

WISDOM'S PEDAGOGY: A COMPARISON OF PROVERBS 7 AND 4Q184

by Scott C. Jones

With speech smoother than butter, but with a heart set on war; with words that were softer than oil, but in fact were drawn swords. Psalm 55:21 NRSV

INTRODUCTION¹

Scholarly inquiry into the canonical witness of both the instruction and sentence literature of Proverbs has largely been governed by concerns to answer questions of historical, linguistic, and theological nature. The first of these includes the dating and compositional history of the various portions of the book. The connection of Proverbs with Egyptian literature has been well canvassed, and examination of foreign Semitic influence² (both East and West) is still in its nascent stages. Likewise, central questions have been the book's *sitz im leben*³, and, more particularly, the possibility of a school setting behind the instruction as it is presented in these collections.⁴ In addition, from the patristic era up to the present day, the topic of the personification of wisdom, especially as she is presented in chapter 8, has pervaded virtually all commentary on this book.

But these concerns have detracted from what should perhaps be one of the most obvious foci of all: that of the process of teaching and learning that is often explicit and always implicit in the text itself. As Fox notes, "The book of Proverbs is, above all, a didactic text... [I]t proceeds from, reflects, and expresses certain beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning."⁵ A more acute inquiry into the pedagogical method governing Proverbs gives us a clearer understanding of both how the teacher *formed*

¹ All translations are the mine unless otherwise noted.

² See, for example, Stuart D. Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

³ See, for example, Nili Shupak, "The 'Sitz im Leben' of the Book of Proverbs in the Light of a Comparison of Biblical and Egyptian Wisdom Literature," *RB* 94 (1986): 98-114.

⁴ For a good overview of this topic, see Michael V. Fox, "The Social Location of the Book of Proverbs," in *Texts Temples, and Traditions. Essays in Honor of Menahem Haran*. (ed. M. V. Fox, et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 227-239. For archaeological evidence, see Andre Lemaire, *Les écoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'ancien Israel* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1981). Other studies include Friedemann Golka, "Die israelitische Weisheitsschule oder 'der Kaisers neue Kleider'," *VT* 33: 257-70; David Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah* (JSOTSup 109; Sheffield: Almond, 1991); and, recently, G.I. Davies, "Were there schools in ancient Israel?" in *Wisdom in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honour of J.A. Emerton* (ed. John Day, R.P. Gordon, and H.G.M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 199-211.

⁵ Michael Fox, "The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2," *JBL* 113 (1994): 233-34.

the student by the instruction and how the student *was formed* by that instruction.⁶ The focus of this paper will primarily be on the former. By focusing on the implied author as the broker of wisdom, one may also gain an entrée into the ideology that governs the accompanying instruction. As Newsom states, "Because of the social nature of discourse in which subjectivity is established, it can never be ideologically neutral."⁷

Proverbs 7 is a titillating text governed by a complex pedagogical process. Its characters are four: The father⁸ instructs from the sidelines. Lady Wisdom is the object to be grasped, the prize to be won. And the lad who lacks sense faces the strange woman, who, dressed like a prostitute, hunts her prey in the open squares. The "son" of verse 1 is a recipient of this instruction.⁹ It is his duty to apply this wisdom to his own life so that he will not have to face the same perilous fate as all the other senseless lads she has raped. The metaphorical world of Proverbs 7 mirrors something of the confusing nature of reality. Both erotic and repulsive description points toward the same "strange woman." In some ways the pedagogical goals of the father seem to be undercut by the very attractiveness of the imagery with which he presents his villainous subject. Thus, Proverbs 7 is an ideal text for examining the complexities of the teaching and learning process in the wisdom traditions of ancient Israel.

However, little formal attention has been given to the pedagogy of extra-biblical wisdom texts, especially those texts that may have been directly dependent upon Proverbs for their themes and content, or to a comparison of these texts with the pedagogical methods of biblical wisdom. Though the book of Proverbs itself has scant attestation at Qumran,¹⁰ several documents¹¹ provide exceptional points of contact with the canonical book. The secondary focus of this paper will be on 4Q184, also known as "The Wiles of the Wicked Woman"¹² – a document that very self-consciously relies on the treatment of the Strange Woman and Lady Folly in Collection I, especially in Proverbs 5-7. Here, however, it becomes obvious that, in this cosmic document, the

⁶ The latter is the primary focus of William P. Brown's work, *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). Here he bridges the gap between the biblical text and contemporary ethical theory by focusing on character formation.

⁷ Carol Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. Peggy L. Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 143.

⁸ It is well-founded to assume that this is an actual father-son relationship. As Crenshaw ("Education in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 104 (1985): 601-615) states, "[E]very single use of father and son within Proverbs can be understood as precisely that, a father instructing his son rather than technical language for teacher and student" (614).

⁹ The singular addressee will be the heuristic assumption of the paper. However, in verse 24, the addressees are "sons" (*bānīm*) in the plural. There is no need to emend the MT here, following the LXX, as Fichtner (BHS) suggests (see 5:7^{a-a}). The switch between the singular and the plural is quite common in poetry, and the MT of 7:24 is certainly the *lectio difficilior*.

¹⁰ Proverbs^a (4Q102) and Proverbs^b (4Q103) are the only two representatives, containing 39 words or portions of words and 125 words or portions of words respectively. See Nathan Jastram, "Proverbs, Book of," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Lawrence Schiffman and James Vanderkam; 2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000) 2:701-702.

¹¹ See Daniel J. Harrington. "Wisdom Texts," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2:976-980.

¹² First published (though faultily) by John Allegro, "Wiles of the Wicked Woman: A Sapiential Work from Qumran's Fourth Cave," *PEQ* 96 (1964): 53-55. The authoritative edition is now that of Allegro in *Qumran Cave 4.1 (4Q158-4Q186)* (*DJD*, V; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 82-85, pl. XXVIII (Frag. 1).

character of the strange woman has been transformed to some extent by the authors of the document – and for very different purposes.¹³ Such a focus is particularly profitable as it reveals the exegesis of the community and how the pedagogy of Proverbs 1-9 has been re-appropriated in a different pedagogical schema.

Unlike Proverbs 7, the metaphors of 4Q184 are more clearly defined. The pedagogical reigns are tighter, so to speak. One character, the Wicked Woman, is the recipient of all 17 lines of its harsh description. The cosmic dimension is emphasized, and the instruction is imbued with the dualistic and apocalyptic elements of the religion of the Dead Sea sect.

Proverbs 7 and 4Q184 may be compared with great profit. Through an investigation these texts, we gain an entrée into the various metaphorical and sociological worlds in which they were created. These worlds provide their wisdom-teachers with tools for wisdom instruction. By evaluating and comparing the complexity and effectiveness with which the teachers act to form the subjectivity of their students for counteracting opposition on the path to wisdom, it is the thesis of this paper that the pedagogical method presented in the text of Proverbs 7 is a more effective pedagogy than that of 4Q184. In seeking to prove this thesis, this paper will focus on how each implied instructor utilizes the metaphors and language of their worlds as teaching tools, operates to control reality, and treats speech as a central theme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PROVERBS 7: THE STRANGE WOMAN

The Strange Woman as a Vehicle of Instruction

Chapter 7 of the book of Proverbs tells a tale of seduction and war. Its focus is on the true "heroine" of the book of Proverbs, the strange woman (*ʾiššā zārā*), and her unsuspecting prey (*naʿar ḥesar-lēb*, v7). As Murphy states, "More lines are given to the topic of the strange woman than to any other figure, even to Lady Wisdom."¹⁴ A description of her seduction takes up over half of the verses in the chapter (vv10-23). Here the father's instruction or editorial comment is minimal. The vividness of the description should suffice to impress the lesson indelibly on the student's mind.

