

### **Non-Proverb Proverbial Bookends: A Possible Lens for Viewing the Book of Proverbs**

Feminine imagery provides a framework at the beginning and the end of the canonical Book of Proverbs. In the rework of her doctoral dissertation entitled *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*, Claudia Camp noted eight features that demonstrate this feminine framework between Proverbs 1-9 and Proverbs 31.<sup>1</sup> Roger N. Whybray agreed with Camp's assessment of the feminine framework and further stated that over half of the 256 verses found in Proverbs 1-9 are concerned with a female figure of some type (i.e. mother, bride, wife, adulteress, prostitute, personified Wisdom or Folly).<sup>2</sup> The sheer preponderance of feminine imagery at the beginning and end of the Book of Proverbs seems to demonstrate an editorial

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<sup>1</sup>The eight features are as follows: (1) the mother's teaching in 1:8 and 31:26 (also the mother's teaching is thematic in 31:1-9 [Lemuel's mother instructing her son]); (2) both Wisdom and the woman of strength are more precious than jewels (3:15, 8:11, and 31:10); (3) the one finding Wisdom and the one finding the woman of strength will have no lack of material gain (3:14, 8:21, and 31:11); (4) nothing compares to Wisdom or to the woman of strength (3:15 and 31:29); (5) one should hold fast to Wisdom (3:18), prize and embrace Wisdom (4:8), love Wisdom (4:6 and 8:17, 21), just as a husband should be completely infatuated with the love of his wife (5:18) and completely trust in her (31:11); (6) as wisdom calls people into security and happiness (8:34 and 9:1-6), so the woman of strength assures the comfort of her household (31:21) and extends her abundance to the poor (31:20); (7) as Wisdom takes her stand in the city gates (1:21 and 8:3), so the works of the woman of strength praise her there (31:31); and (8) the problem of discerning appearance from reality with respect to Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 is repeated in 31:30 (Charm is deceitful, beauty is vain; but a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised). See Claudia Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985), 188-89.

<sup>2</sup>Roger N. Whybray, *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs*, JSOT Supplement Series 168 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 159-62.

shaping or redacting that results in an inclusio for the Book of Proverbs. While the pericope of instruction of Lemuel's mother to her son (Pr. 31:1-9) does contribute to the feminine framework, the closing acrostic poem about the "woman of strength"<sup>3</sup> provides the majority of the connections (seven out of eight of Camp's connections were between Proverbs 1-9 and Pr. 31:10-31).

With assurance, one can say that an inclusio of feminine imagery exists in the Book of Proverbs; however, the consensus view that Proverbs 1-9 and Pr. 31:10-31 forms an inclusio deserves to be further examined. Camp cited the findings of David Noel Freedman as evidence that an author or editor could use the technique of inclusio surrounding a large body of literature, as opposed to the most common use of inclusio around a smaller literary unit.<sup>4</sup> Freedman argued that the Massoretic ordering of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles is framed by an inclusio of a virtually identical passage at the beginning of Ezra and at the end of 2 Chronicles.<sup>5</sup> Thus, according to Freedman, the inclusio between the beginning of Ezra and the end of 2 Chronicles demonstrates, at least in part, the reason for the Massoretic ordering of the text. Based upon this technique of inclusio around a larger literary unit, Camp deduced that Proverbs 1-9 could form an inclusio with Proverbs 31. However, Freedman's example contained two passages of

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<sup>3</sup>The translation of אִשָּׁת־חַיִל used throughout this paper

<sup>4</sup>Camp, 184-85. Freedman's findings are unpublished. Camp noted that she gleaned this information from a lecture that Freedman presented at Texas Christian University in April of 1981 and from a personal letter from Freedman to Camp dated 15 August 1981 (see, Camp, 316, n 1).

<sup>5</sup>The exact scripture references are Ez. 1:1-3 and 2 Chr. 36:22-23. Both of these passages are the proclamation of Cyrus that the Jews could return to their homeland and rebuild the temple of their God.

relatively similar size, theme, and vocabulary. In other words, both elements of the inclusio in Ezra and 2 Chronicles are balanced in size, vocabulary, and theme. While Camp's inclusio between Proverbs 1-9 and Proverbs 31 does have vocabulary (lexical) and thematic similarities, the size of the the first element of her inclusio (Proverbs 1-9) is grossly disproportionate to the second element of her inclusio (Proverbs 31). While Proverbs 1-9 constitutes a major portion of the book (256 verses), Proverbs 31 constitutes only a minor portion of the book (31 verses). More specifically, since seven out of eight of Camp's feminine connections between the beginning and the end of Proverbs come from Pr. 31:10-31, the inclusio virtually has a 22 verse second element. The sheer inequality of text between the two elements of the inclusio elicits the response that Camp's inclusio is somewhat "lopsided." Perhaps the final editor/redactor of Proverbs did use the technique of inclusio to frame the Book of Proverbs, but in a more specific fashion than Camp (et al.) have suggested.

The first speech of personified Wisdom, found in Pr. 1:20-33, contains striking similarities with the closing acrostic poem of Pr. 31:10-31 (the hymn to the woman of strength). The purpose of this paper is to examine Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31, by means of rhetorical and lexical analysis, in order to determine if the two pericopes form an inclusio (of similar vocabulary, themes, and size) through which one should interpret the Book of Proverbs, and if so, to give the theological implication(s) for such an observation. I will seek to accomplish this purpose by giving attention to the following items.

First, the rhetorical features and structures of the two pericopes must be delineated. A translation of the pericopes, so as to allow even the non-Hebrew reader to grasp both the syntax and number of words in the Hebrew text, falls under this section. The heart of this section is the

macrostructure of each pericope and its significance. From this rhetorical analysis, one can see that a thematic connection exists between Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31 in the form of leitmotif<sup>6</sup> similarities. Primarily, the connection comes between the one who heeds the wise words of Lady Wisdom (Pr. 1:33) and the one who finds a “woman of strength” (Pr. 31:10). Both of these people are blessed and secure. Also, the idea of a “thesis-antithesis” motif is present. In Pr. 1:20-33, the leitmotif of the passage is calamity coming upon those who reject the words of Wisdom; however, a secondary motif of security is present as well. In Pr. 31:10-31, the leitmotif is the value of the Woman of Strength and inextricably intertwined with her value is the security and blessings that she provides. When viewed together, these two passages present a “bad/good,” or an “evil/righteous,” or a “negative consequences/positive consequence” dialectic for the reader/hearer. Adding to this connection is the idea of Pr. 31:10-31 containing a marriage metaphor. If indeed the אִשָּׁת־חַיִל of Pr. 31:10-31 is Lady Wisdom,<sup>7</sup> then the connection between Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31 is virtually certain.

Second, counting the syllables of the pericopes reveals symmetry in the respective structures. Rather than attempting to reconstruct the Hebrew behind the Massoretic Text, the Massoretic Text will be the basis for the syllable count.

Third and finally, root lexemes connect these two passages. These lexemes demonstrate both linguistic and thematic connection. For example, in Pr. 1:33, the wise person who heeds the

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<sup>6</sup>I use this term to mean “a dominant theme.” See, Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship Old Testament Series (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 250.

<sup>7</sup>See, McCreesh, 25-46.

words of Lady Wisdom will dwell in “security”.<sup>8</sup> In Pr. 31:11, the heart of the man who is married to the woman of strength “trusts” (בטח) in her. Both translations of בטח, “security” and “trust,” are in a common semantic field; thus, revealing a thematic connection between the two pericopes.

These steps will demonstrate the possibility that Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31 form an inclusio through which to interpret the canonical Book of Proverbs. Both of these pericopes are non-aphoristic; therefore, they would form “non-proverb proverbial bookends” around the text of Proverbs.

### **The Rhetorical Structures of Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31**

#### Translations

#### **Pr. 1:20-33**

20. Wisdom<sup>9</sup> in-the-outside<sup>10</sup> crys-out<sup>11</sup>  
In-the-outdoor-common-areas<sup>12</sup> she-gives her-voice.

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. Thomas P. McCreesh, “Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10-31,” *Revue Biblique* 92 (1985): 30.

<sup>9</sup>The use of the *Pluralus Majesticus*, חַכְמֹת, brings out the all-encompassing nature of Lady Wisdom. She alone encapsulates the many facets of wisdom.

<sup>10</sup>For justification of translating חַכְמֹת as “in the outside,” see BDB, 299-300.

<sup>11</sup>The LXX, Syriac, and Targums relate the infinitive ὑμείτωι whereas the Hebrew employs the Qal Imperfect 3fs.

<sup>12</sup>BDB, 932.

21. At-the-head of-the-noisy-streets<sup>13</sup> she-calls  
 At-the-entrances of-the-gates of-the-city  
 Her-sayings she-speaks.<sup>14</sup>
22. How long,<sup>15</sup> O-naive-ones will-you-love naivete?  
 And-scoffers, in-scoffing delight for-themselves?  
 And-fools hate knowledge?<sup>16</sup>
23. Turn-you to-my-reproof!  
 Behold, I-will-indeed-pour-out upon-you-all my-spirit!  
 I-will-indeed-make-known<sup>17</sup> my-words to-you-all!<sup>18</sup>
24. Because I-called and-you-all-refused,<sup>19</sup>  
 I-stretched-out my-hand and-no-one gave-attention.

