THE PROVERB:
an interdisciplinary approach to a biblical genre

By Ted Hildebrandt
Gordon College, Wenham, MA
© August 15, 2005; Hildebrandt

1. Introduction

This study will examine the literary genre of the biblical proverb from an interdisciplinary approach that will include contributions from biblical studies, Hebrew poetics, ancient Near Eastern history, linguistics, folklore paremiology, and cognitive and computer sciences. After offering several definitions of the proverb, the nature of proverbs in collections will be explored. The roots of the universality of this genre will be exposed both historically and cognitively within the functioning of the brain. How proverbs are used and the variegated nature of their authority will be discussed. While focusing on biblical proverbs, several situations of origin will be given and various Hebrew poetic techniques will illustrate the crafting of the sentence sayings via sound, parallelism, figures/tropes, themes, vocabulary and deep structures. Various proverbial sentence structures will be described and then the collectors' handiwork will be discerned in proverbial pairs, clusters, mini-collections and collections. Finally, suggestions will be made about future directions of proverbial study.

The questions addressed in the paper will be: what is a proverb? how does it come to meaning? does cognitive science help explain why proverbs are so universal in almost all cultures and all known historical time periods, from Sumer

to the Internet? How does the proverb function in a collection differently from when it is used in a story? How is a single proverb changed when stripped out of its original story, decontextualized and resituated in a collection? How does a proverb's meaning change when it is recontextualized, being taken from a collection and merged back into a new, and often diverse, story? How does a proverb differ from a promise? What is the nature of its authority? How do these pithy sentences intersect with truth? Do all proverbs move with and invoke the same level of authority? Where do the biblical proverbs originate (schools, family/clan, court/sages)? What factors play a role in shaping Hebrew proverbs? What literary forms occur in the biblical text of Proverbs (better-than, abomination, numerical sayings, etc.)? Do the proverbial sentences of Proverbs 10-29 have any order? Do larger edited units of pairs, strings/clusters, mini-collections and collections actually exist? Can we detect editorial tendenzes in the way the proverbs are collected and ordered? The goal will be to crack open the core nature of the pithy proverbial sayings by wrestling with these and related questions.

This study will attempt to make four contributions to the study of the proverbial genre: (1) the nature and virtuality of proverbs in collections will be revealed in relation to their becoming decontextualized in collections; (2) a five-level approach to proverbial authority will be developed; (3) an integrative approach combining the contributions of biblical wisdom studies with folklore paremiology, cognitive science and computer science will shed unique light on

why these traditional sayings are so potent in most cultures; and (4) a link will be suggested between the underlying meaning of the acrostic literary form and the core wisdom theme of order/*ma'at*.

A twenty page condensation of this paper will be published in Inter-Varsity's new *Dictionary of Old Testament Wisdom and Poetry* in 2006/7. A "Proverbs" website has also been developed in order to make broader resources available and provide a fuller context for this discussion (vid. currently at faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi).

1.1 Introduction to the Proverb

From the ancient clay tablets of Sumer (ca. 2500 B.C.) to post-modern Internet pop-ups, the proverb has crossed all cultural, linguistic and literary boundaries. It appears embedded in epics, poems, songs, plays, novels, and modern advertising and stands solo in a myriad of international and regional proverbial collections (Mieder, 2004, xii). These pithy sayings have been studied across the academic spectrum from the perspectives of linguistics, literature, religion, psychology, cognitive science, sociology, cultural anthropology, folklore, art, music, education, history, business management, communications, public relations and, of course, paremiology, which is the discipline devoted to the study of the proverb (*paremia*: Greek for "proverb"). Thus the proverb provides a fertile field for interdisciplinary dialogue. The basic corpus for this study of the

proverbial genre will be those proverbs found in the Old Testament along with their relevant ancient Near Eastern parallels.

1.2. Definition

The proverb is portrayed by Lord Russell as "The wisdom of many, the wit of one" and by Cervantes as "Short sentences drawn from long experience." Ibn Ezra describes the proverb as having "three characteristics: few words, good sense, and a fine image." The world's leading paremiologist, Wolfgang Mieder, while acknowledging the difficulty of providing a comprehensive definition, defines the proverb as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (Mieder, 2004, 3).

Neal Norrick, using a linguistically crafted matrix, isolates the key features of the proverb as: (1) a propositional statement (hence eliminating proverbial phrases such as "bite the dust" and larger units such as fables); (2) sayings woven into the fabric of a conversation (as opposed to riddles, jokes or tales which are set off from a conversation); (3) a traditional and spoken statement (in contrast to aphorisms [statement of insight, often paradoxical and thought provoking] and epigrams [a brief poem of a single point] which are typically written, non-traditional, and attributed to a particular author); and (4) a fixed form with didactic intent and completeness of thought (dissimilar to cliches that lack didactic intent). Furthermore, a proverb is a generalization, unlike a curse or blessing that is

personal and particular. A proverb may be figurative when it uses metaphors or similes or plainly literal (maxim). Usually it is poetically enhanced through such techniques as rhyme, alliteration, ellipsis, paronomasia, repetition or parallelism which aid in making it memorable and quotable (Norrick, 66ff; cf. Fox, 14f; Williams, 37-39, Mieder, 2004, 7).

Structurally a proverb is often composed of a topic and comment (Dundes):

	Topic		Comment
	"a simple person"	+	"believes anything" (Prov. 14:15)

If the proverb is metaphorical its common, non-metaphorical meaning must be deduced. For example, "don't cry over spilled milk" literally means, one should not waste time worrying about things that cannot be undone or changed. This literal meaning then may be employed in a diverse range of situations. So a soccer coach quotes this proverb to encourage her team to move on after a loss. In a totally different situation, a friend taunts a friend who has just lost a round of scrabble quoting the saying as he lays out the winning letters for "milk."

Anna-Leena Kuusi, proposes that proverbs are characterized by binary oppositions and Milner adds that many have a quadripartite structure. While the quadripartite structure is not universal as Richard Honek notes, it fits with many of the biblical antithetic proverbs (Honek, 21; Kuusi, 1972, Milner).

"Lazy hands [-]   make a person poor [-],
but diligent hands [+]   bring wealth [+]"   [Prov. 10:4]

2. The Virtual Potential of Collected Proverbs

Though a precise "definition" of a proverb is elusive most readers are easily able to recognize one. Its disjuncture from the contextual flow calls for its recognition, identification and interpretation. The proverb is frequently foregrounded from the surrounding context allowing it to be easily distilled out of its literary surroundings.

Mieder concludes that proverbs taken out of their original situations and placed in collections are dead (Mieder, 1974; 892; Heim, 23). This study maintains that a proverb is not dead when it is decontextualized into a collection, however. Once detached or de-contextualized into a collection, the collected proverb becomes much more flexible and poly-situational in terms of its potential use.

Insight into how a collected proverb is related to the proverb used in an interactive situation can be gained from the study of virtual reality by Pierre Levy. Levy describes that which is virtual as a seed having new multi-faceted potentials not possessed by the actual (cf. Levy passim). By being derealized a new collection of possibilities and potentialities is opened up. Similarly, when a proverb is taken out of a specific interactional situation, it does not die in the collection, but rather, it takes on new potentials and possibilities by becoming virtual. The collected proverb gains flexibility, multi-semanticity, and poly-situational potentiality when detached from a particular situation and placed in a collection. Its potential is virtual in the collection and actualized when it is

reattached and recontextualized in a host of diverse specific situations. The collected proverb's virtuality is actualized in each new textual or situational usage.

Computers science has also given another way of conceptualizing this movement from the collection to the use in a particular situation. In modern programming languages objects are defined in a program. Once defined these code objects can be used in hundreds of new parts of the program by just referencing their name. The collected proverb is like a class object which can be called into use in a host of new situations once it is known by the user. This is called "instantiation" as it provides an "instance of" a proverb or object in actual use. The proverb is not dead in collection but virtual awaiting its instantiation in a new particular situation.

An illustration of the virtual potential of a proverb may be seen in the use of Prov. 14:15: "A simple person believes anything." One can easily imagine recontextualizing this same proverb in a wide range of speech-act contexts utilizing it to expose, humiliate, rebuke, mock, warn, offer guidance, encourage, evaluate, humor, cause reflection or instruct, among others. A parent may cite this proverb to warn a young child about the tricks played by older siblings on the younger. In another situation, a friend might use the same proverb to mock a friend that just fell for a sales pitch. The potential of the virtual is actualized when the proverb is reconnected or instantiated within each alternative context of use. The proverb's unique ability to be detached from its context of creation facilitates its collection (Abrahams, 417).

In order to understand the use of a proverb the communicative intention of the user as well as the cultural readiness and familiarity of the hearer must be known. This interaction between the user and hearer will be a determining factor in what the proverb comes to mean in a particular situation. Carol Fontaine describes how traditional sayings or proverbs are used in the historical narratives. She cites examples from Judges (8:2, 21) and 1 Samuel (16:7; 24:14) describing how the "interaction situation" functions in relationship to the "proverb situation" in the Bible (Fontaine, 57f; Lieber, 111).

The historical narratives containing proverb situations also shed light on the process of proverb creation and formulation. A proverb is created when there is a situation from which a pattern is observed, after which a detachable generalizing inference is distilled inductively, deductively or analogically into a single statement. This distilled saying is formulated by metaphoric imagery and poetic sound techniques. The crafted saying is then detached from its situation of creation and placed in a collection thereby gaining virtual potency and poly-situational flexibility ready for instantiation in a myriad of new situations.

Honek, a cognitive scientist, while acknowledging the inductive-like inference in the generalization process, redefines it as analogical reasoning where one realm is mapped metaphorically onto another via the proverb (Honek, 114). He further penetrates the source of the proverb by noting that the proverbial generalization encapsulates some cultural ideal or value that is either confirmed or disconfirmed by the saying (Honek, 140ff). This cognitive linking of inductive/

analogical generalization and ideal fits very well with the biblical proverbs. So the proverbial parent looks out the window of his house and distills a generalized lesson for life about how the simple are seduced (Prov. 7:6). Similarly, the sluggard is encouraged to go to the ant, observe, reflect and through analogical reasoning from the realm of the ant draw conclusions in the realm of humans on whether the sluggard should have need of close supervision (Prov. 6:6f; 24:30-34). Both of these are ideal confirming. On the other hand, in Proverbs 26:1 the sage, using an analogically based simile, draws a comparison of the inappropriateness of snow in summer to the inappropriateness of bestowing honor on a fool.

A proverbial generalization is crafted into a saying by using architectonic structures of the genre (e.g. Like x, like y; cf. Like mother, like daughter) as well as poetically enhancing it via sound (e.g. assonance, consonance, alliteration, paronomasia), imagery (e.g. metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, simile) or perhaps repetition or ellipsis (cf. "a stitch in time saves nine" or "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"). Once it is encapsulated, the proverb's compactness allows it to be detached, become virtual and then to function as a metonymic tag as it is instantiated in a host of new situations. Familiarity with a saying facilitates a hearer's ability to efficiently process its meaning (Honek, 98).

3. Universality of the Proverbial Form

3.1. Historical and Cultural Universality

The detachable and collectable proverbial form was early bound into Sumerian proverb collections, including the Shuruppak Instructions, dating back

to 2600-1800 B.C. (Alster) shortly after the invention of writing itself. Old Babylonian proverbial clusters were copied from Sumerian unilingual collections into bilingual lists even maintaining the same sequence thereby reflecting the international movement of early proverbial wisdom (Lambert, 223). Old Babylonian copies of Sumerian proverbs found at Susa, Ur, and Nippur show the sayings' geographical diversity. Later, Ahiqar, who served as a sage in the Assyrian courts of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon (ca. 700 B.C.), recorded proverbs that were widely transmitted across ancient Near Eastern cultures. Copies of Ahiqar (Assyria) were discovered deep in Egypt at Elephantine and quoted in the Jewish pseudepigrapha book of Tobit. Later, they were even translated into Arabic. Many have noted parallels between Ahiqar and the biblical book of Proverbs (Day, 43ff). Thus proverbs have been transmitted internationally since ancient times (vid. Lambert and Alster for English translations of Mesopotamian proverb collections).

Egypt also has a long tradition of proverbial instructions, often in a parent-to-child format, extending from the Old Kingdom (ca. 2600-2100 B.C.; e.g. Hardjedef, Kagemeni), Middle Kingdom (ca. 2000-1600 B.C.; e.g. Ptahhotep) and New Kingdom (1500-1080 B.C.; e.g. Amenemope, Ani) and down to demotic and the Ptolemaic times (ca. 300 B.C.; e.g. Ankhsheshonq; vid. Lichtheim for English translations of these texts). Parallels between Amenemope and Proverbs 22-24 have been extensively researched, with the extent and direction of borrowing still a matter of debate (cf. Washington, Ruffle).

