proved to be resilient by mastering his emotions and remaining functional at both the psychological and behavioural levels.

Jesus is portrayed as experiencing intense, unpleasant emotions thus pointing to intense undesirable-stress in the following verses: first, in Mark 3:5 with reference to his troubled heart over the stubbornness of the Jewish religious leaders; second, in John 11:33 when he witnesses the sorrow of Mary at the death of her brother Lazarus; third, in John 12:27 when Jesus informs his disciples of his coming death; fourth, in John 13:21 when he reveals to his disciples that one of them would betray him; fifth, in Matthew 26:37 and Mark 14:33 while he is in prayer before his betrayal; and sixth, in Matthew 27:45-46, while suffering on the cross. I interpret that Jesus, though exposed to undesirable-stress, was resilient to stressors originating from his environment. In addition, many of these stressors had their origin in people who were themselves provoked by Jesus' claims and actions.

According to the model of stress conceptualized for this inquiry in Chapter 5 (section 1.2), the origin of a person's psychological stress is attributed neither uniquely to stressors in the environment nor to factors within a person but to the interaction of events from the environment with the beliefs of a person. Therefore, I suggest that Jesus' lived beliefs and the meaning that he drew from those beliefs contributed to his resilience to undesirable-stress. I attribute his resilience to being fully divine and in the will of his Heavenly Father. As portrayed in the gospel corpus, being in God's will was confirmed to Jesus, at minimum, by his interpretation of prophecies imbedded in the Jewish Scriptures, by the occasions of hearing the audible voice of affirmation coming from his Heavenly Father, and by the intimacy of his personal relationship with the Father demonstrated during his frequent occasions of going off alone to pray (Lu 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1; 22:41-45). As a result of being in God's will, Jesus

was a delight to his Heavenly Father and his Heavenly Father was the object of Jesus' Ultimate Concern. Having an Ultimate Concern beyond this temporal, physical life contributed to Jesus' resilience to undesirable-stress and to the effects of shame.

1.2 Honour/Shame

1.2.1 Dimensions of Belief

Schwitzgebel ([2011](#)) introduced me to the idea that beliefs are composed of different dimensions. For Schwitzgebel, “[to] believe is to possess a cluster of behavioural, phenomenal, and cognitive dimensions” (p. 48). As previously described in Chapter 2 (section 1.3.2), I expanded the number of the dimensions of lived beliefs suggested by Schwitzgebel to a constellation of cognitive, verbal, physiological, affective, volitional, temporal, mnemonic, relational, and behavioural dimensions. Our understanding of the gospel corpus may be enriched by using this nuanced conceptualization of beliefs. I propose the following as examples of this richness.

First, I observed how Zacchaeus's volitional, affective, and behavioural dimensions changed when Jesus approached him in Jericho and honoured him by inviting himself to Zacchaeus's home for a meal (Lu 19:1-9). From his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus trusted, cognitively, in Jesus. This trust is congruent with his positive emotional response towards Jesus (affective dimension), his decision to reconcile himself with anyone he had overtaxed in the past (volitional and behavioural dimensions), and his public profession of desiring to correct past wrongs (verbal dimension). This change of heart on Zacchaeus's part honoured Jesus. As a result, Jesus, in turn, experienced a pleasant, affective response of satisfaction when professing that salvation had now come to Zacchaeus's household!

A second example where distinguishing various dimensions of belief assists our interpretation of an event, but this time associated with shame, is found in John 10:31-33. According to the gospel corpus, Jesus was in conversation with his adversaries. When they heard Jesus claim that he and the Father were one, the gospel corpus records his adversaries as interpret-

ing Jesus, a mere man, as claiming to be God. In response to Jesus' provocation, his adversaries picked up stones to kill him: an act that would imply at least that Jesus is being publicly shamed. Their *cognitive* belief about Jesus' claim, led to an *affective* state of anger which in turn led to the *volitional* state of choosing the *behaviour* to pick up stones with the intention of killing Jesus.

I draw attention to a final example observed in the life of Peter. In Luke 5:1-11, after a night of fishing without catching any fish, Jesus asked Peter to cast his net off the side of his boat. Peter obeyed Jesus, but with hesitancy. This hesitancy would be due to his memory of previous experiences as a fisherman (mnemonic and temporal dimensions). This recall of memory would have led to conflicting thoughts at the cognitive level: "Do I fish where I know there is no fish or do I obey Jesus?" However, to Peter's surprise, overcoming his hesitancy through obedience led to his net overflowing with fish. As a result, I interpret Peter as experiencing healthy shame – sensing his lack of worth in comparison to the sense of awe triggered by Jesus' miracle – due to his initial hesitancy in obeying Jesus. In this case, Peter's volitional and behavioural dimensions of belief, his choice to obey Jesus' directive and act on that choice, did not line up with his initial affective, mnemonic, temporal, and cognitive dimensions. Once he saw the miracle of the catch of fish, his affective and cognitive dimensions of belief were transformed. As a result, all of Peter's dimensions of belief became congruent.

1.2.2 Complex Emotions

Emotional complexity refers to the experience of multiple emotions described in the self-reporting of one's life-world ([Grossmann et al., 2015](#)). One example of *diachronic, dialectic, complex* emotions (discrete contrasting emotions, one after another, in a short period of time) in the gospel corpus was the contrasting emotions that Jesus is portrayed as experiencing on the day of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:1-11). I interpret the crowds laying palm branches on Jesus' path and shouting *Hosanna* honouring Jesus. This honouring, in turn, led presumably to pleasant emotions being elicited in Jesus. However, this pleasant, gratifying experience associated with the crowds honouring him was short-lived. Later that day, we read Jesus displaying righteous anger due to the pain he felt over the shaming of the temple

by Jewish entrepreneurs when they transformed his Heavenly Father's house of prayer into a den of thieves. In response, Jesus cleansed the outer court of the temple from the vendors and moneychangers (Mt 21:12-17). This change in Jesus' emotional state, within a short duration of time, is an example of Jesus being portrayed as experiencing *diachronic, dialectic, complex* emotions.

1.2.3 Shame-Avoidance Strategies

Wilkinson ([2015](#)) explored the concept of internalized shame: when the self finds disgust with the self. He referred to a three-fold typology of narcissists who use an avoidance strategy to protect themselves from feelings of internalized shame. Building on his typology, I introduced a three-fold strategy that I proposed may have been used by pilots to establish, reinforce, or preserve their reputation: a *performance-based strategy*, a *depreciation-based strategy*, and an *association-based strategy*. I observed examples of each of these strategies used by different characters in the gospel corpus.

- *Performance-Based Strategy*

One of the most severe examples of public shaming initiated by Jesus is directed to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. In Matthew 23:13-36, I interpret Jesus drawing attention to the Pharisees' use of a *performance-based strategy* by means of the seven woes he pronounced against their behaviour. These religious leaders built and maintained their reputation by means of their achievements, whether it be going to great effort to win a single convert or extending the application of the Mosaic Law to the details of everyday life.

- *Depreciation-Based Strategy*

The use of a *depreciation-based strategy* is also most associated with the Pharisees. The first example is found in Jesus' "parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector" found in Luke 18:9-14. As referred to in Chapter 7, a Pharisee, using a *depreciation-based strategy* to avoid internalized shame, recounted to God all his righteous habits. In the same breath, he contrasted himself with the Tax Collector who was grouped together with other known sinners of Jewish religious culture. A second example of the Pharisees using a *deprecation-based*

strategy is found in the discussion between the Pharisees and the temple guard about the latter's neglect to arrest Jesus during the *Feast of Tabernacles*. In that discussion, the Pharisees preserve their own importance by depreciating the Jewish population by calling them accursed because "this mob" was enamoured by the teachings of Jesus (Jn 7:49). A third example is found in John 9:13-34, when the Pharisees, in Jerusalem, were investigating the healing of a blind, Jewish man by Jesus. After questioning the man and his parents, the frustrated Pharisees shamed the healed man by insulting Him and accusing him of being steeped in sin from birth (v. 34). The Pharisees' excessive focus on their reputation led to a hubristic or toxic pride displayed by shaming those they considered as socially and religiously beneath them. The final examples are drawn from the analysis I performed on Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 15. In the first episode, Simon the Pharisee depreciated Jesus in his thoughts by questioning Jesus' status as a prophet (Lu 7:39). In the second episode, Jesus is depreciated when the Pharisees grumble over Jesus receiving and eating with tax collectors and sinners (Lu 15:2).

- *Association-Based Strategy*

Though the use of parables, Jesus warns his listeners of the attitudes they needed to avoid while living in this present age. In Luke 14:7-11, Jesus addresses the Pharisees by means of a parable commonly referred to as the "parable of the Wedding Feast." By drawing attention to what I call an *association-based strategy*, Jesus warned the Pharisees that their habit of taking the most prominent seats at such feasts may be counter-productive. Namely, they exposed themselves to the possibility of being publicly embarrassed if requested to move to a less prominent seat. This tendency of the Pharisees to take the most prominent seats at important community occasions illustrates an *association-based strategy*. By associating with prominent seats, Pharisees were pursuing a prominent reputation in the community. However, if asked to move to a less prominent seat, they would be exposed to having their reputation devalued in the eyes of the community.

The behaviours of the Pharisees provide a good example of the link between a *performance-based strategy*, an *associated-based strategy*, and a *depreciation-based strategy*. The Phari-

sees' excessive focus on their achievements by applying the Mosaic Law outside of the temple context, led to their public display of associating with symbolic religious expressions that bestowed honour. This, in turn, led the Pharisees to a toxic pride that was displayed by their shaming of those who could not follow these oral traditions to the same degree.

1.2.4 Resilience to Shame

- *The Resilience of Jesus*

Though Jesus was exposed to shame on many occasions and from various sources, he did not appear to be susceptible to feelings of shame leading to a dysfunctional state. The gospel corpus gives no indication of Jesus' behaviour being negatively affected by feelings of shame when shamed by others. In addition, the corpus is silent concerning Jesus' experience of any self-inflicted shame. Therefore, borrowing from the vocabulary of contemporary mental health discourse, I conclude that if compared with an average person today placed in similar circumstances, Jesus is portrayed as being resilient to shame. In fact, the author of the Book of Hebrews when referring to Jesus writes, "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (He 12:2). Jesus proved resilient to shame because he had a greater joy to look forward to. He knew the shame in this life was not comparable to the glory he was to receive in the next.

In addition, it appears that in many of the situations described in the gospel corpus, Jesus provoked others either by his teaching or by his actions which in turn contributed to his exposure to shame. By bracketing any theological reasons for drowning a herd of swine (Lu 8:33), raising a girl from the dead after being laughed at (Lu 8:53), healing on the Sabbath rather than another day (Mt 12:9-13), or offending listeners by distasteful metaphors (Jn 6:53), in each situation Jesus could have behaved in a different way to avoid being shamed. Jesus, however, is portrayed as being indifferent to shame during his ministry. The gospel corpus portrays Jesus as valuing the pleasing of his Heavenly Father over the pleasing of his contemporaries. Jesus provides an exception to the psychological axiom proposed by Cunningham ([2017](#)) that people are threatened by shame and guilt in order to conform to society's expectations. Though Jesus is shamed and threatened by the men in his culture, the opinions

of those men were of little concern to him. Jesus valued bringing glory to his Heavenly Father in spite of the personal price he had to pay.

