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Syntax and Mood in Proverbs 8:22-31:

The Evocative Function of Asyndetically

Concatenated *b*- based Temporal

Clauses in a Wisdom Speech

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Syntax and Mood in Proverbs 8:22-31: The Evocative Function of Asyndetically Concatenated *b*-based Temporal Clauses in a Wisdom Speech" submitted by Warren Arthur Harbeck in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ii

ABSTRACT

Proverbs 8:22-31, the third strophe of a Hebrew Wisdom poem in which personified Wisdom makes her appeal to mankind, is dominated by an asyndetic concatenation of temporal clauses each of which is introduced by the particle *b*-. Although earlier scholarship saw this syntactic structure as evidence for possible Egyptian or Canaanite influence, recent exegetical opinion has treated the structure as rhetorically significant within the Hebrew poetic tradition itself. A precise definition of *how* the temporal clauses function rhetorically, however, is lacking in the literature. This thesis attempts to provide just such a definition using a methodological adaptation of J.L. Austin's speech act theory. To define the rhetorical function of the asyndetically concatenated *b*- based temporal clauses in Proverbs 8, the macrostructure of a sample of the clauses from verses 27-29 is used as the criterion for selecting and examining the contexts of similar temporal clause structures found elsewhere in Hebrew biblical poetry (Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, Psalm 68, Job 29-31, Proverbs 1:20-33, and Ezekiel 32). On the basis of this analysis, this thesis concludes that the temporal clause structure of Proverbs 8:27-29 functions rhetorically with the force of a wisdom reminiscence, an alluring, evocative reminder of how good life can be under God's blessing and along Wisdom's path.

PREFACE

I would like to reflect briefly on two reasons why I entered into a

Ph.D. program in Religious Studies at the University of Calgary.

The first reason was professional: I wanted to improve my skills as a

scholar in the Humanities, having already spent twenty years in cross-

cultural communication, interpretation, linguistics, and media production.

I wanted to learn from mature scholars the fine art of being able to write on

any topic — from scratch and within a reasonable time frame — such that

the product could be judged by a master in that field as academically

responsible, original, valuable, and well written. I have not been

disappointed. Thus, this thesis, although it deals with a literary question in

Hebrew Bible, is not submitted for a specialist degree in Hebrew Bible, or in

Hebrew language, or in literary criticism; it is submitted for a degree in

the interdisciplinary field of *Religious Studies* — as an exercise in

bringing diverse educational and professional background to bear on a

particular academic issue, the issue in point being found in the Hebrew

Bible.

The second reason was personal: I wanted to understand better the

perspective on life presented in the Hebrew Wisdom Literature. In that

Wisdom is reflective, I wanted to learn responsible reflection.

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To friends who helped by reading and commenting on this thesis in terms of style and clarity: Colleen H. Benoit, E.K. Gingerich, Frank

And finally, to Jesus of Nazareth, who, in his sojourn among us, walked the path of wisdom and life, and in overcoming the seductive intimidation of death has freed us to join him along that same path. To *him* who is our Wisdom, our Freedom — our *Life*!

To
Mary Anna

She sat with me in English,
Chased me through the window in Greek,
Whispered to me in Cheyenne,
Canoed the Jataté with me in Tzeltal,
Strolled through the market with me in Spanish,
Blessed me with a rock and a squirrel in Stoney,
And suffered with me through Hebrew.

בְּעֶלָה יְהַלְלָה

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AV   Authorized (King James) Version.

BDB   F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.*

BHS   Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.

G   Greek Old Testament.

GKC   *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch and A.E. Cowley.

H   Hebrew.

JB   The Jerusalem Bible.

LXX   Septuagint, ed. A. Rahlfs.

NEB   New English Bible.

NIV   New International Version.

RSV   Revised Standard Version.