The adages from classical Greek and Roman times were assembled by

Erasmus (ca. 1542). English collections have highlighted the plethora of proverbs

from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Tilley). In recent times, modern

English and American collections provide good evidence of the fecundity of this

literary genre (cf. Wilson, Mieder, Whiting). The Chinese, European and Russian

collections are also voluminous. Oral proverbial production is still very much

alive in the folklore of the Akan, Igbo and numerous other groups on the African

continent. Finegan, as a cultural anthropologist, has studied African proverbs and

concluded that they reveal the "soul of a people" (Finegan, 35). As Francis Bacon

puts it, "The genius, wit, and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs"

(Obelkevich, 220).

3.2 *Cognitive Universality*

To understand the proverbial genre within a biblical context it is important

to grasp the universality of proverbial materials documented in almost every

language and historical period. Proverbs are internationally fluid and easily

migrate across regional, temporal and linguistic boundaries.

The human urge to classify, generalize and codify experience, filtered

through a culture's ideals and values, help explain the universality of the proverb.

These sayings are recorded in memorable, compressed formats that project their

pithy ideals into the realm of the virtual--ready to function in a host of new

situations (cf. Honek, viii). One might say that proverbs are an encoding

compression schema of the mind.

Once known, the proverb must be decoded, unpacked and reattached to a new situation in order to unleash its meaning potential. Such unpacking places large demands on the brain as metaphor and images must be analogically related to present circumstances. A proverb is not unpacked as a lexical unit or frozen cliche but is linguistically linked by metonymical and analogical processes to the situation at hand. The complexity of these processes provide a cognitive basis for why proverbs are used to isolate mental disorders (vid. Gorham Proverbs Test), to study child/adult thought development (Nippold, 367), to measure mental status (Wechsler Adult Intelligenced Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) and Stanford-Binet; Honek, 238) and even are employed to aid therapeutic communities where individuals recite proverbial wisdom to identify and break addictive behaviors (Rogers, 159).

Cognitive scientists have noted a link between proverb interpretation and a properly functioning right hemisphere of the brain. Those with damaged right hemispheres often could not interpret proverbs quickly or correctly. Familiarity and age also play key roles in whether proverbs are used and processed instantly and meaningfully (Honek, 221, 229 253). Honek comments on the cognitive rudiments of proverbial expression: "The ability to use and understand proverbs draws on a high order of intelligence. Not only is a healthy brain required, but so are a number of subskills, each of which takes years to develop" (Honek, 237).

The reception of wisdom has moral and value prerequisites in addition to cognitive prerequisites. Recently, gerontologists, and others studying wisdom in

adults, have recognized the importance of values in attaining wisdom. This fertile nexus between moral values and wisdom from the study of gerontology has yet to be explored in relation to classic Old Testament wisdom research (Sternberg, 1991, 2005; Baltes, etc.).

4. Paradoxical Character

The proverbial literary genre is paradoxical. Proverbs are easily recognized and commonly used but virtually impossible to define, even by the most erudite paremiologists. On the one hand, proverbs are simple sayings, often composed of concrete images, mundane common sense, and universally authoritative wisdom. They simplify complex issues. They are quoted by elders in what appear to be frozen, traditional, timeless formulas at critical points in conversations with didactic intent for the benefit of the young. On the other hand, proverbs are often complex, poetically crafted, multifunctional, poly-situational independent sayings, and open to formulaic variation and transformation. They express culturally relative ideals of often contradictory advice beyond the cognitive capacity of the young.

Proverbs have been disdained by some upper class literati. Creative writers such as Mark Twain viewed them as trite, trivial and stereotypical, mindless cliches quoted by simple uncreative folk without thinking. However, proverbs have also been collected and valued by kings and sages and employed by masters from Aristotle to Jesus (vid. Winton; Witherington), Erasmus, Shakespeare (e.g. "Brevity is the soul of wit"), Benjamin Franklin (e.g. "Early to bed..."), Dickens

(e.g. "Procrastination is the thief of time") and Emily Dickinson (e.g. "Every rose has its thorns."). The life span of a proverb may be hundreds or even thousands of years. It is of interest that Robert Frost's proverb, "Good fences make good neighbors" ("Mending Wall" [1914]) actually may have originated in correspondence between Reverend Ezekiel Rogers, the founder of Rowley, Massachusetts, and Governor John Winthrop on June 30, 1640 almost three hundred years earlier. (Mieder, 2004, 70).

On the surface proverbs appear timeless, fixed and trans-cultural, yet many of these individually time-locked and culturally frozen sayings have dropped from use as, for example, millers' skills were antiquated with the arrival of the industrial revolution. Thus, Chaucer's "An honest miller has a thumb of gold" i.e. he cheats) became extinct. Other more flexible sayings, which have been pruned and morphed, have become timeless and culturally transcendent. For example, Chaucer's, "Whoso that first to mille comth, first grynt" became the more universal "First come, first served", thriving as an international soft drink corporation utilized its proverbial punch in "Thirst come--thirst served" (1932, Coca-Cola; Mieder, 1981, 313).

5. Proverbial Usage

5.1. Importance of Proverb Usage

Proverbs are detachable units designed for conversational reattachment in new situations. The importance of proverbial usage is clearly acknowledged in the

biblical book of Proverbs itself: "Like a lame man's legs that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool" (Prov. 26:7, 9).

Modern studies have revealed that proverbs are spoken usually by elders and rarely by the young (Finegan, 35; Obelkevich, 216). Honek, from a cognitive perspective, notes that proverb use among children below the age of ten is unheard of largely because citing a proverb is an indirect way of accomplishing social goals (Honek, 262). The linguist Norrick observes that older speakers usually employ proverbs when speaking authoritatively with didactic intent (Norrick, 1994, 149; cf. Prov 4:1ff; 23:22; Ps. 37:25).

Not only should the content of what is said be understood (the illocutionary act) but also the actual impact of the statement on the listener should be carefully noted (the perlocutionary act; Norrick, 152-53). For example, the perlocutionary effect of Proverbs 10:1b, "A foolish son is a grief to his mother," may be consolation, encouragement, rebuke, warning, or even humor depending on who the speaker is and to whom it was spoken (viz. wife to a husband, husband to a wife, parent to a child, parent to another parent, grandparent to a scion parent, etc.). A proverb may be used to highlight ideals that are either confirmed or dis-confirmed (Honek, 144). Interestingly, Proverbs 10:1, as typical of many antithetic proverbs, gives both the ideals-confirming (wise son/joy to father) and the ideals dis-confirming (foolish son/grief to mother) sides, thereby doubling the impact by using both approach and avoidance motivational strategies in a single saying.

Culture also plays a role in determining how a proverb is to be understood. In Scotland, "a rolling stone gathers no moss" indicates the need to keep up with modern trends lest undesirable moss grows and reveals a lack of mental vitality. Thus the rolling stone/moss (keeping current) is the ideal confirmed. In England, on the other hand, the same proverb means that if things are continually in flux desirable traits (moss) will not have sufficient stability to thrive (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 821-27). Here the rolling stone/moss (lack of stability) ideal is disconfirmed. The image of the moss is culturally understood in two very different ways, one desirable the other undesirable, thereby demonstrating that culture impacts how proverbs are interpreted.

Norrick, from a linguistic perspective lists several typical ways proverbs are employed in speech-act performance situations: evaluative comments, evaluative argument, and narrative summation. In his proverb corpus taken from a collection, evaluative comments were in the vast majority. An interesting reversal is manifest in Shakespearian plays. The evaluative argument usage accounts for 70% and the evaluative comments only 30% of the proverbs used (Norrick, 17ff). This confirms the putative distinction between oral, collectional and literary functioning of proverb usage.

An African folklorist observes that Akan speakers of Ghana use proverbs as an indirect means of saving face, avoiding crises, and preserving politeness (Obeng, 261, Obelkevich 216-17). When the proverb is instantiated, it is cited as coming from a wider community rather than as originating with a specific author

("as they say" cf. 1 Sam. 10:11f; 19:24). Hence the locus of authority is moved from the speaker using the proverb to a collective indirect perspective (Norrick, 26). Proverbs also function phatically to establish, maintain and restore social relationships (vid., Obelkevich, 217; Norrick, 1994, 147) and to reinforce solidarity within a community (cf. Job's "friends").

Proverbs allow a speaker to avoid direct confrontation, yet express evaluative comments on current situations in an indirect manner. Westermann observes this occurrence in African proverbial legal usage (Westermann, 143). Beardslee elucidates how Jesus used proverbs to challenge his audiences. He expressed reversals in paradoxical proverbial formats that were designed to jolt hearers out of their lethargy. Sayings such as "Whoever loses his life will preserve it;" (cf. Lk 17:33) and "The first will be last" (Mk. 10:31; cf. Beardslee, 167f) illustrate this paradoxical format. Beardslee also notes the nexus between story--in this case parables--and proverbial summations (cf. Lk 14:7-11; Prov. 25:6f; Lk. 11:5-8; Prov 3:28; Beardslee, 165). Indeed, Mieder well observes that "One could go so far as to say there is a 'story' behind every proverb" (Mieder, 1994, 495; cf. Heim, 73).

5.2. *Proverb Usage in Proverbs 1-9*

While the biblical book of Proverbs contains several sentential sub-collections (Prov. 10:-22:16; 25-29), the initial chapters are composed of lengthy instructions (Prov. 1-9). These longer wisdom discourses provide examples of sentential proverbial usage that may be used as templates modeling how the

proverbs from the sentence collections (Prov. 10-29) are to be recontextualized in larger literary units. Thus Proverbs 1:17 "How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds!" is used as evaluative argument to turn the young person away from the lure of violent companions. The proverb is easily identified. There is a shift from a literal description of hoodlums shedding innocent blood to a proverbial metaphor in the image of a bird and a snare. Here the proverb is used to close an argument. Honek notes that proverbs are often used to close or open an argument (cf. Honek 118).

A second example of proverbial usage in the instructional discourses is found in Proverbs 5:15 "Drink water from your own cistern." This embedded proverb provides the sage with a janus point or hinge that initiates a transition by pointing backwards to the description of the seductive moves of the adulteress. At the same time, it points forward to the sage's advice directing the young person's focus to the erotic pleasures flowing from his own mate. Ecclesiastes also provides many examples of proverbial texts embedded in a wisdom discourse (Eccl. 1:18, 4:5f; 9:12f; cf. Job 4:8; 8:20ff etc.).

6. Authority

It should be clear at this point that it is difficult to talk about the independent veracity of a collected proverb and its authority especially when the proverbs in collections are so poly-valent and decontextualized.

Waltke points out that the authority of proverbial statements has been denied, thus implying that Solomon was a simpleton, and proverbs are merely

probabilistic statements (Waltke, 1996, 323-5). This denies the authority accorded

proverbs as a genre in most cultures even without their being embedded in the

inspired biblical canon.

Genre impacts how truth is engaged. No one would take Jotham's fable

and declare that a bramble bush can boast and accept the nod for kingship (Judg.

9), or conclude from the parable of the ten bridesmaids that this story actually

happened with exactly five being foolish and five wise (Mat. 25), or that an

apocalyptic beast with the face of a leopard and bear paws will literally emerge

from the primeval depths of the sea (Rev. 13). Genre affects how one interprets

divine revelation and how those words are related to truth.

Genre does not determine whether the Scriptures are true but merely shapes

how that truth is formulated in the text and how it must be decoded to effectively

move from the text into life. The historical narratives face a similar difficulty in

moving from an historical particular to a generalized application. Abraham's call

to leave Ur and later to offer his son a sacrifice on Mount Moriah are historical

particulars and not moral directives given to everyone. A believer is not usually

commanded to marry a prostitute as Hosea was. Even the New Testament epistles

struggle to distinguish cultural particulars from universal moral imperatives (e.g.,

head coverings). Thus the authority of the proverbial genre, as these others, must

be carefully understood.

Proverbs in most cultures are spoken with authority as they are instantiated

with reference to a current situation. When the proverb is instantiated it may

render an evaluation or direction in another situation that may or may not fit in another. In the biblical proverbs Wisdom's words must be diligently sought and moral and religious prerequisites met (e.g. the fear of the LORD) before her sayings may be understood and yield their rewards.

While Honek points out that the proverb as a gnomic genre appears omnitemporal and "contributes to a momentary sense of timelessness and universality" (Honek, 256) at another level proverbs are critically dependent on the context and culture in which they are used. Proverbs are not meant to be dogmatized or absolutized into universal propositional truths. That was one of the mistakes made by Job's "friends".