Jesus' resilience to shame is also evident in Luke 15, where the Pharisees grumble at Jesus welcoming sinners. In the "parable of the Loving Father" (Lu 15:11-32), Jesus, represented by the character of the father, is resilient to anger and seeking revenge against both the younger son (for being taken advantage of) and by the older son (for having to face his accusations). This implies Jesus' resilience to anger against both the sinners of Jewish society, represented by the younger son, and the Pharisees, represented by the older son. By his resilience, he maintains emotional control and responds appropriately rather than reacting to these situations.

- *The Resilience of Jesus' Disciples*

Jesus addressed many subjects in what is commonly referred to as the *Sermon on the Mount*. In one of the sections of this sermon, Jesus taught that in place of seeking the equal retributive justice of an eye for an eye, his disciples were not to resist evil (Mt 5:38-42). For example, if slapped, a disciple was to turn and offer the other cheek, and if obligated to carry a soldier's rucksack one mile, a disciple was to carry it two miles. I interpret these hostile behaviours of a perpetrator against a disciple is at least an attempt to shame the disciple. An individual is shamed publicly if slapped in the face in the presence of others or if forced to carry a Roman soldier's kit bag down a public road. By his teachings, Jesus prepared his followers to go beyond what is humanly possible and to accept the shame inflicted by another. Using the vocabulary of the dimensions of belief, I summarize this teaching by Jesus in the following manner.

The choice of a disciple to not resist an evil act on the part of another person (volitional dimension) leads to positive actions (behavioural dimension) towards the perpetrator of the shame, such as offering the other cheek or carrying the object a second mile.

In the next section of the sermon, Jesus taught his disciples to love and pray for their enemies. I interpret enemies as those who would persecute his disciples (Mt 5:44) and by implication

shame them publicly because of their association with Jesus. Like the previous example, the choice of loving one's enemy (volitional dimension) leads to the positive action of praying for one's persecutor (behavioural dimension).

Whether one chooses (volitional dimension) to not resist evil or to love one's enemies, the basis for these behavioural dimensions is remembering (mnemonic dimension) what Jesus previously taught on this subject (temporal and cognitive dimensions). In other words, Jesus taught his disciples the lived beliefs that they were to integrate into their lives. These interpretive assumptions, with their various dimensions, were grounded in the dogmatic, cognitive beliefs of the perfection of God: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). Without foundational beliefs (dogmatic theology), one undermines the moral conviction to pray for one's enemies (practical theology) or to carry an oppressor's burden down a community road in the presence of neighbours (public theology).

In a previous section of the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus taught his listeners the response they were to elicit when insulted or shamed due to their association with Jesus' name (Mt 5:11). Jesus taught his listeners to rejoice (Mt 5:12). To rejoice is to refer to the affective and verbal dimensions of a belief. To elicit this affective dimensional state, a disciple engages his volitional dimensional state, whether one is experiencing an emotion of joy or not. However, to choose to rejoice, a disciple uses his mnemonic dimensional state (memory) to remember (temporal) and cognitively process the teachings of Jesus. In turn, Jesus' teaching must be the object of his cognitive dimension of belief.

Although I have distinguished various dimensions in the examples given in the previous paragraphs, I have done so for clarification purposes. In reality, the dimensions of belief appear to be perichoretic and function in a seamless manner within the human psyche.

1.2.5 Distinguishing Guilt from Shame

Contemporary psychological literature distinguishes guilt from shame. Guilt focuses on a person's behaviour with respect to a moral standard: what a person does. Shame, on the other hand, focuses on a person's being/worth: who a person is. According to Smedes (1993), the

solution to the problem of guilt and shame is forgiveness and acceptance respectively. By applying this experiential observation to Luke 7:36-50, I observed that both the guilt and shame of the sinful woman was addressed by Jesus. However, when applying this experiential observation to the “parable of the Loving Father” (Lu 7:36-50), I observed that only the shame of the younger son was addressed, not his guilt. The reversal of a shame status to an honour status is observed in both episodes by the acceptance of the sinful woman and the younger son respectively. The reversal of a guilt status to a forgiven status is observed by the pronouncement of forgiveness to the sinful woman by Jesus.

1.3 Summary

In summary, reflection on the psychological and social science literature reviewed contributed to my understanding of undesirable-stress and honour/shame in the gospel corpus. Selected literature from the human sciences expanded my understanding of the human that, in turn, assisted me in interpreting the taken-for-granted descriptions of some of the life-world experiences of biblical characters.

2 Heaven to Earth: Enriching a Human Sciences’ Understanding

Having conversed on my interpretation of the gospel corpus using insights gleaned from my reading of the psychological and social science literature reviewed, I now advance this dialogue. Building on the dialogue in section 1 of this chapter and insights from my reading of the gospel corpus, I present a list of recommendations to assist in the formulation of policies and practices to improve the well-being of our CF-18 fighter pilots as they prepare for and participate in future air campaigns. This list is followed by my rationale for these recommendations.

2.1 List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That squadron commanders, in collaboration with their squadron chaplains, offer training to all CF-18 fighter pilots to help them recognize the differences between shame, guilt, honour, and pride.

Recommendation 2

That squadron commanders, in collaboration with their squadron chaplains, offer training to all CF-18 fighter pilots to help them recognize their lived beliefs when interpreting the meaning of personal experience and their emotional response to that experience.

Recommendation 3

That squadron commanders, in collaboration with their squadron chaplains, offer training to all CF-18 fighter pilots that would help them recognize the possible strategies they use to prop up personal worth.

Recommendation 4

That squadron commanders ensure that pilots are offered a workshop on ultimate concern led by their squadron chaplain.

Recommendation 5

That RCAF leadership assure that Fighter Deck Commanders inform pilots that collateral damage with civilian casualties is detrimental to both the country hosting the war and to the future psychological well-being of pilots.

Recommendation 6

That RCAF leadership assure that the strict ROE used by the Canadians contingency in Op IMPACT be applied to future air campaigns and that pilots have the freedom to denounce any loosening of the ROE, for reasons of efficiency, without fear of reprisal.

Recommendation 7

That the base commander, in collaboration with the Canadian government, demonstrate public recognition and appreciation to fighter pilots for their participation in the mission and for the sacrifice on the part of their families while pilots were deployed.

Recommendation 8

That the base commander, in collaboration with the flight surgeon, ensure that mental health support personnel and chaplains receive the same training as the pilots given in Recommendations 1 to 3 and from this training develop a plan encouraging pilots to talk about their combat experiences without threat of stigmatization or appearance of loss of control over their lives.

2.2 Heaven to Earth

Having presented a concise list of recommendations to be considered by the different levels of the fighter pilot chain of command, I now offer my rationale for these recommendations based on this research inquiry.

2.2.1 Pilot Training to Differentiate Important Concepts

In their article, Buckingham and Goodal ([2019](#)) recount how Tom Landry coached a successful football team, the Dallas Cowboys. In place of drawing attention to the errors of individual players while on the football field, coach Landry highlighted the feats of each player by distributing to each a film of the player's successful moments from previous games. By reviewing only their winning plays, Landry was tapping into the success of his players. Because this coach knew the power of acknowledging individual player success, each player began to evaluate himself more positively. This, in turn, improved the player's performance on the football field.

In some ways, fighter pilots can be compared to elite football players. Both have endured rigorous training. Both have undergone the change from identifying solely as an individual to identifying as being a member of an elite brotherhood. And both are recipients of collective honour by society. Just as coaches want to draw out the best performances from their players, so RCAF commanders want to draw the best performances from their pilots. However, one of the differences between football players and pilots is that football players play in a game. The game is played theoretically for the pleasure of the participants and for the amusement of spectators. In combat, fighter pilots don't play games; they destroy targets and take lives.

So, with respect to outcomes, the commander's desire to maximize 56-day pilot performance should be balanced by a concern to maximize life-long psychological well-being. The challenge is that all decisions made to maximize pilot performance may not favour the life-long psychological well-being of pilots. And conversely, all decisions favouring life-long psychological well-being may not favour optimizing pilot performance. Having acknowledged this challenge, the recommendations and rationale given below favour the pilot well-being side of this tension.

Recommendation 1

That squadron commanders, in collaboration with squadron chaplains, offer training to all CF-18 fighter pilots to help them recognize the differences between shame, guilt, honour, and pride.

The literature consulted for this inquiry clearly distinguishes guilt from shame. Because our society blurs the difference between these two phenomena, it is essential that pilots don't. To help pilots identify the difference, Recommendations 1 to 3 focus on the training needed by pilots to understand the concepts of guilt and shame and to identify it consciously in their own experiences. Figure 3 in Chapter 6 (section 3.2) can be used to situate shame, guilt, honour, and pride in the matrix of positive/negative attention, cognitive/affective dimensions, and being/doing.

Recommendation 2

That squadron commanders, in collaboration with squadron chaplains, offer training to all CF-18 fighter pilots to help them recognize their lived beliefs when interpreting the meaning of personal experience and their emotional response to that experience.

Once pilots can differentiate guilt from shame and honour from pride, the next step is for pilots to learn that their lived beliefs play a role first, in the cognitive meaning of their experiences, and second, in their emotional responses to those same experiences. With the ability to distinguish guilt from shame and honour from pride (Recommendation 1), the goal of

Recommendation 2 is to assist pilots in recognizing the beliefs they hold that are at the origins of their experiences at the cognitive and emotional levels.

Recommendation 3

That squadron commanders, in collaboration with squadron chaplains, offer training to all CF-18 fighter pilots that would help them recognize if the undesirable stress they are experiencing is associated with possible strategies to prop up self-worth.

With the ability to identify their beliefs about events experienced along with the meaning and emotions associated with those beliefs, pilots will be able to recognize the possible link between undesirable stress and presence of shame in their lives. With shame in their conscious awareness, pilots can learn to identify their possible use of *performance-based, depreciation-based, association-based* or other strategies to prop-up self-worth.

For example, an individual pilot should be able to identify whether the undesirable stress he is experiencing is associated with a shame-avoidance strategy. During domestic training, a pilot may feel stressed about making an error. While reflecting on the source of his undesirable stress, he may conclude that he is using a shame-avoidance strategy. He does not want to make an error because he does not want other pilots to notice his poor performance and then judge him as unworthy. In place of a shame-avoidance strategy, a pilot can learn to recognize his poor performance, admit it, and seek ways to make improvements. For example, if losing his flight lead during combat training, he should feel comfortable to state during a debriefing session, “I lost you for about 40 seconds there. What can I do to maintain better visual contact in a similar situation in the future?” In other words, pilots must consistently, at both the cognitive and affective levels, associate failure with a lack of performance, which they can change, rather than a lack of self-worth.

In summary, with all pilots aware of the differences between guilt and shame and possible strategies used to avoid shame, pilots will be more consciously aware of undesirable-stress in their lives due to their beliefs about shame.