But who is this strange woman? Examination of Proverbs 7 has been bound fairly consistently by the felt need to answer in some way Boström's thesis concerning her cult loyalties to Aphrodite-Astarte. Uncovering her identity has become a sort of fixation that has received an unwarranted amount of attention, and, in my view, it has led most of these scholars away from the main points of the passage.

While it is essential to examine the nature or identity of the *vehicle* by which the father teaches the son (*benī*, v1) his instruction, it is perhaps more incisive to

¹³ The identity of this Wicked Woman in 4Q184 is as elusive as the identity of the strange woman in Collection I. We will deal with various interpretations of her identity in a later section.

¹⁴ Roland Murphy. "Wisdom and Eros in Proverbs 1-9," *CBQ* 50 (1988), 600.

understand *how the father utilizes that vehicle* and shapes it to impress upon the son a very intentional picture of both the real seduction and the real danger of the adulteress' lascivious advance. Even by the name with which the father refers to her, she is portrayed as a hostile figure. R. Martin-Achard states, "The other is the outsider whose behavior endangers the existence of the group because he/she stands outside the laws of the community... Thus *zār* "other" can acquire a rather negative meaning ("dangerous, hostile")."¹⁵ However, with regard to her identity, Murphy states soberly that "[T]he concept of 'stranger' simply lacks clarity and prevents a specific interpretation. I would infer from this that she is an open-ended character."¹⁶ She is no less elusive to the reader of the text than she was to her victims. It seems that we may safely say, however, that "the strange woman of the early chapter is to be seen as a symbol of Folly, and a foil for presenting the charms of Wisdom."¹⁷ She is in some way both a representative of reality and a construct of the father's imagination. She stands in bold relief to Woman wisdom of the accompanying portrait of chapter 8.¹⁸ Camp notes that "The strange woman in Prov 1-9 is then understood as an imaginative construct, formulated 'over-against' an even more imaginative Wisdom, whose full-orbed characterization includes but is not limited to this one pattern."¹⁹ She is the culmination of all the father's wisdom-experience and the best image for his use in training his son.

Speech and Reality

In engaging with any biblical text, we face the blurring of phenomena and description, object and subject. The sages responsible for the authorship and editing of these collections did so with a view to the emphasis (and thereby lack of emphasis) of various principles. This is no less true of biblical wisdom literature. As Fox states, "Wisdom Literature is the work of the literati, and it is *their* notion of wisdom we are reading... It is a deliberate and programmatic construal of reality."²⁰

But in the text of Proverbs 7 itself, the father is the agent of control. Operating within a hierarchy of control (i.e., sages > father > strange woman > woman's speech, etc.), the father bears responsibility for the pedagogy with which he will instruct his son. From the beginning the father speaks. His instructions is governed by volitives (*šēmōr*, vv1, 2; *weḥyēh*²¹, v2; *qošrēm*, *kotbēm*, v3; *ḥēmōr*, v4) followed by injunctions (*tišpōn*, v1;

¹⁵ R. Martin-Achard, "*zār*," *TLOT* 1:390-392.

¹⁶ Roland Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 45.

¹⁷ Murphy, "Wisdom and Eros in Proverbs 1-9," 603

¹⁸ Proverbs 7 and 8 form a diptych. See Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," 155.

¹⁹ Claudia V. Camp, "Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1982), 124.

²⁰ Fox. "Social Location," 238. Emphasis his.

²¹ On the function of this indirect imperative following a direct volitive, see Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (trans. and rev. T. Muraoka; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1996), 2:384-85 (116f). According to Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 577 (34.6), the second volitive in a volitive + waw + volitive chain signifies *purpose* or *result*.

*tiqrā*²², v4). It is the world of his instruction, his metaphors, and his matrix into which the student must enter and to which he must respond. Such a "deliberate construal of reality" is evident from the beginning of chapter 7 as the father refers to Wisdom as a woman and urges the son to call her "my sister" (*ʾaḥotī*) and "(my) relative" (*mōdāʾ*) (v4). By personifying Wisdom in this way, the father plays heavily upon his audience's prurient interests (It is most likely that the father is addressing young boys).²³ And so the father begins his representation of a world of "competing and conflicting discourses."²⁴ In the vacuum of wisdom stands her nemesis, "the strange woman" (*ʾiššā zārā*), "the foreign wife" (*nokriyyā*) who makes her words smooth (*ʾāmāreyha heḥēlīqā*) (v5 ≈ 2:16).

The structure of the chapter itself revolves around this speech. As Plöger points out, "[D]ie Beobachtungen des Weisheitslehrers in V.6-13 und in V.21-23 den Rahmen abgeben für die Verführungsrede der fremden Frau als dem Kernstück des Hauptteils (V.14-20)."²⁵ Though it is a controlled speech, it is still speech: this strange woman is not silenced by some profane act of power. As Perdue notes, "It is her language more than her actions or appearances that has the power to entrap and destroy. It is the speech of this woman that brings the unsuspecting fool within the orbit of her destruction."²⁶ But in learning to dodge the advances of this strange woman and to see through her meretricious offer, the son must learn to reckon with more than just speech itself. Speech, though it is central, emits from and is connected to the speaker. Elizabeth Huwiler, advancing and altering the thesis of J.-N. Aletti,²⁷ states, "Instead of learning to sort out wise from foolish speech, the wisdom student learns to sort out wise from foolish speakers. The issue, then, is not which words are reliable but whose words are reliable."²⁸ The strange woman cannot be trusted. She is "one who makes her words smooth" (*heḥēlīqā*, v5), a broker of "smooth talk" (*heḥēlīqā sēpātēhā*, v21). And, as the father exposes the shadow side of her invitation, it becomes increasingly clear that she is "clamorous" (*hōmiyyā*, v11) and "rebellious"²⁹ (*sōrāret*, v11) – rather rough traits for such a "smooth" woman to have.

²² Both *tiṣpōn* (v1) and *tiqrā* (v4) are yiqtol of injunction, which take a modal nuance of "must." See Joüon-Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2:371 (113m).

²³ The grammatical reasons for personifying Wisdom as a woman should be noted as well. See Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 100 (6.3.1.e).

²⁴ Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," 146.

²⁵ Otto Plöger, *Sprüche Salomos (Proverbia)* (BKAT XVII/2-4; Neukirchen-Vluyn; Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 75-76. My translation: "The observations of the wisdom teacher in verses 6-13 and in verses 21-23 provide the frame for the seduction speech of the strange woman as the central piece of the body of the text (vv14-20)."

²⁶ Leo Perdue, *Proverbs* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2000), 134.

²⁷ See his "Séduction et parole en Proverbes I-IX," *VT* 27 (1977): 129-44.

²⁸ Elizabeth Faith Huwiler, "Control of Reality in Israelite Wisdom" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1988), 235-36.