<sup>13</sup>הַמְּזִיחַ is a Qal Infinitive Construct from the root lexeme הַמָּה meaning “to growl” or “to murmur” (see BDB, 242). The LXX, Syriac, and Targums contain *τειχέων*, which literally translated is “of walls.” The Hebrew equivalent would be הַמְּזִיחַ, see BDB, 327. The similar Hebrew orthography explains this discrepancy.

<sup>14</sup>BHS editors suggested that “of-the-city Her-sayings” should be deleted from the phrase “At-the-entrances of-the-gates of-the-city her-sayings she-speaks.” The apparent reason is *metri causa*. Since no manuscript evidence suggests such a deletion, the editorial proposal is rejected.

<sup>15</sup>Nam noted that the Hebrew phrase עַד־מָתַי is frequent in the prophetic literature: Jer. 4:14, 21; 12:4; 31:22; 47:5; and Hos. 6:5. See Nam, 17.

<sup>16</sup>Note the twice used Hiphil Cohortative for intensity.

<sup>17</sup>Citing metrical and poetic peculiarities, John A. Emerton proposed a compression of verses 22 and 23. His final translation for these two verses would read “how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? When will you turn to my reproof?” For support, Emerton cited the following similarities between Pr. 1:22 and Pr. 6:9: (1) both verses begin with עַד־מָתַי; (2) both verses have a verb in the second person imperfect after a vocative; and (3) both describe a reprehensible action--simpletons rejecting knowledge and sluggards sleeping. See, John A. Emerton, “A Note on the Hebrew Text of Proverbs 1:22-23,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 609-14.

<sup>19</sup>Note that when the foolish reject Wisdom, the action of “rejecting” ( or “refusing”) is in the intensive Piel stem.

25. And-you-all-neglected all my-counsel,  
and-my-reproof not you-were-willing-to-receive.
26. Also, I-myself at-your-calamity will-laugh,  
I-will-mock when-it-comes your-dread.<sup>20</sup>
27. When-it-comes as-a-storm<sup>21</sup> your-dread,  
and-your-calamity as-a-whirlwind<sup>22</sup> it-comes-on,<sup>23</sup>  
when-it-comes upon-you-all distress and-anguish.<sup>24</sup>
28. Then, they-will-call-to-me but-not I-will-answer,  
they-will-diligently-seek-me<sup>25</sup> but-not they-will-find-me.
29. So-then<sup>26</sup> because they-hated knowledge,  
and-the-fear of-the-Lord not they-chose,
30. not they-were-willing-to-accept<sup>27</sup> my-counsel  
they-spurned all of-my-reproof;

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<sup>20</sup>Later in the chapter, the use of a chiasmic quatrain in verses 26 and 27 will be a significant rhetorical feature.

<sup>21</sup>Ketib = כְּשׂוֹאֵה; Qere = כְּשׂוֹאֵה; however, the Cairo Geniza rendering adds the vowel for the definite article underneath the initial כּ.

<sup>22</sup>Again, the Cairo Geniza rendering adds the vowel for the definite article underneath the initial כּ.

<sup>23</sup>The root lexeme אָהַת occurs only in poetry in Biblical Hebrew; however, the lexeme is common in Biblical Aramaic. This fact could demonstrate a later date for the composition of this pericope. See BDB, 87; and Alger F. Johns, *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, Rev. ed.

<sup>24</sup>BHS editors propose deleting the phrase “when-it-comes upon-you-all distress and-anguish.” They offer no reason for the deletion; therefore, their proposal is rejected.

<sup>25</sup>Note that after the consequences of rejecting Wisdom have come upon the foolish, they “diligently seek” Wisdom as noted by the use of the Piel stem; however, the most common usage of both שָׁחַר and בָּקַשׁ is in the Piel stem. The action of seeking implies intensity.

<sup>25</sup>תַּחַת used as an adversative. See BDB, 1065-66.

<sup>26</sup>From the root lexeme אָבַח which incorporates a sense of volition. See BDB, 2.

31. Then-they-shall-eat of-the-fruit of-their-own-way,  
and-from-their-own-counsels<sup>28</sup> they-will-be-satiated.
32. For the-turning-back of-the-simple will-slay-them,  
and-the-careless-security of-fools will-destroy them.
33. But-the-one-hearkening to-me will-dwell in-security,<sup>29</sup>  
and-he-will-be-at-ease from-the-dread of-evil.

**Pr. 31:10-31<sup>30</sup>**

10. A-woman of-strength<sup>31</sup> who will-find?<sup>32</sup>  
For-far-above more-than-jewels (is) her value.<sup>33</sup>
11. It-trusts in-her (the)-heart of-her-husband,

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<sup>28</sup>An interesting morphological construction: **וּמִמֵּעֲצָתָם יֵהָאֵם**. One could translate the construction as “and from their own counsels,” or “and from their own devices.” The root lexeme at work in the construction is **עצת** which is an integral word in the wisdom vernacular, see Roger N. Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974).

<sup>29</sup>The root lexeme is **בטח** which most commonly translates as “to trust.” This lexeme provides one a major connection between this pericope and Pr. 31:10-31.

<sup>30</sup>In the LXX, Pr. 31:10-31 follows Pr. 29:27, yet the hymn to the woman of strength still concludes the Septuagintal text of Proverbs. The difference between the order of the MT and the order of the LXX occurs only in Pr. 24:23-30:9 (MT versification). For further reference, see Johann Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs, Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 69 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 293-315.

<sup>31</sup>The phrase “**אִשָּׁת־חַיִל**” occurs only three times in the MT: Pr. 12:4, Pr. 31:10, and Ru. 3:11. The typical translation of **חַיִל** is “strength;” however, the word does have a wider semantic range of possibilities, such as valor, nobility, military might, and virility.

<sup>32</sup>This translation of **מִי יִמְצֵא** is unusual. The traditional translation is “who *can* find,” (denoting the imperfect of capability) rather than “who *will* find.” However, “who will find,” is a legitimate translation of the imperfect form of **מִצָּא**. Contra, Bruce Waltke (who holds to the imperfect of capability).

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Pr. 3:15 and 8:11.

and-gain<sup>34</sup> not he-will-lack.<sup>35</sup>

12. She-deals-out-to-him good and-not evil,  
all (the)-days of-her-life.<sup>36</sup>

13. She-seeks wool and-flax,  
and-she-works in-delight with-her-palms."

14. She-is like-ships merchant,  
from-far she-brings her-food.

15. And-she-rises while-yet night,  
and-she-gives food<sup>38</sup> to-her-house,  
and-a-portion to-her-maidens.<sup>39</sup>

16. She-considers a-field and-she-takes-it,

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<sup>34</sup>The root lexeme שלל, usually denotes "booty" or "plunder" as in an act of war. Only in this verse is שלל, understood apart from the context of war. Beth LaNell Tanner noted the possibility of a militaristic undercurrent in this pericope when coupling שלל and יל with verses 15 and 17. See, Beth LaNell Tanner, "Reading Between the Lines: The Book of Psalms and Intertextuality" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1998), 181-82.

<sup>35</sup>Although the Hebrew is ambiguous, the husband is the probable recipient of the gain. Contra, LXX, but cf. Roland Murphy, *Proverbs*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 244.

<sup>36</sup>Although the MT omits the *qamets* under the final *he*, many manuscripts in the Kennicott collection include the final vowel; thus, making clear the third person feminine suffix which renders "her life."

<sup>37</sup>The text literally reads "her palms;" however, the root lexeme, כף, functions synonymously for "hand." Also, כף functions as an inclusiastic marker in verse 13 and verse 20 denoting the second stanza of this poetic pericope.

<sup>38</sup>The root lexeme טרף usually denotes "prey" (BDB, 383); however, the poetic parallelism in this verse aligns טרף with חק ("portion") thereby creating the idea of "food."

<sup>39</sup>Since the third colon of this verse creates the only tricolon in this pericope, BHS editors suggested a deletion of the phrase "and-a-portion to-her-maidens." Again, deletion for *metri causa* is suspect and to be rejected.

from-the-fruit of-her-palms she-plants' a-vineyard.

17. She-girds with-strength her-loins,  
and-she-strengthens her-arms.<sup>41</sup>
18. She-perceives that good (is) her-merchandising,  
not it-is-extinguished in-the-night her-lamp.
19. Her-hands she-stretches-out to-the-distaff,<sup>42</sup>  
and-her-palms they-grasp the-spindle.
20. Her-palm spreads-out to-the-poor,  
and-her-hands she-stretches-out to-the-needy.<sup>43</sup>
21. Not she-fears for-her-house the-snow,  
because all of-her-house are-clothed doubly.<sup>44</sup>
22. Coverings she-makes for-herself,  
fine-linen and-purple (are) her-clothing.

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<sup>40</sup>Read the Kere (קְטָעָה). Cf. Murphy, Proverbs, 244.

<sup>41</sup>LXX adds "for work" before "her arms." Tanner noted that "strong arms are associated with the ability to fight." See, Tanner, 182.