2.2.2 Ultimate Concern

I specified in Chapter 5 (section 1.2) that according to the model of stress conceptualized for this inquiry, the origin of a person's psychological stress is attributed neither uniquely to stressors in the environment nor to factors within a person but also to the beliefs of a person about environmental stressors and his inner resources to cope. This inquiry has helped me identify at least four sources of undesirable-stress through my use of an *eidetic reduction*. At times these four sources may have a combined effect: first, events that impose constraints or demands that are interpreted as being to an individual's disadvantage (source 1); second, thoughts that blur the doing/being distinction and result in interpreting possible failure in one's performance as diminishing one's worth (source 2); third, shaming by self or others that lead to the questioning of one's worth or goodness (source 3); and fourth, threats to one's physical or psychological well-being (source 4).

Therefore, I concluded that Jesus' lived beliefs, and the meaning he drew from events as he interpreted these events, contributed to his resilience to adverse, psychological outcomes in sources 1 to 3 mentioned above.⁵⁸ These lived beliefs were dogmatic in the sense that what he believed cognitively about his Heavenly Father became foundational to his life. As controlling beliefs, with respect to the realm of infinity (the eternal), they had the effect of prioritizing and shaping his other beliefs and behaviours in the realm of temporal, finite realities ([Lints, 1993](#)).

Therefore, Jesus' beliefs about being in *the will of God* contributed to his resilience to the dysfunctions of distress due to sources 1-3. Being in God's will or living for God's eternal purposes was evident to Jesus in at least three ways. First, he was sent on his mission by His Heavenly Father to communicate what he has seen and heard in the heavenly realm (empirical evidence – Jn 3:32). Second, this mission was affirmed by Jesus' interpretation of ful-

⁵⁸ Jesus did experience undesirable stress from source 4, when his life was threatened as he anticipated and experienced his death on the cross.

filling prophecies and typologies ([Davidson, 1981](#)) embedded in the Jewish Scriptures (documentary evidence – Ps 110:1; Mt 22:43-46). Third, this mission was confirmed by the audible voice coming from his Heavenly Father at his baptism (Testimonial evidence – Mt 3:17). Jesus was a delight to his Heavenly Father, who in turn was Jesus' object of Ultimate Concern ([Tillich, 1957](#)). For Jesus, his Ultimate Concern was a personal God.⁵⁹ By taking delight in the Father, who was the object of his Ultimate Concern, Jesus submitted with unconditional obedience to his Heavenly Father and made the ultimate sacrifice. Because of his focus on the eternal, Jesus was resilient to the undesirable-stress from many of his followers who choose to abandon him because of his offensive teaching (an example of source 1 found in John 6:6), from not being able to perform miracles in his hometown of Nazareth (an example of source 2 found in Luke 4:23), and from the shaming of those living in the temporal, whose opinion he regarded as of less concern than his Heavenly Father's (an example of source 3 found in Matthew 26:67, 68).

For Tillich ([1957](#)), an awareness of infinity is found in the finite human. A person has the potential for ultimate concerns that transcend temporal, finite realities. Faith is the stable and enduring expression of individuals towards their ultimate concern. While an act of faith is directed towards the phenomenon of ultimate concern, this ultimate concern makes unconditional demands of obedience that compel an individual to make continual ultimate sacrifices. In exchange, a reward is promised for those sacrifices. For Tillich, any finite reality that has been elevated to an ultimate concern for an individual will eventually prove itself a failure.⁶⁰ The rewards hoped to be gained by the sacrifices do not materialize. When proven a failure, the meaning of one's life erodes.

⁵⁹ Personal not in the sense of being a phenomenon to possess, rather in the sense of being in a relational Father-Son dyad.

⁶⁰ Although one could point out that it takes belief to accept this point by Tillich, it also takes belief to reject his point.

Recommendation 4

That squadron commanders ensure that pilots are offered a workshop on ultimate concern led by the squadron chaplain.

Applying this construct of ultimate concern to pilots, I propose the following questions to RCAF commanders. Is each individual pilot in the squadron conscious of his own ultimate concern? Has this ultimate concern been brought into awareness and been articulated by the pilot, or does ultimate concern remain non-articulated, exerting an influence on the pilot from outside the pilot's conscious awareness?

In an attempt to bring the ultimate concern of individual pilots into conscious awareness for this inquiry, I devised an ultimate concern scenario for the pilot interview. In this scenario, pilots were led to identify and articulate the four most important phenomena in their lives: a person, a possession, an activity, and a character quality. Two observations caught my attention. First, what was surprisingly absent from pilot responses was an ultimate concern associated with the combat mission and their jet. Second, an ultimate concern common to all pilots was a family member. With respect to the latter, I noted – but could not bring out in the interpretation of the pilot corpus without compromising pilot anonymity – that more experienced pilots valued their families more than younger pilots. As experienced pilots imagined their future, they placed family obligations above professional obligations. In summary, conscious and articulated ultimate concerns in the form of personal relationships outweighed pilot commitment to their country, to the mission, and to their jet.

Admittedly, I conducted the ultimate concern scenario in the safety of a room located on a domestic air force base at a time when CF-18 pilots were not involved in an air campaign. Consequently, it would be expected that pilots, in this domestic context, prioritized family relationships. However, if the subject of ultimate concern was to be introduced to pilots in the context of a war, with the nation's security at stake and in the presence of their colleagues, I anticipate that pilot responses would reflect a willingness to sacrifice themselves for their families and for their country.

During the interview, pilots also expressed ultimate concerns that they were probably not consciously aware of. Outside of pilot awareness, they remained non-articulated. Nevertheless, these ultimate concerns were communicated by means of the beliefs (values) held by pilots.

For example, one pilot recalled the results of his combat experience as very positive in his life. He believed that newer pilots looked up to him and to other pilots involved in the air campaign because as combatants they had *proven themselves*. At another point in the interview, this same pilot conveyed a negative emotional response when he recalled his experience of some Canadians being uninformed about the mission in Iraq. In the former context, the pilot naturally experienced pleasant emotions believing that he and his fellow pilots were being honoured by younger colleagues. While in the latter context, he experienced unpleasant emotions because he believed that the collective honour deserved by the pilot brotherhood, including himself, was being withdrawn by some Canadians. From my observation of his emotional response to these different collective groups, I interpret this pilot's non-articulated ultimate concern as his own personal success, personal validation, and self-esteem, which in turn are based on his combat achievements.

This pilot, possibly representative of others, has worked hard and has tasted success at each stage of his fighter pilot career. But what will happen if someday, he does not succeed in what he had set out to do, or if someday the sacrifices he has made in his life prove themselves to be a failure?

For example, a pilot may have placed self, others, or his nation as an ultimate concern. During his career, the pilot has made sacrifices to that ultimate concern that has brought him personal honour. What will happen if, during a future air campaign, the pilot participates in or witnesses an event contrary to his own or to his society's cherished moral beliefs? Is it possible that he finds himself in a position where the pleasant experience of being the recipient of honour for his personal military achievements – his sacrifices to ultimate concern – conflict with the unpleasant guilt and shame associated with compromising his own moral beliefs or

Canadian society's moral standards? This dissonance at a cognitive and affective level may be amplified if these events contrary to society's standards are subsequently revealed to the Canadian public by the media.

To safeguard pilots from what may be labelled as a potential moral injury, my Recommendation 4 above should take place during pilot training on squadron. For this session, I offer the following two suggestions: first, that the squadron chaplain lead this session during a Padre Hour; and second, the squadron commander, or another seasoned combat pilot, share his combat experiences, his own reflections on the taking of life, and his thoughts on the possibility of his own life being taken in combat.

The presence of the squadron chaplain and seasoned combat pilot would ensure that this important subject would be taken seriously by younger pilots on the squadron. The goal of this session would be to provide an opportunity for pilots to shift their ultimate concern from the non-articulated realm of unawareness to the articulated realm of full awareness.

In agreement with Tillich, and from an evangelical Christian perspective, any meaning of life built on temporal realities will eventually be washed away (Mt 7:26-27). Therefore, I personally find it problematic to base one's worth on one's achievements apart from the grace of God. Although one may experience temporal success during the youthful stages in life, no one can expect continual success throughout all of life. Failure at any stage is more difficult to accept if the doing and being dimensions of life are blurred.

2.2.3 Rules of Engagement (ROE)

In a footnote in Chapter 1 (section 1), I differentiated vulnerability from susceptibility. *Vulnerability* refers to the degree to which an individual is exposed to a threat. An individual constantly exposed to a threat is more vulnerable to feelings of undesirable-stress than someone who is occasionally exposed to the same threat. *Susceptibility*, on the other hand, refers to the differing degrees of undesirable-stress that individuals experience when exposed to the same threat.

For example, we saw earlier in Chapter 7 (section 1.2.) that Jesus placed himself in situations where he provoked his adversaries. The provocation led to his adversaries reacting in ways that were aggressive and resulted in Jesus being the victim of their shaming. Using *vulnerability/susceptibility* terminology, one could claim that though Jesus placed himself in situations where he was exposed (*vulnerable*) to being shamed, the gospel corpus portrays Jesus as not *susceptible* to feelings of shame. Others exposed to the same threats (same *vulnerability*) might experience a greater degree of undesirable-stress or distress (increased *susceptibility*). To restate this in a positive way, though exposed to being shamed, Jesus appears to be resilient to the toxic, dysfunctional feelings of shame.

Not only was Jesus resilient to the toxic, dysfunctional feelings of shame, the gospel corpus records Jesus as impressed by those exposing themselves to shame by identifying with his name. The Centurion was not ashamed to make a public request to Jesus, a Jewish citizen under the domination of Roman authorities. The Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, was not ashamed to bear witness to her fellow citizens about Jesus, though Jesus was a Jew and she was an outcast in her community. The woman in Luke 7, who wiped Jesus' feet with tears and perfume, was not ashamed to go to a meal reception for Jesus knowing that she would be judged by Simon the Pharisee. The man healed from blindness by Jesus was not paralyzed by shame when the religious leaders examined his version of the healing a second time (Jn 9:24-34). This man stood his ground and did not accept the leaders' intimidation. All of these events provide examples of a cross-section of biblical characters who, one the one hand, were exposed to being shamed by others, but, on the other hand, were resilient to shame.

One key element common to the above victims who proved resilient to shame is that they believed it was right and virtuous to associate with Jesus' name. Thus, these resilient victims believed that the shame received was unjustified because they knew they had done the right thing by associating with his name. The victims took comfort in that others and God were aware of their righteous behaviour.

In the pilot corpus, I observed that pilots did what was right during the air campaign. They followed the Rules of Engagement (ROE) set out by the Canadian government. Every strike made on a target was authorized by a team of Canadians located at the CAOC. In spite of these measures taken, accusations of civilian casualties were levelled against pilots by the Canadian media. The pilot corpus demonstrated that pilots were collectively shamed when accused, by the Canadian media, of killing civilians in Iraq/Syria. In spite of these accusations, and the inability at the time to respond to those accusations, pilots proved resilient to this shaming. A contributing factor to the pilots' resilience to this collective shame was the pilots' belief that the targets they struck were legitimate.

A cognitive belief is taken-for-granted until that belief is questioned. Once questioned, the belief has to stand the test, or doubt will set in. Once doubt sets in, based on the evidence a belief may either prove resilient or change. A change in the cognitive dimension of a belief is accompanied by a change in its affective dimensional response.

I observed from the pilot corpus that a pilot's belief about the validity of targets resisted the unjustified shame that came from media sources. When a pilot's belief about the legitimacy of a target was challenged, his belief in the high standards of the ROE and the meticulous application of those standards by those in the CAOC alleviated any personal doubt.