²⁹ Here following MT and Fox's interpretation of *srr* (Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* (Anchor Bible 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 244. *Contra* G.R. Driver ("Problems in Proverbs," *ZAW* 50 (1932): 141-42), who offers "fickle" or "restless." Interestingly, however, *sbb* has been offered as an emendation of the MT here. See *sbb* in Song 3:2ff.

The Eros of Pedagogy: Language and Themes

The most striking feature of this poetic instruction is its shared vocabulary and imagery with the Song of Songs. A survey of its shared language bolsters the erotic side of this complex character that was created for complex instruction.

Language

The language of erotic intimacy is found first with reference to Lady Wisdom in v4, as we have noted previously. The term *mōdā'* in 4ba is found only again in Ruth 2:1. HALOT renders it "(distant) relative."³⁰ Such a position might involve intimacy, as it did in Ruth's case, but its parallel term, "sister" (*'āḥōtī*) is more proximate (cf. Song 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2). Fox notes that this term of endearment is also found in the Egyptian love songs and in the Mesopotamian Sacred marriage songs.³¹ This love of the student for Wisdom, then, must be read against the wedding scene of the Shulammitte with her lover and the consummation of their marriage.

But an adulteress, whose "lips... drip honey" and whose "speech is smoother than oil" offers competing pleasures (Prov 5:3, NIV). As W.G.E. Watson has pointed out, lips (*šiptē*, Prov 5:3) most likely refer doubly to her lips with which she speaks and to her pudenda.³² Such a correlation between inner and outer is suggested in Prov 7:27 as well, as the father notes that her ways lead "to the chambers of death" (*'el-ḥadrē māwet*). While Price notes that *ḥdr* means either the "innermost parts of the body as in the in chamber of the belly" (Prov 18:8=26:22) or "a person's innermost being" (Prov 20:27, 30; NIV) in all its other occurrences in the book of Proverbs, he states that "[i]n the Mish. and Talm. literature *ḥeder* took on the additional connotation of the inner part of the female genitals, and in the pl. the nuance of the remotest recesses or strict secrecy."³³ One wonders if the Mishnaic or Talmudic sense was influenced directly by this text. In any case, Newsom's statement rings true: "[H]er vagina is the gate of Sheol. Her womb, death itself."³⁴

However, the concentration of "Song language" is found ironically in vv14-20, as the strange woman offers her words of entrapment. The sleep that she offers may be deadly, but her bed is verdant. She covers her bed with coverlets (*marbaddīm*), embroidery³⁵ (*ḥātubôt*), and Egyptian linen (*'ētūn mišrāyim*) (v16). She perfumes her bed

³⁰ HALOT 2: 550, s.v. *mōdā'*.

³¹ Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 136.

³² Wilfred G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 247. See also CAD, Vol. K, 396.

³³ James D. Price, "*ḥdr*," NIDOTTE 2:28-30.

³⁴ Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," 156.

³⁵ LXX (similarly Vulgate) reads *evstrwka*, meaning "I have spread" (lex.: *strwnnuw*). Syriac and Targum: "I have spread it." I follow Waltke here (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs* (NICOT; Grand Rapids:

with myrrh (*mār*, cf. Song 4:6, 5:5 et al.), aloes³⁶ (*ʾāhālīm*, cf. Song 4:14), and cinnamon (*qinnāmôn*, cf. Song 4:14) (v17). She points toward her lush creation, and offers the lad a night of sex (*dōdīm*, cf. Song 1:2, 4 et al.) and lovemaking (*ʾōhābīm*),³⁷ promising to fill his appetite. She will do more than this, however, for her couch is his coffin.

Themes

Not only do Proverbs 7 and the Song share common language, but they employ similar themes. The strange woman goes into the street (*hūs*) and the squares (*rēhōbôt*) to search for the lover to join her tryst (vv12, 15) Similarly, the Shulammitte wanders around the city to find her lost lover (Song 3:1-2, 5:6-7). Like the strange woman, she has no man in the house (Prov 7:19). She longs to embrace him again, as the strange woman purports to do with the senseless boy (Prov 7:13). But finding him is not as easy.

The complexity of the pedagogy of Proverbs 7 quickly becomes apparent. The orthodox language and themes of seduction and lovemaking in the Song are injected into Proverbs 7 and turned on their heads. The world of this text certainly isn't all it first appears to be, and the father's instruction is perhaps less straightforward than one might expect. This is especially true considering the danger in which his son might land if he doesn't "get it." If Huwiler's statement is true (that the students must learn to differentiate between wise and foolish *speakers*), then the question asked by Fox is obvious: "Why does the father veil the vice in such allure?"³⁸ The answer is more, however, than Fox himself provides. Certainly the father is attempting "to make *appearances* clear and palpable, so that the son will be aware of their power."³⁹ But there is still more genius to the control of the strange woman's speech by the father. Upon a careful (and, to my knowledge, heretofore unnoticed) reading of the text, we find that the falsity and deception of the strange woman's speech is not merely found in the father's editorial comments in the introduction and conclusions of the chapter, but *in her speech itself*. A very purposeful and revealing double entendre lies latent within her words. Of course, it goes unnoticed by the dullard himself (i.e., the lad who lacks sense), but it may be perceived by those readers who have heeded the conditions and commands of Proverbs 2 and 7:1-5: they can see through the sweet glaze of the woman's speech and may lay hold of life. In her speech, they find the words of death

Eerdmans, forthcoming), Chap. 7, p. 3, fn. 21) who takes this to be a fem. pl. Qal pass. ptc. form functioning as a substantive. His conclusions are based partially upon Manfred Görg, "Beobachtungen zur Basis *H.T.B.*," *BN* 5 (1978): 7-11.

³⁶ LXX read "tents" (*ʾōhālīm*) here. The MT as pointed should probably stand, but it is worth noting that 4Q184 may have read with the LXX here (see Frag. 1, lines 6-7). Fichtner's (BHS) emendation to *waʾāhālīm* is unnecessary.

³⁷ Fox notes that *dōdīm* (*Song of Songs*, 97) and *ʾōhābīm* (*Song of Songs*, 135) refer to sexual love.

Whybray says that *ʾōhābīm* is a more general term (R.N. Whybray, *Proverbs* (NCB; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 115).

³⁸ Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 350.

³⁹ *Ibid* (emphasis his).

glossing its latent warlike imagery and thereby engage in dramatic irony. While elucidating the nature of this double meaning, I shall seek to prove both lexically and by counterexample that this double entendre in the woman's speech is the work of fine poetic craftsmanship and is an intended reading of the text.

Traditional Meaning: Translation

As we have noted previously, the very structure of the chapter points to the centrality of the woman's speech. However, there is a cluster of verses both preceding and within this speech with a high degree of poetic concentration – governed by a spate of double meanings. These are verses 10-15, as the father describes the strange woman's advance and reports her speech. The "traditional reading," which is supported by the LXX and all the versions is as follows:

- 10 And look! A woman [comes out] to meet him, in the garment of a prostitute and with a crafty heart.⁴⁰
 11 She is loud and rebellious.⁴¹ Her feet do not settle down in her house.
 12 Now in the street, now in the open squares⁴² – beside every corner she lurks.
 13 Then she took hold of him and she kissed him; she made her face bold,⁴³ and she said to him:
 14 I have peace offerings [at home].⁴⁴ Today I have fulfilled my vow.⁴⁵
 15 Therefore I have come out to meet you, to seek your face earnestly, and I have found you!

