Hunting and Searching: Contrasting Patterns of Female Behavior in Wisdom Literature

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Introduction

The references to women in the ancient biblical/Jewish wisdom corpora remain a source of great debate amongst scholars, with the personifications that feature so prominently in this literature further compounding the problem.[1] Are such figures as Wisdom, Lady Folly, the Strange/Other Woman, and the Woman of Valour embodiments of the quality they most prominently exhibit, functioning as representatives of an attribute or type of woman, or are they to be understood as relating to real flesh-and-blood women? Some scholars argue that they are figurative, metaphorical, or allegorical—i.e., they serve as types or symbols for foreign cults**,** Greek philosophy, etc.**[2]** Others suggest that the Strange Woman passages in Proverbs (2:16–22, 5:1–23, 6:20–35, 7:1–27)—in contrast to the personification of Wisdom (1:20–33, 8:1–36, 9:1–12) and Folly (Prov 9:13–18)—should be read literally as warning against socializing with adulterous

[1] See, for example, Bernhard Lang, *Die weisheitliche Lehrrede* (SBT 54; Stuttgart: KBW, 1972); Roland E. Murphy, "The Personification of Wisdom," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton,* ed. John Day, Robert P. Gordon and H.G.M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 222–33; Richard J. Clifford, "Woman Wisdom in the Book of Wisdom," in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: für Norbert Lohfink, SJ* (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 61–72; idem, *Proverbs*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 23–28.

[2] Leonie J. Archer, *Her Price is Beyond Rubies: The Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine* (JSOTSup 60; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 159–66. Wisdom has frequently been associated with ancient Near Eastern tutelary gods—the ancient Egyptian goddess Maʿat, the goddess of truth/justice: see Christa Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1–9*, WMANT 22; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag., 1966), 93–119; Carole. R. Fontaine, "Proverbs," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 142–52; Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; Doubleday: New York, 2000), 334–38.

women. Taking the Strange Woman to be another man's wife, Michael Fox rejects allegorical-symbolic interpretations and feminist readings alike.[3]

The question has also been addressed from diverse disciplinary approaches—comparative, historical, literary, sociological, ideological, feminist, etc.[4] Carol Newsom maintains that the Strange/Other Woman is a "symbolic figure" representative of a "variety of marginal discourses."[5] Similarly adducing the concept of "otherness," Claudia Camp argues that "Woman—particularly in her sexual nature—becomes the embodiment of defilement." The metaphor has now been fully realized, but also reified: Woman is Strange."[6] Developing Lévi-Strauss and Jameson's theory that literary texts form imaginary ways of resolving social contradictions, Gale Yee contends that Proverbs 1–9 seeks to efface all signs of class tension in Persian Yehud between the (richer) returning exilic ruling elites and the (poorer) Jewish residents.[7]

The argument that "literature is grounded in historical real-life relations" is, of course, notoriously difficult to maintain with respect to wisdom literature.[8] While I do not wish to adduce any particular social-historical

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[3] See Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 134–41, 254–55.

[4] According to Boström, the Strange Woman denotes foreign fertility cults: Gustav Boström, *Proverbiastudien: Die Weisheit und das Fremde Weib in Sprüche 1–9* (Lund: Gleerup, 1935).

[5] Carol A. Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1–9," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 142–60, 149.

[6] Claudia V. Camp, *Wise, Strange and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible* (JSOTSup 320; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 64. A similar approach can be discerned in relation to Qoh 7:26, 28 and 9:9: cf. Choon-Leong Seow, *Ecclesiastes,* AB 18c (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 270–75; Thomas Krüger, *Qohelet* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 145–48.

[7] Gale A. Lee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 135–58; idem, "'I Have Perfumed My Bed with Myrrh': The Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1–9," *JSOT* 43 (1989): 53–68. See also Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1–15* NICOT (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2004), 11; Harold C. Washington, "The Strange Woman (אשה זרה/נכריה) of Proverbs 1–9 and Post-Exilic Judean Society," in *Second Temple Studies* 2*,* ed. T. C. Eskenazi and K. H. Richards (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 217–42; Christl Maier, *Die "Fremde Frau" in Proverbien 1–9*, OBO 14 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 177–214.

[8] Ortega y Gasset (1921), quoted in David J. Sapir, "The Anatomy of Metaphor," in *The Social Use of Metaphor: Essays in the Anthropology of Rhetoric* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 3–32. See, for example, Gerald T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct* (BZAW 15; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 1–12; Fox,

context herein, I propose that the metaphors of hunting and seeking/finding help to concretize the danger and virtue of two contrasting types of women, thus promulgating good behavior in both sexes according to patriarchal norms. The prominence which parental instruction, family ethos, and domestic harmony hold within Proverbs supports the view that the Strange/Other Woman of Proverbs 1–9 represents seductive women who, in engaging in relations with men other than their husbands, threaten the family nucleus and social stability.[9] The patriarchal framework of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Sirach is deeply problematic for many contemporary readers, feminists in particular—from the late 1970s onwards—arguing that the biblical and post-biblical literature suppresses the female voice and regards women as the legitimate object of male dominance.[10] Without detracting from this feminist critique of biblical patriarchal thinking, I wish in this paper to offer an exegetical discussion of the metaphors of hunting and seeking/searching in some of the passages the sage/teacher's usage of fixed stylistic patterns has been adduced.

As figurative expression in which a word or a phrase is shifted from its normal uses to a context where it evokes new meanings, metaphors work as implicit comparisons between two otherwise disparate items.[11] Extending

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Proverbs 1–9, 6–12; Tova Forti, *"Gattung* and *Sitz im Leben*: Methodological Problems in Identifying the 'Wisdom Psalm,'" in *Is There a Wisdom Tradition? New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies*, ed. Mark R. Sneed, AIL 23 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 205–20.