However, I can imagine a scenario where the ROE are less restrictive and where the CAOC is less credible in maintaining its very high standards. In this scenario, if a pilot becomes aware that his strike contributed to civilian casualties, he may question if he had done the right thing in striking that target. He would no longer have the ability to justify his actions against media accusations. At least to himself, he would eventually have to concede to some degree that the accusations of the media were justified. It is at this point, when a pilot experiences a change in belief about a target, that he may become more susceptible to a moral injury. He may experience the shame of contributing to an act that went against his own moral conscience and against the collective conscience of Canadian society.

It is the responsibility of Canadian military stakeholders to ensure that those formulating, enforcing, and applying the rules of engagement (ROE) for multinational air campaigns have the highest ethical and moral standards possible. Benefits of this high standard are not only to minimize the civilian casualties in air-to-ground combat or to maintain the professionalism of the CAF in the eyes of the Canadian public, important as they may be. More importantly, high standards for the ROE may also contribute to the long-term psychological well-being of CF-18 fighter pilots.

In light of the above reflection, my two recommendations to military stakeholders are as follows.

Recommendation 5

That RCAF leadership assure that Fighter Deck Commanders inform pilots that collateral damage with civilian casualties is detrimental to both the country hosting the war and to the future psychological well-being of pilots.

Recommendation 6

That RCAF leadership assure that the strict ROE used by the Canadians contingency in Op IMPACT be applied to future air campaigns and that pilots have the freedom to denounce any loosening of the ROE, for reasons of efficiency, without fear of reprisal.

Following the ROE is the right action for pilots to take even if unjustly accused of not following them by the media. To continue to do what is right, even if falsely accused, contributes to psychological resiliency.

2.2.4 Public Appreciation for Advancement of Air Campaign Objectives

I observed in the gospel corpus that withdrawing honour from a worthy recipient may be interpreted as an act of shame. For example, in my analysis of Luke 7, I observed how Simon the Pharisee withdrew honour from Jesus first, by his acts of omission when he welcomed Jesus, as a guest, for a meal and next, by his second thoughts about Jesus being a prophet. The withdrawing of honour falls into the mid-section along the honour/shame continuum

presented in Figure 5 of Chapter 7 (section 5). When withdrawing honour, the action may not only be interpreted as withdrawing positive attention. The deserving recipient and observers sympathizing with the deserving recipient may interpret the withdrawing of honour as an act of shame.

I observed the same tendency in Luke 15 when the older son interpreted the killing of the fattened calf as honouring his undeserving younger brother. By means of a zero-sum comparison between the honouring of the younger brother by a feast with the father's omission of having a feast for the older brother, the older son believed that the father was withdrawing his honour as eldest son. Thus, the withdrawing of honour was interpreted as shaming the older son. This shame was evident by the anger of the son directed to his father.

The withdrawing of honour can be experienced by a deserving recipient in various ways. For some, the deserving recipient of honour may feel ignored. For others, the deserving recipient may experience feelings of shame. What is true in an individual sense may also be true in a collective sense. The withdrawing of honour from members of a community or institution that has traditionally been honoured by society may be interpreted as ignoring or as shaming that community. I interpret that pilots believed they were collectively ignored and possibly shamed by the Canadian government and by some Canadians. Unintentionally, the Canadian government and some Canadians withdrew the collective honour normally attributed to pilots by not acknowledging the following: first, the pilots' contribution to a successful multinational air campaign; second, the pilots' professionalism during the air campaign; and third, the sacrifice endured by the families of pilots deployed during the air campaign. As a result, pilots interpreted this disregard to some degree as an act of collective shame that manifested itself by personal feelings of frustration and for some a lack of motivation.

In light of this interpretation, I offer the following recommendation not only when squadrons must be pulled out of an air campaign for political reasons, but also for all future air campaigns.

Recommendation 7

That the base commander, in collaboration with the Canadian government, demonstrate public recognition and appreciation to fighter pilots for their participation in the mission and for the sacrifice on the part of their families while pilots were deployed.

It is essential that the sending institution, the Canadian government, recognize the psychological benefits that public appreciation brings to those who have served in combat. This recognition of the member and of the sacrifice of the member's family is to remain at the level of appreciation for work done (doing) and not for attributing worth or honour (being) for military performance. In addition, this public recognition, on the part of the sending institution, should be applied to all environments of the CAF participating in the mission. In response, each environment of the CAF (army, navy, air force) should express their appreciation for the work done and for the sacrifice of family members of the other environments. For the Government of Canada to support one military environment at the expense of another or for one military environment to jostle for more honour than the others in the eyes of the government, weakens the success of the whole CAF. Using the imagery of the gospel parable where the older son interprets the father shaming him by honouring the younger son, the granting of honour towards one environment by the Canadian Government may be interpreted by another environment as a zero-sum phenomenon and a collective shaming. Using air force terminology, this internal competition between military environments for the recognition of honour prevents the whole CAF from *flying in formation* ([Melanson, 2016](#)).

2.2.5 The Communication/Support Dilemma

Parallel to my observation of withdrawing honour, I also observed that shame may be withdrawn for the benefit of the victim who deserved it. The withdrawing of shame was observed in the two episodes analyzed in Chapter 8 of this dissertation: Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 15:11-32. In Luke 7:36-50, the sinful woman, who was initially shamed, experiences a reversal of status by Jesus. Unlike Simon the Pharisee's response to the woman, Jesus withheld attributing shame to the woman for her previous behaviours and for touching his feet. By withdrawing this shame, Jesus' actions can be interpreted as honouring the woman.

In Luke 15:11-32, I observed the father withdrawing the shame that his two sons deserved. The father is portrayed as demonstrating his patience, compassion, and love, not only by welcoming back and accepting his youngest son, but also patiently accepting the reaction of his older son and inviting him to join the celebration for the younger son. On the one hand, the father sees beyond the initial selfish intentions of the younger son. He perceives the transformation in belief of his younger son: the belief that the father is merciful and will accept him as a servant. On the other hand, the father hopes to see a similar transformation in the older son.

The withdrawing of shame also falls into the mid-section along an honour/shame continuum (Figure 5 in Chapter 7, section 5). When withdrawing shame, the action may not only be interpreted as withdrawing negative attention. The expecting victim and observers sympathizing with the expecting victim may interpret the withdrawing of shame as an act of grace.

As observed in the pilot corpus, fellow pilots and commanders did not shame pilots for errors made. Fellow pilots and commanders extended grace for pilot mistakes. In a similar fashion, mental health professionals need to be seen as support personnel extending grace.

As mentioned earlier, pilots identified their immediate pilot chain of command as most interested in their well-being. Pilot well-being was associated with administrative support rather than psychological or spiritual support from mental health professionals or chaplains. As a result, pilots expressed little need to talk to support professionals when attending debriefing sessions. This led to what I labelled a communication/support dilemma. How could mental health support workers, including chaplains, hope to provide support contributing to pilot well-being if uninformed of pilot combat experiences?

As a researcher, when I started conducting interviews on pilots, I anticipated adverse, psychological outcomes because my own beliefs about pilot combat experiences were formed in the Canadian cultural context. As a Canadian, when I heard or read about combatants in the Canadian military, my mind was drawn to PTSD and our injured ground soldiers and veterans from Bosnia and Afghanistan. The media had reinforced this association in my mind ([Aw](#),

[2014](#); [Bailey, 2014](#); [Payne, 2014](#)). As a result, in any conversation on the topic of military combat with others, the subject of stress would eventually lead to the mentioning of PTSD.

This belief was then reinforced in two ways.

First, I was influenced by my reading of the literature associating combat with traumatic experiences. All literature I read made that association. However, it took a while before I realized that the literature available on this subject focused on ground soldiers. The exception was one dissertation I read on a quantitative study that examined the mental health of Airmen returning from deployment to Afghanistan ([Grubbs, 2012](#)). However, this American study examined responses given in a debriefing questionnaire by American Airmen supporting the mission in security and support roles. The study did not focus specifically on the experiences of Airmen in combat nor, more specifically, combat experiences of fighter pilots.

Second, the assumptions guiding qualitative research reinforced my beliefs. Research is usually conducted when a problem exists. Qualitative research is usually conducted on participants who are in some sort of dependent relationship. It is undertaken to give voice to a minority, underprivileged group. While preparing to conduct interviews on human subjects, I was obliged by my ethics committee to anticipate the possibility of managing situations where pilots would manifest symptoms of psychological stress. Though sensitizing a researcher to be prepared for this possibility is very pertinent advice, it also contributed to my expectation relative to the psychological well-being of pilots as they recalled combat experiences.

To my surprise, when I began interviewing pilots, my preconceived beliefs about adverse psychological outcomes of an underprivileged group were challenged! Rather than a concern emanating from pilots about their involvement in combat, pilots portrayed confidence and enthusiasm about their experiences. Striking targets allowed pilots to put their professional skills, developed over years of training, into practice. All pilots interpreted their combat experiences as the highlight of their careers to date! After listening empathically to their positive experiences and showing interest in the display of their confidence, I then found that

pilots willingly talked about their concerns. They brought up the subject of adverse psychological outcomes of combat, such as recurring thoughts and images!

I share this observation here because mental health professionals in formal post-deployment debriefing sessions may hold similar preconceived beliefs of fighter pilots. They enter psychological debriefing sessions with a concern for pilots. Their desire is for pilots to disclose those negative images and recurring disturbing thoughts related to combat. However, by not extending grace and allowing pilots to display their confidence and to give voice to their exhilarating experiences of combat, the door closes to knowing the darker side of what a fighter pilot may be presently experiencing.

One pilot recalled a mental health professional making a statement about the pilot dropping bombs on people.

And then the only weird thing was, I just remember, the social worker or whatever [his/her] position was overseas said, ‘You had to drop bombs on people, and that’s terrible,’ which I don’t think was the right thing to say, because I don’t, well, I don’t think it’s terrible, if it’s for a good reason.

As a result of this comment, the confidence between the pilot and the mental health professional was broken. Why? I suggest the following as a possible reason.

In this phenomenological inquiry, research participants were considered to be the experts on air-to-ground combat experiences. As experts, pilots were consulted with the intent of making their combat experiences known so that future pilots could benefit from the results. One pilot shared that intent in these words, “If this research project can help others, I am glad to have participated in it.” Within this research context, pilots were in a position of strength. They were being honoured. As professionals, they were the experts being consulted. Even when pilots disclosed some of their emotional struggles, they did so from a position of strength. They remained in control of what they disclosed and did it for the benefit of others.

In contrast, during a formal post-deployment debriefing with mental health support personnel, a pilot exchanges his *professional* identity for the identity of a *patient* in a therapeutic

dyad. In addition, a pilot, who is in control of his jet during combat, is now under the threat of losing this control. Any disclosure of psychological weakness may lead to the pilot being *grounded* from flying. Therefore, a pilot, who is a member of an honoured institution, must willfully set aside his pilot identity and the honour associated with that identity when talking to a mental health professional. If a pilot reveals any adverse psychological outcome due to combat, his pilot identity is threatened. He exposes himself to the possibility of having to endure other sessions as a patient in a therapeutic dyad, and the possibility of being *grounded* from flying ([Saitzyk et al., 2017](#)).