Such a reading might be acceptable, except that the wording of 12b has been glossed. In virtually all the English versions, 12b reads either "lies in wait" (KJV, ASV, RSV, NRSV) or "lurks" (NJPS, NAS, NKJV, NIV, NEB).⁴⁶ Neither reading is sufficient for such a strong word as *'ārab*. In all occurrences of the word in Proverbs it refers to lying in ambush (cf. 1:11 and 23:28). The last time the reader has seen this verb was in Prov

⁴⁰ Lit. "and guarded of heart." The suggested reading (BHS): *nēzōrat lōt* ("guarded by means of clothing") is perhaps an attempt to read the context of Gen 38:15 into the passage, though the same phraseology is not present. This verse does suggest that she was dressed like a prostitute. It may follow that her face was covered, as was Tamar's in Gen 38:15, but the reading seems too facilitating. A confusion in the orthography (i.e., *beth* and *teth*) in any stage from 840 B.C.E. onward seems very improbable.

⁴¹ On this reading, see footnote 29.

⁴² Note also the double entendre here: "a foot in the streets, a foot in the open squares."

⁴³ The sense of this phrase, *hē'ēzā pānēhā*, is difficult. This form is unattested elsewhere, as is noted in the Massorah Parva. See especially Karel van der Toorn, "Female Prostitution in Payment of Vows in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 108 (1989): 193-205, and the response article: Duane Garrett, "Votive Prostitution Again: A Comparison of Proverbs 7:13-14 and 21:28-29," *JBL* 109 (1990): 681-82. Much is tied up in the interpretation of this verse. I follow Garrett in thinking that this phrase indicates she is lying in what follows.

⁴⁴ The sense of this phrase, lit. "Peace offerings are upon me," is ambiguous, and the sense of the line is debatable. Some take this to mean that she has fulfilled her vows already. Others take this to mean that she still has vows to fulfill.

⁴⁵ The rendering of this phrase is connected to the notes in fn. 43 and 44 above.

⁴⁶ One exception is the Jerusalem Bible, which reads, "She is at the lookout at every corner."

1:18, where it means "to lie in wait to kill." "To lie in ambush"⁴⁷ is certainly a superior rendering.

Double meaning: lexical proof

Such strong language provides a firm foundation for elucidating the remaining elements latent in this passage. The curious forms *liqr'ātô* and *liqr'ātekā* occur in vv10, 15 respectively. *HALOT* treats this as a frozen form, meaning "contrary to, opposite."⁴⁸ Holladay notes that it is usually used with a verb of motion in the context of war and renders it "against."⁴⁹ The contexts of Gen 32:7, Num 20:18, 20 bear out this meaning exceptionally well. There is nothing overtly curious about the form *hēhezîqâ* in v13, except that we are becoming increasingly aware of a bellicose environment – certainly more than this passage would seem to warrant in its traditional translation. With reference to individuals, Hesse notes, "When a man abuses his physical superiority over a woman, the verb can have the precise meaning 'rape, violate.'⁵⁰ With reference to the *Hiphil*, he states, "When a living creature or one of its members is 'seized' or 'grasped,' we are often dealing with an act of violence."⁵¹ The causative of *h̄zq* is frequently found in contexts of war (cf. Deut 22:25, 25:11; 1 Sam 17:35; 2 Sam 11:25). The Hebrew *māṣā'* (v15bb) frequently takes the plain sense "to find," but it may also mean, "to obtain, achieve."⁵² Holladay points out that it may mean to obtain booty, as in war (cf. Num 31:50).⁵³ Gerleman notes, "Just as 'seeking' can be a malevolent pursuit, 'finding' quite often acquires the sense 'to gain power over.'"⁵⁴ Importantly, Num 31:50 refers to obtaining booty which will be offered to the LORD. According to one reading of the Proverbs passage, the strange woman has peace offerings yet to make. Perhaps the most elusive of all the elements is *lēšahēr* (v15ba), a form which occurs only here.

The root is also disputed (*šhr* II or *šhr* III). The root *šhr* III appears in a difficult context in Isaiah 47:11. The meaning is uncertain, but it more than likely refers to "causing to disappear by magic."⁵⁵ Sorcery is in view. However, the root *šhr*, in all its other occurrences in Proverbs (1:28, 8:17, 11:27, 13:24) refers to seeking earnestly. But the possibility that *šhr* in this infinitive form refers to "casting a spell" or "charming" is further supported by the Akkadian evidence. Von Soden notes that the participle form

⁴⁷ *HALOT* 1: 83, s.v. *'rb*.

⁴⁸ *HALOT* 3: 1131, b. (2), s.v. *qr' II*.

⁴⁹ William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 323, (2), s.v. *qr' II*.

⁵⁰ F. Hesse, "*h̄zq*," *TDOT* 4: 301-308.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 304, d.

⁵² *HALOT* 2: 620, (4), s.v. *mṣ'*.

⁵³ Holladay, *Lexicon*, 209, (4), s.v. *mṣ'*.

⁵⁴ G. Gerleman, "*maṣa*," *TLOT* 2: 682-684.

⁵⁵ *HALOT* 4: 1466, # 2, s.v. *šhr III*.

sāḥīru(m) (used as substantive) may refer to a sorcerer (*ein Hexer*).⁵⁶ More parallel to our passage, the feminine noun form *sāḥertu(m)* II may refer to a sorceress (*eine Hexe*).⁵⁷ Moreover, the verb form *saḥāru(m)* means "to turn one's self around, to bewitch" (*sich zur Behexung usw*) *umdrehen zu, behexen*).⁵⁸ Likewise, the Arabic *saḥara* means "to bewitch, enchant, fascinate."⁵⁹ In sum, while *šḥr* means, "search," there is a strong presumption that there is also an accompanying meaning: "charm." We can say that, at best, the lad is acting in contradiction to Lady Wisdom's statement in Prov 8:17. Instead of seeking wisdom (as the father has told the boy to do (v4)), he is *being sought* by the adulteress. He is the passive object, and she is the violently active agent. At worst, she is also bewitching him. His dull senses then have no chance of recognizing, as we do, that her apparently sweet speech is contaminated with death. By way of intertextual interpretation, the words of Psalm 55:21 are startlingly germane: "With speech smoother than butter, but with a heart set on war; with words that were softer than oil, but in fact were drawn swords" (NRSV). Indeed, the two characters are in a face-off (*pānēhā*, v13, and *pānēkā*, v15), a battle. And so we have an enticing double entendre. In addition to the translation previously given, the text can also be read as follows:

10 And look! A woman [comes out] against him, in the garment of a prostitute and with a crafty heart.

11 She is loud and rebellious. Her feet do not settle down in her house.

12 Now in the street, now in the open squares – beside⁶⁰ every corner she lies in ambush.

13 Then she seized him violently (to rape him) and she kissed him; she made her face bold, and she said to him:

14 I owe peace offerings. Today I fulfill my vows.⁶¹

15 Therefore I have come out against you, to charm you, and I have obtained you as booty⁶².

⁵⁶ Wolfram von Soden, ed. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Band II (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972) 1009, # 1, d.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1008, # 1. Both meanings, *sorcerer* and *sorceress*, are also listed in *CAD*, Vol. 15, 60 (a), s.v. *sāḥīru A*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1105, # 4. It is likewise interesting to note that *zārā* (strange) is the verbal adjective of the root *zīr* II, which means "to turn away." See R. Martin-Achard, "zār," *TLOT* 1:390-392.