Thus the biblical sage warns that even a fool can mouth a proverb in which case the proverb has lost its punch and hangs as ineffective as a crippled leg, or worse, does damage like a drunkard wildly swinging a thornbush not realizing his own hand and others are being pierced (Prov. 26:7, 9).

Proverbs, as a genre, face the tension between correct application in a particular situation and the tendency towards generalization that incorrectly leads to universalization and dogmatization. This is a frequent and fatal misunderstanding of this genre. Proverbs offers no guarantee that every child properly trained will stay or return in the way he should go. Even God, the divine parent of rebellious children, gives sad testimony of this (Prov. 22:6; cf. Isa. 1:2). Thus understanding how the genre engages truth is foundational for interpreting Scripture faithfully and discovering the divine meaning in biblical proverbs.

What is the nature of the connection between the proverbial sayings and divine revelation? Proverbial "revelation" is drawn in part from general revelation, human reflection, inductive/analogical inferences and ideal encapsulizations rather than from direct communicational forms which typify the prophetic "thus saith the LORD." Instead, it is the revelation mediated through a mother who taught (Prov. 31:1) or a father who passed down the tradition he learned from his father who faithfully taught the fear of the LORD and the ways of wisdom (Prov. 2:1ff; 4:3). It is derived, in part, from observations (Prov. 6:6) and analogical/inductive generalizations built from careful scrutiny of patterns of behavior (Prov. 7:6ff). The Bible contains, allows for and presents examples of a diversity of channels by which divine communication flows (cf. Heb. 1:1). Ultimately wisdom is derived from the LORD (Prov. 8:22ff.) and is given by Him as a gift (Prov. 2:6) but is often mediated through traditional wisdom channels (i.e., parents, empirical observations, inductive/analogical generalizations).

How is the authority of Proverbs to be understood? Is Proverbs 10:4 "Poverty comes from a lazy hand, but a diligent hand makes wealth" a promise? This example raises the question of the extent of the authority of proverbial statements. While some may incorrectly see this as a divine promise in a "name-it-and-claim-it" manner, most quickly realize that this saying is not an absolute guarantee. It is easy to cite examples of people who have been diligent and still poor and others who have been lazy yet live in the lap of luxury. Furthermore, Proverbs itself indicates that while working hard leads to profit, evil companions

(1:18) or another's greed may quickly negate or pillage the benefits of hard work and leave one ultimately impoverished. Thus the equating of a promise and a proverb is a fatally flawed approach that ignores what a proverb is.

A second "solution" frequently cited is that "proverbs are not promises". That is, when God promises Moses on Sinai that He will deliver His people out of Egypt, He must indeed fulfill the promise lest His word be proven false. But a proverb is not a one-hundred percent guaranteed promise. Indeed, proverbs are not promises but rather generalizations from which a truth is drawn. The proverb takes complex situations and encapsulates them--distilling them down into a pithy saying that encodes the ideal of what generally should or should not happen. Distinguishing a proverb and a promise, while useful, still does not answer the central questions however: what is a proverb? how does a proverb textualize divine truth? and, how is truth embedded in and gleaned from proverbial interpretation?

The proverb may be commenting on only one aspect of a situation rather than endorsing the whole. Because of its unitary pithy nature a proverb cannot be taken as a guarantee of complex outcomes. The proverb is true but often only gives one aspect of truth like a vector projecting along the x-axis in a single direction rather than the smooth analogue curves of real life. Since situations are complex, the wise realize that the proverb needs to be taken as an expression of the focused singular ideal without violating the broad and diffused complexities of the current real-life situation. In order to describe a complex situation

comprehensively, multiple proverbial vectors may be needed to describe actual movements in reality. The work hard/wealth//evil companions/poverty contrary proverbs highlight the need to think in terms of the whole canon of proverbial sayings rather than focusing on single isolated sayings. In short, Proverbs are true but encapsulated and focused on only one aspect of a complex reality.

The way the proverbial genre engages authority is not simplistically flat. Some proverbs are built to express universal ideal-confirming mandates as in "Trust in the LORD with all your heart (Prov. 3:5), while others present absolute ideal-disconfirming prohibitions such as "six things the LORD hates..." (Prov. 6:16f). It should be noted that there are ideal-disconfirming proverbs where the innocent suffer and the wicked prosper as Van Leeuwen aptly notes (cf. 11:4,7, 18, 21, 23, 28; 12:7, 12; 15:25; 17:5; 19:17; 20:2, 21; 21:6-7, 22:8-9, 16; 23:17-18; 24:20)(Van Leeuwen, 1992, 29; cf. Waltke, 1996, 326). These also demonstrate that proverbs are often descriptive of life rather than merely listing a series of abstract absolutes. Ideal-confirming proverbs are paralleled by ideal-disconfirming or world-up-side-down type sayings. Such Proverbs describe realities both of the wise and foolish and the righteous and wicked.

Between the two poles of absolute mandates and prohibitions there are proverbs that use indirect methods of endorsing or encouraging certain behavior patterns (e.g., "diligent hands bring wealth"), while others warn and dissuade some types of behavior (e.g., "a gossip betrays a confidence"). Finally, in the middle stand proverbial statements that are merely observations of the way things

are without making any moral evaluation. Examples of these are "Each heart knows its own bitterness" (Prov. 14:10) and "A bribe is a charm to the one who gives it" (Prov 17:8).

Thus five categories may be observed in exposing the contours of proverbial authority: (1) a universal mandate (Prov. 3:5); (2) an ideal-confirming exhortation (Prov. 10:4); (3) a simple non-moral observation (Prov 14:10); (4) an ideal-disconfirming warning (Prov. 11:13); and (5) an absolute prohibition (Prov. 6:16f). These five artificial categories are proffered to demonstrate that the authority of the proverb genre is not uniform and flat but variegated and contoured. A wise interpreter must carefully observe the different strata of proverbial authority and nuance.

Furthermore, when proverbial usage is also added into the mix, the scope of authority may even take other directions. Perhaps the proverb is not cited for dogma at all but simply for pointed humor such as the sluggard who fears the lion in the street (Prov. 22:13), or is too lazy to raise his hand back to his mouth (Prov. 19:24).

Contrary proverbs such as Proverbs 26:4-5, where one is directed both to answer and not to answer a fool according to his folly, highlight the fact that proverbs in collections are not to be taken as crystalline universal dogmas but as proverbs ready to be instantiated in appropriate complex situations. Wisdom demands that those who use proverbs have the wisdom to know when a word is fitting and how to use proverbs with intentions that are consistent with the fear of

the LORD. The wise do not simply memorize proverbs in order to employ them in any given situation without considering the impact that such analogic thinking is going to have on the listener either to teach wisdom or to do damage as a foolish drunkard's thrashing thornbush (Prov. 26:9). Thus the wise must understand people and the impact of performance situations (cf. Crenshaw, 1982).

7. Oral

Another underlying aspect of the proverbial genre that should not be overlooked is the oral nature of the proverbs in terms of their original creation, transmission and use. How does the nature of the proverb differ when performed orally from when it is recorded textually and gathered into written collections? How does orality change the communication process? Does inspiration extend to an unknown folklore origin or unidentified Egyptian author or foreign king Lemuel or sage Agur? What was the role of divine revelation for the editors who determined the canonical shape of the text in Hezekiah's day (Prov. 25:1) or later the unknown editors that assembled and ordered the whole book of Proverbs?

The oral nature of many proverbs in conversational discourse has been noted by cognitive scientists, linguists and folklore paremiologists and is corroborated in Scripture in the embedded traditional sayings recorded in speech contexts in Judges 8 and 1 Samuel 16.   The encomiums about Solomon's vast wisdom also were markedly oral as he "spoke three thousand proverbs" and many came "to listen to Solomon's wisdom" (1 Kgs. 4:31ff). It is no accident that the theme of speech and oral communication is central both in Egyptian wisdom

literature, where eloquence and silence are extolled, as well as in Israelite proverbs (Prov. 11:9; 12:14, 18; 15:1, 30; 16:24, 27; 17:28; 25:15; vid. Kidner, 47-49). The oral implications of the frequently repeated phrase "Listen, my son" should not be overlooked. It should not be assumed that an oral tradition infers a preliterate stage of development--just as proverbs function orally today yet clearly are within a literate cultural milieu.

Gerhardsson and others (Lord, Goody, Ong) have explored the significance of oral pre-textual underpinnings in both classical literature and the sayings of Jesus. This approach should be extended to the oral origins and expressions of proverbial wisdom as well. Snell's careful scrutiny of proverbial repetitions isolated were understood from a collectional standpoint but need to be re-explored in terms of the variations possibly due to different oral recitations (Snell). In Proverbs whole verses are sometimes repeated verbatim (cf. Prov. 9:4, 16; 14:12; 15:25; 16:2, 21:2). At other times, half-verses are repeated but linked to different matching cola (Prov. 10:6, 11). Often variations are introduced in whole verse repetitions with one word (Prov. 19:5, 9), two word (Prov. 10:1; 15:20) or three word variations (10:2; 11;4; 15:13; 17:22). How and why these variations occur needs to be understood from the perspectives of transformational grammar, deep structure and oral performance. Numerous modern collections cite the same proverb with multiple variations (e.g., "Don't change horses in mid-stream" and its variant "Don't swap horses while crossing a stream"; Flavell, 136). At other times proverbial phrases are purposefully "twisted" by the user to make counter

proverbs (e.g., "Spare the rod, spoil the child" becomes "Spoil the rod and spare the child"; or "Early to bed, early to rise, and your girl goes out with other guys" [Mieder/Litovkina, 184]).

8. Proverbial *Sitz im Leben*

While this paper focuses on the proverb as a literary genre, brief comments will be made on the alleged *sitz im leben* of that genre. The debate over the original setting of Proverbs has produced a tsunami of material with no final consensus within reach. There are basically three suggestions for the original setting of Proverbs with innumerable combinations and variations: (1) schools; (2) family/clan; and (3) the royal court/scribes.

8.1. *School Origins*

There are those that emphasize a school origin (Hermisson, 1968; Crenshaw 1998, Davies 1998, Whybray, 1995, 23-5; and Jamieson-Drake). They realize that the first explicit mention of schools is found in Ben Sirach 51:23 (ca. 180 B.C.) which is rather late. Yet they find support in Mesopotamian and Egyptian school parallels where father/son may refer to teacher/student. Recent archaeological finds lend support to an early school hypothesis. This evidence is, however, not conclusive and subject to alternative interpretations (Lang, Lemaire). The underlying didactic intent of the proverbs fits well with a school context but the question of exactly how a "school" was structured in pre-exilic Israel remains a mystery. This also finds support in the text of Proverbs itself (Prov. 5:13-14. cf. 1 Sam. 3:6, 16; 2 Kgs. 2:3-5, 12) and the "father" may refer to a teacher acting *in*

loco parentis (Nel, 1977, 59; cf. Pemberton, 96 who refer to the instructor as "father" but "rhetor").

8.2. *Family/Clan Origins*

Some highlight the folk, clan or family background of the sayings (Westerman, Golka, cf. Fontaine) based on studies of proverbial use in African communities and paremiological studies of folklorists. Unfortunately the potential employment of live proverbial community data from Africa and folklore paremiological studies has not been fully realized by Old Testament scholars trained more in ancient Near Eastern backgrounds and cognate languages. The clan/family origin is supported by the frequent reference to the father/mother//son addresses (Prov. 1:8; 4:1, 3; 6:20; 19:27; 31:1) and the folk content of many of the sayings (Prov. 10:5; 14:4; 20:4). This literal father/son relationship is also corroborated in an Egyptian context (cf. Letter of Menena, Fox, AB, 8). Fox correctly objects to a totally agrarian preliterate origin as many of the sayings reflect a more urban setting (Prov. 10:26; 17:3; 25:11f.) (Fox, AB, 9).

Many view the instructions in Proverbs 1-9 as originating in post-exilic schools and hence from a different setting than the older clan/family sentence sayings of Proverbs 10-29 (Fox, AB, 9). The alleged evolution of the short single-line proverb into longer more complex instructions has had to be abandoned because of ancient Near Eastern parallels showing that lengthy instructions were prominent for over a millennia before Solomon.