I support this interpretation of the resistance on the part of some pilots to enter into a therapeutic dyad with medical professionals on the following evidence: first, from the quotes of pilots; second, from comparable examples in the non-military literature; third, from comparable examples in the military literature; and fourth, from a personal conversation with a pilot.

First, I observed the threat that one pilot experienced when he found himself in the role of a patient in a therapeutic dyad during a psychological debriefing. He recalled a mental health professional making the following comment during a debriefing, “Pilots are stubborn. We know you are not going to talk about it.” By quoting the health care professional, the pilot confirmed to me that pilots are not going to divulge any psychological weakness to psychological support personnel.

Another pilot expressed why he chose to be interviewed for this inquiry, “it can benefit others.” But he was also direct to clarify that he was not being interviewed so that he could talk about his experiences for personal psychological reasons.

I’m quite happy to share the experience though. Because if it can benefit others, at least we got that. Because, I don’t think it affected much of my feeling personally, but I’m sure as a group you’re going to figure out something that can help out in the future, so I’m, I’m very happy. That’s what I want to say, I’m very happy to talk about it, because I can help you in the work you want to do. But it’s not, it’s not like I needed to talk about it. I’m not, I’m probably gonna feel better because I talked about it. Just because I did some-, I, I think I’m helping you, so it makes, makes me feel good, but, but not, not much more than that. Really, honest.

A third pilot clearly expressed the antagonistic relationship between pilots and professional support personnel in this way,

. . . and didn't realize the hostile inherent relationship between a doctor, a physician, and a pilot. . . So we don't. Why? Because doctors ground pilots. . . There's a, there is a bit of a, not a hostile relationship, but there, there is, there's some tensions in that relationship between doctors and pilots, right? Ok.

Second, concerning examples of resistance on the part of individuals to enter a therapeutic dyad, Goicoechea ([2006](#)), cites the following quote from Karon and Van den Bos (1981) when the latter wrote about the labelling of a psychological patient by health care professionals in a non-military context.

It is true that if you asked him whether he was paranoid or schizophrenic, he would get very angry at you and not accept such words. Why should he? What benefits derive from accepting a 'diagnosis?' From his standpoint, the primary consequence of accepting the 'diagnosis' would be to legitimize the right of others to make decisions about his life. (p. 136)

Applying Karon and Van den Bos's observations to pilots, it is understandable that a fighter pilot would be very hesitant to express any weakness or any adverse psychological issues to mental health professionals. When accepting a diagnosis, the pilot would legitimize the right of another person to make decisions about his life. A pilot wants to fly. He does not want a non-pilot professional to prevent him from flying. That would be humiliating to his sense of honour. He wants to maintain control over his life and his ability to fly. To rephrase these observations using exchange theory introduced in Chapters 2 (section 1.4.5) and 5 (section 1.2), for a pilot to accept a diagnosis, to accept the label attached with that diagnosis, and to accept the *grounding* associated with the diagnosis, the benefits for the pilot must outweigh the liabilities.

Third, Kral and Klose ([2011](#)) observed the differences in response between active members and veterans of the Czech army who were interviewed using semi-open questions about their stress reactions while deployed to a theatre of combat. Veterans were open to talk about their

experiences while active members were not. The reason for this difference was associated with the context of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted by clinical psychologists or psychiatrists from the Central Military Hospital in Prague and the average length of interviews was about 120 minutes. In general, we can say that those who were not in active duty during the interview were much more communicative, while the active military professionals were more careful about what they say (in spite of the fact the survey was anonymous). (pp. 35-2, 35-3)

Kral and Klose note that interviews were conducted in a military hospital with interviewers being psychologists and psychiatrists. Based on the above interpretation that the therapeutic dyad model can contribute to the experience of shame in military members, I interpret the lack of openness on the part of active Czech soldiers as an unwillingness to expose any psychological weaknesses in a threatening professional/patient context. This exposure of weakness would threaten the Czech soldiers' honour by being exposed to shame in the eyes of their comrades. On the other hand, it may have been advantageous for veterans to identify in a new role as patients.

Finally, in a personal conversation with a pilot who was not interviewed for this inquiry, I learned that some pilots, "when they get crazy drunk, talk about some things they feel shame about in [another air campaign]."⁶¹ I interpret the pilots referred to in this quote as experiencing some degree of adverse psychological outcomes, but these outcomes were not intense enough to render pilots dysfunctional. However, at the same time, pilots do have a need to talk about those experiences with each other. When consuming excessive quantities of alcohol, the inhibitions of these pilots were lowered resulting in conversations on this subject.

Pilots want to tell their own story, but only in situations that are non-threatening to their honour. I believe that mental health professionals and chaplains need to become aware of this honour/shame dynamic when supporting pilots. Professionals who support pilots should

⁶¹ The reader will recall in Chapter 6 (section 5.1.3) that the ROE were less restrictive in a previous air campaign.

withdraw shame and apply grace by encouraging pilots to tell their exhilarating, combat stories, rather than ask pilots to divulge their adverse psychological outcomes of combat. If not, support professionals, by withdrawing honour from pilots, may be perceived as subtly shaming pilots. Pilot support professionals may unwittingly be interpreted by pilots as another segment of the Canadian population who collectively shame pilots.

Pilots may be threatened by being placed in a position of inferiority in a therapeutic dyad. As support professionals, if we only anticipate the revelation of concern when debriefing pilots, we may be blind to the possibility that pilots primarily want us to celebrate their confidence. If pilots are comfortable sharing their success of combat, they may then feel less threatened to disclose their concerns. To ensure that pilots share their successes and concerns, it may be helpful if support professionals adopt an unassuming *curious* stance rather than a threatening *expert* stance ([Goodcase, Love, & Ladson, 2015](#)). This would allow pilots to be the experts of their experiences.

Considering the above discussion, my recommendation is as follows:

Recommendation 8

That the base commander, in collaboration with the flight surgeon, ensure that mental health support personnel and chaplains receive the same training as the pilots given in Recommendations 1 to 3. From this training, mental health support personnel and chaplains develop a plan that encourages seasoned pilots to talk about their positive combat experiences without threat of stigmatization or appearance of loss of control over their lives.

The stigma associated with mental health problems in ground troops has already been documented ([Greene-Shortridge, Britt, & Castro, 2007](#)). I suggest that pilots be treated differently. Ensure that pilots can celebrate their positive combat experiences so as not to be associated with ground troops stigmatized in the eyes of mental health support personnel.

Mental health support tends to become the exclusive terrain of experts. Is it possible to continue to extend this support beyond the professional? The pilot chain of command can investigate ways for pilots to talk about their experiences of combat without the threat of being diagnosed as having a psychological problem. This would assure pilots that they will maintain control over their lives and over their ability to fly even though they talk about their struggles. This approach would ensure that struggles are interpreted as normal reactions, rather than indicators of a psychological problem.

One pilot recalled that the pilot community provides the support for pilots to talk. One could equip the pilot brotherhood to better support pilots as they talk about their experiences ([Katongole & Rice, 2008](#)). For example, commanders of fighter pilot squadrons who are now veterans can be trained and called in to debrief pilots following deployments. Having post-deployment debriefing sessions conducted by veterans who pilots look up to and who possess no authority to *ground* them may be a step that invites pilots to talk about their normal responses to combat.

Summary

In this chapter, within the academic subfield of public theology, I attempted to enrich our understanding of stress and honour/shame by entering into a dialogue between contemporary culture and the Christian tradition. To make the dialogue more manageable, contemporary culture was represented by my review of the literature in the human sciences, while the Christian tradition was represented by my interpretation of selected texts of the gospel corpus. In this dialogue, I provided examples of how the literature reviewed from the human sciences may enrich an understanding of the gospel corpus and how a review of selected Scriptures may enrich our understanding of the phenomena of stress, honour, and shame in the pilot corpus. From this dialogue, I then made recommendations that may help military stakeholders make decisions that would contribute to future combat pilot well-being.

CONCLUSION

The Presbyterian pastor Ross Lockhart ([2015](#)) describes Canadians as non-critical, biblical skeptics. What he means is that first, Canadians, in general, are unfamiliar with the Christian Scriptures. This lack of familiarity is due to skepticism which leads to a lack of biblical literacy found in modern Canadian culture. Second, Canadians, in general, are non-critical with respect to their own thinking. They will cast the Bible aside by saying that it was written by humans, but not admit that the beliefs they have adopted, through the influences of popular culture, also originate from humans. As a retired military chaplain, I have attempted to show that the Christian Scriptures can enrich a contemporary human sciences' understanding of the human condition. To do so, I addressed the following research question:

What insights into CF-18 fighter pilot air-to-ground combat experiences would help military stakeholders make decisions contributing to pilot well-being as pilots prepare for and participate in future air campaigns?

To answer this question, I engaged in an interdisciplinary inquiry within the sub-discipline of public theology. I began by compiling a corpus of interviews with six CF-18 fighter pilots stationed at CFB Bagotville who voluntarily shared their experiences of air-to-ground combat over Iraq. By means of an empathic reading, I interpreted the pilot corpus using an adapted phenomenological research genre within the qualitative research tradition. From salient emotional experiences recalled by pilots, I identified stress as the core phenomenon that best described the collective experiences of these pilots. Then, by means of a critical reading, I identified the dual phenomena of honour/shame as a deeper, tacit meaning of those salient emotional experiences. After examining the phenomena of stress and honour/shame using selective literature from the discursive communities of psychology and sociology within the academic field of the human sciences, I examined these same phenomena by means of an empathic reading of the gospel corpus. This interpretation of the selective literature from the canon of the Christian tradition became a conversation partner in a dialogue with my selective literature from the human sciences. As a result of the insights generated from this dialogue,

I offered recommendations that may prove helpful to military stakeholders as they make decisions contributing to pilot well-being.

1 Practical Implication of this Study

By means of this inquiry, I have attempted to show that a theological contribution, commonly relegated to the private sphere can enrich a human sciences' understanding of a contemporary issue within the Canadian public sphere. The practical implications of this approach are not only directed to the participants of this inquiry, fighter pilots, but also to the reader.

First, with respect to the pilots, individual pilots may hold beliefs about themselves and their combat experiences that have not yet been brought into their awareness. I recommend that it would be helpful for pilots to bring these beliefs into awareness. To do so, apart from the recommendations made in Chapter 9, I suggest that the results of this study be introduced to both combat-experienced pilots and novice pilots by means of focus groups. Pilots, in small groups, could be invited to a face-to-face discussion about the results of this study with a mental health professional and the squadron chaplain ([Levers, 2006](#)). Pilots, during this discussion, may agree, disagree, or partially agree with any of the results and proposed recommendations. In spite of the interpretation and results presented in this study, the benefit of this focus group would be first, to allow combat-experienced pilots to audibly reflect on their past combat experiences; second, to provide a learning platform for novice pilots on this important subject; and third, to address what I called the communication/support dilemma between pilots and mental health support personnel.