⁵⁹ *HALOT* 4: 1466, s.v. *šḥr III*.

⁶⁰ Holladay (*Lexicon*, 26) notes that even the particle *ʿēṣel* may denote hostility ("over against," cf. Dan 10:13).

⁶¹ It seems clear, via the double entendre, that she is obtaining the lad as a peace offering rather than inviting him to join her for the leftovers of an already-performed offering.

⁶² As corroborating evidence for this translation, it should be noted that the nominal form of *ḥlq II* may mean "share of booty" (Holladay, *Lexicon*, 107). The root *ḥlq I* is used to describe the strange woman's speech in v5 (*ʿāmarēhā heḥēliqā*).

Double Meaning: Counterexample as Proof

A counter-example in the book of Proverbs also supports viewing the strange woman in a military context. The "valiant wife" of Prov 31:10-31 serves as an uncanny parallel and counterpart to the strange woman of Proverbs 7. It is most likely here, too, that this figure is not simply limited to one literal referent. Indeed, she is the culmination of the typological "valiant wife." She is Wisdom personified once again — here a mixture of both the real and the imaginative. If Camp is right, then this is the very woman over-against which the strange woman is formulated. This persona of Wisdom, then, is part of her "full-orbed characterization."⁶³

First, she is a "valiant woman" (*ʿēšet-ḥayil*, v10, *ḥāyil*, v29).⁶⁴ As Waltke notes, *ḥāyil* "denotes competent strength (Prov 12:4, Ruth 3:10; cf. Ps 84:8) and wealth (cf. 2 Kings 15:20) and membership in a select group (cf. Gen 47:6; Exod 18:21), including a warrior class (2 Kings 24:24 and 16)."⁶⁵ It is frequently found in military contexts⁶⁶ and "should probably be understood as the female counterpart of the *gibbôr ḥayil*."⁶⁷ This woman girds herself with strength, and she makes her arms strong.⁶⁸ (v17). This provides an excellent counter-example for the military imagery in Prov 7:10-15.

Second, the words "plunder" (*šālāl*, v11) and "prey" (*ṭerep*,⁶⁹ v15) occur in contexts of the valiant wife's provision for her husband (v11) and her household (v15). Though used in a positive sense here, these words are reminiscent of the vocabulary of Prov 7:12, 15 as the strange woman lies in ambush (*ʿārab*, v12) and she obtains the lad as her booty (*mātsāʿ*, v15).

Third, it was said of the strange woman that, "her feet never stay at home" (v11). This valiant woman's cottage industry is based in the home, though she does leave it (cf. 31:14).

Fourth, the strange woman "covers her bed with coverlets" (*marbaddīm*, v16). As Whybray points out while commenting on Prov 7:16, "[T]he only other occurrence of this word in the Old Testament is in 31:22, where it refers to articles of domestic use made by the mistress of a well-equipped household."⁷⁰

Fifth, more military imagery occurs with "you ascend above/against" (*ʿālīt ʿal-*, v29) and "she stretches out her hand" (*yādēhā šilḥā*, v19). According to Waltke, the first

⁶³ Camp, "Wisdom and the Feminine," 124.

⁶⁴ Verse references are to the MT, although vv10-31 are placed after 29:27 in LXX.

⁶⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, "The Role of the 'Valiant Wife' in the Marketplace," *Crux* 35 (1999), 26.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁷ Al Wolters, "Proverbs XXXI 10-31 as Heroic Hymn: A Form-Critical Analysis," *VT* XXXVIII (1998), 453.

⁶⁸ Fichtner (BHS) proposes to insert *laʿābōdā* before *zērōʿōtēhā*, reading with LXX plus: *eivj evrgon*. I read with the MT, however (*lectio brevior*).

⁶⁹ Reading with MT.

⁷⁰ R.N. Whybray, *Proverbs*, (NCB; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 115.

phrase is often used of going out to battle.⁷¹ Paul Humbert notes that the second elsewhere is always used within an aggressive context.⁷²

As a final point, the author/editor of Prov 31:30 formulates his/her paean of the valiant wife negatively in the A verset – a reference that could with great profit be applied as the evaluative viewpoint of the strange woman of Proverbs 7: "Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting." The valiant woman fills the shoes of the B verset: "But a wise woman⁷³ is to be praised." These are both aggressive women: one in a way that destroys, the other in a way that constructs.

Conclusion

Certainly the above conclusions may have a bearing on the identity of the wicked woman if one were to look for such a thing. However, as I have stated previously, this is rather to miss the point. As Van Leeuwen notes, "The profounder role of the 'strange woman' is to elaborate Woman Folly in contrast to Woman Wisdom."⁷⁴ The metaphorical matrix of this book presents a unified worldview built upon divergent but overlapping metaphors. To take the identity of one or the other literally is to misunderstand the purpose for which these figures were used and created. It is the ambiguity of Wisdom and Folly that contributes greatly to the allure that was purposely attached to both. It was this process by which the father formed and shaped his son, teaching him to discern not between dualistic opposites, but between various shades of good and bad. Lasine states, "[L]iminal myths and symbols, like riddles, can foster recognition of indeterminacy as a means of educating members of a society to make their models of reality and order both strong and adaptive."⁷⁵ The text's double meaning functions to reveal the shadow side of her smooth words and serves as an example of the complexity of the father's instruction as he teaches the son about speech and reality. In this task, both the father and son must wield all their intellectual and imaginative powers to live wisely in a world of harshly ambiguous foes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING AT QUMRAN: "WILES OF THE WICKED WOMAN"

⁷¹ Walkte, "The Role of the 'Valiant Wife'," 25.

⁷² Cited in *ibid*, p. 25. See Paul Humbert, "Entendre la Main," *VT* 12 (1962), 187.

⁷³ Reading with LXX. LXX has suneth = "wise" (Heb. *něbônā*) in place of *yir'at YHWH* (see also Sir 9:15 and 16:4). Literarily, *yir'at YHWH* would provide a nice inclusio around the whole book (cf. 1:7). But the grammar is undeniably odd in the MT of 31:30, and the line length is likewise stilted. Also, it seems unexplainable why the translators of the LXX would cut out "the woman who fears the LORD." More than likely, the MT is a case of theological explication.

⁷⁴ Raymond Van Leeuwen, "Liminality and Worldview in Proverbs 1-9," *Semeia* 50 (1990), 134.

⁷⁵ Stuart Lasine, "Indeterminacy and the Bible: A Review of Literary and Anthropological Theories and Their Application to Biblical Texts," *Hebrew Studies* 27 (1986), 68; cited in Van Leeuwen, "Liminality," 117-118.