[9] See Tova Forti, "The Isha Zara in Proverbs 1–9: Allegory and Allegorization," *Hebrew Studies* 48 (2007): 89–100. For family structure in the biblical period, cf. Leo G. Perdue et al., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1989); Ken M. Campbell, ed., *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 2003); Joseph Fleishman, *Parent and Child in Ancient Near East and the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999) (Hebrew). For Second Temple period familial values, see Charlotte Hempel, "Family Values in the Second Temple Period," in *Ethical and Unethical in the Old Testament: God and Humans in Dialogue*, ed. Katharine J. Dell, LHBOTS 528 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 211–30.

[10] Cf. Athalya Brenner and Fokkelien Van Dijk-Hemmes, "Proverbs 1–9: An F Voice?" in *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible,* BibInt 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 57–62, 117–26.

[11] Wallace Martin, "Metaphor," in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 760–66; G. Miller, "Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 357–400.

Aristotle's idea that, "all men take a natural pleasure in learning quickly; words denote something; and so those words are pleasantest which give us new knowledge" to human cognition *per se*, Lakoff and Johnson have seminally argued that "The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details . . . what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people."[12] Metaphors thus frequently help to concretize human experience by re-construing it—making sense of the inchoate and filling the frames in which we find ourselves.[13] As Schön argues, metaphors set socially-constructed reality in a new, more complex light, thus functioning as an interpretive tool for the critical analysis of social policy.[14]

In the following, I shall discuss the usage of the hunting and finding/seeking metaphors in Qohelet, Proverbs, Sirach, and 4Q184 in order to show how they function to instil the virtues of good conduct.

The Hunting Metaphor

Of all the varieties of the hunt, the use of fishing and fowling nets was among the oldest and most widespread hunting techniques in ancient Israel.[15] Hunting methods have inspired biblical poetry and prose. The psalmist employs hunting terms to describe both the distress of the persecuted righteous and the retribution meted out to the evildoer. Thus, any investigation of images and metaphors based on this semantic field requires technical analysis.[16] The Bible mentions at least four technical terms associated with trapping: פח יקשים "fowler's trap," רשת "net," מוקשים "snares,"

[12] Aristotle, *Rhet*. 3.10.2; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3.

[13] Gregory Fewster, *Creation Language in Romans 8: A Study in Monosemy* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 91; James W. Fernandez, *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, 1986), 45.

[14] Donald A. Schön, "Generative Metaphor: A Perspective on Problem-Setting in Social Policy," in *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 137–63.

[15] Edwin B. Firmage, "Zoology (Fauna)," *ABD* 6: 1112– 13.

[16] For iconography of various methods of hunting in antiquity, see Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 89–95.

and חבלים "ropes." There are also three associated methods: hiding traps, spreading cords, and setting nets (see Pss 124:7; 140:6). Several hunting metaphors in Job 18:8–10 punctuate the speech of Bildad the Shuhite to convey the instability of the evildoer's prosperity. Each verse contains a pair of hunting terms within the pattern of poetic parallelism as following:

8a–b: רשת//שבכה: The רשת net seizes the victim by its legs (Pss 9:16; 25:15), and another term שבכה 'toils, latticework' also denotes a net (1 Kgs 7:17) which is stretched over a pit or trench (cf. Sir 9:13).

9a–b: פח//צמים: The term פח denotes a snare for birds (cf. Jer 48:44; Amos 3:5; Ps 124:7; Prov 7:22; Qoh 9:12) whereas the nature and mode of operation of the hapax צמים, usually rendered as "net" or "meshwork," remain unclear.

10a–b: חבל//מלכודת: The term חבל "rope" is mentioned in connection with פח (cf. Ps 140:6). Apparently wound around the animal's neck and tightened by means of a special knot after it was caught, the rope was connected to the trap itself. The hapax מלכודת denotes a trap in general. The noun derives from the root לכ"ד "ensnare." It could be spread both as a means of entrapment or as the lure. The trap is set on the path, much like the net spread near a path (cf. Ps 140:6b).[17]

The first text I shall discuss is Qoh 7:23–29, the thematic unity of which demonstrates that it constitutes a single literary pericope. Verse 26 reads: "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains; the one who pleases God escapes her, but the errant is trapped by her."[18] The sage warns here of a type of woman with whom it is dangerous to associate, the participle מוצא indicating that the caution given is based on long experience. The two (masculine plural) homonyms מצודים and חרמים "snares and nets" belong to the fields of hunting / fishing / laying siege and cursing / doom / destruction respectively. The feminine absolute form of מצודה (Qoh 9:12) is associated with the semantic field of fishing. The

[17] See Tova Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs*, VTSup 118 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 84–86.

[18] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

masculine singular מצוֹד in Job 19:6 is interpreted alternatively as net/snare (KJV, NRV) and siege (LXX; NJPS) (cf. also Prov 12:12). In Qoh 9:14, the masculine plural from מצוֹדים denotes "siege works."[19] The terms מָצד and מצוּדה are associated with defense, מצוֹר/מצוּרה also signifying "siege-works."[20] The parallel חרם//מכמרת denotes a "fishing net" (Hab 1:16, 17; Mic 7:2). The plural form חרמים forms part of the phrase משטח חרמים "surface for spreading nets" (Ezek 26:5, 14, 47:10). The homonym חרם denotes "net" and "curse / doom / destruction."