Finally, with respect to the reader, the theological analysis of this inquiry may have triggered the reader to re-evaluate his or her own spiritual journey with respect to stress and honour/shame. After reading this dissertation, the reader may now be more aware of the possible association between undesirable stress and honour/shame in one's own life. Reflecting on an experience of undesirable stress may lead the reader to consider one of the many avenues presented in this dissertation. For example, reflecting on one's experience of undesirable stress may either confirm or rule out the possibility of the reader associating an undesirable

event with one's behaviour, one's worth as an individual, or with a mixture of one's behaviour and worth. Or, the reader may further reflect on the resilience to shame portrayed by Jesus when he faced the cross. Does Jesus' ultimate concern of focusing on pleasing his Heavenly Father rather than temporal realities provide an example to imitate?

2 Limitations of this Study

Having critically reflected on my inquiry into pilot combat experiences, I now offer the limitations I have observed with regards to this study.

The first limitation of this inquiry is that the insights presented result from the subjective interpretation of one individual, mine. In other words, the pilot corpus, unlike the gospel corpus, is not yet available for study by the public. As a result, other researchers are prevented from constructing alternative *readings* and identifying alternative phenomena to account for pilot experiences.

Second, it is unfortunate that I conducted pilot interviews as a novice researcher. For example, in order to obtain a richer understanding of experience, a phenomenological approach encourages an imaginative variation where the phenomenon in question is imagined in other conditions. This usually occurs at the data analysis stage. Bevan ([2014](#)), however, introduces imaginative variation at the interview stage. In hindsight, one of the weaknesses of my interviews is that I did not use imaginative variation at this stage because I was not able to anticipate the descriptions of combat experiences that pilots were to recall. For example, as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, I could have asked the following question after a pilot described a certain frustrating experience: "In this scenario, what would have changed if the Canadian rules of engagement (ROE) were as permissive as those of other coalition countries?" The pilot's answer may have provided additional clarity of the combat experience in question as well as revealing the deeper beliefs of the pilot. If I conduct future research, I will include imaginative variation during the interviews.

Third, pilots interviewed had an interest to be part of this study. Their responses did not originate from a neutral position. Pilots who refrained from participating in this inquiry may

have interpreted their combat experiences in a different way. The views of interviewed pilots may not reflect the views of CF-18 fighter pilots in general.

Fourth, instead of following a prospective research design where a cohort of pilots were followed over a period of time (diachronic), pilot interviews were taken at one point in time (synchronic). I will never know what pilots left unstated in the first interview that may have been revealed in further interviews. In addition, with the passage of time, pilots gain more life experience and maturity. As a result, their beliefs may change resulting in a more nuanced meaning of their past combat experiences.

Fifth, the experiences of other Canadian pilots active in the air campaign but not directly involved in combat were not addressed in this study. For example, a researcher could interview RCAF pilots who flew refuelling planes. Interviewing those pilots would provide comparison cases when interpreting fighter pilot experiences. How did pilots of fuel tankers experience flying over a combat zone? What was their evaluation of their contribution to the air campaign? How did they view the assessment of the air campaign by the government, Canadians in general, and mental health support personnel? Did tanker pilot personal and collective experiences reflect or diverge from fighter pilot experiences?

Sixth, the small sample size was reflected by the six pilots who made themselves available to share about a specific life experience: air-to-ground combat over Syria/Iraq. The results cannot be generalized beyond the participants in their unique situation. However, in spite of this weakness, the criteria of resonance or vicariously identifying with the experience may act as a counter-active measure. If the descriptions, portrayals, and findings of this investigation resonate with other fighter pilots who read this dissertation, the generalization of these findings can be made to other pilots or to other similar situational contexts ([Fischer, 2006](#)).

3 Future Research Suggested by this Study

3.1. A fruitful area for future research is to follow up on pilots interviewed. Further research may be conducted on the pilots in at least two possible ways:

First, by allowing pilots to view and interpret their own transcripts, a comparison may be drawn between the pilot's own analysis and this present analysis. Pilots would be invited as co-researchers in the study thus increasing creditability of the study in the eyes of other pilots;

Second, a longitudinal study of the same pilots may be conducted. Changes in the interpretation of pilot combat experiences over time may provide additional insights on the phenomena under investigation.

3.2. This present study investigated retrospective interpretations of pilot combat experiences at the time of the interview. It did not examine pilot combat experiences at the time it occurred. It may be interesting for the RCAF to investigate pilot interpretations of combat experiences synchronically when pilots are engaged in a future air campaign. To prepare for this research possibility, a researcher may be imbedded in the squadron ([Saitzyk et al., 2017](#)) and prepare for interviews during combat by being invited to conduct preparatory studies during a multinational training exercise such as *Red Flag*.

3.3. Pilots referred to Close Air Support (CAS) *sorties* as “boring.” One pilot described taking-off on the *sortie* with a full load of bombs and returning at the end of the *sortie* with the same load of bombs as “just flying.” He described these *sorties* as “really nothing to do” and “not being just for Canada.” I observed that instead of speaking for himself and his experience of the mission, he projects this injustice onto the country. A future research project could use rhetorical analysis and trace when pilots refer to their actions and feelings as projected on the framework of the following: first, personal experience; second, the pilot brotherhood; and third, the country. Is there a tendency for CF-18 fighter pilots and other Canadian combatants to take responsibility for positive emotional experiences but then shift the responsibilities for adverse emotional experiences to the country or the military? If so, what may account for this shift?

3.4. This study suggests that undesirable-stress and its accompanying unpleasant feelings were experienced either as dissatisfaction due to poor performance or as shame due to beliefs leading to a continuity between a participant's performance and state of being. Unfortunately,

current studies on the manifestations of apprehension in American student pilots during military flight training ([Callister et al., 1999](#); [Ragan, 2010](#)) overlook the phenomena of dissatisfaction over performance, shame, or the differences between the two. Future research may focus on the phenomena of dissatisfaction and shame and its influence on apprehension in student pilots.

3.5. This inquiry looked at honour/shame in a specific situational context: CF-18 fighter pilots engaged in combat over Iraq. Future research may replicate this study in other tight-knit elite groups within the CAF such as members of intelligence units who collected and assembled data for strikes, members of the Special Operational Forces, members of specialized infantry troops, or Infantry Officers (Captains and Majors) who find themselves facing the enemy on the front lines with their troops.

3.6. Another interesting follow-up research project would be to interview pilots from other nations who were involved in the same multinational air campaign. What were the experiences of fighter pilots from other nations who had differing ROE? What are the intensities and frequencies of adverse psychological outcomes in pilots who had more permissive ROE? Do their present recollections of pleasant or unpleasant combat experiences reflect or diverge from our CF-18 fighter pilot experiences? Interviewing of fighter pilots from other nations would provide comparison cases to either confirm or refute the recommendation in this inquiry that strict ROE contribute to improved long-term well-being of fighter pilots.

3.7 Reflections on this study led to the hypothesis that pilots at times may find themselves in situations where the pleasant experiences of pursuing their personal reputation (the bestowal of honour associated with sacrifices to ultimate concern) conflict with the unpleasant guilt and shame associated with compromising his own or society's moral beliefs. This dissonance at a cognitive and affective level may be further explored as a possible source leading to the adverse psychological outcomes of moral injury.

3.8 The sub-discipline of public theology was unknown to me until I began reading broadly for this research inquiry. An infinite number of subjects can be addressed in a secular context

that could be researched by Christian public theologians that have been traditionally investigated by the human sciences. Theological (vertical) insights can present refreshing and important insights on subjects that have been exhausted by a purely human science (horizontal) investigation.

3.9 The multiple dimensions of belief as conceptualized in this inquiry can be applied to other episodes in the gospel corpus and in other texts in the Christian Scriptures. These dimensions (cognitive, verbal, physiological, affective, volitional, temporal, mnemonic, relational, and behavioural) may provide insight into enriching the meaning of the Christian Scriptures as they provide a logical method of categorizing the different dimensions of belief.

3.10 Finally, the interpretive dialogue on the phenomena of stress and honour/shame between the dialogue partners of contemporary culture and the Christian tradition was limited, from the Christian tradition stance, to an interpretation of the gospel corpus. Future research can expand the Christian tradition dialogue partner to include the richness of honour/shame from the Psalms of David with its combat motif, from the corpus attributed to the Apostle Paul, an ex-Pharisee, or from the corpus of the whole New Testament.

Epilogue

Returning to the metaphor of experience as a process of sedimentation, the experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots analyzed in this study are dynamic and supple. They may not have yet been crystallized into a rigid structure, as sand, silt, and clay calcify into sedimentary rock, nor metamorphosed into a more durable structure by the heat and pressure of traumatic events. As the rushing water of a flood dislodges sediment into an alluvial suspension, future air campaigns may once again thrust these air-to-ground combat experiences into the daily lives of these same pilots.

The practical question addressed at the beginning of this dissertation is as follows: can all research knowledge generated from soldiers in past ground campaigns be simply transferred

to support CF-18 fighter pilots who will be deployed to future air campaigns? In my evaluation, due to efficiency, RCAF leadership has delegated the research on the psychological well-being of their fighter pilots to researchers who have specialized in ground soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. Some of this research is applicable to pilots because of the characteristics common to humans and common to humans in combat. However, fighter pilots are unique, and this uniqueness merits specialized research.

It is my desire that our CF-18 fighter pilots benefit from research on the phenomena of stress and honour/shame. And it is my desire that future pilots, before experiencing combat, learn from our combat-seasoned pilots of Op IMPACT and that future researchers advance our understanding of the unique combat experiences of CF-18 fighter pilots.

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Appendix A: Initial Contact Letter



Memorandum

5000-1 (pers)

August, 2016

CF-18 Fighter Pilots (via C of C)

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT - FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH:

AIR TO GROUND COMBAT EXPERIENCES OF CANADIAN CF-18 FIGHTER PILOTS

1. The experiences of Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) fighter pilots are important. As CF-18 pilots, you have risked your life and possibly your well-being by flying air to ground combat missions over Libya or more recently over Iraq/Syria.

2. Current mental health researchers are confident in their understanding of the psychological impact of the ground mission on combatants in Afghanistan. However, though CF-18 fighter pilots have been recently deployed in combat missions, airpower practitioners have not conducted research on fighter pilot experiences and mental health outcomes. It is within this void that I am interrupting your already busy schedule and inviting your voluntary participation in the following research project.

3. **The Project:** This research study seeks to investigate possible relationships between Canadian CF-18 fighter pilots air to ground combat experiences, their beliefs/values, and susceptibility/resilience to psychological adversity. Eligibility for participation in this project is past involvement in air to ground combat over Libya or Iraq/Syria.

4. **The Researcher:** I am a military chaplain (Capt David Dytynyshyn) stationed at 3 Wing, Bagotville. I am also a doctoral candidate at Université Laval in Quebec City. I have

received permission to conduct this study from the following authorities: Col Darcy Molstad, 3 Wing Commander, LCol David Turenne, and LCol William Mitchel, squadron commanders of 425 Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFC) and 433 TFC respectively; the Université Laval Ethics Committee on Research with Humans; and the Surgeon General's Health Research Program.

5. **Your Voluntary Participation:** For pilots who agreed to participate, in-person interviews will be conducted on two or three occasions within the next month at the location of your choosing. Neither your chain of command nor anyone else within the RCAF (or outside the RCAF) will be informed of your decision to participate in this study. During the first session of approximately 30 minutes, I will explain the project, answer any questions, and will confirm your voluntary consent to participate in this research project. I will then distribute a written questionnaire that will better help me formulate my questions during the interview. We will then set a time for an in-depth interview.