<sup>42</sup>"Although the traditional translation of "distaff" is given for כִּישׁוֹרִי, this translation is tentative at best. כִּישׁוֹר is a hapax legomenon and continues to perplex scholars regarding its meaning. Al Wolters offered an insightful article on the meaning of כִּישׁוֹר in which he posited that the word represents a special kind of spindle. See, Al Wolters, "The Meaning of Kisor (Prov. 31:19)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 65 (1994): 91-104.

<sup>43</sup>Note that verses 19 and 20 form a chiasmic quatrain marking the end of the second stanza (verses 13-20) of this poem. The chiasm revolves around the use of the words כַּף and יָד in verse 19 and יָד and כַּף in verse 20. As well as marking the end of a stanza, this chiasm turns the focus of the poem from a description of the woman of strength to the blessings received by those associated with this woman in the next stanza (verses 21-25).

<sup>44</sup>While some Syriac and Targumic manuscripts support the MT reading שְׁנֵיִם, ("scarlet") in agreement with Is. 1:18, the LXX and the Vulgat:, offer a more sensible reading with שְׁנֵיִם ("double"). "Doubly clothed" is most plausible when paralleled with "snow" in the first colon of verse 21.

23. He-is-known<sup>45</sup> in-the-gates her-husband,<sup>46</sup>  
when-he-sits with the elders of-the-land.
24. Linen-garments she-makes and-she-sells (them),  
and-a-belt she-gives to-the-tradesman.
25. Strength and-dignity (are) her-clothing,  
and-she-laughs at-the-day later-ones.<sup>47</sup>
26. Her-mouth she-opens in-wisdom,  
and-the-instruction of-lovingkindness (is) upon  
her-tongue.
27. She-watches-over<sup>48</sup> the-ways (of) her-house,  
and-the-bread (of) sluggishness not she-eats.
28. They-rise<sup>49</sup> her-sons and-they-bless-her,  
her-husband and-he-praises-her.
29. "Many daughters have-done nobly,  
but-you go-over upon all-of-them.
30. Deceitful (is) the-appearance and-vanity (is)

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<sup>45</sup> נִדָּע is the only Niphal in this pericope.

<sup>46</sup> Note that the husband of the woman of strength is the center of third stanza in this poem. He is "clothed" or "bounded" on both sides, in the preceding and subsequent verses of this stanza, with the semantic field of "clothing."

<sup>47</sup> The LXX places verse 25 after verse 26.

<sup>48</sup> צוֹפֵיָהּ is a Qal participle. This fact is interesting for two reasons: (1) all other descriptions of the woman of strength employ either the perfect or imperfect verbal forms; and (2) the participle itself represents a rare inflection. See, Al Wolters, "SOPIYYA (Prov 31:27) as Hymnic Participle and Play on Sophia." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104 (December 1985): 577. In this article, Wolters asserted that the rare inflection form of this word constitutes a play on the Greek word for wisdom, σοφία. Based on this pun, Wolters argued for a third century B. C. E. date of composition for this poem (well into the Hellenistic period).

<sup>49</sup> For some reason BHS editors suggest יָבִיאוּ, meaning "they come before." While the meaning of the suggested emendation is fits the context of the verse, the editors offer no manuscript evidence for such a change.

the-beauty,  
a-woman fearing Yahweh' she shall-be-praised.

31. Give-you<sup>51</sup> to-her from-the-fruit-of her-hands,  
and-let-them-praise-her in-the-gates her-deeds."

### Macrostructures

#### Pr. 1:20-33

Phyllis Tribble put forth a structure of Pr. 1:20-33 that seems to have held the field. She demonstrated that the poem has a chiasmic arrangement and that the apex of the chiasm is the chiasmic quatrain in verses 26 and 27 (or chiasmic pentacolon depending on one's preference). Her diagram is as follows.

- A Introduction: an appeal for listeners (20-21)
- B Address to the untutored, scoffers., and fools (22)
- C Declaration of Disclosure (23)
- D Reason for the Announcement (24-25)
- E Announcement of Derisive Judgment (26-27)
- D' Result of the Announcement, with interruption (28-30)
- C' Declaration of Retribution (31)
- B' Address about the untutored and fools (32)
- A' Conclusion: an appeal for a hearer (33)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> For the complex argument of how to translate the phrase "יִרְאַת־יְהוָה" see McCreech, 28-29.

<sup>51</sup> Wolters argued that the imperative יִנְיֵן derives from a verb meaning "to sing" rather than from יָנַן meaning "to give." Thus, he renders the first colon of the verse as follows: "Extol her for the fruit of her hands." See, Al Wolters, "Proverbs XXXI 10-31 as Heroic Hymn: A Form-Critical Analysis," *Vetus Testamentum* 38 (1988): 449-50. Murphy held that the change of meaning is negligible. See, Murphy, 244-45.

<sup>52</sup> Phyllis Tribble, "Wisdom Builds a Poem: The Architecture of Proverbs 1:20-33," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975): 511. Other scholars have accepted her structure. See, Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Chiasmic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, ed. John W. Welch (Heldesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 152-54; and Nam, 12-32.

Tribble made a strong case with for this structure with her very thorough rhetorical analysis, but the weakest part of her structure is C and C' (verses 23 and 31). By her own admission, these two sections have no lexical similarities, they have different lengths, and neither section contains a signal word.<sup>53</sup> Although he did not offer a rhetorical analysis, Bruce Waltke opted for a different structure of the speech. Waltke saw two major sections in the speech and asserted that the first major section (Pr. 1:20-27, which he entitled "Sermon to Fools") has a "twiceness" in its structure. He organized the structure as follows.

**I. Sermon to Fools (20-27)**

A. Introduction (20-21)

B. Sermon (22-27)

1. Invitation to Fools (22-23)

2. Denunciation of Fools (24-27)

a. Scolding (24-25)

b. Grounds for Scolding (26-27)

1. Not Listening

2. Calamity

**II. Statement Addressed to the Children of the Covenant (28-33)**

A. Withdrawal of Wisdom (28)

B. Inevitability of Judgment (29-31)

C. Generalizing Substantiation of Condemning Fools  
and Commending the Wise (32-33)<sup>54</sup>

Waltke well illustrated the "twiceness" that is present in Pr. 1:20-27 and he also accounted for the use of the third person in Pr. 1:28-33 by arguing that Lady Wisdom, in these verses, removed herself from the company of the foolish and began addressing the children of the covenant. Implicit in Waltke's argument is the assumption that the children of the covenant heed the words

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<sup>53</sup> Tribble, "Wisdom Builds," 517.

<sup>54</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, "Lady Wisdom as Mediatrix: An Exposition of Proverbs 1:20-33," *Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review* 14 (1988): 4.

of Wisdom. Although both Tribble and Waltke dealt extensively with the idea of judgment and/or consequences within this pericope, neither explicitly stated these ideas as the leitmotif of the passage. Only verses 23 and 33 present positive ideas; the remainder of the verses in this pericope exude with negativity, consequences, and judgment.

An independent rhetorical analysis of this passage has revealed the following eight stanza structure.

Stanza 1	Introduction (20-21)
Stanza 2	Exasperation and Promise (22-23)
Stanza 3	Reason for Calamity and Dread (24-25)
Stanza 4	Calamity and Dread (26-27b)
Interlude	Temporal clause of distress and anguish (27c) <sup>55</sup>
Stanza 5	Finality of Calamity and Dread (28)
Stanza 6	Reason for Calamity and Dread (29-30)
Stanza 7	Further Consequences for Rejecting Wisdom (31-32)
Stanza 8	Blessing for the Wise/Freedom from Dread (33)

From the stanzaic titles in this structure, one can see the predominance of negativity and distress within the passage--the leitmotif is the calamity elicited by rejecting Wisdom.

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<sup>55</sup> Even though this clause contains a second person address and verse 28 contains a third person address, the clause provides a Janus link with both the preceding and subsequent stanzas. Authorial shift in person is a common feature in prophetic literature; thus, Pr. 1:20-33 does manifest similarities with the prophetic corpus and does so without necessitating a change in the audience addressed (Contra Waltke). For confirmation of this fact, see Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 152-171; and Scott L. Harris, *Proverbs 1-9: A Study of Inner-Biblical Interpretation*, SBL Dissertation Series 150 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 83-86. Furthermore Although BHS editors suggest deleting this colon, the rhetorical effect of the colon is crucial.

However, in similar fashion to condemnatory prophetic speeches,<sup>56</sup> Lady Wisdom offers a ray of hope to the remnant who will heed her words (verses 23 and 3:3).

#### Brief Rhetorical Analysis of Pr. 1:20-33

**Stanza 1 (Pr. 1:20-21).** The pericope begins with the common method of introducing the Lady Wisdom--giving her physical locus and demonstrating that she speaks. In verses 20 and 21, the reader becomes familiar with the setting of Lady Wisdom's speech. As always,<sup>57</sup> Lady Wisdom appears in the public arena (outdoor common areas, head of the noisy streets, etc.). One will never find her slinking around the back alleys of Jerusalem or some other metropolis (as one might find the seductress). She speaks so that all might hear--she is public, visible, and candid. Although the Woman of Strength in Pr. 31:10-31 is a paragon of domesticity (versus being a public prophet), she also must venture into the openness of public life; otherwise, she would not be able to bring her food from afar (Pr. 31:14), consider a field and buy it (Pr. 31:16), interact with the poor (Pr. 31:19-20), and give/sell her wares to the tradesman (Pr. 31:24).<sup>58</sup> Additionally, although she herself is not a major public figure, her husband (the one most intimately related to her) is quite the public figure (Pr. 31:23). In fact, her husband is known in the gates,<sup>59</sup> one of the precise locations for Lady Wisdom to utter her speeches.