8.3. *Royal Court/Scribal Origins*

The third proposed *sitz im leben* for the proverbs is in scribal and royal court settings--again with strong parallels from Egypt and Mesopotamia and supported by the biblical text itself which correlates the proverbs with King Solomon (Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 1 Kgs. 4:31ff), the court of Hezekiah (Prov. 25:1) and the sages mentioned in Proverbs 22:17; 24:23, 30:1 (vid. Gammie 1990; cf. Fox, AB, 6-9; and his article on social location, 1993, Kovacs). Kitchen demonstrates the validity of wisdom superscriptions based on Egyptian literary models but many critical scholars unfortunately have not embraced his conclusions (Kitchen). The presence of the king in the content of many of the proverbs was originally seen as evidence to support the royal court setting (Prov. 16:12-16) but recently has been debated by Golka and rejected by Weeks (Weeks, 1-56). Malchow (Prov 28-29; labeled "A Manual for Monarchs") and Van Leeuwen (Prov. 25-27) have examined specific sub-collections that point to royal court connections (Malchow, Van Leeuwen). Waltke's stellar commentary separates the situation of origin from a situation of dissemination and use (Waltke, 1:62). The potential of this insight needs to be explored by future studies.

Many have opted for the seams between these three options, arguing for scribal schools in the royal court or for apprenticeship schools in the home. Perhaps the distance between the clan/family settings and the courts was not as great in Canaan as in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Furthermore, it is possible that the schools and family apprenticeships were also more fluid and homogenized than previously thought (cf. Washington).

The forced locking of particular genres to specific and exclusive social settings also seems a bit strained. One should be aware that even a particular content of a proverb does not always map isomorphically onto a unique *sitz im leben* of a proverb. For example, a "king proverb" can be written in a family or clan context as Golka and Westermann have demonstrated from African parallels and a proverb on the harvesting of the land could quite easily be written within the royal court (Prov. 27:23-24).

The literary features of the proverb will be examined here while holding the question of which particular *sitz im leben* in abeyance--whether school, family/clan or scribal/royal court. The focus will be on the literary text itself.

9. Hebrew Proverbs

9.1. *Mashal*

The term translated "proverbs" in the title of the book of Proverbs is "mishle" meaning "likeness" or "similitude." Crenshaw explores the diversity of genres tagged by the label of *mashal*: popular sayings (Jer 23:28; 31:29), literary aphorisms (Prov. 10:1-22:16); taunt songs (Is 14:4; Mic. 2:4; Hab 2:6-8), bywords (Deut 28:37; 1 Kgs 9:7); and allegories (Ezk 17:1-10; 20:45-49) (Crenshaw, 1974, 230). Fox rightly observes that *mashal* is a multifaceted trope including even the words of a foreign prophet like Balaam speaking of visions that were labeled as *mashal* (Num. 23:7, 18; 24:3) (Fox, AB, 54f). This "likeness" may be seen as a correlation between the given text and the current situation. The *mashal* calls for one to reflect and make connections between the ideals expressed in the text and

map to them paradigmatically onto the current situations. While the saying may

not have an embedded metaphor or even be classified as poetry (1 Sam. 10:12;

24:13), the connection between the text and a current situation calls the hearer to

notice the analogical similarity--thus rendering it a *mashal*.

9.2. Sound techniques

The proverbs of the book of Proverbs were crafted in poetic form. In order

to understand the genre one must be keenly aware of how proverbial statements

employ poetic features. A brief examination of poetic sound, syntax, and

semantics is in order. McCreesh's delightful dissertation published as *Biblical*

Sound and Sense cites numerous examples from the text of Proverbs but its

potential has not been sufficiently savored by many exegetes of the biblical text.

Mieder cites modern examples illustrating the importance of sound in proverbs

such as "Practice makes perfect" and "Forgive and forget" (Mieder, 2005, 7 cf.

Arora).

Anyone familiar with Proverbs in English quickly realizes the importance

that sound has in the crafting of a sentence into a proverbial statement.

Alliteration (consonant and vowel repetition), assonance (vowel repetition),

consonance (consonant repetition) and rhyme (final line sound repetition) all play

roles in the poetic line in general and in proverbial sayings in particular

(McCreesh, 28; cf. Berlin, 107ff). The sentence "God created humans, people

make money" is crafted into a proverbial saying through the repetition of the

initial "m" sound: "God made man, man made money".

Many who are looking only for theological propositional truth ignore such aesthetic enhancements, but it is clear that the sages who originally crafted proverbs were keenly sensitive to the sounds of their sayings. Others minimize its significance because such features are locked in the original language and often cannot be translated. Some have demurred the repetition of sounds by acknowledging that there are only 23 letters in the Hebrew alphabet so naturally sound repetition is a necessary random phenomenon. It may move beyond mere random repetition, however, when there is shared location (initial, medial, final positions), when there are multiple letter combinations that are repeated ("ma" alliteration in the example cited above) or when other symmetries emerge (Prov. 10:5, 9a; 28:19). For example:

Prov 10:9a: *holek battom yelek betah.*
                One who <u>walks</u> honestly <u>walks</u> securely.

Note the symetrical (final-*ek* followed by initial *b+t*) sound repetition which reinforces the "walk" (*holek/yelek*) word/root repetition.

A final sound repetition may take the form of a rhyme as in "Haste makes waste." The sound technique encapsulates and registers the saying in the memory and even opens the door for proverbial transformations (e.g. "Taste makes waist"). Hebrew with its end-word affixes marking person, gender and number is prone to such end-word equivalences.

There is often a convergence of sound enhancement, as word/root repetition and paronomasia word play, increase the amount of phonetic repetition. Even

Shakespeare uses paronomasia as Falstaff says to Prince Hal, "Were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent." So McCreesh notes in Prov 13:20

| *halok 'et <u>ha</u>kamim wa<u>ha</u>kam* | Walk with the wise and so become wise. |
| *we<u>ro'eh</u> kesilim ye<u>roa</u>* | but a companion of fools will face harm. |

The play on the root *hkm* (Noun: wise; Verb: become wise) in the first line is different from the sound play between *ro'eh* (companion) and *yeroa* (harm). This leads to the interesting observation that the second line moves beyond the first (a la Kugel, cf. also Prov. 16:26 for word/root repetition). The second line counters the expected "a companion of fools becomes foolish" by injecting "harm" into the second line. This shift links character to a consequence that is diverse in meaning but similar in sound to the semantic repetition in the first line (McCreesh, 150; cf. also Prov 11:18; 12:16; 13:22). In several instances, McCreesh makes a case for keeping the Masoretic text based on sound rather than granting conjectural emendations (cf. Prov. 21:8, 21; McCreesh, 13, 37; contra Toy, 406-7). It is no surprise that those who edited the collections also used sound to link the proverbial sentences into longer clusters (cf. Prov. 11:9-10 where each line begins with the preposition "by").

9.3. Semantic Parallelism

Parallelism is the most significant and frequent poetic device used in Hebrew proverbs. Mieder cites examples of parallelism in non-Semitic proverbs such as "Ill got, ill spent," and "Easy come, easy go" (Mieder, 2005, 7). The standard description of the parallel relationship between the two lines has been

semantically designated: synonymous, antithetic, synthetic and emblematic parallelism (cf. O'Connor, Kugel, Berlin, Watson). The proverbial sentences of Proverbs 10-29 are most frequently antithetic as the ideal-confirming is juxtaposed with the ideal-disconfirming in a single bi-colon.

1. Synonymous parallelism: Proverbs 16:28   (ABC/A'B'C')

| A perverse person | stirs up | dissension, |
| A gossip | separates | close friends. |

2. Antithetic parallelism: Proverbs 10:1 (ABC/A'B'C')

| A wise son | brings joy | to a father |
| A foolish son | is a grief | to his mother. |

3. Emblematic: Proverbs 16:15 (ABC/A'B'C')

| In the light of the king's face | is | life, |
| and his favor | is | like a cloud of the spring rain. |

4. Synthetic: Proverbs 16:7 (ABC/DEF)

| When a person's ways | are pleasing | to the LORD, |
| he makes | live at peace | his enemies. |

In the above examples the alternate ABC/A'B'C' order is maintained, strongly paralleling the lines. Chiastic patterns are also observed where the unit ordering is ABC/C'B'A'.

Proverbs 10:12 (ABC/C'B'A')—antithetic parallelism chiasm

| Hatred | stirs up | strife, |
| all offenses | are covered | by love. |

9.4. Syntactic Parallelism

The ordering and paralleling of syntactic units (S=subject, V=verb, O=object, M=modifier) are carefully examined in the major works on Hebrew poetic structures (O'Connor, Collins, Cooper). Proverbs manifests these carefully crafted features that are often covered over in translation. So the NIV destroys the chiasm in translation in Proverbs 10:12

"Hatred (S)   stirs up (V)   dissension (O),
 but love (S)   covers (V)   all wrongs (O). (NIV).

The actual Hebrew ordering is SVO/OVS which highlights a chiastic structure with a hate/love inclusio linking the beginning and ending of the bi-colon.

Ellipsis or the gapping out of one of the elements is another characteristic that is frequent in proverbial statements (e.g., "Depend not on fortune but on conduct [depend]). While the verb is gapped in Hebrew (SVO/SO), in translation it is often glossed in for clarity as in Proverbs 11:18 (cf. also 12:17; 14:35):

The wicked (S)   earns (V)   deceitful wages (O),
but one sowing righteousness (S)   [reaps] (gapped V)   a sure reward (O).

Frequently when a unit is gapped out of one line there are additional units added to compensate and make the line word count balance. In the example in Proverbs 11:18 note how the subject unit compensates by lengthening "righteous," which would have matched the "wicked" of the first line, to "one sowing righteousness." This balances the line and compensates for the gapping out of the expected verb (V: reap). Such proverbial ellipses cause the reader to engage and supply the "missing" elements.

9.5. *Proverbial Figurative Features*

The proverbial literary genre is often poetically and rhetorically crafted with a diverse range of figures of speech. Some linguists have noted that proverbs of all nations have a metonymic character as they name, classify and focus on one aspect of complex situations (Norrick, 128f). A metonymy is a figure in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated. So "the bench decided" may refer to a judge's court decision or the "White House announced" may refer to a presidential proclamation. Because of the brevity of proverbial formulation, metonymy is a useful trope. So Proverbs 27:24b states: "and a crown (i.e. the king) is not secure for all generations." Biblical proverbs often use the word for one's character as a stand in for a reference to the person (righteous/wicked, wise/fool, diligent/sluggard; for a righteous person, etc.).

The similes are statements that make a comparison between two diverse realms using the markers "like" or "as". Proverbs includes numerous similes (Prov 10:26; 18:8; 19:12; 26:14, 17, 18, 21, 23; 27:8; 28:1b). Proverbs 12:18a illustrates this trope when it makes the point: "Reckless words pierce like a sword."

Metaphors are a comparison of two diverse realms without the explicit use of "like" or "as"—such as "a sea of trouble" (cf. Prov 18:4; 20:15b; 21:6b; 27:3). In Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower" metaphorically compares the name of the LORD to the security and protection of a strongly fortified tower. Proverbs of all cultures are rich in metaphor, which may be due to

the didactic intent of the proverbial genre. The proverbs' abstracting analogic quality is compatible with metaphoric expressions. Metaphors allow for the easy transfer of meaning between diverse situations, unleashing the poly-situational and virtual capabilities of this genre.

Hyperbole is another characteristic that is common in world proverbs. Mieder cites hyperbolic examples of "All is fair in love and war" and "A faint heart never won a fair lady" (Mieder, 2005, 7). A hyperbole is an overstatement or exaggeration for emphasis or effect. Such overstatements help the proverb to focus attention on the aspect of the situation that is being encapsulated. Thus when dining with a ruler the sages recommend: "put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony (Prov. 23:2). The proverb cuts away all the extraneous aspects of the situation and makes its point while not recommending a literal action (cf. also Prov 19:24; 30:2). Missing the fact that a hyperbole is being used as an exaggeration or rhetorical effect may cause an undesireable outcome, such as being stuck living in a desert (Prov. 21:19) or responding to Jesus' wisdom teaching by literally gouging out one's eye because of its offense (Mat. 5:29).

The synecdoche is a figure where a part is used for the whole or the general for the specific as in "all hands on deck" with a part, "hands", standing in for the whole, "sailors" (Cf. Prov. 17:7a, 22a; 18:6a, 7a; 12:24a). Proverbs 10:20a mixes a "silver" metaphor and a "tongue" synecdoche: "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver."

Finally, personification is a major figurative trope in Proverbs 1-9 and 31. Personification is found when an inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities. Thus "Wisdom" calls out in the streets (Prov. 1:20), she laughs (Prov. 1:26), invites the simple to dinner (Prov. 9:4) and she was born and aided God in the creation of the world (Prov. 8:22). Indeed, how to understand this feminine personification or hypostasis is one of the most debated aspects of the book of Proverbs (cf. Camp, Lang, 1986).