6. During the second session, of approximately 90 minute duration, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions. These questions are designed to prompt you to remember and to describe the following: your experiences of being a fighter pilot, your experiences of air to ground combat missions, and the meaning that you assign to these experiences. Your responses will be digitally recorded and then transcribed word for word to form a narrative for analysis. Be assured that any statements revealing pilot identify, yours and others, will be removed from the narrative. If you do not have enough time during the interview and you feel that there is more for you to share, it may be possible to schedule a third session. I will leave the possibility of a third optional session up to you.

7. At any time, you may change your mind and withdraw from the study. The voluntary consent form and any other written documentation will be returned to you. Any digital information about your association with this research project will be destroyed.

8. Your participation in this research will be helpful in exploring the relationship between experiences of fighter pilots and resilience (the potential to overcome adversity) in the face of the various stresses of air to ground combat. Since participation is voluntary, your participation or non-participation will have no effect on your career.

9. If you are interested in participating in this study, or have any questions, please contact me using the contact information found below.

10. My hope is that this research can be used by others to refine future pre-deployment training and post-deployment support thus enhancing fighter pilots' post-deployment well-being.

11. With appreciation of your interest,

Capt David Dytynyshyn

Chaplain, 3 Wing – CFB Bagotville

Ce projet a été approuvé par le Comité d'éthique de la recherche de l'Université Laval : No d'approbation 2016-086 / 21-06-2016 et le Programme de recherche en santé du médecin général E2016-06-193-003-0001.

Appendix B: Agreement to Participate Form

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM

Initiator of the Project

This research project is being undertaken by me, Capt David Dytynyshyn, from 3 Wing Bagotville, a Ph.D. candidate in the doctoral program at the *Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses*, at Université Laval, Québec City. Dr. Robert Mager from the same faculty is my supervisor for this research project. The co-director is Dr. Jean-Marc Charron, from Université de Montréal.

Consent to the Project

Before accepting to participate in this research project, please take the time to read the following information. This document outlines the objective of this research project, the procedures, the advantages, as well as the risks of participation. You will be asked to sign this document, expressing your consent to share your combat experiences in a climate of confidence and respect. I invite you to ask any questions you may have before adding your signature.

Objective of the Project

This research project seeks to investigate possible relationships between Canadian CF-18 fighter pilots' air to ground combat experiences, their beliefs, and susceptibility/resilience to psychological adversity.

Procedures of the Project

Your participation in this research project consists of answering open-ended questions about your experiences as a fighter pilot in a personal interview of approximately 90 minute duration. The questions will focus on the following subjects:

- your experiences as a pilot before deployment into combat;
- your experiences (thoughts, beliefs, feelings, body sensations) as a pilot during combat;
- your perception of yourself and other people's perception of you as a pilot as a result of combat;
- your beliefs with respect to the risk and protective factors related to the mission and associated with psychological adversity;
- your method of coping with the combat experience and its contribution to your post-deployment well-being.

Advantages and Risks of the Project

At a personal level, participation in this project will allow you to reflect on and confidentially discuss, in a non-judgmental environment, your combat experiences and the meaning that you have attributed to those experiences. Your participation in this research will be helpful in exploring the relationship between experiences of fighter pilots and resilience (the potential to overcome adversity) in the face of the various stresses of air to ground combat. At a collective level, my hope is that the knowledge gained by sharing your experiences will be used by others to refine future pre-deployment training and post-deployment support thus enhancing fighter pilots' post-deployment well-being.

However, because of the sensitive nature of this subject, it is possible that the sharing of your combat experiences may bring to awareness uncomfortable memories, feelings, and body sensations. If this happens, and it overwhelms you, please feel free to ask that we take a break or stop the interview. A list of resources will be made available to you if the need arises.

Withdrawal from the Project

Since you are free to participate in this project, you may change your mind and withdraw from this study at any time. You will not need to justify your decision to withdraw from the project. As well, you are free to abstain from answering any question or questions that you will be asked. This *Agreement to Participate Form* and any other written documentation will be returned to you. Any digital information about your association with this research project will be destroyed.

Confidentiality and the Project

Be assured that the personal information you share will remain strictly confidential. The contents will be used for Capt. David Dytynyshyn's doctoral dissertation and possibly for an occasional conference.

During the collection and transcription of data into a textual narrative, only your fictitious call sign will be used. This *Agreement to Participate Form* will be stored in a location separate from any other data collected. All data, including this form, will be filed in a cabinet with a Protected B security level. The transcribed narrative, once in digital form will be stored in encrypted files with access only to the researcher by using his DWAN account and password.

During the communication of the results of this research, patterns observed at a global level rather than at the individual level are of interest in this study. Therefore, any results published in a thesis/scientific journal or presented at conferences will not focus on individuals. If individuals are quoted as examples of global patterns, only the fictitious call signs will appear.

This precaution will eliminate any identification of participants. A short summary of the results will be sent to participants who request a copy. To request your summary, please provide an address under your signature on this form.

After the end of this project, all materials collected for this project will be destroyed by December 2017.

Appreciation

Your collaboration in this research project is greatly appreciated. For this reason, we thank you for setting apart precious time from a busy schedule to participate.

Signatures

I, the undersigned _____ have read and understand the purpose and process of this research projected entitled *From Heaven to Earth: Air to Ground Combat Experiences of Canadian CF-18 Fighter Pilots*. I have read this *Agreement to Participate Form* and I understand the objective of this research project, the procedures, the advantages as well as the risks of participation. I am satisfied with the explanations, the precisions, and the responses that the researcher has provided. I indicate my free consent to participate in the study by signing this consent form.

Signature of the participant

Date

A short summary of the results of the project will be sent to interested participants. To receive a copy, please add a confidential e-mail address or your postal address below. If your address changes within the next year, please inform the researcher of your new address.

Please send a copy of the summary of results to the following address:

I have explained the objective of this research project, the procedures, the advantages, as well as the risks of participation to the above person. I have answered the questions of this participant to the best of my abilities and am satisfied with the participant's understanding of this project.

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Supplementary Information

If any questions remain concerning this project or if you would like to withdraw from this project at any time, please communicate with me Capt David Dytynyshyn by one of the following means: by e-mail at david.dytynyshyn@forces.gc.ca or by phone (418) 677-7349.

Complaints or criticisms

Any complaints or criticisms concerning this research project can be directed to the Office of the Ombudsman at Université Laval:

Pavillon Alphonse-Desjardins, bureau 3320

2325, rue de l'Université

Université Laval

Québec (Québec) G1V 0A6

Information - Secretary: (418) 656-3081

Toll free number: 1-866-323-2271

E-mail: info@ombudsman.ulaval.ca

Ce projet a été approuvé par le Comité d'éthique de la recherche de l'Université Laval : No d'approbation 2016-086 / 21-06-2016 et le Programme de recherche en santé du médecin général E2016-06-193-003-0001.

Appendix C: Pilot Initial Questionnaire

INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is important and confidential. You will see that many of the questions are very personal; your answers will remain strictly confidential. The objective in answering these questions are threefold: first, to determine if you qualify to participate in this research study; second, to determine if you will be comfortable sharing your experiences on air to ground combat; and third, to provide background information on yourself thus allowing more time to share your combat experiences during the in-depth interview.

In order to ensure your confidentiality, please create a fictitious call-sign that will be associated to you in this study. The fictitious call sign must not, to your knowledge, refer to any present or former RCAF pilot.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Today's Date _____

Fictitious Call Sign _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Confidential E-mail Address (where you can be reached)

Telephone Number (where you can be reached) _____

Please start by providing a brief biographical sketch of your life (e.g., place of birth, education, occupation before becoming a pilot, military experience up to the deployment).

Are you presently living in a relationship with another person and consider yourselves a couple?

Living with someone _____ Living alone _____

List the members of your immediate family and/or others living presently in your home:

Provide Fictitious Name(s)	Age	Relationship to you	Occupation

SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND

What spiritual orientation were you raised with as a child?

Do you still presently follow that orientation? Yes _____ No _____

How would you briefly describe your present spiritual orientation?

COMBAT EXPERIENCE

Were you in air to ground combat in Libya? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, on how many deployments and for roughly how many days per deployment?

<u>Deployments to Italy</u>	<u>Number of Days Deployed</u>	<u>Number of Days Between Deployments</u>
1st _____	_____	_____
2nd _____	_____	_____
3rd _____	_____	

Were you in air to ground combat in Iraq/Syria? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, on how many deployments and for roughly how many days per deployment?

<u>Deployments to Kuwait</u>	<u>Number of Days Deployed</u>	<u>Number of Days Between Deployments</u>
1st _____	_____	_____
2nd _____	_____	_____
3rd _____	_____	_____

How motivated are you in sharing your combat experience with the researcher? (Circle one.)

Very

Not very

5

4

3

2

1

Do you have any hesitations about sharing your experiences of air to ground combat? Yes ____ No ____

Why or why not?

What are some of the things that it would be helpful for the researcher to know about the mission that could contribute to susceptibility/resilience to psychological injury?

Have you ever received psychological help of any kind before your combat experience?

Yes No

If yes and you feel comfortable, please answer the following questions:

1. What was the problem for which you received help?
-
-

2. How severe was the problem?
-
-

3. What triggered this problem or when did it begin?
-
-

4. What was the result of your counselling experience?
-
-

Have you sought psychological help of any kind because of your combat experience?

Yes No

If yes and you feel comfortable, please explain:

BASIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Your Physical Health (Circle one): Very Good Good Declining Poor

Is your appetite less or greater than usual? _____

Your weight: Any recent gain? Yes ____ No ____

Any recent loss? Yes ____ No ____

Do you have problems sleeping? Yes ____ No ____ If yes, please explain:

How many hours of sleep do you average per night? _____

How much sleep do you usually need per night? _____

Do you have any medical conditions presently? Yes ____ No ____

Have you had any serious accidents?

PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

Underline any of the following that often apply to you:

Headaches	Blackouts	Watery eyes	Hearing problems
Dizziness	Coldness Tingling	Hot flashes	Smothering sensations
Palpitations	Twitches	Skin problems	Allergic reactions Rapid heartbeat
Chills	Back pain	Dry mouth	Don't like being touched
Nausea	Restlessness	Burning / itchy skin	Sweating excessively
Muscle spasms	Tremors	Shortness of breath	Visual disturbances Chest pains or discomfort

Tension Neck pain Sexual disturbances Choking
Hear things Others:

Feelings

Underline any of the following feelings that often apply to you:

Angry	Fearful	Guilty	Hopeful	Bored	Optimistic
Annoyed	Panicky	Happy	Helpless	Restless	Tense
Sad	Energetic	Conflicted	Relaxed	Lonely	Ashamed
Depressed	Envious	Regretful	Jealous	Contented	Excited
Anxious	Disappointed	Hopeless	Unhappy	<u>Others:</u>	

What feelings would you like to experience more often?

What feelings would you like to experience less often?

When are you most likely to feel overwhelmed by your emotions?

Describe any situations that make you feel calm or relaxed:

What kind of hobbies or leisure activities do you enjoy or find relaxing?

BEHAVIOURS

Circle any of the following behaviours that apply to you.