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<sup>56</sup> For treatments regarding the prophetic nature of this passage, see A. Robert, "Les attaches littéraires bibliques de Prov. 1-9" *Revue Biblique* 43 (1934): 172-81; Christa Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9: Eine form-und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung ägyptischen Vergleichsmaterials, Wissenschaftliche Monographien Zum Alten und Neuen Testament* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966), 119-29; and Harris, 68-109. Harris offered a thorough, scholarly, and extremely readable view for connecting Pr. 1:20-33 with Jeremiah 7 and 20.

<sup>57</sup> See also Pr. 8:1-3 and Pr. 9:1-3.

<sup>58</sup> Tradesman coming to her house in order to purchase her wares is an unlikely scenario. "Presumably as he administers justice and wise decisions with the elders of the land.

On the other hand, the Woman of Strength never offers a public invitation to receive her sayings, as does Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 1. She does, however, portray the scenario of security and blessing for the one who is related to her (primarily in familial terms) in verses 23 and 31.<sup>60</sup>

**Stanza 2 (Pr. 1:22-24).** This stanza begins the actual speech by Lady Wisdom. She starts in an exasperated tone when she asks "how long, O-naive-ones, will-you-love naivete? And scoffers, in-scoffing delight for-themselves? And-fools hate knowledge? (Pr. 1:22)." The signal phrase **עַד־מָה** denotes the beginning of this stanza and betrays the speech's ties to the prophetic tradition.<sup>61</sup> Also, within verse 22, Lady Wisdom begins with a second person address to the naive (or simpletons) and then switches to a third person address to the scoffers and fools. As noted above, this shift in person does not necessitate a change in audience. The technique is a rhetorical attempt to broaden Lady Wisdom's address. If a reader understands a second person address, then he or she easily could hold that the address is not directed at the reader personally; however, when Lady Wisdom speaks in the third person, the reader understands a broader audience and thereby experiences the text in a vicarious manner.

In verse 23, Lady Wisdom offers a positive and invitational promise. For those who will turn to her reproof, she will pour out her spirit upon them and make her words known to them.<sup>62</sup> Although Murphy rejected this invitational view based on the overall

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. McCreesh, 30. Also, compare Pr. 1:23 and 33 with Pr. 31:10-31. "See above, footnote 15. Also, see Roland Murphy, "Wisdom's Song: Proverbs 1:20-33," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48 (January 1986): 457.

<sup>62</sup> This writer takes the imperfect **תָּשׁוּבוּ** to denote an invitation: "If you turn." Murphy translated the imperfect as "turn aside," denoting more of a scornful tone in Lady Wisdom's voice. Murphy asserted[ that Lady Wisdom does not offer an invitation in this pericope. Regarding verse 23, he held that the foolish had already rejected Lady Wisdom's words and the reader is not privileged to know when such a rejection took place. Murphy, "Wisdom's Song," 456-60.

tenor of verses 24-32,<sup>63</sup> the use of the root lexeme Mt, in verses 23 and 32 forming a type of inclusio, and the assertion that one does not offer an invitation to repent by rehearsing past infidelities,<sup>64</sup> this writer disagrees with Murphy on a few key points. Murphy has rightly deduced that the overall tenor of the poem is one of negativity and judgment. Further, he also has rightly deduced that the condemnation present in verses 24-32 is the result of a prior refusal to accept Wisdom's words. He did not, however, see the possibility that verses 23 and 33 can form a type of positive inclusio around the condemnatory heart of the pericope (verses 24-32).<sup>65</sup> Granted, verses 22, 23, and 32 have root lexeme connection (כַּסִּיל, פָּתִי, and שׁוּב) thereby forming an inclusio, but verse 23 intentionally interrupts the exasperated tone of Stanza 2 (also, on a larger scale, verse 23 interrupts the negative tone of 22 and 24-32). This intentional interruption links Stanza 2 to Stanza 6, and verses 23 and 33 mitigate the harsh words of verses 24-32 in the ears of the hearer. Although destruction is certain for the group addressed in verses 24-32, future hearers might learn from their calamity and heed the words of Wisdom. Another shortcoming in Murphy's article is the fact that he relegates verse 33 to virtual obscurity in this pericope. He held that verse 33 hardly

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<sup>63</sup> Regarding the tenor of verses 24-31, Michael V. Fox asserted that in these verses, Lady Wisdom acts like a "spurned lover nursing a grudge." See, Michael V. Fox, "Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997): 625, n 23.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 459-60.

<sup>65</sup> An inclusio of positivism is a thematic inclusio, not a root lexeme or key word inclusio.

softened the "unremitting, ineluctable condemnation" of verses 24-32.<sup>66</sup> Although for the foolish who have already rejected Wisdom verse 33 does not soften the judgment of verses 24-32, Murphy omitted the implicit invitation of Wisdom present in verse 33. If Wisdom would state that security and peace come to the one who heeds her words, an invitation is implicit. Perhaps the judgment of those who remained fools is the content of verses 24-32, while the target audience of verses 23 and 33 are later generations. Wisdom's promise to pour out her spirit and make known her words to the one who will heed her reproof finds hypothetical fulfillment and result in verse 33. Then in turn, verse 33 amply portrays the security and blessings for the family (particularly the husband) of the Woman of Strength.<sup>67</sup>

Verse 24 begins with the signal word, **וְעַתָּה**, and functions to signify the reason for the judgment contained explicitly in verses 26 and 27.<sup>68</sup> Although signal words often function to denote a new stanza of a poem (or section if in a narrative passage), this writer contends that the signal marker in verse 24 marks the end of the stanza in parallel fashion with the signal marker that began the stanza in verse 22.<sup>69</sup> In other words, both the opening and closing verses of this stanza, verse 22 and 24, begin with signal markers (a type of *inclusio* around this stanza). Verse 24 explains the exasperated tone of verse 22, and although Tribble highlighted the root lexeme

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<sup>66</sup> Murphy, "Wisdom's Song," 460.

<sup>67</sup> See above, footnote 60.

<sup>68</sup> See Tribble, "Wisdom Builds," 512.

<sup>69</sup> Contra, Tribble, "Wisdom Builds," 511-12. Although Tribble made a strong case for verses 24 and 25 comprising a major section of the poem, both the symmetry of the text (which will be shown later) in verses 25-30 and the large number of repetitions that occur in verses 25 and 30 seem to show that these two verses form an *inclusio* within this pericope.

connection of **קרא** in verses 24 and 28, she did not mention the same root lexeme in verse 21. Verse 21 and verse 24 are the final verses within their respective stanzas; therefore, the use of **קרא** in these verse links the first two stanzas of the poem. In verse 21, Lady Wisdom was calling to the foolish. In verse 24, she already has called to the foolish. In verse 28, the foolish who have met with their destruction call to Wisdom, thereby forming a type of antanaclasis with the root **קרא**. The first two uses of **קרא** were invitational, the last use of **קרא** is a call of distress. This ironic, possibly even comic, use of **קרא** emphasizes the consequential destruction that comes upon the ones who reject the words of Lady Wisdom.

Both of the verbs in verse 24 are in the perfect stem; thus, denoting a completed action. Here, Wisdom has already called and stretched out her hands to the foolish, but apparently they have rejected her, as verse 25 elucidates. Such a rejection is repeated in verse 25, which begins the next stanza.

**Stanza 3 (Pr. 1:25-27b).** In the third stanza of this pericope, Lady Wisdom gives further reason for the destruction that will come upon those who have rejected her and states that she will laugh at their calamity and dread. The initial verse of this stanza, verse 25, forms an inclusio with the final verse of the subsequent stanza, verse 30. Three root lexemes are present in both of these verses: **עצת**, **תוכח**, and **אבה**. Further, even the particle words, **כָּל** and **לֹא** are repeated in these verses. The root lexemes in the inclusio form a skewed chiasm (ABC//C'A'B').

	A	
Verse 25	And-you-all-neglected	all my-counsel,
	B	C
	and-my-reproof	not you-were-willing-to-receive.
	C'	A'
Verse 30	not they-were-willing-to-accept	my-counsel
	B'	
	they-spurned	all of-my-reproof.



27. When-it-comes as-a-storm your-dread,  
                                   A'  
 and-your-calamity as-a-whirlwind it-comes-on

In verse 33, the word פחד occurs again; however, this time with positive connotations—the one who heeds the words of Lady Wisdom will be at ease from the פחד (dread) of evil). This repetition connects stanzas 3 and 6 in a manner of "thesis/antithesis" in much the same manner as the leitmotif of this pericope connects with the leitmotif of Pr. 31:10-31.12.