Text^{76 77}

1 [hzwn]h⁷⁸ twšy' hbl wbl [] tw'wt tšhr tmyd [l]šnn⁷⁹ dbry[h⁸⁰
 2 wqls thl[y]q wlhlyš yhd bš[w'] ('wl⁸¹ lbh ykyn pḥwn⁸² wklywtyh mq[⁸³
 3 b'wl ng'ly⁸⁴ hwh⁸⁵ tmkw šwh rglyh lhršy' yrdw wllkt b'šmw[pš⁸⁶
 4 mwšdy ḥwšk rwb⁸⁷ pš'ym bknpyh []h tw'pwt lyh wmlbšyh []
 5 mksyh 'plwt nšp w'dyh ngw'y šht 'ršyh yšw'y⁸⁸ yš'y šht[
 6 m'mqy bwr mlwnwtyh mškb y ḥwšk wb'yšny lyl[h mm] 'šlwtyh⁸⁹ mmwšdy 'plwt
 7 t'hl šbt wškw n b'hly dwmh btwk mwqdy ('wlm w'yn nhlth btwk bkwl
 8 m'zry⁹⁰ //nwgh why'h r'šyt kwl drky ('wl hwy hwh lkwl nwḥlyh wšddh lk[w]
 9 twmky bh ky' drkyh drky mwt w'wrḥwtyh šbyly ḥt't m'glwtyh mšgwt
 10 ('wl wntybw[ty]h) 'šmw[pš' s'ryh s'ry mwt bpth byth tš'd š'w[lh]⁹¹
 11 k[w]ll []⁹²yšwbwn kwk nwḥlyh yrdw šht wh[y]' bmstry m t'rw[] []
 12 kw⁹³[] brḥwbwt ('yr t'lp wš'ry qrywt tṭyšb w'yn lhr[y'h]
 13 mh []⁹⁴t []⁹⁵(ynyh hnh whnh yškylw w'p'pyh bphz trym lr'w[t l'⁹⁶y[š]
 14 šdyq wšyghw w'yš []šwm wtkšylhw yšrym lḥwt drk wlbḥwry⁹⁷ šdq

⁷⁶ Taken from John Allegro, *Qumran Cave 4.I (4Q158-4Q186)* (DJD, V; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 82-82, pl. XXVIII (Frag. 1).

⁷⁷ In the orthography of Qumran, no visible distinction was made between *šīn* and *šīn*. For this reason, I have elected simply to represent both as *šīn*. In this text, which was written in the early Herodian script, both *šīn* and *šīn* are represented as . See F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), Fig. 17, line 4.

⁷⁸ John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 114, states, "this reading is not possible." See J. Strugnell, "Notes en marge du volume V des 'Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan,'" *RevQ* 7 (1970): 163-276, esp. 263-68. García Martínez and Tigchelaar (*Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (vol. 1; Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), 376) do not include a reconstruction of this text.

⁷⁹ *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1:376 reads [wy]šnn.

⁸⁰ Ibid. is less confident about the *yod* here. Their reconstruction includes [y pyh], thus reading *dbry[pyh]*.

⁸¹ Ibid. takes the middle consonant as a *yod* rather than a *waw* (= 'y)

⁸² Ibid reads *pḥyn*.

⁸³ Ibid. offers a reconstruction: [šwt ('ynyh].

⁸⁴ Ibid. reads *ng'lw*.

⁸⁵ Ibid. offers a different interpretation of the text, reading *ydyh* in place of *hwh*.

⁸⁶ Ibid. offers no reconstruction.

⁸⁷ Ibid. includes a *waw* before *rwb* (= *wrw*).

⁸⁸ Ibid. notes here that there was legible or illegible text erased by the copyist.

⁸⁹ Ibid. reads *lyl[h] 'šlwtyh*.

⁹⁰ Ibid. reads *m'yry*.

⁹¹ Ibid. reads *š'w[l]*.

⁹² Ibid. reconstructs: [b'yh bl].

⁹³ Ibid. includes *lamed* as reconstructed text.

⁹⁴ Ibid. reconstructs *mh[znw]t*.

⁹⁵ Ibid. reads confidently: *tmyd*.

⁹⁶ Ibid. does not treat the *aleph* as a reconstruction.

15 *mšwr mšwh smwky* [⁹⁸ *lhbyl bphz whwlky yšr lhšnwt h[wq]⁹⁹ *lhpšy*⁶
 16 ⁶ *nwym m'l wlhwt p(myhm mdrky šdq lhby) zd[w]n* [¹⁰⁰ *bmh bl ydrwkw*
 17 *bm(gly ywšr lhšgwt) nwš bdrky šwhh wlpwt bhlqwt bny* ⁷ *yš**

Control of Reality

With 4Q184 we move from examining a strange woman to examining a "wicked" one. The presence of a harsher evaluative viewpoint involved in the exegetical shift from the relevant texts in Proverbs (esp. chaps. 5-7) to the "Wiles of the Wicked Woman" is obvious. But, as we have noted previously, the members of the Dead Sea sect and the authors/editors of the Book of Proverbs (most likely post-exilic) lived in very different realities. In contradistinction to the world implied by Proverbs 7, the Dead Sea community was in many respects formed by sharper images, clearer contrasts, and more discrete elements. Their apocalypticism¹⁰¹ lent itself toward dichotomizing and did not allow for much mixing of metaphors. As Hanson states,

Within the community at Qumran, the perspective of apocalyptic eschatology has been elevated to the status of an ideology, functioning to inform its interpretation of Scripture, to provide the basis for its understanding of Jewish and gentile adversaries, and to supply a historiographic point of view from which to develop a detailed scenario of final conflict and divine vindication of the elect.¹⁰²

One of the most telling documents of the community's purpose and their system of teaching and learning is *serek ha-Yahad* (1QS). Here we find, perhaps, the purpose for which the community existed: "to seek God with a whole heart and soul in order to do what is good and just before him, as he commanded by Moses and all his servants the prophets" (1QS i 1-3).¹⁰³ Despite the difficulties of labeling the community an apocalyptic one, it certainly seems that the apocalypticism so overt in many of their documents is a result of their righteous interests. It is this interest — this righteous/wicked dualism — that led this community perhaps more than the post-exilic Israelite community to live especially in contrast with a named and labeled "other."

One might consider the Dead Sea sect to be, as Newsom puts it, "a community of individuals."¹⁰⁴ Each of the members of the group had separated themselves from the

⁹⁷ Ibid. reads *wlbhry*.

⁹⁸ Ibid. reads *hē* and reconstructs [*lb*] (= *h[lb]*).

⁹⁹ Ibid. includes *qōp*, but not as a reconstruction.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. reads *b[lb]*.

¹⁰¹ Here using the definition given by John Collins, "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism: Early Jewish Apocalypticism," *ABD* 1:283: "This world view or 'symbolic universe' which is extrapolated from the apocalypses is what we call 'apocalypticism'" (italics his).

¹⁰² Paul D. Hanson, "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism: Introductory Overview," *ABD* 1:281.

¹⁰³ Carol Newsom, "Apocalyptic and the Discourse of the Qumran Community," *JNES* 49 (1990), 135. Translation hers.