9.6. *Proverbial Themes and Vocabulary*

Besides sound patterning, parallelism, and heightened use of figures of speech, the biblical proverbial genre is also marked by certain themes and vocabulary that help mark out its conceptual space. While certain vocabulary sets do not necessarily prove a wisdom tradition origin, Whybray's lists are the most useful found anywhere (Whybray, 1974, 124-42). Some characteristic wisdom words are: *hasar-leb* (lacking sense), '*asel* (fool), *nabal* (fool), '*esa* (counsel), *peti* (simple), *kesil* (fool), *les* (mocker), *nabon* (discerning); '*arum* (clever, shrewd), *musar* (discipline), *derek* (way), *da'at* (knowledge), *bina* (discernment), '*ashere* (blessed), and various forms of *hkm* (wisdom), to name a few. There is often a heavy use of antithetical word pairs (e.g., wise/foolish; righteous/wicked and their variants) and noun phrase construct forms of the type: X + of the Y.

X [body part (mouth, lips, hand, heart, tongue), words, way] +

of the Y [character word: wise, fool, righteous, wicked].

(e.g. "the head of the righteous [Prov. 10:6] cf. also Prov. 10:11, 20, 21a). The vocabulary clusters around value characterizations or ideals that are being either confirmed and disconfirmed.

Major themes that the proverbial genre addresses are diverse. However categories such as wise/foolish, righteous/wicked, diligent/sluggard, rich/poor and topics of friendship, speech, wicked/virtuous woman, Yahweh and the king are commonly reflected in this genre (Golka, 46-48).

9.7. Deep Structures

The motivational structures are clear in admonitions that are often accompanied by an explicit motive clause (Prov. 3:10-11; 25-26). Motive clauses are also frequently present in ancient Near Eastern legal codes as well (Gemser, Sonsino, Nel, Postel; Exod. 20:7; Deut 22:19; cf. Prov 3:1-2; 22:28; 23:10f.). Dundes, a folklorist, observes that proverbs usually contain a topic and a comment, which he rates in terms of positive or negative value. When this method of analysis is combined with Chomsky's notion of deep structure and psychological theories of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, eight underlying patterns emerge that reveal the underlying motivational structures of many proverbial sayings. These are not found in explicit motive clauses but only revealed after doing a deep structure analysis.

1. Character ⟶ Consequence: (Prov 10:2b, 3a, 6a)

Prov. 10:1a A wise son [+ Character]⟶ makes a father glad [+ Consequence]

2. Character ⟶ Act: (Prov 10:12a, 14a)

Prov. 10:14a The wise [+ Character] ⟶ store up knowledge [+ Act]

3. Character ⟶ Evaluation: (10:20a; 11:1a)

Prov. 10:20a Righteous tongue [+ Character] ⟶ is choice silver [+ Eval.]

4. Act ⟶ Consequence: (Prov. 10:17a, 19a)

Prov. 10:19a many words [-Act] ⟶ no lack of sin [- Consequence]

5. Act ⟶ Evaluation: (Prov. 11:30b; 12:1a)

Prov. 12:1a loving discipline (+ Act) ⟶ loves knowledge [+ Evaluation]

6. Item ⟶ Consequence: (Prov. 13:2a, 8a)

Prov. 13:8a Wealth [+ Item] ⟶ may ransom of a person's life [+ Conseq.]

7. Item ⟶ Evaluation: Prov. 10:15a; 13:19a

Prov. 13:19a A wish come true [+ Item] ⟶ is sweet to the soul [+ Eval.]

8. Appearance ⟶ Reality: (Prov 13:7; 14:13)

Prov. 13:7a There is one who pretends to be rich, [+ Appearance] ⟶

yet has nothing [- Reality].

These structures reveal an "Approach"/ "Avoidance" motivational structure that

has been empirically researched in studies on the psychology of motivation

(Atkinson & Birch, McClelland, Deci & Ryan). Indeed, the frequently used

antithetical parallelism allows for the doubling of motivational potential by giving

both approach and avoidance motivational aspects in a single bi-colon.

These deep structures also expose the underlying approach/avoidance

motivational categories that the sages used: personal concern (life/death: 10:2b;

11a); achievement/success (10:2a; 24b) and social evaluation (11:26; 14:20) as well as concern for others (10:1, 17; 26) and concern for God (11:1, 20; 15:3). The biblical proverbs are highly motivational, which reflects their didactic intent. The most frequent underlying structure is "character to consequence" and not "act to consequence" as promulgated in early wisdom studies that focused on the doctrine of retribution and the cosmic ordering of the universe paralleling *hokmah* (Heb. "wisdom") with the Egyptian *ma'at* (order)(vid. Von Rad; Humphreys).

10. Proverbial forms

The proverbial form is easily identified not just from the poetic techniques of the sound, syntax, semantics, tropes, themes and vocabulary involved but also because often the proverbial statements conform to an architectonic structure. So Norrick notes the formulae: "Like X like Y" (e.g. "Like father like son"); "No X without Y" (e.g. "No rose without a thorn") and "Better X than Y" (e.g. "Better late than never") (Norrick, 55). Indeed Kuusi attempts to isolate a whole series of structures to fit a universal international classification of proverbs (Kuusi; cf. Finegan, 21, 46).

The proverbial forms recorded in the historical sections of the Bible are one-line traditional sayings or folk proverbs (e.g. Gen. 10:9: "Therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.'" cf. also Judg. 8:2, 21; 1 Sam 10:12; 24:13; Ezek. 9:9; 18:2, 25, 29). In the past many thought the two-line poetically parallel wisdom sayings found in the book of Proverbs were a later development from one-line proverbs. With the discovery of proverbial collections

in the ancient Near East, such a simplistic unilinear literary evolution from simple one-line sayings to complex poetic bi-cola, has been rejected.

Within the book of Proverbs there are clearly two types of literary forms: the instructions and the sentence sayings. The instructions are longer didactic discourses where there is a direct address usually of a father/mother to a son (Prov. 1-9; 22:17-24:22; 31:1-9). The second person imperfect verb is characteristic of the instructions and is used 48 times in chapters 1-9 but not once in the sentence sayings of chapters 10-18, which use third person verbs. Then in chapters 22-24 the second person instructional format reappears 31 times. The proverbial sentences of Proverbs 10-22:16; 24:23-34; 25-29 are usually short bi-cola in the third person.

10.1. Instructions
"Listen my son . . ." (Prov. 1-9; 22-24)

Fox divides the instructions of Proverbs 1-9 into ten father-son lectures (Prov. 1:8-19; 2:1-22; 3:1-12; 3:21-35; 4:1-9; 4:10-19; 4:20-27; 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27) and five interludes (Prov. 1:20-33; 3:13-20; 6:1-19; 8:1-36; 9:1-18) that feature Madame Wisdom speaking. The lectures/instructions usually have the format of: a direct address or "call to hear" ("Listen my son," Prov. 1:8; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1) followed by an exhortation ("listen . . . do not forsake your mother's teaching," Prov. 1:8; 2:1b-5; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1) and an explicit motivation ("for they will be a garland" Prov. 1:9; 2:6; 3:2; 5:3). This "introduction" is followed by a "lesson" proper ("if violent hoodlums allure you . . ." Prov. 1:10-16) and a conclusion that

may include a proverb (Prov. 1:17: "How useless to spread the net in full view of the birds") and a concluding apothegm ("and so these prowl for their own blood," Prov. 1:18-19) to reinforce the teaching (Fox, AB, 45). The topics under discussion are frequently warnings about joining in gang related violence or the wiles of the seductive Madame Folly, which are contrasted to the instructional invitations of Madame Wisdom. Pemberton, after a fine rhetorical analysis, divides the ten lectures into three sub-sets: (1) Call to Apprenticeship (1:8-19; 2:1-22; 4:1-9; 4:10-19); (2) Call to remember and obey (3:1-12; 21-35; 4:20-27); and (3) Warnings against illicit sexual relations (5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27) (Pemberton, 286-90). Pemberton portrays the ten lectures as an ancient handbook for rhetorical education in Israel. The "interludes" are addresses given by Madame Wisdom extolling her instruction (Prov. 1:20-33), virtues (Prov. 9:1-18; 31:10-31), benefits (Prov. 3:13-20) and skills (Prov. 8:1-36). Fox sees the interludes as later insertions. He distinguishes them from the lectures by the following characteristics: (1) wisdom in the lectures resides in people whereas in the interludes it transcends the human mind; (2) the literary schema of the lectures (proem, proposition, proof, epilogue; a la Pemberton) differs from the interludes; and (3) thematic consistency with wisdom personified is found in the interludes as opposed to the lectures (Fox, AB 618).

10.2. *Admonition*
"Guard your heart for it is . . ." (Prov. 4:23)

The admonitions are found in both Mesopotamian and Egyptian wisdom literature. The highest concentration are in the instruction sections of Proverbs 1-9 and 22:17-24:22 (cf. 51 imperatives in Prov. 1-9; only 4 in chapters 10-18). The admonition architectonic formula is: $\pm$ (call to listen) $\pm$ (condition: "if") + (imperative) + (motivation) $\pm$ (summary instruction). Proverbs 3:5 provides a well-known example: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart" (imperative) + "he will make your paths straight" (motive). This example highlights two core components of the admonitions: the imperative and the motive (cf. also: Prov. 3:3-4; 9-10; 4:21-22, 23; 23:10-11; 31:8-9). Some admonitions contain more than one imperative (Prov. 8:5-9; 9:5-6). Prohibitions are the same form but in the negative (e.g., Prov. 3:11-12: "Do not despise the LORD's discipline" (negative jussive) . . . + "because the LORD disciplines those he loves" (motive) (cf. also Prov. 5:8-14; 4:14-16; 6:25-26). The prohibition format is also found in legal texts (cf. Ex. 23:1; Deut. 9:4). Nel notes four types of motivation: reasonableness (Prov. 23:9); disssuasive (Prov. 23:13-14), explanatory (Prov. 23:4-5) and promissory (Prov. 4:10) (Nel, 1982, 86-8).

10.3. *Numerical Saying*
"Three things are too amazing . . . four that I . . ." (Prov. 30:18)

The numerical saying, as other proverbial statements, is based on careful observation of some feature(s) which is then collected and classified using a

numerical pattern: "There are X . . . and X+1 . . ." (Prov. 30:15b-16, 18-19, 21-23; 24-28, 29-31; 6:16-19; 26:24-25; cf. Eccl. 7:16-17; Amos 1-2; Sir. 23:16-17; Job 5:19-22) (Roth). Proverbs 30 has the largest collection of numerical sayings. Ogden isolates four domains from which these sayings are drawn: nature (Prov. 30:15f, 18f); society (Prov. 30:21-23); ethics (Prov 6:16-19; 30:7-9) and theology (Job 5:19-22; 33:14-15). Such lists provide a glimpse into how the ancients grouped things together and give insight into how their analogical thought structures collected, classified and networked situations together.

Two earlier sources have been proposed as giving rise to the numerical sayings: the onomastica, which give lists of things from Mesopotamia, and the riddle, where a partial list is given and the final element is to be guessed. Many of the numerical sayings exhibit a humorously indirect way of commenting on sexual and societal status issues; indeed even Confucius used numeric sayings to offer wisdom on sexual matters (Ogden, 1981, 160). Whatever the historical development, O'Connor is correct in labeling it as a trope of coordination (O'Connor, 378) with the didactic intent possibly aiding students in remembering lists of common elements.

10.4. Better-than Sayings
Better poor . . . than rich . . . (Prov. 19:1)

The better-than sayings have not been found in Mesopotamian sources yet but the Egyptian instructions have yielded many. Even in modern times we use

"Better late than never" and "better a live dog than a dead lion." This form

connects Israelite wisdom with Egypt where it is interesting how frequently it also

references economic evaluations: poverty + value > wealth – value. So

Amenemope says "Better is bread with a happy heart, than wealth with vexation"

(Litcheim, II: 152). The simple form "Better X than Y" is most often extended

into a quadripartite structure: "Better A + x than B + y" as seen in Proverbs 16:8

"Better a little with righteousness, than great wealth without justice" (e.g. Prov.

12:9; 15:16-17; 16:19; 17:1; 19:1; 21:9, 19; 27:5; Eccl. 4:3, 6, 9, 13; 9:4, 16, 18;

Sir. 40:19-26; cf. Bryce; Ogden, 1977). A variation of this form is the "not good"

proverb (Prov. 17:26; 18:5; 28:21; cf. Eccl. 2:24; 3:12, 22).

While most proverbs have an antithetic and a polar oppositional nature, the

better-than sayings show that the sages were well aware that life was more

complicated than a simplistic identification of oppositions. Sometimes there are

clashes between virtue and success that must be accounted for when making

choices and rendering evaluations.