SL   Syntactic Locution; i.e., the asyndetically concatenated *b* - based temporal clause structure

TEV   Today's English Version.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A popular song of the 1930's begins, "I'm in the mood for love...." It could be said that Lady Wisdom, in the elevated language of Proverbs 8:22-31, speaks in the spirit of that song, but with a difference: Wisdom's word to the whole world is, "I'm in the mood for *life*."[1] She communicates this mood in the midst of rhetorical reminiscence, as she thinks back to her days with the Lord before the creation of the physical universe. It is not the memories alone that suggest the mood of Wisdom's speech, however, for memories can reflect many moods, such as nostalgia, wistfulness, rejection of the present. Rather, the mood of Wisdom's speech — the way she wants her audience to understand this reminiscence (that is, what she is doing *in* the act of delivering this reminiscence) — is signaled by something other than the words themselves: not by the romantic melodies of a lover's song, but by the alluring, evocative syntax of the teacher's argument. Indeed, as this thesis will show, syntax and mood in Proverbs 8:22-31 are inseparably linked; and it is the rhythmically repetitious temporal clause structure of verses 27-29, the particular focus of this thesis, that communicates this mood with the fullest intensity.[2]

Proverbs 8:22-31, in terms of the temporal clause macro-structural concerns of this thesis at least, presents no textual-critical problem of consequence.[3] The passage according to BHS is as follows:

<div dir="rtl">

22 יְהוָה קָנָנִי רֵאשִׁית דַּרְכּוֹ   קֶדֶם מִפְעָלָיו מֵאָז:

23 מֵעוֹלָם נִסַּכְתִּי   מֵרֹאשׁ מִקַּדְמֵי־אָרֶץ:

24 בְּאֵין־תְּהֹמוֹת חוֹלָלְתִּי   בְּאֵין מַעְיָנוֹת נִכְבַּדֵּי־מָיִם:

25 בְּטֶרֶם הָרִים הָטְבָּעוּ   לִפְנֵי גְבָעוֹת חוֹלָלְתִּי:

26 עַד־לֹא עָשָׂה אֶרֶץ וְחוּצוֹת   וְרֹאשׁ עָפְרוֹת תֵּבֵל:

27 בַּהֲכִינוֹ שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אָנִי   בְּחוּקוֹ חוּג עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם:

28 בְּאַמְּצוֹ שְׁחָקִים מִמָּעַל   בַּעֲזוֹז עִינוֹת תְּהוֹם:

29 בְּשׂוּמוֹ לַיָּם חֻקּוֹ   וּמַיִם לֹא יַעַבְרוּ־פִיו

בְּחוּקוֹ מוֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ: 30 וָאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אָמוֹן

וָאֶהְיֶה שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים יוֹם‖יוֹם   מְשַׂחֶקֶת לְפָנָיו בְּכָל־עֵת:

31 מְשַׂחֶקֶת בְּתֵבֵל אַרְצוֹ   וְשַׁעֲשֻׁעַי אֶת־בְּנֵי אָדָם:

</div>

The larger context of this passage is the Introduction to the Book of Proverbs (chapters 1-9). These chapters consist mostly of a series of father-to-son instructions that contrast the life-denying ways of folly with the life-affirming ways of wisdom, a wisdom that is grounded in "the fear of the Lord" (1:7). In Proverbs 7 the father draws his son's attention to a simple young man led away to a bed of death by an adulterous woman of the streets. In chapter 8 another woman — Wisdom — stands in those same

streets. Has the son considered her alternative?[4]

1 Does not wisdom call,
  does not understanding raise her voice?
2 On the heights beside the way,
  in the paths she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates in front of the town,
  at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:
4 "To you, O men, I call,
  and my cry is to the sons of men.
5 O simple ones, learn prudence;
  O foolish men, pay attention.
6 Hear, for I will speak noble things,
  and from my lips will come what is right;
7 for my mouth will utter truth;
  wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth are righteous;
  there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.
9 They are all straight to him who understands
  and right to those who find knowledge.
10 Take my instruction instead of silver,
  and knowledge rather than choice gold;
11 for wisdom is better than jewels,
  and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.
12 I, wisdom, dwell in prudence,
  and I find knowledge and discretion.
13 The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.
  Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
  and perverted speech I hate.
14 I have counsel and sound wisdom,
  I have insight, I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
  and rulers decree what is just;
16 by me princes rule,
  and nobles govern the earth.
17 I love those who love me,
  and those who seek me diligently find me.
18 Riches and honor are with me,
  enduring wealth and prosperity.
19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
  and my yield than choice silver.
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
  in the paths of justice,
21 endowing with wealth those who love me,
  and filling their treasuries.