Overeating	Loss of control	Sleep disturbance	Eating problems
Taking drugs	Affairs	Phobic avoidance	Aggressive behaviour
Vomiting	Suicidal attempts	Promiscuity	Crying
Odd behaviour	Compulsions	Lack motivation	Outbursts of temper
Drinking too much	Smoking	Insomnia	Lack of concentration
Working too hard	Withdrawal	Take too many risks	Impulsive reactions
Procrastination	Nervous tics	Lazy	Others:

Are there any specific behaviours, actions, or habits that you would like to change in yourself?

What are some special talents or skills that you feel proud of?

What would you like to do more of?

What would you like to do less of?

What would you like to start doing?

What would you like to stop doing?

THOUGHTS

What do consider to be your most irrational thought or idea? (i.e. *It does not make sense or seem reasonable, yet you think it anyway*)

Underline each of the following words that you might use to describe what you think of yourself.

Intelligent Full of regrets Considerate Stupid Concentration difficulties

Confident Worthless A deviant Naïve Memory problems

Worthwhile	A nobody	Unattractive	Honest	Can't make decisions
Ambitious	Useless	Unlovable	Incompetent	Suicidal ideas
Sensitive	Evil	Inadequate	Horrible thoughts	Persevering
Loyal	Crazy	Confused	Conflicted	Good sense of humour
Trustworthy	Morally degenerate	Ugly	Attractive	Hard-working

BELIEFS

Circle the number that most accurately reflects your actual beliefs about yourself.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I should not make mistakes.	1	2	3	4
I should be good at everything I do.	1	2	3	4
When I don't know, I should pretend that I do.	1	2	3	4
I should not disclose personal information.	1	2	3	4
I am a victim of circumstances.	1	2	3	4
Other people are happier than I am.	1	2	3	4
It is very important to please other people.	1	2	3	4

Play safe; don't take any risks.	1	2	3	4
I don't deserve to be happy.	1	2	3	4
If I ignore my problems, they will disappear.	1	2	3	4
It is my responsibility to make other people happy.	1	2	3	4
I should strive for perfection.	1	2	3	4
Basically, there are 2 ways of doing things: the right & wrong way.	1	2	3	4

GRIEF AND LOSS

1. Have there been any recent deaths among friends or family? Yes ___ No ___

2. Has any relative or close friend attempted or committed suicide? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, how long ago? _____

3. Have you ever experienced any other major losses in your life? (loss of friendship, divorce, job, etc.) Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please briefly explain: _____

4. Are there any particular stressors in your life (influences that cause you stress) at this time?

Yes ____ No ____ If yes, please briefly explain: _____

Is there any other relevant information you are willing to communicate that could be helpful before sharing your combat experiences? _____

When would be some possible times to schedule the personal interview?

Appendix D: Interview Guide

The following Interview Guide is intentionally not presented in the form of questions. Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the researcher wants to minimize controlling the interview by a series of questions. At the same time, he does not want the interview to go off in random directions. The researcher intends to let the pilot describe his experiences but at the same time ensure that the following subjects are covered. If the pilot hesitates to go into depth on any of these subjects, this hesitation will be noted and used in the analysis of the data.

1. Life as a Pilot

- 1) Ask R (the respondent) to describe how he became a fighter pilot. When and how was the interest awakened? What obstacles had to be overcome in order to become a pilot? How did he overcome them?
- 2) Ask R to describe a typical day as a pilot in Canada compared with a typical day while deployed apart from the *sortie* itself.

2. Description of the Mission

- 1) Ask R to provide a description of the *sortie* (the combat mission). What was a typical *sortie* like? How did it compare with his imagined version before deployment?
- 2) Ask R to describe how he felt (positive and not so positive) during the different stages of the *sortie*, the various physical sensations/impulses, and the thoughts/doubts.
- 3) Ask R if he feels uncomfortable talking about these experiences. Would the pilot prefer to continue with the questions or withdraw from the research project?
- 4) Explore indications of positive emotional investment or stress.

3. Life after the Mission

- 1) Ask R how he would describe himself as a person before the deployment; to think of a few character qualities (strengths/weaknesses) that remained the same during the transition from civilian to pilot; and those that changed.
- 2) Ask R if he has noticed any other changes in his character qualities or personality, for the better and for the worst, as a result of the mission.
- 3) Ask R if others have commented on any change in personality due to the mission.

- 4) Explore indications of positive emotional investment or stress.
- 5) Have things gotten better or worse for you since being involved in the mission?

4. Experience of the Mission

- 1) Ask R to recall the thoughts, feelings, and body sensations/impulses as experienced during his *sorties*. How they changed during different phases of the mission? Did these inner states become habitual experiences during each mission? How, if any, did they differ from the habitual experiences when flying a mission in Canada? Did the pilot ever experience unique or surprising experiences during any of his *sorties*? How did he feel about himself during these unique experiences of combat?
- 2) Ask R to recall his perception of how significant others/stakeholders thought about him during the deployment: co-pilots, military leadership, family/friends back home, media, the Canadian public, or others. If their perception triggered positive/negative/neutral feelings about self;
- 3) Distanced now from the mission, what does R now think about the present perception of significant others/stakeholders as it relates to combat?
- 4) Explore indications of positive emotional investment or stress.
- 5) Would the pilot prefer to continue with the questions or withdraw from the research project?

5. Coping with the Mission

- 1) Ask R about how he coped with difficult circumstances before becoming a pilot. If any strategies come to mind, what were they? Ask if he used the same strategies during the combat situation or if strategies used were different. Did he think they were effective at the time? Does he still think so as he now reflects about them?
- 2) Ask R about how he copes with present thoughts/doubts/feelings/sensation/memories that he unintentionally experiences about the combat experience.
- 3) Ask R about how he presently deals with any present challenges in life (work related, health, interpersonal, etc.); what he does to maintain motivation in life in spite of the challenges; if he observes any relationship between his combat experience and his present

challenge or if this personal challenge in any way shades the experiences described in this interview.

- 4) Ask R if he has talked about his experiences with anyone else: a significant other, leadership, or military support services. What incited/prevented him from approaching others? If he found the support helpful or not.
- 5) How does R view both his short term and long term future: positive, neutral, or not too positive?
- 6) At this point in the interview, identify what the pilot believes is most important to him as he responds to the scenario of Ultimate Concern.

6. Concluding Questions

- 1) Ask R if sharing his experiences has triggered something else important to share, something we have not even touched on, or any stories (funny or sad) about the mission whether about him or about another pilot.
- 2) Ask R to share the advice he would give to future pilots as they prepare for a similar combat mission.

Ask R if sharing his experiences today has been a relief, threatening/uncomfortable, or both.

Ask R if I can turn off the recorder or if he has anything else important to add.

Appendix E: Determination of a Pilot's Ultimate Concern

Instructions

- 1) Write down your four most precious activities, people, possessions, and qualities each on the four-coloured Activity, People, Possession, and Quality Cards provided.
- 2) Imagine a scenario where you are on a combat mission over enemy territory. Because it is a dangerous mission, you must choose an Activity Card and a Possession Card and renounce them and tear them up;
- 3) On this mission you are being shot at. Renounce and tear up a People Card and a Quality Card.
- 4) You have been hit by a projectile and you are losing control of the plane. Renounce and tear up another Possession Card.
- 5) You cannot maintain control and you seek authorization to eject over enemy territory. The other planes in your formation were ordered to leave the area. Renounce and tear up an Activity Card and People Card.
- 6) As you descend on your parachute, you can see the vehicles driving in the desert moving towards the location where you anticipate landing. Renounce and tear up a Quality Card.
- 7) Even though you fire your arm while descending and on the ground, you are outnumbered. Renounce and tear up a Possession Card and Activity Card.
- 8) You are captured, blindfolded, put into a vehicle, and driven to an unknown location. Renounce and tear up a People Card and two Quality Cards.

What People Card, Possession Card and Activity Card you have left is a good indication of what you consider as your ultimate concern.

Record the ultimate concern of the pilot.

Appendix F: Advice to Future Pilots

One of the questions I asked pilots during the interview focused on the advice these combat seasoned pilots would give to the generation of pilots that were to follow them. In order to maintain my honesty and integrity as a researcher, I present this section as an edited summary of the advice given in the pilots' own words.

1. Auto

Train like you fight, fight like you train, but there is nothing in training that actually sets you up for the actual action of taking a life. You can train all you want, you can simulate all you want, but when you take a life it's real. And that is something you will not be able to train to until you actually do it . . . Trust your training. You have to have faith in the CoC, in terms of why you going to do a certain mission and the importance of the mission. Those are probably the two biggest things. Have faith in why you doing the job and trust the training that you've been trained to do.

2. Canuck

I would say that at the end of the day everything that you do at the gun squadron, all the training that you do, may one day be used. And I can honestly say I never thought I was going to be flying combat missions over Iraq. I mean, that first time that I crossed over the line, I just found myself thinking, 'Man, I cannot believe I am here right now, flying, on the jet, over Iraq, in a conflict.' I just never thought that would happen. For sure it was a possibility. But I never thought it would ever actually really happen . . . So I would say always take your training seriously, it really pays off. You really will fall back on it. And it, it is good training. It will make you ready. Just take it seriously, be professional.

3. Christo

Read the book, *On Killing*. That would be my advice. I thought it was good mental preparation. So, that probably was a big factor in me. I think I was very mentally well prepared. So, that's why I would say if anyone is going over, knowing they're going to have to kill people, reading that book was, was probably a good thing.

4. Dodge

We were training to do that kind of job [air-to-ground combat] over there. But our forces were so overwhelming so we should not draw false conclusion about

it. It's not always that easy. I didn't fear ejecting or getting shot at. But it's not always going to be the case . . . The next conflict might be different, and we might lose people. Always keep that in mind. Because it looks easy one day, doesn't mean it's always going to be like that.

5. McSnail

If pilots are well prepared there won't be any problems. Of course, it all depends on the risk level of the mission. I don't have much advice to give because everyone is different. Looking at the mission from a technical perspective, there should not be a problem. However, from a psychological perspective, I do not have much advice to give because each scenario will be different and each person is different. It is difficult to say how each one will react.

6. Smokey

I think that preparation is 90% of telling your performance. The more prepared you are, the better your performance. And I totally believe that the debrief brings the lessons learned for next time. Although we prepare for the actual job, I don't know if we prepare people to be resilient for that job. I think the [air force] institution, the brotherhood of fighter pilots takes care of it. The closeness of families, kind of takes care of that as well.

I guess I learned that for actual combat, you are really well prepared. We do a good job at it. Combat is usually easier than the training that we go through. I mean, that's not to say that the next war will be, but it usually is. So, be confident and you'll be fine, in what you're going to be or going to do.

And the only other thing I would say is, unless Canada's at war for its life or death, it's usually a deployment. It's a 2-month period. It will be dangerous, but it's finite period of time. So, make sure you look after yourself. Make sure you take the time to go to the gym, and take care of your health. You will perform better. Even though you thought it was best, at university, to cram all-night to get something done, it was not really the case, right? So, all the hard work has already been done before you get to theatre. There's no more extra training to do in theatre. There's no more extra intelligence you're going to read that's going to make the difference between life and death. It's your ability to make decisions and be in the right frame of mind at the time that is important. So, there's my advice.