**Interlude (Pr. 1:27c).** The final colon of Pr. 1:27 seems to be an enigmatic riddle capable of being solved only by Solomon himself. BHS editors proposed that the phrase should be deleted; however, they do so with no manuscript evidence and deletion for *metri causa* is tenuous at best. Along the same line, Crawford C. Toy held that the colon is a scribal insertion.<sup>73</sup> Tribble viewed the colon as a recapitulative statement for emphasis,<sup>74</sup> and Duane C. Garrett held that the temporal clause, כִּבְנָה, echoes the first colon of verse 27 and thereby completes the symmetry of the verse.<sup>75</sup> This writer proposes that the colon in Pr. 1:27c forms a Janus interlude between stanzas. The Janus nature of the colon comes from the fact that one can read it as a codaic line at

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<sup>71</sup> While Stanza 3 presents the idea of "dread," Stanza 6 presents the idea of "freedom from dread."

<sup>72</sup> Also note that Pr. 31:10-31 also contains a chiastic quatrain roughly in the center of the pericope. Although, this writer noticed the central chiastic quatrain in both of these pericopes on his own, also see Thomas R. Hawkins, "The Meaning and Function of Proverbs 31:10-31 in the Book of Proverbs" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1995), 168.

<sup>73</sup> Crawford H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Proverbs*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), 25

<sup>74</sup> Tribble, "Wisdom Builds," 514.

<sup>75</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 72 n 19.

the end of verse 27 or as an introductory phrase before reading verse 28. If one takes the colon as a coda to verse 27, then it serves to reemphasize, in alliterative, assonantal, and paronomasial fashion, the calamity and dread of the chiasmic quatrain in verses 26 and 27. If one chooses to read the statement as an introductory phrase for Stanza 4 (verses 28-30), then the distress and anguish set the stage for the ineffectual call from the foolish after their calamity has struck (verse 28). As stated earlier, the shift from second person (verse 27c) to third person (verse 28) does not necessitate a change in audience; therefore, the colon can have a Janus like function even with this shift in person from verse 27c to verse 28.

**Stanza 4 (Pr. 1:28-30).** This stanza begins the third person address from Lady Wisdom. The beginning word of the verse 28, אַז functions as a marker for this new stanza. The Hebrew text of verse 28 is rich with repetition, alliteration, and vocalic assonance. A copy of the verse is given: אַז יִקְרְאוּנִי וְלֹא צִעֲנָה יִשְׁחֹרְנוּנִי וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּנִי. The phrase וְלֹא is repeated twice to emphasize that Wisdom will not hear the cries of the foolish nor will she be found when they seek her. Alliteration occurs in with the preformative *yodh* of the imperfect three times. Also, these imperfect verb forms with their *les* suffixes provide a repetitive sound to the ear as they all have vocalic assonance with the *chireq-yodh*. This verse marks the point of no return in this pericope--destruction has happened but one will not find Wisdom at that time.

Verses 29 and 30 both provide reason for the destruction of the foolish. In that respect, they mirror the theme of verses 24 and 25, which also contain the reason for the destruction of the foolish. Tribble asserted that verse 29 is an interruption between verses 28 and 30;<sup>76</sup> however, the verse seems to be an integral reason for the destruction

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<sup>76</sup> Tribble, "Wisdom Builds," 515-16.

of the foolish (much more so than verse 28 that Tribble included in her D' section entitled "result of the announcement"). Although verse 30 forms an inclusio with verse 25, the verse also seems to belong to a larger motif--the reason for the destruction of fools. Verse 24, 25, 29, and 30 all give a reason for judgment and consequential destruction of fools. These verses ring the chiasmic quatrain of calamity and dread in verses 26 and 27, the Janus colon of verse 27c, and the rhetorically rich bicolon that demonstrates the irrefragability of judgment--verse 28. This "ring of reasons for destruction" leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader why such destruction would take place: rejection of Lady Wisdom's words and not choosing the fear of the Lord (both of these ideas function synonymously in this pericope). Again, negativity and destruction mark this stanza, which is commensurate with the leitmotif of the pericope and in opposition to Pr. 31:10-31.

**Stanza 5 (Pr. 1:31-32).** This stanza functions as an anacephalaeosis<sup>77</sup> for stanzas 3 and 4. The destruction and judgment of the two prior stanzas are seen in these verses as the natural result of failing to heed Lady Wisdom's words. The initial waw of verse 31 carries the force of a resultative and marks the new stanza.<sup>78</sup> Also, the metaphor "the fruit of their own way" also conveys result. In verse 31, an antanaclasis occurs with the root lexeme **עצת**. When the lexeme refers to the counsel of Wisdom (verses 25 and 30) the conveyed idea is that Wisdom's counsel is good. When the lexeme occurs here

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<sup>77</sup> Anacephalaeosis is the rhetorical term for a summary or review intended to refresh the readers's memory (at times called a recapitulation); however, here the reader's memory could not need refreshing. The anacephalaeosis is used for emphasis.

<sup>78</sup> Contra, Tribble, "Wisdom Builds," 517 n 36; and Kayatz, 121. Tribble held that she did see the initial waw as "having the force of a 'therefore' or any other introductory signal-word."

in verse 31, the conveyed idea is that the fool's own counsel will cause him to be sated and wish he had not chosen his own way.

Verse 32 provides intensification of verse 31. Whereas verse 31 gives the results of rejecting Wisdom in a "matter of fact" tenor, verse 32 intensifies the results by employing the verbs "kill" and "destroy." So that one will not think that rejecting Wisdom is a matter to be taken lightly, the intensification shows the reader that death and destruction follow for the one who rejects Wisdom. Verse 32 also provides a connection between Stanza 5 (verses 31-32) and Stanza 2 (verses 22-24). As noted earlier the root lexemes in verse 32, **שׁוּב**, **פָּתִי**, and **כָּסִיל**, also occur in verses 22 and 23. Precisely, **שׁוּב** occurs in verse 23 and 32, and **פָּתִי**, and **כָּסִיל** occur in verses 22 and 32. Depending on how one translates **שׁוּב**, another antanaclasis could be present. If one translates **שׁוּב** in verse 23 as "repentance" (with the idea of repentance that avoids destruction) then the translation of **שׁוּב**, in verse 32 of "waywardness" provides the opposite idea. The word in verse 23 would connect with a life-saving repentance whereas the word in verse 32 denotes a life-ending waywardness. The words **פָּתִי**, and **כָּסִיל** form a type of inclusio around the condemnatory verses of this pericope (excluding verse 23) and identify the ones who will be destroyed (verses 26-27, and 31-32). One might ask at this point, "has not the sage poet made his point that the ones who reject Wisdom will suffer destruction?"

**Stanza 6 (Pr. 1:33).** This final stanza serves as a antithesis against the leitmotif of the poem. No longer do judgment and destruction occupy the eyes of the reader and the ears of the hearer. The initial waw in this verse indicates a new stanza and a new train of thought--the promise of security and ease for the one who will heed the words of Lady Wisdom. "A-class" assonance, so common in the Hebrew language, marks this final

verse in the pericope as Lady Wisdom offers an implicit invitation for the current reader to learn from the negative example of the fools and not to choose their "counsels" that lead to "destruction." Although the leitmotif conveyed throughout most of the pericope is judgment and destruction for the ones who have rejected Wisdom, the last verse sets the tone for the life-giving words that follow throughout the book. Lady Wisdom offers a strong example of the fate of fools; however, she tempers her harsh words with the implicit promise of security and ease for those who still hear her words that seem to foreshadow the one who finds a "Woman of Strength" (Pr, 31:10).

#### Brief Rhetorical Analysis of Pr. 31:10-31

The macrostructure of the closing acrostic poem in the Book of Proverbs has received much attention; therefore, a plethora of outlines are extant that describe the overall structure of the pericope.<sup>79</sup> One of the preeminent scholars concerning Pr. 31:10-31, Al Wolters, gave the following outline:

1. Introduction (10-12)
2. The Deeds of the Woman (13-27)
3. Call to praise the Woman (28-31)<sup>80</sup>

Although Wolters approached the pericope as an heroic hymn, his outline has merit for any approach to the text of Pr. 31:10-31. A rhetorical analysis of this pericope has

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<sup>79</sup> For a thorough sampling of outlines regarding the macrostructure of Pr. 31:10-31, see Hawkins, 238-51.

<sup>80</sup> Wolters, "Heroic Hymn," 449. Wolters gleaned from Gunkel that a heroic hymn had three basic sections: (1) an introduction, which announces the praise to be given; (2) the body, or the Hauptstück, which enumerates the praiseworthy deeds of the person being heroicized; and (3) the concluding exhortation, in which the poet elicited the audience to join him or her in praise.

revealed basic agreement with Wolter's outline. The main area of disagreement is in the second section. This writer's analysis of this pericope has revealed the following stanzaic structure.

- Stanza 1 Blessing for the husband of the Woman of Strength (10-12)
- Stanza 2 Description of the Activities of the Woman of Strength (13-20)
- Stanza 3 Blessing for all associated with the Woman of Strength (21-25)
- Stanza 4 Description of the Activities of the Woman of Strength (26-27)
- Stanza 5 Blessing of Praise for the Woman of Strength (28-31)<sup>81</sup>

This outline is justified both by the rhetorical structures and themes present within the pericope.