The attribution of snares and nets to the woman's "heart" recalls Jeremiah's description of Israel's adulterous behavior towards God. The heart of the adulterous woman is the organ that directs her steps. In 3:10, Jeremiah depicts Israel as a "faithless wife" who refuses to return to God "with her whole heart." Hosea similarly asserts that God will draw his unfaithful wife back to God by "speaking comfortably unto her heart" (2:16). Qohelet adduces his own heart in 7:25: "I turned, I and my heart/mind, to know and to search around and to seek wisdom and an account of things, so as to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness which is madness." The juxtaposition of the compound אני ולבי "I and my heart" with the seductive woman in v. 26 suggests that Qohelet feels that such women's wiles weave webs that "capture" his heart, drawing him into their deadly embrace. As Fox notes, "The irony [is] heightened by the play on 'heart'; Qohelet's heart, which accompanies him on his investigation in verse 25, leads him to an awareness of the woman's 'heart' in verse 26."[21]

Having used her heart to beguile men, the woman then grasps them firmly in her hands. "Hooked" by her, they fall into her "trap," whence there is no escape. Qohelet deliberately reverses the customary verbal phrase ילכד בפח "will be caught in the trap" (cf. Isa 24:18; Jer 48:44) in order to highlight the power of such women: the "errant" will be trapped by her (יִלָּכֶד בה). Here, the

[19] The LXX, Symm, Syr, and the Vulg. Suggest that the reading should be מצוּרים.
[20] Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 309.
[21] Cf. Michael V. Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, BLS 18 (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1989), 241.

instrumental dative represents the woman as a metonymy for snaring. The meaning of מר as "bitter" is supported by ancient translations (LXX, Vulg., and Syr.) and the portrayal of the adulterous woman in Prov 5:4: ואחריתה מרה כלענה "but her end is bitter as wormwood."[22]

The victim is the חוטא. This term—usually translated as "sinner"—frequently refers in the wisdom literature to errancy, specifically denoting the person who exhibits negative behavior and a lack of social concern/decorum, such as overweening pride: "He who despises his fellow is wrong (חוטא); he who shows pity for the lowly is happy" (Prov 14:21 [NJPS]); "A person without knowledge is surely not good; he who moves hurriedly blunders (חוטא)" (Prov 19:2 [NJPS]). In the present passage, however, its association with hunting via the idea of "missing the mark" cannot be overlooked (cf. Judg 20:16). Prov 8:35–36a explicitly identifies the חוטא as the person who fails to "find" wisdom/life/God: "For he who finds me [Wisdom] finds life and obtains favor from the LORD; but he who misses me injures himself (כי מֹצאי מָצָא חיים ויפק רצון מה' וחֹטאי חמס נפשו); all who hate me love death."[23] Similarly, he is likened to a militiaman in Qoh 9:8: "Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but the one who is errant destroys much good." The חוטא is thus the antithesis of the טוב—the one who "finds" wisdom and life through God's favor.[24]

The second use of the hunting metaphor is employed in the book of Proverbs. As I shall argue, the strange/other woman adduced in Proverbs represents the seductive, adulterous woman. In a similar way to the warning

[22] Antoon Schoors, *Ecclesiastes* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 573. Cf. מר המות "the bitterness of death" in 1 Sam 15:32 (cf. 2 Sam 2:26; Jer 4:18). The Ugaritic *mr(r)* signifying "strong, strengthen," has led some scholars to interpret "stronger than death is the woman." See Charles F. Whitley, *Koheleth: His Language and Thought,* BZAW 148 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1979), 68–69; Lohfink who also adduces Cant. 8:6: עזה כמות אהבה "love is strong as death," takes a further step touching the saying that womankind is "more powerful than death" on his central theme, death: see Norbert Lohfink, *Qoheleth: A Continental Commentary*, trans. S. McEvenue (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 102–3.

[23] חמס also denotes bloody violence.

[24] This discussion is a result of an ongoing project of writing a commentary on Ecclesiastes in collaboration with Katharine J. Dell in the series of the International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (IECOT) by Kohlhammer [forthcoming].

against associating with the seductress in Qohelet embedded within the call to embrace wisdom, the warnings against associating with such women in Proverbs (2:16–22, 5:1–23, 6:20–35, 7:1–27) all occur in cautionary context, each being introduced by a call to embrace wisdom and internalize the sage's teaching (2:1–11, 5:1–2, 6:20–23, 7: 1–4). Chapter 7 portrays how youths are seduced by married women. With a "set purpose," they "lurk at every corner" in order to entrap the unwary in the dark (7:10b, 12b). The root אר"ב "lie in ambush" also belongs to the hunting/military semantic field (cf. Josh 8:4, 14; Judg 9:34; Ps 59:4; Prov 12:6; Job 38:39–40).[25] Unerringly finding her prey (7:15), the enticing/tempting woman describes her bed as covered with fine Egyptian linen and sprinkled with fragrant spices (7:16–17). Using her female wiles, she sways her victims with her eloquence, turning them aside with her smooth talk (7:21; cf. 2:16, 5:3, 6:24). The first metaphor compares the victim to the captured animal led to its death. I suggest that the second be read as: "like a stag being bound to the stocks," thus continuing the same idea. The third—"he is like a bird rushing into a trap"—closes the cycle of seduction. The result clause—"until the arrow pierces its/his liver" (v. 23a)—seems out of place, more logically following v. 22a. It then depicts an animal tied down so that men can shoot at its various organs. In all these cases, the victim is a dumb beast unaware that stalking his prey will prove to be his undoing.[26]

In Prov 6:26, the sage describes women who "hunt down cherished souls (נפש יקרה תצוד)." The MT is obscure, literally reading: "For on behalf of a woman, a harlot, unto a loaf of bread; and the wife of a man hunts a precious soul." This seems to suggest that while a man might be brought to poverty by a harlot, adultery exacts his very life from him,[27] or following Fox's translation: "for a whore costs but a loaf of bread, but a married woman

[25] See also below on 4Q184.
[26] Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs*, 44–49.
[27] See Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC 22 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 36.

hunts for a precious life."[28] Prov 5:4 similarly refers to the poison and deadly threat the adulterous woman poses: "she is bitter as wormwood, [29] sharp as a two-edged sword." Keeping company with her ensnares a man in her wiles, leading him straight into the arms of death.