¹⁰⁴ Carol Newsom, "The Sage in the Literature of Qumran: The Functions of the Maškil," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Gammie et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 382.

wicked and had joined the community of the righteous. But this righteous community was a disciplinary regime. As Foucault points out, "In a disciplinary regime... individualization is 'descending': as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized."¹⁰⁵ "Meaning... is constituted through right ordering,"¹⁰⁶ and that ordering is effected by the *acts* of that community as exhibited in their *texts*.¹⁰⁷ It is through these texts that they created 'criminals' and 'outsiders.' That is not to say that the "unrighteous" are merely a figment of the sect's imagination, but that their literary characters are not commensurate with their selves in daily practice. They are painted in black, with stigmas and metaphors befitting cosmic foes. The Dead Sea sect here has created an "other" in order to maintain its sole adherence to the instruction of the Righteous Teacher.

But, as Foucault points out, this sort of power must not always be seen as negative. "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms... In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objections and rituals of truth."¹⁰⁸ Such is certainly the case with "Wiles of the Wicked Woman." In it, Lady Folly of Proverbs has been transformed into more than simply an adulteress or even the archetype of an outsider. It seems that she is the embodiment of all that the group opposed, and their opposition produced a new reality. But this still held a pedagogical purpose: to drive learners back to the group (the righteous). Huwiler's statement about post-exilic wisdom serves at least equally as well here, but in a different sense:

The wisdom process leads to the fixing of one's identity in the group, and the development of trust in the group. It is within this group solidarity that the possibility of discussion and modification is to be viewed. It is not a question of one individual challenging another's idea, but of the enrichment of the group's apprehension of the world and of other people.¹⁰⁹

In this process, solidarity is gained with those who had entered successfully, and those who had not were held in suspect. Such is obviously the case with this "wicked woman," whomever she may be.

Wisdom Literature at Qumran

Wiles of the Wicked Woman is a wisdom text, found in Qumran's fourth cave, but there are some doubts as to whether "wisdom" as a genre was endemic to the Dead Sea community or if it was a received tradition. Interestingly, *hkm* is a rather rare word in its body of writings. Lipscomb and Sanders state, "[T]here are no true wisdom texts

¹⁰⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (trans. Alan Sheridan; New York: Vintage, 1995), 193.

¹⁰⁶ Newsom, "Apocalyptic and the Discourse," 142.

¹⁰⁷ See *ibid.*, 136.

¹⁰⁸ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 194.

¹⁰⁹ Huwiler, "Control of Reality in Israelite Wisdom," 244.

among the scrolls of undisputed Essene authorship."¹¹⁰ A.S. van der Woude agrees with this conclusion and asserts, "the reason for the absence of sapiential texts authored at Qumran could be that after true wisdom was revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness, the members of his community were essentially interested in the knowledge imparted to him."¹¹¹

This is not to say, however, that they did not believe wisdom texts to be important. Even if these texts did not originate in their ranks, they assumed upon themselves its content and taught it faithfully. "They copied sapiential literature handed down to them and to a large extent put their own convictions into words by means of inherited wisdom terminology."¹¹² So, despite any ambiguities about the origin of 4Q184, the ideology of that text still reflects clearly that of the sect in whose midst it resided. We may say, at the least, that it is something of which they would have approved.

Metaphorical and Theological Transformation

Florentino García Martínez has called the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* an "Allegorical wisdom poem on Need, personified as a woman, inspired by Prov 7 and with obvious magical connotations."¹¹³ It has been contested, however, whom this wicked woman represents. Maier states, "The sapiential motifs of this moralistic variety, as they are attested in Proverbs 5-7, underwent, then, in *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* a theological transformation whereby they were applied to group controversies of a fundamental character."¹¹⁴ Regardless of whether or not this woman represents another group toward which the Dead Sea sect was hostile, this theological and pedagogical shift is key. Proverbs 7, though containing divergent metaphors and mentions of cosmological consequences, is practical wisdom for real life. This kind of woman is a very real and observable danger (cf. Prov 7:6). However, with 4Q184, one finds only a detailed description of this woman along the lines of more overtly cosmological proportions.¹¹⁵ Here she is not a character by which practical wisdom is taught. She is a character about whom it is wise to avoid talking altogether.

Similarly, in the Qumran document, the terms 'wise' and 'righteous' do not retain their proverbial use as descriptive of those who live or fail to live in harmony with the

¹¹⁰ W. Lowndes Lipscomb and J.A. Sanders, "Wisdom at Qumran," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (ed. J.G. Gammie, et al.; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 278.

¹¹¹ A.S. van der Woude, "Wisdom at Qumran," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J.A. Emerton*. (eds. John Day, R. P. Gordon, and H.G.M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 256.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (trans. W.G.E. Watson; Leiden, New York, Cologne: E.J. Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 487.

¹¹⁴ Johann Maier, "Wiles of the Wicked Woman," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Lawrence Schiffman and James Vanderkam; 2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 2:976.

¹¹⁵ For a comparison of the pedagogies of these two documents, see J.M. Baumgarten. "On the Nature of the Seductress in 4Q184," *RevQ* 15 (1991), 138.

divinely-established world order. In 4Q184, these terms have taken on new meaning befitting a new and somewhat unusual environment. 'Wise' and 'righteous' now are divided by predestined truth revealed by God.¹¹⁶ Gammie states, "1 QS 3:13-4:26 teaches an ethical dualism which at times is internalized into psychological dualism and at times externalized or further extended into a modified cosmic dualism."¹¹⁷ Such a description is likewise fitting for 4Q184, a document in which the separation between deed and final destiny is foreshortened. It is not its purpose to relay, as Proverbs does, generalized truths. The final moral consequences of such profane acts are very palpable to the authors of this document. But this woman is not merely condemned for her acts. In some sense, it seems, her very existence is an act of violence.

Qumran's "Wicked Woman"

As noted previously, the identity of the Wicked Woman of 4Q184 is still disputed. Moore thinks that she is the personification of the seduction of evil. That is, "The Qumran writer seems to have zeroed in on evil's seductive dimension..."¹¹⁸ Similarly, Baumgarten thinks that she is representative of demonological elements: "4Q184, we submit, is the description of the seductive demoness who resides in the darkness of the netherworld but issues forth steadily to lure the unsuspecting to apostasy and perdition."¹¹⁹ An interesting parallel to our thesis of double entendre in Prov 7:10-15, Gazov-Ginzburg believes that the lacunae of 4Q184 can be reconstructed in a way that supports a political and a cosmic meaning simultaneously.¹²⁰ The Wicked Woman would then represent both a literal political entity (e.g., Rome in Revelation as "Babylon") and a cosmic opponent. Perhaps the most interesting interpretation, owing more to psychoanalytic feminism¹²¹ than to historical and exegetical probabilities, Broshi believes that this document reflects a literal contempt for women: "Gynophobia was, I believe, the source of the sect's extreme purity, its harsh matrimonial laws and the monastic, celibate nature of the Qumran community where the most extreme adherents of the sect spent their lives."¹²² While the author(s) of this text may have held such a standard, the text itself presents a view that is probably driven more by communitarian rather than sexual orientation. Harrington's view is probably best, however, as he sees Wiles of the Wicked Woman as a heightened portrayal of Lady Folly of Proverbs 1-9.¹²³ However, here she is portrayed through the lenses of adherents of a different theology in a very different and apocalyptic setting. Wisdom does not now refer merely to wise living, but also to either eternal reward or eternal punishment. The Wicked Woman, with all her entrapments, is the bearer of this irreversible fate.