#### Brief Rhetorical Analysis of Pr. 1:20-33

**Stanza 1 (Pr. 31:10-12).** After an introductory rhetorical question, verse 10 reveals the leitmotif of this passage: the worth of a Woman of Strength is far above jewels.<sup>82</sup> When coupled with verses 11 and 12 which mention her husband, the idea that the reader will seek an intimate relationship with such a woman, whomever she might be, is implicit in this motif. Verse 11 specifies that the heart of her husband trusts (הַטָּח) in her. This same root lexeme is present in Pr. 1:33 to denote that the one who listens to Wisdom will dwell in security (אָטָח). Through this common semantic field, the husband of the Woman of Strength (Pr. 31:11,12, 23, and 28) and the one who hearkens to Wisdom both share a common security. Verse 12 also reflects this idea of security that the husband has. In this verse, the Woman of Strength "deals out to him good and not evil all the days of her life." One can easily visualize a pleasant and peaceful scenario for the husband of such a wife. Even though her worth is more than jewels, her husband still benefits in a material fashion (Pr. 31:1 lb). She is worth more than jewels to her husband, but he still does not do without wealth--he has no lack of gain.

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<sup>81</sup> To the best of this writer's knowledge, this is an original outline.

<sup>82</sup> Compare this statement to Pr. 3:15 and 8:11 where Wisdom's worth is far above jewels.

Three root lexemes provide connection between Stanza 1 and Stanza 5 in this pericope: **אָשֶׁת** (verses 10 and 30), **חַיִל** (verses 10 and 29), and **בַּעַל** (verses 11, 23, and 28). The lexeme **בַּעַל** also provides connection with Stanza 3, which shares a common theme with the first and fifth stanzas, and serves to demonstrate the importance of the husband in this pericope. These words form an inclusio around this pericope.

**Stanza 2 (Pr. 31:13-20).** With these verses, the reader has a glimpse of the amazing deeds that the Woman of Strength accomplishes. She displays heroic attributes in the areas of domesticity (verse 13, 14, 15, and 19), business dealings (verses 16 and 18), physical prowess (17), and altruism (verse 20). The structural marker that denotes this stanza is the lexeme **כָּף**. The lexeme occurs in both verses 13 and 20; hence, forming an inclusio around this pericope. Also, this word only occurs within this stanza. The other occurrences of the word are in verses 16 and 20. This repetition highlights both the artisan/working ability that the Woman of Strength possesses and the giving spirit that she has as she extends her "hand" to the poor and needy (verse 20). This extension of her hand in a spirit of generosity is similar to Lady Wisdom's invitational nature in Pr. 1:23-24. While the Woman of Strength extends her "hands" to the poor and needy, Lady Wisdom stretched out her "hand" to the foolish (Pr. 1:24). This stanza ends with a chiasmic quatrain that revolves around the synonymous terms **יָד** and **כָּף**. The quatrain is structured as follows.

A

19. Her-hands she-stretches-out to-the-distaff,

B

and-her-palms they-grasp the-spindle.

B'

20. Her-palm spreads-out to-the-poor,

A'

and-her-hands she-stretches-out to-the-needy.

Just as the Lady Wisdom pericope has a chiasmic quatrain in its center, so does this pericope. In both pericopes, the quatrain ends the stanza and might serve to denote the midpoint of the poem. To the best of this writer's knowledge, the only other chiasmic quatrain like those in Pr. 1:26-27 and Pr. 31:19-20 occurs in Pr. 8:30-31. This rhetorical device could denote a connection between these three pericopes.

**Stanza 3 (Pr. 31:21-25).** In this stanza, the motif of blessing for those associated with the Woman of Strength is most prominent. In a "cloaking," structural fashion, the secondary motif of clothing wraps around the apex of this stanza. This secondary motif serves to highlight the husband of the Woman of Strength. This stanza has a chiasmic structure with A and A' elements that provide a Janus link to the preceding and subsequent stanzas (much like Pr. 1:27c). The structure is as follows.

**A** No Fear of Snow (גִּלְגֵּל - metaphor for future) - 21a

**B** Clothing (לְבָשׁ) - 21b

**C** She makes / linen (שָׂשְׂתָה/שֵׁשׁ) - 22

**D** Reputation of her husband - 23

**C'** Linen / she makes (שֵׁשׁ/תָּה / יוֹדֵי) - 24

**B'** Clothing (לְבָשׁוֹתָה) - 25a

**A'** No Fear of the Future (לֵי יוֹם - אֲחֵרוֹן) - 25b<sup>83</sup>

The themes/motifs of this stanza are clothing and how those associated with the Woman of Strength are blessed; however, both the A and A' elements are more descriptive of the Woman of Strength rather than informative of who she blesses. The first colon (verse 21a) provides a further description of the Woman, similar to Stanza 2, thereby creating

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<sup>83</sup> Although this writer discovered this structure independently, Duane Garrett already has published this basic structure for these verses. A few differences exist between this structure and Garrett's structure. See, Garrett, 248.

a backwards link. The second colon (verse 21b), serves to explain the first colon (verse 21a), thereby creating a forward link. The Woman has no fear of the snow for her household (description and backwards link), because all of her household members are doubly clothed (clothing motif and the reason that she has no fear of the snow. Since snow rarely occurred in Ancient Israel, a strong possibility is that the snow metaphorically represents a future threat and her family is "doubly-prepared" to meet such a remote threat. Verse 25 (the A' element of the chiasm) functions in Janus fashion as does verse 21. The first colon (verse 25a) echoes the clothing motif in that the Woman of Strength is clothed with strength and dignity. Because she is so clothed, she laughs at the future (verse 25b). Verse 25b provides a description of the Woman of Strength, thereby providing a forward link to the next stanza which also describes this Woman. Also, she can laugh at the future because she is "clothed" with strength and dignity, thereby providing a backwards link to the clothing motif of Stanza 3. This Janus linking demonstrates the inextricable nature of describing the Woman of Strength and the blessing that she provides to those associated with her.

The apex of this structure is verse 23, where the husband has a good, public reputation. The structure of this stanza draws primary attention to the husband, even though the Woman of Strength is the predominant character within this pericope.<sup>84</sup> The Woman of Strength "clothes" her husband and the structure of this stanza emphasizes that the Woman's action of clothing is one of the primary, if not the primary, reason that the

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<sup>84</sup> Garrett held that verse 23 actually establishes the central message of this pericope, which is that a man needs this type of woman in order to be a success in life. This statement is correct. The question remains, however, is this type of woman a real person that a young man should look for, or is she primarily a symbol for Wisdom? The woman in this pericope seems almost "superhuman" with her varied expertise in so many areas of life. Could anyone, male or female, attain such a standard in life?

husband has such a good public reputation. Additionally, the husband's reputation is public by virtue of his being known "in the gates," a precise location as to where Lady Wisdom to offer her speeches (Pr. 1:21).

**Stanza 4 (Pr. 31:26-27).** This short, two verse stanza provides the final descriptions of the Woman of Strength in this poem. While Stanza 2 primarily describes her "hands-on" abilities, Stanza 4 describes both her mental and managerial abilities. By means of a syntactical chiasm, verse 26 relates the wisdom with which this Woman speaks and teaches.

A	B	
26. Her-mouth she-opens in-wisdom,		
	B'	A'
and-the-instruction of-lovingkindnes s (is) upon her-tongue.		

Roy Zuck has argued that this verse demonstrates that the Woman of Strength must be a real person as opposed to the personification of Wisdom. He argued that Wisdom speaking with wisdom makes no sense; therefore, the woman of strength must be a wise woman and not Wisdom personified.<sup>85</sup> If this argument is true, how could Wisdom dwell with prudence in Pr. 8:12 unless prudence is another personification? Furthermore, how could sound wisdom belong to Wisdom in Pr. 8:14a, or how could Wisdom either possess understanding or be understanding in Pr. 8:14b?<sup>86</sup> Perhaps, we should give the Sage Poet a little poetic license in his task rather than holding him to a twentieth century standard of thought. By means of poetic rhetoric, he is demonstrating the pervading

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<sup>85</sup> Roy B. Zuck, "A Theology of the Wisdom Books and the Song of Songs," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, eds. Roy B. Zuck, Eugene H. Merrill, and Darrell L. Bock (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 237.

<sup>86</sup> See textual note for verse 8:14b in K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 2d ed (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 1285.

nature of Wisdom in all areas of life (the Woman, regardless of her identity, both speaks and acts with Wisdom--as does Lady Wisdom).

Verse 27 reemphasizes the diligent nature of the Woman of Strength in tending to her household. The initial word in the verse, **צוֹפִיָּה**, provides the *tsadhe* line of the acrostic and is the only participle within the poem.<sup>87</sup> Also arranged in a syntactical chiasm (like verse 26), this final verse of Stanza 4 is a recapitulation of all prior descriptions of the Woman of Strength.

**Stanza 5 (Pr. 31:28-31).** The concluding stanza forms the ending element of the inclusio with Stanza 1 by means of the root lexemes **אֵשֶׁת** (verses 10 and 30), **חֵיל** (verses 10 and 29), and **בְּעַל** (verses 11, 23, and 28). The primary motif of the stanza is the blessing of praise, which is provided by the lexeme **הֵלֵל** (the lexeme occurs in verses 28, 30, and 31). In verse 28, the children of the Woman of Strength rise to "bless" (**בָּרַךְ**) her and her husband praises (**הֵלֵל**). Praise and blessing function synonymously in this verse.