The third use of the hunting metaphor, which also abounds in portrayals of women appears in the apocryphal book of Sirach—widely accepted as written in Hebrew in Jerusalem at around 180 BCE. In contrast to Proverbs, whose author, date, and social-historical background remain obscure, the circumstances of the composition of Sirach are much more clear cut. Sirach's attitude towards women, so prominently displayed in his "best seller," has been widely discussed. Some scholars contend that he displays an androcentric or rigidly patriarchal attitude towards women, and accuse him of being "motivated by a personal negative bias against them." [30] Others maintain that, while many of his statements offend contemporary Western sensibilities, he was simply a "typical oriental male," whose outlook was dictated by the norms and conventions of a society in which women were denied any free or independent existence.[31] Collins argues that his misogyny is due neither to Hellenistic influences nor to his urban context. His individual personality plays a central role; he merely favors passive women disinclined to question patriarchal authority. [32] His warnings against

[28] Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 228.

[29] מרה כלענה "bitter as wormwood" recalls the "water of bitterness that brings the curse" (Num 5:19–28)—despite the woman being made to drink it in the ordeal.

[30] See Warren C. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis*, BJS 38 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 7:332–34. McKeating accuses Ben Sira of being a misogynist: see Henry McKeating, "Jesus ben Sira's Attitude to Women," *ExpTim* 85 (1973–74): 85–87.

[31] See Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 90.

[32] John J. Collins, "Marriage, Divorce, and Family in Second Temple Judaism," in *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 104–62, 143–45. Camp argues for the relationship between the ideology/cultural system of honour-shame depicted by Ben Sira and his instructions concerning dominating women's sexuality: see Claudia V. Camp, "Understanding a Patriarchy: Women in Second Century Jerusalem Through the eyes of Ben Sira," in *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish women in the Greco-Roman World* (Atlanta; Scholars Press, 1991), 20–39; idem, "Honor and Shame in Ben Sira: Anthropological and Theological Reflections," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research*, BZAW 255 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 171–87.

associating with women who lead the unthinking astray—with the resulting dangers to marital harmony and social stability—thus belong to the same type of moral conduct and family ethos promulgated in Proverbs and Qohelet.[33]

In 25:19 (MS C), the innocent victim is entrapped by the wickedness of women עליה (חוטא יפול).[34] The "heart" of the seductive woman of Qoh 7:26 is described in Sir 25:13 (MS C) as "wicked" (לב כל רעה).[35] The final stanza of 26:22b–23 notes: "A married woman is a deadly snare for those who embrace her. An impious woman will be given as spouse to the lawless man, but a devout wife is given to whoever fears the Lord."[36] On the basis of Qoh 7:26, Skehan suggests that the retroverted Hebrew behind the expanded Greek translation of Sirach (GII) and Syriac read מצודת מות "a deadly snare" rather than מגדל מות "tower of death" (cf. Prov 6:26; Sir 9:3).[37]

Sir 9:1–9 sets out the dangers femininity poses to a man: he becomes "jealous of the wife of your youth [bosom]" (v. 1), may "give himself to a woman" (v. 2),[38] "go near a loose woman" (v. 3b), "dally with a singing girl/banquet musician" (v. 4), or "look intently at a virgin" (v. 5).[39] The Hebrew text of Sir 9:3 (MS A) also adduces the snare. The root קר"ב in 9:3

[33] See Ibolya Balla, *Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality* (DCLS 8; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 169–218.

[34] Although Collins suggests understanding "sinner" here in the light of Qoh 7:26, Sir 26:3 (MS C) clearly makes a contrast here with the good/devout wife who is the lot of the one who fears God (ירא ה'): see John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 67.

[35] The Greek text reads: "Worst of all wounds is that of the heart, worst of all evils is that of a woman" (Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 343).

[36] Ibid., 345. Unless otherwise noted, the Hebrew text of Sirach follows Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, VTSup 68 (Atlanta: SBL, 2006).

[37] Patrick. W. Skehan, "Tower of Death or Deadly Snare?" *CBQ* 16 (1954): 154. Pahk notes that Sirach parallels Qoh 7:26, both passages seeking to underscore the importance of acting rightly before God by adducing the dangers that women pose as ensnarers and entrappers of innocent victims: see Johan Pahk, "Women as Snares: A Metaphor of Warning in Qoh 7:26 and Sir 9:3," in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom Festschrift M. Gilbert*, ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen, BETL 143 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 397–404.

[38] This reading follows G and the Syr MS A repeats the אל תקנא "do not be jealous" of v. 1a.

[39] Camp associates the discourse on forbidden sexual relationships in 9:1–9 with the male patriarchal concern with personal sexual and household control in ancient Israel: see Claudia V. Camp, *Ben Sira and the Men Who Handle Books*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 50 (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2013), 54–74.