22 The Lord created[5] me at the beginning of his work,
    the first[6] of his acts of old.
23 Ages ago[7] I was set up,[8]
    at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
24 When[9] there were no depths I was brought forth,
    when there were no springs abounding with
            water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
    before the hills, I was brought forth;[10]
26 before he had made the earth with its fields,
    or the first of the dust of the world.
27 When[11] he established the heavens, I was there,
    when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 when he made firm the skies above,
    when he established the fountains of the deep,
29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,
    so that the waters might not transgress his
            command,
  when he marked out the foundations of the
            earth[.][12]
30   [T]hen I was beside him, like a master
            workman;[13]
  and I was daily his delight,
    rejoicing before him always,[14]
31 rejoicing in his inhabited world
    and delighting in the sons of men.

32 And now, my sons, listen to me:
    happy are those who keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction and be wise,
    and do not neglect it.
34 Happy is the man who listens to me,
    watching daily at my gates,
    waiting beside my doors.
35 For he who finds me finds life
    and obtains favor from the Lord;
36 but he who misses me injures himself;
    all who hate me love death."

The need for such a study as undertaken in this thesis has been emphasized in general terms by James L. Kugel in "Some Thoughts on Future Research into Biblical Style."[15] In his concern for a reconsideration of the

question of parallelism and the distinction between poetry and narrative in the Hebrew Bible, first presented in his major work *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*,[16] Kugel assigns the highest priority to the "thoroughgoing syntactic analysis" of a cross section of passages of all genres.[17] He shows his respect for the rôle of modern linguistics in achieving this goal thusly: "Certainly some of the most suggestive work on biblical style has been undertaken recently from a rigorously descriptive standpoint, and I mean especially recent studies of syntax."[18] Kugel's intention for such syntactic analysis differs to some degree from the intention of this thesis, however. His concern is "to generate a set of criteria for distinguishing various levels of style in Hebrew as well as offer new insight into the means of their differentiation,"[19] whereas the concern of this thesis is to discern the rhetorical function of a certain higher-level syntactic structure for the interpretation of a specific text.

The methodology employed in this thesis is somewhat eclectic. The author's extensive background in the field of descriptive linguistics has combined with his interest in discourse strategies to form the analytical framework for this essentially inductive study. However, as much as possible, the technical terminology contained herein is derived from the more traditional areas of biblical studies such as Classical grammar, form criticism, and rhetorical criticism. This thesis assumes that the interplay among these various critical and analytical approaches is not only healthy but necessary for the task at hand.

James Muilenburg, anticipating by a generation certain interests that dominate much of present-day literary and discourse studies, states regarding the reading of Hebrew biblical poetry: "The words must be allowed to have their own way with the reader."[20] By this Muilenburg refers to more than merely the denotative-connotative value of lexical items to which biblical lexicology has traditionally addressed itself. He refers to more than the elements of sentential syntax and morphology that fill the pages of most of the Hebrew grammars on the market today. Muilenburg is talking about the overall impact that macrostructure and the higher-level patterned usage of language can have on the reader who is sensitive to the stylistic implications of Hebrew literary phenomena such as repetition. Since the temporal clause structure discussed in this thesis is characterized by repetition, it seems worthwhile to review some of his thoughts on the matter as part of the discussion of methodology.

In "A Study of Hebrew Rhetoric" Muilenburg lists five rôles played by repetition:

(1) "It serves...to center the thought, to rescue it from disparateness and diffuseness, to focus the richness of varied predication upon the poet's controlling concern."

(2) It serves "to give continuity to the writer's thought; the repeated word or phrase is often strategically located, thus providing a clue to the movement and stress of the poem."

(3) It serves to indicate "the structure of the poem, pointing to the separate divisions."

(4) It serves as a guide "in determining the extent of the literary unity."