In verse 29, either the husband alone or the husband with his children directly address the Woman of Strength. The praise itself is contained in this verse: "Many daughters have done nobly, but-you go-over upon all-of-them!" The use of the second person demonstrates that the verse is a direct address.<sup>88</sup> Further, pleonasmus, or using a superfluous word, enriches and intensifies the praise accorded the Woman.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> For further information on **צוֹפִיָּה**, refer back to footnote 48.

<sup>88</sup> This pericope has no ties to the prophetic tradition; therefore, a shift in person is a noteworthy feature which can indicate a change in audience.

<sup>89</sup> The preposition, **עַל**, is not needed in the text because the verb **עָלָה** carries the sense of going up. Literally, verse 29b reads, "but you go over/up upon all of them."

Verse 30 contains the sense of a third person address. While no grammatical indicators demonstrate the third person, the hortatory tone of the verse conveys a larger audience. The Sage Poet enlarged the audience with this verse with the didacticism that "charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman fearing the Lord is to be praised." Although young males are the primary audience of the Book of Proverbs, even a woman could hear this verse and learn that her primary goal in life should be to fear the Lord (which should be the primary goal for a man as well) rather than aspiring only to look beautiful and act charming.

In codaic fashion (juxtaposed with the prefatory fashion of verse 10), verse 31 concludes both Stanza 5 and the entire poem. With a large audience in mind, the Sage Poet, in the imperative mood, now calls on all who hear his words "to give the Woman her due, and to let her works praise her in the gates." A woman of such rapport deserves to be praised and justly recompensed. The ones who have been blessed through their association with her could not offer too many accolades for this Woman. With this thought of public praise, the Book of Proverbs ends "in the gates," the same place where the husband of the Woman of Strength enjoys a splendid reputation (Pr. 31:23) and the place where Lady Wisdom begins speaking her words of wisdom.

#### Rhetorical Review

The first conclusion of the preceding analysis is that the motif of blessing/security in Pr. 1:23 and 33 resurfaces in the closing acrostic poem in the Book of Proverbs. The one who heeds the words of Lady Wisdom will dwell in security, much like those associated with the Woman of Strength. The second conclusion is that an antithetical motif is present within the two pericopes as well. In Pr. 1:20-33, the leitmotif of the

passage is the calamity that comes upon those who reject the words of Wisdom. In Pr. 31:10-31, the leitmotif is the value of the Woman of Strength and inextricably intertwined with her value is the security and blessings that she provides. These two passages present a "negative consequence/positive consequence" dialectic for the reader/hearer; thus, forming a type of inclusio.

### **Syllable Count**

The syllable count of poetic lines, stanzas, and pericopes can reveal symmetry in structure. A problem, which most every Hebrew Grammar book addresses, is how to count syllables. Authors are divided as to what constitutes a full syllable, half syllable, etc. For the purposes of this investigation, a syllable equals one sound unit, regardless of whether or not the syllable is a whole or half syllable.<sup>90</sup> Also, the covenant name of God sounds as three syllables, Qere takes precedence over Ketib, and the common diphthong equals one syllable. Furthermore, this writer makes no assertion that the hearers of a publicly read text would tally syllables in their minds. Counting the syllables does, however, have the potential to illuminate authorial intent in the structure of a pericope.

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<sup>90</sup> For further details about syllable counting, see David M. Howard, Jr., *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, Biblical and Judaic Studies, Volume 5 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 28-31. Howard followed the lead of his mentor, David Noel Freedman, in reconstructing the Hebrew behind the MT. In this investigation, however, the MT is the basis for the syllable count.

## Syllable Count of Pr. 1:20-33

<b>Verse</b>	<b>Syllables<sup>91</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>
20a	3+2+2	
20b	2+2+3	14
21a	2+3+2	
21b	2+4+2+3+3	21
22a	2+4+3+2+1	
22b	2+3+2+3	
22c	2+3+4	31
23a	4+3	
23b	2+2+3+2	
23c	2+3+3	24
24a	4+3+2	
24b	2+2+2+3	18
25a	3+1+4	
25b	3+1+4	16
26a	2+3+2+1	
26b	3+2+2	15
27a	3+3+2	
27b	3+3+3	
27c	3+2+3+2	27
28a	3+2+4+1	
28b	4+2+5	21
29a	2+3+1+2	
29b	3+1+3+3	18
30a	4+2+1	
30b	3+1+3	14
31a	2+3+4	
31b	3+7	19

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<sup>91</sup> Since Hebrew reads right to left, the number of syllables reflects this right to left order. The last number (in left to right order) in each line of arabic numerals corresponds with the first word of the Hebrew colon.

32a	3+2+3+1	
32b	4+3+3	19
33a	2+2+1+4	
33b	2+3+4	18
<b>GRAND</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		

The most salient feature of the syllable count for this paper is the fact that the midpoint of the pericope occurs in the chiasmic quatrain of Pr. 1:26-27b. According to the syllable count, the midpoint is between the 137<sup>th</sup> and 138<sup>th</sup> syllable, which occurs in Pr. 1:26. Precisely, between the first and second syllable of the word פִּהֲרֹקֶם is the midpoint of the pericope.

#### Syllable Count for Pr. 31:10-31

<b>Verse</b>	<b>Syllables</b>	<b>Total</b>
10a	2+1+2+2	
10b	2+4+3	16
1 la	2+1+1+2	
1 lb	2+1+3	12
12a	1+2+1+4	
12b	3+2+1	14
13a	3+2+3	
13b	3+3+3	17
14a	2+4+3	
14b	2+2+3	16
15a	2+2+3	
15b	3+2+3	
15c	6+2	23
16a	5+2+3	
16b	2+3+3+3	21

17a	3+2+3	
17b	5+4	17
18a	2+1+1+3	
18b	2+3+2+1	15
19a	3+3+3	
19b	2+3+4	18
20a	3+3+2	
20b	4+3+4	18
21a	3+3+2+1	
21b	2+2+2+1+1	18
22a	1+3+3	
22b	3+4+1	15
23a	2+4+2	
23b	2+2+1+3	16
24a	3+3+2	
24b	5+3+3	19
25a	3+3+1	
25b	3+2+3	15
26a	3+3+2	
26b	3+1+2+3	17
27a	2+3+3	
27b	2+1+2+3	16
28a	6+3+2	
28b	5+2	18
29a	2+2+2+2	
29b	3+1+2+2	16
30a	3+3+2+2	
30b	3+1+3+2+2	21
31a	3+3+1+2	
31b	4+4+5	22
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>380</b>

The midpoint of this pericope falls at the 190th syllable. This syllable occurs immediately after the chiastic quatrain of Pr. 31:19-20. Precisely, the last syllable of the word אִי־יָאֵ is the 190<sup>th</sup> syllable of this pericope. While the precise midpoint is not located within the chiastic quatrain itself, the midpoint is exceedingly close to the quatrain. Using a reconstructed Hebrew text, Freedman counted 360 syllables in this pericope. Employing Freedman's count causes the midpoint of the pericope to fall also in verse 21 (the 180th syllable is the first syllable of verse 21 for Freedman--אֵל).<sup>92</sup> Thomas Hawkins also has done work with the syllable total for this pericope. In Hawkins's count, he saw 371 syllables in the pericope.<sup>93</sup> Using Hawkins's count, the midpoint of the pericope also falls in the first colon of verse 21 between the 185th and 186th syllable, which is the middle of the word אִי־יָאֵ. As one can see, whatever method is used in syllable counting, the midpoint of this pericope falls immediately after the chiastic quatrain.

Due to the fact that only four such chiastic quatrains occur in Proverbs 1-9 and 31 and the fact that the quatrains in Pr. 3:11-12 and Pr. 8:30-31 do not mark the midpoint of a passage, having a chiastic quatrain in the virtual center of two poetic pericopes, one at the beginning of Proverbs and the other at the end of Proverbs, is too unique to dismiss as coincidence. This rhetorical technique gives a comparable symmetry to each of the respective pericopes and links them together.

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<sup>92</sup> See, David Noel Freedman, "Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry," *Harvard Theological Review* 65 (1972): 368-85.

<sup>93</sup> Hawkins, 258. Although Hawkins listed 372 as the total number of syllables, the numbers he used to arrive at his total equal 371.

**Common Lexemes in Pr. 1:20-33 and  
Pr. 31:10-31**

A total of fifteen common lexemes occur within these two pericopes.<sup>94</sup> These lexemes have varying degrees of significance depending upon their frequency of occurrence within the Book of Proverbs. The lexemes are as follows on the next page.

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<sup>94</sup> This number excludes the common particles that the pericopes share: כֹּל, עַל, and לֹא.

<b>Common Root Lexemes between Pr. 1:20-33 and 31:10-31</b>	<b>Verses of Occurrence</b>
נתן	1:20; 31:15, 24, 31
חכם	1:20; 31:26
פתח	1:21; 31:26
שער	1:21; 31:23, 31
ידע	1:23; 31:23
יד	1:24; 31:19, 20, 31
שחק	1:26; 31:25
בא	1:26, 27; 31:14
מצא	1:28; 31:10
ירא	1:29; 31:30
יהוה	1:29; 31:30
פרי	1:31; 31:16,31
בטח	1:33; 31:11
רע	1:33; 31:12
אכל	1:31; 31:27

Out of these fifteen common lexemes, four occur ten times or less in the Book of Proverbs, two occur eleven to twenty times, and nine occur more than twenty times. While one cannot use statistical significance in biblical studies with the precision of a statistician, one can notice the rarity of words and the attention that these words command. Since the common lexemes occurring more than twenty times are so frequent in the Book of Proverbs, those occurring less than twenty times will be the major focus

of this section. The following table gives the frequency of occurrence within the Book of Proverbs for all fifteen of these lexemes.