¹¹⁶ J. Lowndes Lipscomb and James A. Sanders, "Wisdom at Qumran," 278.

¹¹⁷ John G. Gammie, "Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature," *JBL* 93 (1974), 381.

¹¹⁸ R.D. Moore, "Personification of the Seduction of Evil," *RevQ* 10 (1981), 507.

¹¹⁹ J.M. Baumgarten, "On the Nature of the Seductress in 4Q184," *RevQ* 15 (1991), 143.

¹²⁰ A.M. Gazov-Ginzberg, "Double Meaning in a Qumran Work: 'The Wiles of the Wicked Woman'," *RevQ* 6 (1967): 279-285.

¹²¹ See especially Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology* (New York: Norton, 1967). See especially pp. 107-118 and 133-146.

¹²² Magen Broshi, "Beware of the Wiles of the Wanton Woman," *BAR* 9 (July/August 1983): 54-56.

¹²³ See Daniel J. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts from Qumran* (London, Routledge, 1996), 31-35, and "Wisdom Texts," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 979-80.

Comparison of Texts: Language and Themes

Despite these differences, the author(s) of 4Q184 obviously relied on Proverbs 7 for much of the core of its message and the document shares its language and themes. This text is best divided into 3 main parts and exhibits a skillfully designed structure:¹²⁴

- I. The Identification of Her Seduction (1-8)
 - A. Her anatomy
 - B. Her attire
 - C. Her abode

- II. The Summation of Her Seduction (8-9)

- III. The Outcome of her seduction (9-17)
 - A. Where she leads
 - B. How she leads astray
 - C. Whom she leads astray

Language¹²⁵

In Prov 7:5, 21, we find references to the smooth speech of the strange woman, first to "her words which she makes smooth" (v5, *'mryh h_hlyqh*), then to "her smooth speech" (v21, *h_hlq sptyh*). Both of these instances are paralleled by "flatters" (L.2, *th_hl[y]q*) and "smooth words"¹²⁶ (L.17, *b_hlqwt*). Similarly, the author(s) reference "her words" in L.1 (*dbry[h]*). Wiles of the Wicked Woman also provides an interesting commentary on a textual difficulty in Prov 7:9¹²⁷ with *b_hyšwn lyh* (prb. "in the middle of the night"). Fichtner (BHS) has proposed to read *b_hšwn lyh* ("in the approach of the night"). This document reflects the former reading, however, in L.6 with "in the heart of the nigh[t]"¹²⁸ (*wb_hyšny ly[h]*). Like the strange woman, this wicked woman "hides in ambush."¹²⁹ The same form occurs in Prov 7:12 and L.11: *t_hrwb*. While the strange woman lies "beside every corner" (v12, *w_hšl kl-pnh*), the wicked woman lies "in secret places" (L.11, *bmstrym*). However, both wander "in the open squares"¹³⁰ (*br_hwbwt*, 7:12//L.12) where they are veiled (7:10; L.12). The text of 4Q184 employs Proverbs' normal use of the root *šhr* (cf. 7:15) here in

¹²⁴ This structure adapted from R.D. Moore, "Personification of the Seduction of Evil: 'The Wiles of the Wicked Woman,'" *RevQ* 10 (1981), 508-509.

¹²⁵ All translation and text of 4Q184 is that of John Allegro, *Qumran Cave 4.I (DJD, V)*, 82, pl. XXVIII, unless otherwise noted. Variants dealt with in the previous section, "Text," will not be recapitulated.

¹²⁶ Translation is that of Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, eds. and trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), 1:377.

¹²⁷ See K/Q Prov 20:20.

¹²⁸ Translation that of García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1:377.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ My rendering.

L.1, with "she is searching"¹³¹ (*tšhr*). Just as the strange woman speaks of "my bed" (7:16, *ʿrsy*), so are "her beds" described here (L.5, *ʿrsyh* (cf. also L.6, *mškby*)).

Interestingly, the *ʿhlym* of 7:17 which the LXX took as "dwelling" (*oivkoj*) was similarly used here as "tents" (L.7, *ʿhly*) – though contrary to our received Massoretic pointing. Perhaps this points to a *Vorlage* reading "tents" instead of "aloes," though it may be incidental. Last, the somewhat ambiguous phrase, "her house conceals the ways of Sheol" (*drky šʿwl byth*) is interpreted in L.9 as "her ways are the ways of death" (*drkyh drky mwt*) and in L.10 as "in the entrance to her house Sheo[!] proceeds" (*bpth byth tš(d šʿw[!])*).¹³²

Themes

Perhaps the most important theme shared by Proverbs 7 and 4Q184 is that of speech (cf. Prov 7:5, 21; 4Q184 L.2, 17). It is most striking to note that while the strange woman is allowed to speak (Prov 7:14-20), this wicked woman is not. Her antagonists only report her speech secondarily. This fact is quite reflective of the ideology and pedagogy of the community. Huwiler analyzes the significance of both speech and silence with reference to post-exilic wisdom, though her conclusions may be appropriately applied here:

"For the most part the approval of either [speech or silence] appears to depend on who is speaking or silent. If the subject is a member of the approved group (righteous, wise, etc.), either speech or silence is positive; if an outsider (wicked, fool), either speech or silence can be negative."¹³³

Using this thesis, we may conclude that the silence that is deafening in 4Q184 is the negative result of a worldview in which lines are clearly drawn. To reveal the allure of this woman as painted by the father in Prov 7 would be considered to be too dangerous. But this, in my estimation, is not only an act of power driven by a disciplinary ideology. It is inferior pedagogy. To conceal the allure with such harsh description and severe silence is no more the better for the student of the Dead Sea community. He (or she), unlike the son of Proverbs, will not be able to adapt to any indeterminate situation or environment and will most likely fail in the end of his (or her) search for wisdom.

CONCLUSION

Upon examination of the language and metaphors of 4Q184, its underlying schema of teaching and learning comes to the foreground. It is a world upon which the end times have stumbled. The result is chaos for the wicked and a controlled order for the righteous. Clear, even dualistic, representation of the world is here perceived to be

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Text and translation that of García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1:377.

¹³³ Huwiler, "Control of Reality in Israelite Wisdom," 238.

the best tool for the instruction of the young. The theology of predestination plays itself out in the document's "determinate" language.

Certainly it is no less true that the book of Proverbs is a text controlled by an ideology. Here we have a text governed by the father's depiction. In formulating the subjectivity of the listener/reader, he acts as the authority to which the student must submit. As a result, this world of signs perhaps hangs together more than the world we know in practice.

But, with its texts as acts, the Dead Sea sect has perhaps made more profane gestures. Speech of opposing groups or ideologies is not only controlled here. It is silenced. Real allure is virtually absent, and reality is something that is instilled in the student and reproduced. They do not only seek to live in harmony with God's created order but to re-establish it proleptically.

And so we see these two pedagogical worlds merge and collide at once. They are worlds of similar themes and different pedagogies. While these texts share the same concerns, they differ in their methodologies. The elegance and allure of Proverbs 7 collides head-on with its darker progeny, 4Q184, whose defining characteristics are profanity and power.