(קרב אל תקרב אל אשה זרה/ פן תפול במצודתיה—"Do not go near a strange woman, lest you fall into her snares") bears the biblical meaning of sexual intercourse (Gen 20:4; Lev 18:6, 19). Sirach replaces Qohelet's מצודים here with the feminine plural מצודות, reinforcing the specifically feminine nature of the snare. He also details the consequences of falling prey to her wiles: she will "trample your strength" (9:2b), you will "fall into her snares" (9:3b), be "caught by her tricks" (9:4b), "stumble and incur penalties for her" (9:5b), "lose your inheritance" (9:6b), and "teach her an evil lesson to your own hurt" (9:1b).[40]

Turning to the fourth example of the hunting metaphor related to women in 4Q184, the titles given by scholars to 4Q184 indicate that it is frequently understood as a personification of the wicked woman. Originally entitled "The Wiles of the Wicked Woman" by John Allegro, its first publisher, Geza Vermes subsequently renamed it "The Seductress."[41] Numerous scholars have noted the close affinities the scroll exhibits with the Strange/Other Woman and Lady Folly in Proverbs 1–9.[42] Unlike Proverbs and Sirach, however, 4Q184 offers no practical instruction regarding marriage or women in general. It also differs markedly from the biblical wisdom texts in its "mythological" dualism.[43] While the seductress's boudoir, dyed Egyptian linen bedcovers, and perfumed spices in the biblical text carry overtly erotic connotations, the woman in 4Q184 represents darkness and death: "Her hands go down to the pit, her feet sink to act wickedly" (line 5).[44] Those

[40] Di Lella (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 216) translates "trample upon your dignity," which borrows the imagery from Deut 33:29 in accordance with James L. Crenshaw, "*W*^{e}*dōrēk ʿal bāmŏtê ʾareṣ*," *CBQ* 34 (1972): 39–53.

[41] John M. Allegro, *Qumrân Cave 4.I (4Q158–4Q186)*, DJD 5 (Oxford, 1968), 82–85; idem, "Wiles of the Wicked Woman: A Sapiential Work from Qumran's Fourth Cave," *PEQ* 96 (1964): 53–55. See more recently Garcia F. Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 1:376–79; Géza Vermès, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 2004).

[42] John Strugnell, "Notes en marge du volume V des 'Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan,'" *RevQ* 7 (1970): 263–68; Matthew J. Goff, *Discerning Wisdom: The Sapiential Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls,* VTSup 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 104–18.

[43] See Scott C. Jones, "Wisdom's Pedagogy: A Comparison of Proverbs VII and 4Q184," *VT* 53 (2003): 65-81; Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 104–18.

[44] Sidnie W. Crawford, "Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly at Qumran," *DSD* 5 (1998), 355-66.

scholars who view the figure as a metaphor or allegory thus contend that it represents the Roman Empire, a rival sect, the representative of "women" in general, or a personification of evil.[45]

According to Kampen, the Hebrew text of frg. 1, line 2b should be reconstructed: [לבה יכין פחין וכליותיה מק[שות שפתיה—"Her heart prepares snares and her inner being/kidneys tr[aps. Her lips]."[46] Allegro prefers the reading עול לבה יכין פחוז "her heart's perversion prepares wantonness," the theme of licentiousness clearly appearing in lines 13 and 15. While this reconstruction does not explicitly adduce the semantic field of hunting, the idea of ambushing one's victims is reflected in phrases such as תשחר תמיד "she seeks continually" and במסתרים תארוב "lies in wait" in lines 1 and 11. These recall Prov 7:12: בכל פינה תארוב "lies in wait at every corner." The author also makes extensive use of the image of the "pit": "The depth of the pit" / "the pit of her legs." As in the biblical texts (cf. Ps 30:3; Prov 1:12; Isa 38:18; Ezek 31:16), the terms שוח שחת and שוחה "depth of the pit" are synonymous with [לה]שאו "Sheol" (lines 3, 5 [x 2], 6, 11, 17). The victim of her entrapment is identified by a striking list of pietistic terms: the "righteous man," "upright man," "those who keep the commandments." The seductress "preys upon" his guilelessness, עול לבה "her perverted heart" exploiting his "purity of heart" and ensnaring him into her trap. Thus ambushed, he falls into the pit, thereby leaving God's path that leads to life and prosperity. As in the biblical texts, the pit is explicitly associated with death/Sheol.

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[45] See Jacob S. Licht, "The Wiles of the Wicked Woman," in *The Bible and the History of Israel*, ed. B. Oppenheimer (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Faculty of Humanities, 1972), 289–96 (Hebrew); Magen Broshi, "Beware of the Wiles of the Wanton Woman," *BAR* 9 (1983): 54–56; Rick D. Moore, "Personification of the Seduction of Evil: 'The Wiles of the Wicked Woman,'" *RevQ* 10 (1981): 505–19, 506; Allegro, "Wiles of the Wicked Woman," 53; Jean Carmignac, "Poèm allégorique sur la secte rivale," *RevQ* 5 (1965): 601–74; Joseph M. Baumgarten, "On the Nature of the Seductress in 4Q184," *RevQ* 15 (1991): 133–43; Johann Maier, "Wiles of the Wicked Woman," in *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. VanderKam and L. H. Schiffman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 2:976.

[46] See Strugnell, "Notes en marge du volume V," 264. Cf. John Kampen, *Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 233–49, 239.