10.5. Comparative Sayings
For as churning milk produces butter . . . (Prov. 30:33)

The comparative proverb manifests the essential nature of the proverb that

makes a comparison from one realm onto another. This form is as ancient as the

Sumerian sayings: "Like an ox, you don't know how to turn back" and "Like a

dog you have no place to sleep" (Alster, 1:123, 141). Similarly, the biblical sage

writes, "Like a city with broken walls is a person who lacks self-control" (Prov

25:28; cf. Prov. 10:26; 25:25; 26:11, 21, 23; 30:33). There is a high concentration

of the simile comparative pairs/clusters in Proverbs 25-26 (25:12-14; 18-20, 25-

26, 25:28-26:2; 26:6-11, 17-18, 21-23). The 25:28-26:2 cluster indicates that the

chapter break for chapter 26 was misplaced.

Often it is helpful in analyzing comparative proverbs to isolate the image,

topic and point of contact between the two realms. In the Proverbs 25:28 example,

the topic is a "person who lacks self-control," the image is a "city with broken

walls," and the point of contact between the two is defenselessness and readiness

for ruin of both.

10.6. Abomination Saying
The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD (Prov. 15:9)

Some have proposed that proverbs that mention the LORD (YHWH) were

later additions inserted into an early more secular proverb collection (McKane).

Ironically, some of the earliest Sumerian collections also have this form which

references their deities: "Debts not cleared . . . are an abomination to Utu" (Alster,

1:196). The formula "X is an abomination to the LORD" is found frequently in

the sentence sayings (Prov. 11:20; 12:22; 15:8-9; 17:15; 20:10, 23; 21:27; 28:9).

So the biblical sage writes: "A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but

an accurate weight is his delight" (Prov. 11:1). In antithetical parallelisms the

"abomination" is often balanced by "his delight".

These types of sayings about cultic issues (sacrifice, prayer) are rather rare in the sentence sayings. The Pentateuch also uses abomination sayings (Deut. 7:25; 12:31; 17:1; 22:5). It should noted, however, that there is a lack of any mention in Proverbs of cultic priests or temple which are mentioned in the sayings of other cultures in the ancient Near East. There seems to be a distance between the biblical cultic and wisdom texts (cf. Perdue for a brilliant discussion and solution to this tension).

10.7. Beatitude
Blessed is one who is kind to the poor (Prov. 22:9)

The beatitude or macarism is best known in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5:3-11), but this form is also found opening wisdom Psalms (Ps. 1:1; 32:1-2; 112:1-2). The use of "blessings" in the covenant (Deut. 27-28; Lev. 26) should not be confused with its use in wisdom texts as they function quite differently in the two genres. The beatitude form appears in Egyptian instructions as well as biblical Proverbs (Prov. 3:13; 8:32, 34; 14:21; 16:20; 20:7; 28:14; 29:18; cf. Sir. 14:1f). Similarly, Proverbs 16:20b states "and whoever trusts in the LORD is blessed."

10.8. Yahweh Sayings
The LORD [YHWH] is far from the wicked (Prov. 15:29)

Many have attempted to rearrange the sentence materials into thematic categories rather than go with the textual flow of the collection which seems to

bounce helter-skelter from one topic to another and leave the post-modern reader

underwhelmed with disconnected sentences. McKane attempts to rearrange the

sentences according to three classes: A: individual education for a successful life;

B: community concerned sentences; and C: God-language sayings, which he

alleges were added later (McKane). While the suggestion that the Yahweh

proverbs were inserted later as reinterpretations of the more ancient and secular

sentences has been rejected, the highlighting of the Yahweh-sayings has focused

attention on the role of these sayings in the larger collections.

Whybray notes that of the 375 sayings (interestingly, Solomon's name

equals 375), 55 (15%) are Yahweh-sayings.   He summarizes the theological

content of these sayings

> "Yahweh is the creator of all things and has a purpose for everything (16,
> 4). He has perfect knowledge of man, who is entirely subject to him and
> dependent on him (16, 1a, 2. 3. 9 and passim). He approves those who
> accept his rule (16, 3. 6. 7); he hates the arrogant, who do not accept it, and
> punishes them (16, 4b. 5), while those who do accept it will be given
> success and security (16, 3-7). . . . The essential duty of man is well
> summarized in 16, 3: "Commit (or perhaps "reveal") your actions to
> Yahweh, and all your plans will be fulfilled" (vid. Bostrom, for an
> insightful development of the theology of Proverbs) (Whybray, 1979, 157).

Chapters 15 and 16 contain a marked increase in the number of Yahweh-

sayings and are positioned at the center of the book of Proverbs. An inclusio

begins and ends the book with the fear of the LORD (Prov. 1:7; 31:30; cf. Eccl.

12:13). The section 15:33-16:9 is a concentrated collection of Yahweh-sayings

which is followed by a series of king sayings (16:10-15).

Whybray exposes the fact that almost all of the Yahweh-sayings are intimately connected to surrounding proverbs. For example, he notes 15:16 (little with the fear of the LORD is better...) as strategically placed to balance 15:17, which is about eating of fattened calf with hatred. When taken in connection with 15:16 the meal is elevated into the cultic sacrificial context (Whybray, 1979).

It can also be observed how the Yahweh-sayings are used at the collectional level. Heim notes the following chiastic pattern with a Yahweh-saying inclusio bonding Proverbs 21:1-31 together (Heim, 288).

     [A] Yahweh-sayings (vv. 1-3)
          [B] diligence (v. 5)
               [C] nagging wife (v. 9)
               [C'] nagging wife (v. 19)
          [B'] laziness (v. 25)
     [A'] Yahweh-sayings (vv. 30-31)

Thus the Yahweh-sayings interact with their surroundings, not as "later additions," but as manifesting the collectional compilers' theological tendenz.

10.9. Contrary Proverbs
Answer not a fool . . . Answer a fool (Prov. 26:4-5)

Contrary or paradoxical proverbs have been observed from Sumerian times, (e.g. "From 3600 oxen there is no dung"). Contrary proverbs occur in modern English sayings also in "Look before you leap" versus "He who hesitates is lost" and "Birds of a feather flock together," versus "Opposites attract" (Honek, 189; Cram, 89-90, cf. Yank). This antonymity between proverbial sayings looks like a contradiction if one understands proverbs in a dogmatic or propositional manner.

Yet, in almost every proverb collection, opposites are recorded and often juxtaposed with the "contradiction" purposefully used to break the bands of an isolated dogmatic approach and to necessitate the importance of coming to grips with the poly-situational virtuality of proverbs disconnected from their situational usage by being gathered into collections.

In the renaissance, scholars developed collections entitled "The Crossing Proverbs" which featured one proverb set off against another (Goodwin/Winzel, 143). Sages in many proverb making cultures have enjoyed these mind challenging "contradictions." Does "absence make the heart go fonder"? Or is it "out of sight, out of mind"? Perhaps the twisted proverb has it right in "absence makes the heart to wander." Some cultures even have proverbial duals where sayings are bantered back and forth in an almost contest-like format. So one feisty daughter responded to her father's instruction that the "early bird gets the worm" with "Yes, dad, but the second mouse gets the cheese."

Thus the biblical proverb pair found in Proverb 26:4-5 with one advising, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly," and the next one just as clearly advising, "Answer a fool according to his folly," is common fare in world proverb collections. The collectional editors purposefully placed these contrary proverbs back to back.

There are two ways of handling these contrary proverbs. First one may utilize the parallel line which explains that the fool is not to be answered, lest one become like him while the other advises that he should be answered lest, the fool

become wise in his own eyes. Arrogance is regarded as a state worse than being a fool. The second line provides the key. One has to discern whether one will be drawn in as a fool or whether it is worth it to try and rescue the fool from a fate worse than his folly: pride. The second "solution" is to realize that each proverb in the collection is without a situational context and hence may be applied to diverse situations. Thus there are situations in which the saying that a fool should not be answered is to be used and other situations suitable for the other proverb that the fool should be answered. Both are true but both will have the power of their potential and their ideals unleashed in different contexts. The wise will have to realize which is appropriate in which discourse situation. The contrary pairs demonstrate that proverbs are not meant to be taken as universal dogmas but rather as situationally sensitive sayings.

11. Editorial Compositional Units

Proverbs explicitly mentions editorial activity of Hezekiah's sages editing an earlier Solomonic collection (Prov. 25:1). The LXX reordering of collections reinforces the idea that the order of the collections was still fluid even into the Hellenistic period of the Septuagint (after 200 BC) (vid. Cook). How did the editors compile the proverbs into collections? What techniques and ethos does their collectional and editorial work reveal? Is it possible to interpret above the sentence level at the level of the pair, string/cluster. Can the theological tendenz the whole collection provide a context for understanding a particular proverbial saying?

11.1 Pairs

Many have noted the apparent randomness of the sentence sayings in Proverbs 10-29. However, literary and linguistic techniques have revealed over sixty proverbial pairs in the sentence sayings (Hildebrandt, 207-24). Several identifiable techniques were used to bind individual proverbs into pairs.

First, repeated catchwords may semantically link two proverbs into a pair as in the example of "answer a fool according to his folly" and "do not answer a fool according to his folly." As mentioned above, these two were clearly intentionally juxtaposed and linked through shared catchwords and phrases (Prov. 26:4-5; cf. also 15:8-9). Proverbs 13:21-22 provides an interesting example where the first proverb begins with *hatt'im* (sinners) and the second ends with *hote'* (sin) forming an inclusio that bonds the two sayings together. This is further enhanced by the first proverb's ending with the word *tob* (good) and the second proverb's beginning with that same word. Thus a chiasm spans the pair and links them in an ABBA pattern: sinners/good; good/sin. Clearly the juxtaposing of these two was not random.

Second, the linking between the pairs is often thematic (21:25-26; 13:2-3). Thus Proverbs 12:18 and 19 both address issues of speech without the presence of a single catchword. Sometimes this thematic pairing may be antithetic as in Proverbs 16:12-13 where one saying references that which the king detests while the next identifies that in which the king delights in (cf. also 18:10-11). Whybray makes an important distinction between theme and topic in examining the double

pair in Proverbs 25:4-7 where there is no common theme (wicked advisers to the king// modesty in the royal court) but the common topic of the king/royal court is shared (Whybray, 1994, 71).

Third, proverbs may be linked into pairs by syntactic features. Proverbs 15:1 and 2 both address issues of speech without a single common catchword but the syntax of each of the four cola is isomorphic, with each following the Subject:NP [N + Qual] + Verb + Object:N type syntactic structure.

Sometimes two proverbs with a metaphor or simile are juxtaposed (Prov. 10:25-26; 14:26-27; 27:15-16). In these cases the shared figure of speech provides the sense of cohesion.

As in Proverbs 26:4-5, pairing is a product of direct editorial intent. When proverbs are paired, each sentence should first be interpreted as an isolated unit, then the relationship to its pair explored as a second layer of interpretation and interaction (cf. Whybray, 1994. 78; for another example vid. Prov. 20:26-27).

11.2. Acrostic

An acrostic begins each line with consecutive letters of the alphabet with some variations allowed (cf. Ps. 119; vid. Freedman, Hanson). The acrostic form has proven impossible to translate yet to construct such a piece demands careful planning, and textual crafting and manifests clear authorial intent. Detailed studies have been carried out by D. N. Freedman in the Psalms, which also contain the acrostic format (Ps. 111-12; 25, 34, 9/10, 145; esp. Ps. 119). The poem of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 is a concluding acrostic to the book of

Proverbs. It provides an inclusio as the book begins with Madame Wisdom's invitation and then concludes with a description of the many ways that this virtuous woman will serve those who embrace her (cf. Wolters, McCreesh, 1985). Many have made suggestions as to the function of the acrostic form, from mnemonic/pedagogical and magical, to giving a sense of completeness or exhaustiveness--the A to Z on the virtuous woman. This writer suggests that the acrostic form presents an underlying sense of "order" that wisdom brings, not only in the way she tirelessly orders the affairs of her household, but the use of the acrostic form itself reinforces the presence of an underlying "order." This form is used in lament contexts (cf. Lamentations) where again the notion of deep providential "order" prevails in the face of overwhelming chaos.

11.3. Strings/Clusters

Many have extended the notion of collectional groupings into strings or clusters in a similar manner to the way Psalms study, after Wilson's dissertation, began showing intertextual links and inter-psalmic interpretative strategies (Wilson, cf. Howard, Goulder, Crow, Nasuti). Perhaps the most comprehensive studies on collectional aspects of Proverbs in English have been by Skehan, Heim, Van Leeuwen and Whybray along with extensive work done by the Germans from the days of Bostrom, and Skladny, to Ploger, Scherer, Scoralick and Krispen. The recent rash of commentaries (Ploger, Meinhold, Murphy, Whybray, Garrett, Perdue, Fox, Koptak and especially Waltke) also reflects this rich collectional approach to proverb interpretation.