<b>Common Root Lexemes between Pr. 1:20-33 and 31:10-31</b>	<b>Frequency of Occurrence within the Book of Proverbs</b>
פתי, שער, שחק, פרי	1-10 times
אכל, בטח	11-20 times
בא, יד, ידע, ירא, חכם, נתן, רע, יהוה, מצא	More than 20 times

While all fifteen of these common lexemes show connection between Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31, the rare lexemes are the most significant (rarity = significance). Upon closer inspection of the six lexemes that occur ten times or less, one can deduce whether or not the lexemes convey the same sense of meaning in both pericopes. As most all words are polysemous and convey a wide range of semantically related meanings, an emphatic connection between the pericopes will exist if the common lexeme achieves identical sense conveyance.

In Pr. 1:31, אכל<sup>95</sup> functions to convey result: "so they shall eat of the fruit of their own way." The word does not refer to a physical consumption of food, as it most often does. Rather, the word conveys the sense of consequential calamity that occurred because the foolish chose not to listen to Lady Wisdom. In Pr. 31:27, the Sage Poet declares that the Woman of Strength "does not eat the bread of sluggishness." Here, the word conveys a metaphoric sense of diligence.

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<sup>95</sup> אכל occurs sixteen times in the Book of Proverbs: 1:31; 13:2; 13:23; 13:25; 18:21; 23:7; 23:8; 24:13; 25:16; 25:21; 25:27; 30:1; 30:17; 30:14; 30:17; and 31:27.

While the root lexical forms are identical, the contextual meanings of this lexeme are diverse enough to say that **אכל** does not convey the same sense of meaning within these pericopes.<sup>96</sup>

Though closer than **אכל**, the lexeme **פתח**<sup>97</sup> also falls short of identical sense conveyance. In both Pr. 1:21 and Pr. 31:26, **פתח** conveys the sense of "opening." The lexeme functions as a locative in Pr. 1:21 (at the opening of the of the gates) and as a verb in Pr. 31:26 (she opens her mouth in wisdom). Al though the lexeme conveys a similar meaning in both pericopes, the contexts in which the lexeme occur are too diverse to declare that identical sense conveyance exists. In the two different contexts, however, the lexeme does achieve an "overlapping sense conveyance" in that both objects relate the function of opening.

The lexeme **בטח**<sup>98</sup> might possibly achieve identical sense conveyance. While the common lexeme has two distinct grammatical functions (adverbial in Pr. 1:33 and verbal in Pr. 31:11), a similar sense of meaning is conveyed in both pericopes. While the one who heeds the words of Lady Wisdom dwells in "security" (Pr. 1:33), the heart of the husband "trusts" in his wife (Pr. 31:11). The occurrence in Pr. 1:33 denotes both a physical and mental state of security and the occurrence in Pr. 31:11 seems to denote more of an emotional action, yet trust and security mesh together. When **בטח** occurs in the Hiphil stem, one can translate the construction as "make secure." In Pr. 31:11, trust is more relationship oriented and in Pr. 1:33, security is more of a stative description.

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<sup>96</sup> For further explanation about word sense, see Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 134-78.

<sup>97</sup> **פתח** occurs nine times in the Book of Proverbs: 1:21; 8:3; 8:34; 9:14; 17:19; 24:7; 31:8; 31:9, and 31:26.

<sup>98</sup> **בטח** occurs fourteen times in the Book of Proverbs: 1:33; 3:5; 3:23; 3:29; 10:9; 11:15; 11:28; 14:16; 16:20; 28:1; 28:25; 28:26; 29:25; and 31:11.

Although the word sense in these pericopes achieves overlapping sense conveyance, the two occurrences fall short of identical sense conveyance.

A lexeme that does achieve identical sense conveyance is **שַׁעַר**.<sup>99</sup> In both pericopes, this lexeme conveys the sense of a gate. Lady Wisdom offers her words at "the gates of the city" (Pr. 1:21), the husband of the Woman of Strength "is known in the gates" (Pr. 31:23), and the Sage Poet calls all who hear his message to praise the Woman of Strength "in the gates" (Pr. 31:31). In each of the three occurrences of **שַׁעַר**, the same physical location is denoted; therefore, **שַׁעַר** achieves identical sense conveyance in both of these pericopes.

**שַׁחַק**<sup>100</sup> also achieves identical sense conveyance. In Pr. 1:26, Lady Wisdom "laughs" at the foolish when their calamity comes upon them. In Pr. 31:25, the Woman of Strength "laughs" at the future. While the object of the laughter is different, the derisive sense of the laughter is the same. As opposed to joyous laughter, **שַׁחַק** often denotes derisive laughter<sup>101</sup> and both Lady Wisdom and the Woman of Strength engage in this action.

Although the word denotes both positive and negative results, the lexeme **פְּרִי**<sup>102</sup> also achieves identical sense conveyance. While in Pr. 1:31, the results are negative, in

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<sup>99</sup> Since Though one might think that **שַׁעַר** would be a frequent word in the Book of Proverbs, the word occurs only six times: 1:21; 8:3; 22:22; 24:7; 31:23; and 31:31.

<sup>100</sup> **שַׁחַק** occurs only six times in the Book of Proverbs and four of the six occurrences are found in either the Lady Wisdom pericopes or the closing acrostic poem: 1:26; 8:30; 8:31; 10:23; 14:13; and 31:25.

<sup>101</sup> See BDB, 965-66.

<sup>102</sup> **פְּרִי** occurs ten times in the Book of Proverbs: 1:31; 8:19; 11:30; 12:14; 13:12; 18:20; 18:21; 27:18; 31:16; and 31:19.

Pr. 31:16 and 31, the results are positive. Nevertheless, in all three occurrences within this pericopes the idea of result is common through the use of metaphor.

While **אכל**, **פתח**, and **בטח** do not achieve identical sense conveyance, they do function respectively within similar or identical semantic domains in each occurrence between these pericopes. Also, they do provide direct lexical connection between the pericopes.

The words that do achieve identical sense conveyance have an inverted correspondence between these pericopes. Due to the root lexemes **שער**, and **פרי** occurring twice within the pericope of Pr. 31:10-31, the correspondence is in the form of a skewed chiasm.<sup>103</sup> This repetition serves an important linking function within the acrostic poem and one should not view the repetition as a hindrance to forming a mirror chiasm. Chiasm was a tool in the arsenal of the poet, not an end to be achieved.

A **שער**, (Pr. 1:21)

B **שחק** (Pr. 1:26)

C **פרי** (Pr. 1:31)

C' **פרי** (Pr. 31:16)

A' **שער** (Pr. 31:23)

B' **שחק** (Pr. 31:25)

A' **שער** (Pr. 31:31)

C' **פרי** (Pr. 31:16)

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<sup>103</sup> This phrase comes from Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, ed. John W. Welch (Heldesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 132. Further, see Watson's entire article for a thorough and exhaustive treatment of the use of chiasmus in Hebrew poetry, 118-68.

Regardless of the above structure, all six lexemes listed above are significant in connecting Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31. Words rarely used in the Book of Proverbs could denote authorial intent to link these two pericopes together.

### **Theological Implication**

Much like a professor or teacher might begin a new course by attempting to instill the "fear of God" in his or her students with a gruff manner and warnings of the consequences that will befall sluggards, Lady Wisdom so behaves in her initial speech in the Book of Proverbs. The location of this speech in the first chapter of the book initiates a tone of warning and consequences that befall those who do not heed her words. This scathing beginning is tempered somewhat by Wisdom's promise to imbue with her spirit and words those who turn to her reproof. The security and well being (the idea of **שְׁלוֹמִים**) promised in Pr. 1:33 also tempers the stern speech. This tempering of tone foreshadows the end of the Book in which security and well being prevail and pervade. Just as the one who finds Wisdom dwells in security and peace, the man who finds the Woman of Strength dwells in security and peace. This antithetical idea of calamity verses peace permeates the entire Book of Proverbs. This type of inclusiastic framework between Pr. 1:20-33 and Pr. 31:10-31 reveals this dialectic and leaves the hearer to choose his or her path.

An inclusio is a lens through which to interpret the text; therefore, the interpretation of the Book of Proverbs is a dialectic between calamity and comfort, problems and peace, poverty and prosperity--even death and life. Perhaps Proverbs promises too much. If so, then God's Word completes itself in the New Testament where one must die before one can truly live. The earthly world view in Proverbs is elevated to a spiritual world view in the New Testament. While the follower of the Wisdom of God

(1 Cor. 1:24) might not acquire the wealth of the world that Wisdom promised, he or she will indeed have the security and peace mentioned in Pr. 1:33 and also will have life to the full (Pr. 8:35 and Jn. 10:10).

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