The seeking/finding metaphor

As observed above, the hunting metaphor denoting the seductress frequently forms part of the teacher-sage's call to seek for wisdom (see Proverbs, Qohelet, and Sirach). Qoh 7:23—"All this I have tested by wisdom; I said, 'I will be wise'; but it is far from me"—serves to introduce the theme of the elusiveness of wisdom that presents the reader with a set of binary choices—wisdom vs. folly, righteousness vs. wickedness, integrity vs. deception. The unit's cohesion revolves around the catchwords בקש "seek," מצא "find," and חשבון "sum of things."[47] The root נס"י "to test" attached to the *instrumentalis* בחכמה "by wisdom" appears to refer to cognitive energy and the investment of time in attempting to achieve understanding.[48] The use of the cohortative אחכמה "I will be wise" exemplifies a wishful thought or unreachable desire, linking up with the end of the verse. The autobiographical style (with the exception of v. 27) is indicated by the first suffix conjugation, reinforced by Qohelet's self-quotation אמרתי אחכמה "I said: I will be wise." The juxtaposition of modes of pondering and the adjectives רחוק "far off" and עמוק "deep"—"What happens is far off and deep, deep down; who can find it out?" (v. 24)—highlight the distance and depth of wisdom and mental effort required to find the right answers.

In line with this, Job 11:7 portrays wisdom as mysterious and unfathomable: החקר אלוה תמצא, אם עד תכלית שדי תמצא "Would you reach the mystery of God? Would you reach the limit of the Almighty?"[49] The divine prerogative of revealing the secrets of nature's phenomena is portrayed

[47] Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 200–207.

[48] Cf. לנסות בחידות "to test by riddles" in 1 Kgs 10:1.

[49] The term חקר expresses a metonymic relation between the search for deep/divine wisdom/mystery of God (see e.g., Job 5:9; 9:10; 11:7; 28:27) and the depth of sea and water (cf. Jer 31:37; Job 38:16). Job 28:11-14 (cf. 38:16) links the sources of the rivers, springs and sea and those of Wisdom: see Stephen A. Geller, "'Where is Wisdom?': A Literary Study of Job 28 in its Settings," in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* , ed. J. Neusner, B. A. Levine, and E. S. Frerichs (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987, 155-88) (reprinted in *Sacred Enigmas: Literary Religion in the Hebrew Bible* [London-New York: Routledge, 1966], 87-107.) See also Scott C. Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom: Job 28 as Poetry*, BZAW 398 (Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 130-31.

within the hymnic refrain in Job 28 about the elusiveness of wisdom and the limits of human accomplishment והחכמה מאין תמצא, ואי זה מקום בינה "but where can wisdom be found; Where is the source of understanding?" (v. 12 [NJPS]; cf. v. 20).[50] Qohelet's rhetorical question, "Who can find it out?" (v. 24) reflects human frustration in the face of the enigmatic phenomena of life: "One never finding ultimate wisdom, the world remains hermetically sealed to human understanding."[51] This circumstance demands persistent, tenacious efforts, signified by an accumulation of cognitive verbs: "I turned, I and my mind, to know and to search around and to seek wisdom and the account of things" (v. 25). Qohelet lays out the process of drawing conclusions and associating them with one another to reach a comprehensive assessment.[52]

The allusions to women in 7:26, 28 occur in the context of finding solutions to the enigmatic choices that must be made in life in vv. 27 and 29: "'Look, this is what I found,' says Qohelet, adding one to one to find an account of things (מצא חשבון)" (v. 27); "See, I found only this, that God made human beings straightforwardly, but they seek to devise many schemes (בקשו חשבונות רבים)" (v. 29).[53] The act of seeking (בקש) but not finding (מצא) represents Qohelet's retrospective evaluation of his life, having devoted

[50] Greenstein ascribes the actions described in 28:1-11 to God rather than human applying the Mesopotamian model of a divine search for cosmic wisdom in the depths of the earth and the heights of heavens. Edward L. Greenstein, "The Poem on Wisdom in Job 28 in its Conceptual and Literary Contexts," in *Job 28: Cognition in Context*, ed. Ellen van Wolde, BibInt 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 253-80.

[51] Y. A. P. Goldman, *Qoheleth*, BHQ 18 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004), 95*.

[52] See James L. Crenshaw, "Qoheleth's Understanding of Intellectual Inquiry," in *Qohelet in the Context of Wisdom*, ed. A. Schoors, BETL 136 (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1998), 205–24, 219.

[53] Gordis remarks on Qohelet's struggle "to use Hebrew for quasi-philosophic purposes, a use to which the language had not previously been applied": see Robert Gordis, *Koheleth: The Man and His World* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 88. Machinist similarly argues that Qohelet reflects on the reasoning process itself, evident in his innovative and explicit employment of conceptualization and abstraction (מקרה, חשבון, מעשה, עולם); see Peter Machinist, "Fate, *Miqreh*, and Reason: Some Reflections on Qoheleth and Biblical Thought," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*, ed. Z. Zevit, S. Gittin, and M. Sokoloff (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 159–74.

himself to a search that has yielded no results.[54] As Anthony Ceresko observes, the multiple nuances the root מצ"א carries in Qoh. 7:26–29 ("grasp, find, learn, teach") represent an antanaclasis—i.e., the repetition of word or phrase in which on its second appearance the word carries a different meaning.[55] The contextual meanings of the root in Qohelet as a whole (x 17) relate not only to God's creation but also to His unfathomable divine activity within the world.[56]

In contrast to seductresses, who stand ready at every corner to entrap the guileless and ensnare them in their net, the searching/finding metaphor relates to a woman who is very difficult to find ("catch"). In Qoh 7:28, the root מצ"א indicates the elusiveness of this search. In contrast to the iniquitousness of the seductress, the virtuous woman is less than "one in a thousand": "That is what my soul has sought again and again but not found. One human being in a thousand I have found, but a woman among all these I have not found" (Qoh 7:28; cf. Sir 6:6[5] [MS A]). The phrase אחד מאלף "one in a thousand" denotes the search for the ideal woman as unattainable.[57]

The idiomatic usage of בק"ש and נפש "mind/soul" (בקשה נפשי) in Qoh 7:28 to denote the eager search for wisdom (cf. Sir 51:19, 20, 26) echoes Canticles: בקשתי את שאהבה נפשי "I will seek him whom my soul loves" (cf. 3:2b, 3:1, 5:6). The fact that finding one woman "among thousands" appears to be a hopeless task creates a clear dichotomy between the adulteress and ideal wife—the two poles of real-life family relationships. Qohelet portrays the ideal wife in

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[54] The root מצ"א occurs seven times in Qoh 7:26–29. For the idiomatic use of בק"ש ("to search") and מצ"א ("to reach, find") as indicating an unattainable target, cf. Ezek 22:30: ואבקש … ולא מצאתי—"and I searched … but I found no one."