Heim's work discusses and interprets the connections of clusters in Proverbs 10:1-22:16. For example, he sees Proverbs 10:6-11 as a cluster being delimited by the inclusio repetition of "but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked" in 10:6b and 11b. Garrett finds a chiastic structure (AB/BA) in the Proverbs 11:1-4 cluster with 11:1 showing God's disdain for fraud and 11:4 crushing the hope that wrongfully-gained wealth will do any good on the day of judgment. By contrast the center two sayings point out the value of humility and integrity by contrast (Garrett, 124). Waltke notes the alternating AB/AB pattern in Proverbs 20:8-11 introduced with a janus (Prov. 20:8) that points back in an inclusio to 20:2 and forward to the next cluster which it begins.

A   The king's justice (v. 8)
       B   Universal human depravity (v. 9)
A'   The LORD's justice (v. 10)
       B   Human depravity from youth (v. 11).

These chiastic, alternating and inclusio structures are helpful in isolating such clusters. Meinhold's ABC/A'B'C' pattern in Proverbs 24:23b-34 (Meinhold; 2:410 in Waltke, 1:24) and Garrett's macro-structure in Proverbs 28:3-11 also illustrate the point (Garrett; 222). These brief examples show the importance of reading the sentence sayings in light of the pairing and the clustering collectional strategies by which the editors built their collections.

11.4. Larger Units and Collections

The book of Proverbs is explicitly composed of seven collections as designated by the superscriptions:

  1:1-9:17: lengthy instructions about Madame Wisdom and Madame Folly;
  10:1-22:16: sentence sayings of Solomon;
  22:17-24:22: sayings of the wise;
  24:23-24:34: more sayings of the wise;
  25:1-29:27: more proverbs of Solomon collected by the men of Hezekiah;
  30:1-33: sayings of Agur; and
  31:1-31: sayings of King Lemuel which his mother taught him.

While many critics view the "Solomonic enlightenment" historically linking these collections to Solomon as a literary fiction, this is not supported by the superscriptions themselves (1:1; 10:1; 25:1), the literary form (cf. Kitchen) or the historical descriptions of the period (1 Kgs. 3:5-6; 4:29-34; 2 Chr. 1-9) where even international connections are uniquely highlighted, particularly with Egypt (1 Kgs. 3:1; 9:16). Some consider Proverbs 1-9 and 31 to be additions to the older collections (Prov. 10-21; 25-29) as the book took shape in the post-exilic period. Wolters even speculates on a Greek Hellenistic setting for the final compilation and redaction based on a doubtful pun linking Proverbs 31:27 with the Greek word for wisdom (*sophia*) (Wolters, 1985).

  Van Leeuwen isolates a sub-collection in Proverbs 25-27. Similarly, Malchow demonstrates that Proverbs 28-29 is a sub-collection which he labels a "manual for future monarchs" (Malchow). Heim's work on the bonding of Proverbs 21 has been noted above under the Yahweh-sayings. It provides an encapsulation of the whole of chapter 21 as a sub-collection (Heim, 288). Perhaps the best studies to date on the collectional and rhetorical flow of Proverbs 1-9 are Pemberton's dissertation and Fox's comprehensive Anchor Bible Commentary on Proverbs.

12. Canonical Setting

The connection of the ethos of the proverbial wisdom as a genre should not be trivially assimilated into the record of events of Israel's salvation history (*heilsgeschichte*) because the exodus, the giving of the law, the wilderness wandering, and the capturing and settling of the land are never mentioned in Proverbs. Similarly the temple, priests, cultic feasts, covenant, patriarchs, Moses and subsequent judges or prophets are never referenced in Proverbs. The wisdom perspective should not be twisted to fit into a monolithic Old Testament "center" approach that has evaded biblical theologians for decades. Wisdom's perspective should be drawn from the proverbial text itself and its diversity savored. Proverbs provides an interesting look into Israelite society, the role of the feminine, and the basic connection of wisdom to values and ideals. These topics are also currently being explored by gerontologists studying wisdom in the aged (Sternbeg, Baltes).

13. Future directions and reflections

Modern evangelicals have used proverbs in defense of pedagogical techniques (memorizing, spare the rod, etc.), to offer advise on how to make money (diligence/wealth motifs, cf. Franklin's "Way of Wealth") and to reinforce a black/white cognitive-ethical framework that actually subterfuges the use of proverbs for attaining higher order thinking and more advanced aspects of spiritual formational. While it is clear that proverbial familiarity can be beneficially inculcated at a young age, yet the wisdom potential of these sayings needs to be explored within the framework of adult cognitive/ethical and wisdom formation.

In another direction, Honek points out that the emotional aspects of proverbs have yet to be explored by cognitive scientists (Honek, 254). The topic of emotions needs to be researched in the proverbial textual corpus as Longman/Allendar did for Psalms (*The Cry of the Soul*).

Obelkevich, in his essay on "Proverbs as Social History," points out the difficulty of face when interfacing proverbs with the post-modern culture.

> Perhaps there is now something unacceptable in the very notion of collective wisdom: more to the modern individualist taste. . . .The purpose of life is to fulfill an inner potential, that happiness can be achieved and ought to be pursued, that in the process one becomes a unique individual—all of this clashes with one or another assumption implicit in proverbs. Proverbs put the collective before the individual, the recurrent and stereotyped before the unique, external rules before self-determination, common sense before the individual vision, survival before happiness . . . . To use proverbs would deny the individuality of both speaker and listener. . . linguistically lazy or lacking in originality, their poverty of language reflecting poverty of experience and poverty of imagination. Proverbs are seen as part of a restricted code that encapsulates experience and imprisons it: they are conversation-stoppers (Obelkevich, 240).

Obelkevich wisely concludes that for the proverb, appearances can be deceiving (Obelkevich, 242). In short, in post-modern times the baby should not be cavalierly thrown out with the bath water.

Several final reflections are proffered on the functionality of the proverbial genre in post-modern culture. First, Mieder is right on how frequently the power of the proverbial form is utilized in modern advertisting slogans and recent songs which often use proverbs and proverbial techniques (Mieder, 1993). It seems that the proverbial form was recorded not long after humankind learned to write in Sumerian and Egyptian cultures, flourished in the Hellenistic and Roman empires,

flowered in sixteenth/seventeenth century England, and is still employed by modern marketing strategists today. This is not just a cultural phenomenon but a universal psycholinguistic structure by which situations are encapsulated and preserved for future generations. Proverbial sayings, in fact, may be well suited to the fragmentation, short attention spans and disconnected views of reality present in post-modern culture. Hence their potential needs to be reevaluated in light of post-modern thought.

Second, the rejection of the collective cultural and historical "They say" must not be lost amidst the unique individual imagination and experience of "I say." Indeed, without the collective "they say" of the sages, the "I say" is the unheard cry of a tree falling in a woods or the sound of one hand clapping. Thus the creative genius and wit of the one must be drawn in and encouraged to move from the lone-wolf "I say" to statements that can be embraced and recited by the collective "we say" of the many or even beyond that to the "they say" of an inter-generational tradition. Students can be taught to write ideal-confirming and dis-confirming proverbs to poetically encapsulate their own stories and the stories that they have read. One exercise for use in a pedagogical context is to take the proverbial sentences of Proverbs ("they say") and have students generate stories that coordinate/contrast ("I say") with the proverbial sentences. The collective voices of tradition, thereby and the creative contemporary voice must be allowed to dance together extending and giving significance to the one and invigorating the other. Perhaps this is one of the greatest gifts of the proverb to denizens of post-

modern culture: the ability to listen to another rather than being bent merely on expressing their own story in a vacuum.

Third, the fixed omnitemporal universals appearing in proverbial sayings do not sit well with post-modern relativism. This often causes proverbial statements to be trivialized and used merely for parody and satire—as if from a former age of naiveté and innocence, and not relevant to the post-modern complexity and cynicism. Yet, again, there is something in the proverbial ideal-confirming and disconfirming stance that is desperately desired by those surfing on the ever shifting waves of the latest technological or new media reality fads. It is with great interest that those studying intelligence are seeing the importance of foundational values and ethics in the formulation of wisdom in the later stages of life (Sternberg). The focus on the uniqueness of each decision and the embracing of a politically corrected relativism have cut off the ethical rootedness of seeing underlying classes and collective commonalities among human beings who share the ebb and flow of life historically, culturally and existentially. Thus proverbs have the potential of reintroducing and inculcating values that may be necessary for the development of higher order thinking and even beyond that to the wisdom of common sense.

Finally, the loss of the sacredness and the absence of the "Other" or "Thou" in the "I-Thou" dialogue has left the post-moderner lost and searching in the mystical extremes of scientism, new age fantasy, practical agnosticism/atheism or returning to polytheistic paganism. The proverbial statements demonstrate that

appearances may be deceiving.   People may plan their way--making what appear to be self-determining choices--but the ultimate guarantee of the final outcomes are somehow chimerically beyond reach. Proverbs raise one's vision to the fear of the LORD and at the same time call one to responsible action in planning one's way but always with the humble realization that there is a providential hand guiding, caring for and ultimately determining the final outcomes (Prov. 16:9).

Thus proverbs calls for a total engagement in the *carpe diem* choices of the moment but set within a context of the "they" and the "Thou" establishing the context for significance and meaning in the choices made by each individual "I". The power and potential of the collected proverb can be unleashed in the particular story of the post-modern individual. Proverbs deny helplessness by encouraging human development by making responsible choices that matter and have real consequences and by giving practical substance to what it means to trust in God by moving beyond the folly of the ego-centricism of "I" to the communal meal with Madame Wisdom as she offers her instruction--"The wit of the One and the wisdom of many" i.e. the proverb.

Bibliography

Abrahams, Roger D. and Barabara A. Babcock. "The Literary Use of Proverbs,"
    Pages 415-438 in *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb.* Edited by
    Wolfgang Mieder. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1994.

Allendar, Dan B. and Tremper Longman III. *The Cry of the Soul: How our
    Emotions Reveal our Deepest Questions about God*. Colorado Springs,
    CO: NavPress, 1994.

Alster, Bendt. *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer: The World's Earliest Proverb
    Collections.* 2 vols. Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 1997.

Arora, Shirley L. "The Perception of Proverbiality." Pages 3-30. In
    Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb. Ed. by Wolfgang Mieder
    New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1994.

Atkinson, J. and D. Birch. *An Introduction to Motivation.* New York:
    D. Van Nostrand, 1978.

Baltes, Paul. *Wisdom: The Orchestration of Mind and Virtue*. Max Planck
    Insitute for Human Development, Berlin.

Beardslee, William A. "Use of the Proverb in the Synoptic Gospels." Pages
    161-73. *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb*. Eds. Wolfgang
    Mieder and Alan Dundes. *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the
    Proverb.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.

Berlin, Adele. *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism.* Bloomington, IN:
    Indiana University Press, 1985.

Bostrom, Gustan. *Paronomasi I Den Aldre Hebreiska Maschallitteraturen: Med
    Sarskild Hansyn till Proverbia*. Lund: Gleerup, 1928.

Bostrom, Lennart. *The God of the Sages: The Portrayal of God in the Book
    of Proverbs.* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1990.

Bryce, Glendon E. "Better-Proverbs: An Historical and Structural Study." *Society
    of Biblical Literature Abstracs and Seminar Papers*, 2 1972.

Camp, Claudia V. *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*.
    Bible and Literature Series. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985.

Collins, Terence. *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry: A Grammatical Approach to
    the Stylistic Study of Hebrew Prophets.* Studia Pohl: Series Maior 7.
    Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978.

Cook, Johann. *The Septuagint of Proverbs: Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs?*
    New York: Brill, 1997.

Cooper, A. M. "Biblical Poetics: A Linguistic Approach." PhD diss.
    Yale University, 1976.

Cram, David. "The Linguistic Status of the Proverb," Pages 73-98 in *Wise Words:
    Essays on the Proverb.* Ed. by Wolfgang Mieder. New York: Garland
    Publishing, Inc. 1994.

Crenshaw, James L. "Wisdom and Authority: Sapiential Rhetoric and Its

Warrants," *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 32 (1981).

_____. *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence.*
New York: Doubleday, 1998.

_____. "Wisdom." Pages 225-64 in *Old Testament Form Criticism*. Ed. by
John H. Hayes. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974.

Crow, Loren D. *The Song of Ascents: Psalms 120-134) Their Place in Israelite
History and Religion*. SBL Dissertation Series 148. Atlanta, GA: The
Society of Biblical Literature, 1996.

Davies, Philip R. *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew
Scriptures.* Louisville, Kentucky: Wesminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Day, John, and Robert P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson. *Wisdom in
ancient Israel: Essays in honour of J. A. Emerton.* New York:
Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Deci, E. and R. Ryan. *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human
Behavior.* New York: Plenum, 1985.