[55] Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Formation of Antanaclasis (*mṣ*' 'to find'// *mṣ*' 'to reach, overtake, grasp') in Hebrew Poetry, Especially in the Book of Qoheleth," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 551–69, 568.

[56] Luca Mazzinghi, "The Verbs מצא "To find" and בקש "To Search" in the Language of Qohelet," in *The Language of Qohelet in its Context: Essays in Honour of Prof. A. Schoors on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday,* OLA 164 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 91–120, 104–5.

[57] The same idiomatic expression is attested in Sir. 6:6(5) (MS A): אנשי שלומך יהיו רבים ובעל סודך אחד מאלף—"May those whom you greet be many, but may your adviser be one in a thousand." Here, the "one in a thousand" is a "soul mate"—that one person who wins your innermost trust and confidence. Cf. Prov 20:6b: "But a faithful man who can find?," in which מי ימצא idiomatically parallels the unreachable trust/trustful person (בעל סודך אחד מאלף).

9:9a: "Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun" (cf. Prov 5:18–19).

Eighteen of the occurrences of מצ"א in Proverbs relate to wisdom's beneficial aspects. The son who seeks diligently for wisdom will eventually succeed in finding her (2:1–5). Wisdom extols her qualities of knowledge, discretion, cunning, and wit, promising mankind honour, length of life, wealth, and hope for the future to those who find her.[58] The root מצ"א appears in the opening question of the most well-known passage relating to the "virtuous wife"—Proverbs 31: "A woman of valour, who can find?" (Prov 31:10).[59] Here, "the reader is prone to expect the negative answer 'No one,' but the passage proceeds to extol the exemplary qualities of the woman who is praised by her husband" (vv. 28–31).[60] Prov 19:14 similarly portrays the ideal wife as a gift from God: "A prudent wife (אשה משכלת) is from the LORD" (cf. Sir 40:23b [MS B]). Not only does she ensure her husband's happiness but she also brings God's blessing upon him: מצא אשה מצא טוב ויפק רצון מה' "He who finds a wife has found happiness, and he will win the favor of the LORD" (Prov 18:22; cf. 31:23).

The LXX expands the MT here via two devices, identifying the wife as "good" (cf. Syr., Targum, and Vulg.) and adding a further couplet: "He who drives out a good woman drives out goodness, and he who holds onto an adulterous woman is a fool and a sinner." This may reflect a word play on the root מצ"א based on a reading of the Hebrew as מוציא אשה טובה מוציא טוב "He who drives out a good woman drives out goodness." The play between מצא "found" and מוציא "drives out" allows the translator to adduce the

[58] Cf. Prov 1:28; 3:4, 13, 8:17, 35, 24:14; cf. Job 28:12–13. See Daniel J. Estes, "Seeking and Finding in Ecclesiastes and Proverbs," in *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually*, ed. K. Dell and w. Kynes (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 118–29.

[59] The portrait of the "woman of valour" (Prov 31:10–31) is frequently said to represent the feminine personification of wisdom: see Claudia V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985), 186–91; Thomas P. McCreesh, "Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31," *RB* 92 (1985): 25–46; Al Wolters, *The Song of the Valiant Woman* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2001), 138–41. The poem nonetheless conceptualizes the industrious wife as the ideal wife.

[60] Estes, "Seeking and Finding," 125.

consequences of each act—the "driving out" of the good wife and the "holding onto" of the adulterous woman. The "fool and sinner" also corresponds to the errant person who misses the mark (חוטא) in Qoh 7:26.[61] The thematic and stylistic affinities between Prov 18:22 and Qoh 7:26, 28 thus appear to reflect a debate over the qualities of the righteous woman based on a play of words between מצא (Prov 18:22), מוצא (Qoh 7:26), and לא מצאתי (Qoh 7:28).[62]

The root מצ"א also denotes the search for wisdom and the ideal woman alike in Sirach.[63] Describing the pursuit of this goal in a sequence of sapiential terms, he suggests that a good wife must be sought out in the same way as wisdom: דרש וחקר בקש ומצא והחזקת ואל תרפה "Search her out, discover her; seek her and you will find her" (6:27 [MS A]). Sir 6:27 and 51:13 also both employ the root בק"ש "to seek," urging those who find wisdom "not to let her go" (cf. Prov 4:6).[64] The motif of seeking and finding wisdom is also characteristic of the wisdom poems in Sir 14:20–15:10 and 51:13–22. Two adjacent "better than" sayings similarly express the value of searching for wisdom and a good wife: "A child and a city will preserve one's name, but better than either is finding wisdom (מוצא חכמה). Cattle and orchards make a person flourish, but better than either, a devoted wife (אשה נחשקת)" (40:19 [MS B]).[65]

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[61] The exegetical Greek version of Proverbs—which recalls Qoh 7:26—is echoed in a custom adduced in the Babylonian Talmud designed to "find out" whether a man was destined to have a happy or unhappy marriage: "In the West, they used to ask a man who married a wife thus: *Maza* or *Moze*? '*Maza'*, for it is written: *Whoso findeth* [maza] *a wife findeth a great good* [Prov 18:22]. '*Moze'*, for it is written: *And I find* [moze] *more bitter than death the woman* [Qoh 7:26]" (*b*. Ber. 8a; cf. *b*. Yebam. 63b).

[62] Tova Forti, "Conceptual Stratification in LXX Prov 26,11: Toward Identifying the Tradents Behind the Aphorism," *ZAW* 119 (2007): 241–58.

[63] The root מצ"א serves as a key term in the wisdom poem in 51:13–30 (x 4).

[64] For a detailed analysis of the wisdom poems, see Balla, *Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality*, 169–218.

[65] Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 463. Although the two cola of 40:19bc are missing in G they are clearly attested in MS B. Yadin suggests reconstructing the fragmentary Masada Scroll as: "A child and [city est]ablish a name, but better than both he that findeth [wisdom]; [Young cattle and planting maketh] a kinsman [to flourish,] [But better than both is a woman beloved] (40:19–19c MS M): see Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of Ben Sira of Masada* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society and The Shrine of the Book, 1965), 40.

Intrinsic vs. extrinsic analysis

In her study of Proverbs, Gale Yee distinguishes between extrinsic and intrinsic analysis, the former seeking to reconstruct the social situation in which a text was written, the latter paying primary attention to its literary nature. In order to argue that Proverbs 1–9 focuses on the tensions between the wise/other woman to present us with the fiction of a classless society, Yee must pin down the text's specific historical circumstance. Because the text is devoted to removing all signs of its social setting, however, this must be adduced from other sources. As Roland Boer observes, Yee is in danger of falling into the trap of the hermeneutical circle here—employing texts to reconstruct a social context in the light of which the meaning of the text is then adduced.[66]

In this contribution, I have sought to focus on the intrinsic—literary—aspects of the text, paying particular attention to the function of two metaphors portraying women in a cluster of texts. The texts deriving from diverse religious, cultural, and social environments—biblical, post-biblical, and Second Temple sectarian—any historical comparisons are naturally difficult to make. While the post-biblical texts may well relate to the biblical ones, the social-historical context of one—if it can even be adduced—cannot be transferred to that of another. At the same time, however, I have sought to anchor the literary aspect in a "performative context" via Lakoff and Johnson's claim that "most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature" and Schön's concept of "generative metaphors."

In this framework, I would like to suggest that the two metaphors serve two particular functions in the didactic context of urging people to internalize behavioral values to promote integration into the social order that will ensure maintenance of the family fabric. They do so in very contrasting ways themselves, however. As has been noted by numerous

[66] Roland Boer, "Review of Gale Yee's *Poor Banish Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible*," *The Bible & Critical Theory* 2.3 (2006), 41.3: http://novaojs.newcastle.edu.au/ojsbct/index.php/bct/article/view/112/96.

scholars, the "negative" image of woman in wisdom literature takes multiple forms—the strange woman, the alien woman, the evil woman, the foolish woman, the prostitute, the wife of another, the neighbor's wife. The hunting metaphor explicates this phenomenon, accentuating the fact that this figure is ubiquitous, "lurks at every corner" to spread her snares and traps for the unwary. Here, she is positioned as the "subject agent," being attributed with male characteristics and domains in order to highlight the danger she poses. As Davies and Harré note, "A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire ... a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts . . ." [67] Paradoxically, the hunting metaphor positions the woman in the male hegemonic role in order to concretize the risks of female seductiveness. Rather than becoming "part of the text's curious ability to avoid being pinned down," this multiplication can be read as an explicit marker of the omnipresent, "clear and present danger" of improper sexual relations.[68]

In contrast, the metaphor or finding/seeking exemplifies the completely opposite tendency, concentrating all women into an "ideal"—a "one in a thousand." Hereby, it imposes a unitary standard under which all women are to be subsumed, highlighting her unique qualities and distinctive features. Rather than posing a risk to male society, she is the "jewel in its crown"—the pearl above all price. In her quintessential essence as woman, she is the thing to be sought above all else.

The disparity in form between the two metaphors serves to ground their functioning, sharpening the dichotomy between the adulteress and the ideal wife. Against the presence of the Strange Woman "on every street corner" the ideal woman is "one in a thousand" and thus should be searched for. In

[67] Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré, "Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 20.1 (1990), 43–63, 46: http://www.massey.ac.nz/~alock/position/position.htm.
[68] Boer, "Review," 41.4.

concretizing two contrasting types of women, they propound the male view of society and instill its virtues in the readers.

Conclusion

This article examines two sets of metaphors—hunting and seeking/finding—that are employed in biblical and post-biblical wisdom texts in order to represent two contrasting types of women. The former paints seductive women in violent and vicious terms as using their hearts to ambush, entrap, ensnare, and enchain the guileless. The innocence and simplicity of the latter make them ready prey for female wiles, against which they must be constantly on their guard, for such women abound. The wise and the righteous, however, are urged to set their hearts on steadfastly seeking the greatest—and rarest—prize of all, the virtuous woman. The two metaphors serve to exemplify and instil patriarchal family values, the first by underscoring the danger posed by seductive woman who lurk at every corner, the second by epitomizing her as an ideal, "one in a thousand." Metaphors of hunting and searching are germane to the pedagogical approach of the teacher/sage and are to be treated as a vehicle of instruction. Rather than allegorical, the women to which they refer are thus better understood as real-life figures.