Dundes, Alan. "On the Structure of the Proverb," Pages 43-64 in *The Wisdom
of Many: Essays on the Proverb*. Edited by Wolfgang Mieder and Alan
Dundes. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.

Finegan, Ruth. "Proverbs in Africa," Pages 10-42 in *The Wisdom
of Many: Essays on the Proverb*. Edited by Wolfgang Mieder.
Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Pres, 1981.

Flavell, Roger and Linda. *Dictionary of Proverbs and their Origins*.
New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1993.

Fontaine, Carole R. *Traditional Sayings in the Old Testament*. Bible and
Literature Series. Sheffield, England: The Almond Press, 1982.

Fox, Michael. *Proverbs 1-9*. The Anchor Bible. New York: Double Day, 2000.

Freedman, David N. *Psalm 119: The Exaltation of Torah*. Biblical and
Judaic Studies, vol. 6. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999.

Gammie, John G. and Leo G. Perdue. *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near
East*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

Gammie, John G. et al. *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays
in Honor of Samuel Terrien.* Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978.

Garrett, Duane A. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. The New American
Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993.

Gemser, B. "The Importance of the Motive Clause in the Old Testament Law,"
Pages 52-62 in VT Supplement 1. Leiden: Brill, 1953.

Gerhardsson, Birger. *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written
Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids:
Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998.

Golka, Friedemann, W. *The Leopard's Spots: Biblical and African Wisdom in
Proverbs.* Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993.

Goodwin, Paul D. and Joseph W. Wenzel. "Proverbs and Practical Reasoning:
A Study in Socio-Logic." Pages 140-60. In *The Wisdom of Many:*

Essays on the Proverb. Eds. Mieder, Wolfgang and Alan Dundes, Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.

Goody, Jack. *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Goulder, Michael D. *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah.* JSOT Supp. 20. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982.

Hanson, K. C. "Alphabetic Acrostics: A Form Critical Study." PhD. diss. Claremont Graduate School, 1984.

Heim, Knut Martin. *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver: An Interpretation of Proverbial Clusters in Proverbs 10:1-22:16.* Beihefte zur Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Band 273. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001.

Hermisson, Hans-Jurgen. *Studien zur israelitischen Spruchweisheit.* Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament, vol. 28. Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968.

Hildebrandt, Ted. "Proverbial Pairs: Compositional Units in Proverbs 10-29," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107.2 (1988) 207-24.

Honeck, Richard P. *A Proverb in Mind: The Cognitive Science of Proverbial Wit and Wisdom.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1997.

Howard, David M. *The Structure of Psalms 93-100.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

Humphreys, W. Lee. "The Motif of the Wise Courtier in the Book of Proverbs," Pages 177-90 in Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien. Eds. John G. Gammie et al. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978.

Jamieson-Drake, D. W. *Scribes and School in Monachic Judah.* JSOT Sup. 66. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991.

Kidner, Derek. *The Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary.* London: Tyndale Press, 1964.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Toward a Theory of Proverb Meaning." Pages 111-22. *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb.* Eds. Wolfgang Mieder and Alan Dundes. *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.

Kitchen, K. A. "Proverbs and Wisdom Books of the Ancient Near East: The Factual History of a Literary Form," *Tyndale Bulletin* 28 (1977) 69-114.

Koptak, Paul E. *Proverbs.* The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Kovacs, Brian. Is There a Class-Ethic in Provebs?" Pages 171-89. in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics: J. Philip Hyatt in Memoriam.* Ed. by James L. Crenshaw. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1974.

Krispen, Jutta. *Spruchkompositionen Im Buch Proverbia.* Frankfurt am Main:

Bern; New York; Paris: Peter Lang, 1989.

Kugel, James L. *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Kuusi, Anna-Leena. "Towards an International Type-System of Proverbs," *Proverbium* 19 (1972) 698-736.

Lambert, W. G. *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1960.

Lang, Bernhard. "Schule und Unterricht im Alten Israel," Pages 186-201. *La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testment*, ed. Maurice Gilbert, BETL 51. Gembloux: Duculot, 1990.

_____. *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs: A Hebrew Goddess Redefined.* New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1986.

Lemaire, Andre. *Les ecoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'ancien Israel*. OBO 39. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981.

Levy, Pierre. *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age*. Translated by Robert Bononno. New York: Plenum Trade, 1998.

Lieber, Michael D. "Analogic Ambiguity: A Paradox of Proverb Usage," Pages 99-126. *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb*. Edited by Wolfgang Mieder. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1994.

Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*. 3 vols. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980.

Lord, Albert B. *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Malchow, Bruce V. "A Manual for Future Monarchs." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47.2 (1985) 238-45.

McClelland, D. *Human Motivation*. Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1985.

McCreesh, Thomas P. *Biblical Sound and Sense: Poetic Sound Patterns in Proverbs 10-29*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.

_____. "Wisdom as a Wife: Proverbs 31:10-31." *Revue Biblique* 92 (1985): 25-46.

McKane, William. *Proverbs: A New Approach*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970.

Mieder, Wolfgang. ed. *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1994.

_____. "The Essence of Literary Proverb Study," *Proverbium* 23 (1974) 888-94.

_____. *The Prentice-Hall Encyclopedia of World Proverbs*. New York: MJF Books, 1986.

_____. *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

_____. *Proverbs are Never out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

_____. ed. *Cognition, Comprehension, and Communication: A Decade of*

North American Proverb Studies (1990-2000). Germany: Schneider
    Verlag Hohengehren GmbH, 2003.

_____. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Pres,
    2004.

Mieder, Wolfgang and Anna T. Litovkina. *Twisted Wisdom: Modern Anti-
    Proverbs*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 1999.

Mieder, Wolfgang and Alan Dundes. eds. *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the
    Proverb*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.

Meinhold, Arndt. *Die Sprüche*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2 vols. 1991.

Milner, G. B. "Quadripartite Structures," *Proverbium* 14 (1969) 379-383.

Nasuti, Harry P. *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph*. SBL Dissertation
    Series 88. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988.

Nel, Philip J. "The Concept of 'Father' in the Wisdom Literature of the Ancient
    Near East." *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 5 (1977) 53-66.

_____. *The Structure and Ethos of the Wisdom Admonitions in Proverbs*.
    Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982.

Nippold, Marilyn A. Linda D. Uhden, and Ilsa E. Schwartz. "Proverb
    Explanation Through the Lifespan: A Developmental Study of
    Adolescents and Adults," Pages 367-84. *Cognition, Comprehension,
    and Communication: A Decade of North American Proverb Studies
    (1990-2000)*. Edited by Wolfgang Mieder. Germany: Schneider
    Verlag Hohengehren GmbH, 2003.

Norrick, Neal R. *How Proverbs Mean: Semantic Studies in English Proverbs*.
    Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs 27. New York: Mouton
    Publishers, 1985.

Obelkevich, James. "Proverbs and Social History," Pages 211-252 in *Wise
    Words: Essays on the Proverb*. Edited by Wolfgang Mieder.
    New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.

Obeng, S. G. "Verbal indirection in Akan informal discourse. *Journal of
    Pragmatics* 21 (1994) 37-65.

O'Connor, M. *Hebrew Verse Structure*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980.

Ogden, Graham S. "Better Proverb (Tob-Spruch), Rhetorical Criticism,
    and Qoheleth." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977) 489-505.

_____. "Numerical Sayings in Israelite Wisdom and in Confucius." *Taiwan
    Journal of Theology* 3 (1981): 145-76.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*.
    New York: Routledge, 1982.

Pemberton, Glenn D. ""The Rhetoric of the Father: A Rhetorical Analysis of the
    Father/Son Lectures in Proverbs 1-9." PhD diss., The Iliff School of
    Theology, 1999.

Perdue, Leo G. *Wisdom and Cult*. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977.

_____. *Proverbs*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching
    and Preaching. Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2000.

Ploger, Otto. *Sprüche Salomos (Proverbia)*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984.

Postel, H. J. "The Form and Function of the Motive Clause in Proverbs 10-29." PhD. diss. University of Iowa, 1976.

Rogers, Tim B. "Psychological Approaches to Proverbs: A Treatise on the Import of Context." Pages 159-182. *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb*. Edited by Wolfgang Mieder. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.

Roth, Wolfgang. *Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament*. Vetus Testamentum Supplements 13. Ed. Bruce W. Anderson. Leiden: Brill, 1965.

Ruffle, John. "The Teaching of Amenemope and Its Connection with the Book of Proverbs," *Tyndale Bulletin* 28 (1977) 29-68.

Scherer, Andreas. *Das weise Wort und seine Wirkung: Eine Untersuchung zur Komposition und Redaktion von Proverbia 10, 1-22, 16*. Wisesenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten un Neuen Testament 83. Neukirchener Verlag, 1999.

Scoralick, Ruth. *Einzelspruch Und Sammlung: Komposition Im Buch Der Sprichwörter Kapitel 10-15*. Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1995.

Skehan, Patrick W. "A Single Editor for the Whole Book of Proverbs," Pages 329-340. In *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*. Ed. James L. Crenshaw. New York: KTAV, 1976.

Skladny, U. *Die altesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel*. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962.

Snell, Daniel C. *Twice-Told Proverbs and the Composition of the Book of Proverbs*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993.

Sonsino, R. *Motive Clauses in Hebrew Law: Biblical Forms and Near Eastern Parallels*. Chico: Scholars Press, 1980.

Sternberg, Robert J. *Wisdom: Its Nature, Origins, and Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Sternberg, Robert J. and Jennifer Jordan. eds. *A Handbook of Wisdom: Psychological Perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Tilley, M. P. *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1950.

Toy, Crawford, H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Proverbs*. in The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899.

Van Leeuwen, Raymond C. *Context and Meaning in Proverbs 25-27*. SBL Dissertation Series 96. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988.

_____. "The Book of Proverbs." Pages 17-264. The New Interpreter's Bible eds. Keck, Leander E. et al. vol. V *Introduction to Wisdom Literature, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Sirach*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.

_____. "Wealth and Poverty: System and Contradiction in Proverbs."
    Hebrew Studies 33 (1992): 25-36.

Von Rad, Gerhad. *Wisdom in Israel*. Nashville, TN: Abindgon Press, 1981.

Waltke, Bruce K. "Does Proverbs Promise Too Much?" *Andrews University
    Seminary Studies* 34.3 (1996): 319-36.

_____. *The Book of Proverbs*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Washington, Harold C. *Wealth and Poverty in the Instruction of Amenemope
    and the Hebrew Proverbs*. SBL Dissertation Series 142. Atlanta, Georgia:
    Scholars Press, 1994.

Watson, Wilfred G. E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*.
    Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984.

Weeks, Stuart. *Early Israelite Wisdom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Westermann, Claus. *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and
    Other Peoples*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press,
    1995.

Whiting, Bartlett Jere. *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English
    Writings Mainly before 1500*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of
    Harvard University Press, 1968.

_____. *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings*. Cambridge, MA:
    Harvard University Press, 1989.

_____. *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings*. Cambridge,
    MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977.

Whybray, R. N. *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*.
    New York: E. J. Brill, 1995.

_____. *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament*. Beiheft
    zur Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wiseenshaft, 135. New York:
    Walter de Gruyter, 1974.

_____. "Yahweh-Sayings and Their Context in Proverbs 10:1-22,16."
    Pages 153-65. In <u>La Sagesse De L' Ancien Testament</u>. Ed. by M. Gilbert:
    BETL 51. Gembloux: Duculot, 1979.

_____. *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs*. JSOT Supp. 168.
    Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

_____. *Proverbs*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids:
    Eerdmans, 1994.

Williams, James G. *Those Who Ponder Proverbs: Aphoristic Thinking and
    Biblical Literature*. Bible and Literature Series. Sheffield, England: The
    Almond Press, 1981.

Wilson, F. P. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*. Oxford: Oxford
    University Press, 1970.

Wilson, Gerald Henry. *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. SBL Dissertation
    Series 76. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985.

Winton, Alan P. The Proverbs of Jesus: Issues of History and Rhetoric.
    Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.

Witherington, Ben. *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom.* Minneapolis,
    MN: Fortress Press, 2000.

Wolters, Al. *The Song of the Valiant Woman: Studies in the Interpretation of
    Proverbs 31:10-31*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2001.

_____. "Sopiyya (Prov 31:27) as Hymnic participle and Play on Sophia."
    Journal of Biblical Literature 104.4 (1985) 577-87.

Yank, Kwesi. "Do Proverbs Contradict?" Pages 127-142. In *Wise Words: Essays
    on the Proverb.* Ed. by Wolfgang Mieder. New York: Garland Publishing,
    Inc. 1994.