(5) It provides "an open avenue to the character of biblical thinking."[21]

In support of his analysis of the power of Hebrew rhetorical strategies such as repetition, Muilenburg quotes from Johannes Pedersen:

> The very language shows how Israelite thought is dominated by two things: *striving after totality* and *movement*. Properly speaking it only expresses that the whole soul takes part in the thinking and creates out of its own essence. The thought is charged with the feeling of the soul and the striving of its will after action. This characterizes the Hebrew manner of argumentation. We try to persuade by means of abstract reasoning, the Hebrew by directly influencing the will. In expressing a thought he makes the souls of his listeners receive his mind-image, and thus the matter itself; but at the same time he produces an effect by the feeling and will which he puts into the words. His argumentation therefore consists in assurance and repetition.[22]

Methodologically speaking, Muilenburg — like Kugel — argues for the application of intensive analysis to Hebrew poetry. As an "approach to an examination and evaluation of the repetitive style in ancient Hebrew rhetoric," Muilenburg comments, "such an undertaking would reveal the importance of this literary method not only for an evaluation of the Hebrew temperament and literary manner but also for hermeneutics."[23]

It is not with the phenomenon of repetition in general that this thesis is concerned, however, but with a specific type of repetition — not that of sounds, words or phrases, but that of a *syntactic structure*, the

concatenation of temporal clauses in Proverbs 8:27-29. Furthermore, the intention of this thesis is to do more than show how the repetition-concatenation of the syntactic feature serves cohesively as a structural guide; that matter has already been settled by many scholars, as noted in Chapter Two. Rather, the intention here is to show that (1) the concatenated syntactic structure of the passage functions evocatively and (2) that evocative function can be defined.

The area of linguistic theory that relates most closely to the approach of this thesis is that set forth by J.L. Austin in his 1955 William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University and posthumously published in 1962 in his *How to Do Things with Words*.[24] This is a theory of "speech acts." Austin maintains that when people speak they are doing something, are performing an action of some sort — they are performing *speech acts*. Austin details three kinds of speech acts: (1) locutionary acts, (2) illocutionary acts, and (3) perlocutionary acts.

A *locutionary* act of speech is the performance of an "act *of* 'saying something.'"[25] It is "roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense."[26] It is that kind of speech act that can be readily discussed in terms of traditional phonology, syntax and lexicology. The utterance "The house is on fire," made as a simple statement without reference to it being a warning or the like, is a locutionary act.

An *illocutionary* act of speech is that which carries a certain

force; it is the performance of an act *in* saying something.[27] Whereas locutionary acts are characterized by meaning, illocutionary acts are characterized by force. Illocutionary acts include "asking or answering a question, giving some information or an assurance or a warning, announcing a verdict or an intention, pronouncing sentence, making an appointment or an appeal or a criticism, making an identification or giving a description," and the like.[28] Illocutionary acts are acts "done as conforming to a convention,"[29] and are intentional. The conventional nature of such acts is supportable by their ability to be made "explicit by the performative formula."[30] For example, the sentence "The house is on fire," shouted amidst the smell of smoke in the middle of the night, carries the force of a warning — that is, *in* shouting "The house is on fire!" under the stated conditions, the speaker is performing an illocutionary act of warning the audience; the speaker is not merely performing a locutionary act *of* saying something that may be true or false; he is calling for some kind of response such as the audience's fleeing the house. In this example the conventional nature of the illocutionary act can be made explicit by applying the performative formula — that is, by prefacing the first-person performative, "*I am warning you that* [the house is on fire]."

A perlocutionary act of speech is that which achieves something in the audience; it is the performance of an act *by* saying something.[31] Whereas locutions are characterized by meaning, and illocutions by force, perlocutions are characterized by "*the achieving of* certain *effects* by saying something."[32] If the locution "The house is on fire" is performed

with the illocutionary force of a warning, a perlocutionary act will have been performed if the audience actually flees the burning building as the response to the locution. In this example, then, the locutionary act is the act *of* saying "The house is on fire"; the illocutionary act is the act of warning *in* saying "The house is on fire"; and the perlocutionary act is the act of persuading the audience *by* saying "The house is on fire." First person performatives cannot be used to make explicit a perlocutionary act; for example, it is not acceptable to say "I persuade you that the house is on fire;" this is a distinguishing feature that separates illocutionary acts from perlocutionary acts.

Using Austin's terminology, it can be said that the present thesis is an attempt at determining the *illocutionary force* of the concatenated temporal clause structure of Proverbs 8 — that is, to determine what Lady Wisdom is trying to do *in* saying what she says. But unlike the relative ease of determining the force of an expression in modern English, such as "The house is on fire," where live speakers can be called on as informants, the task of such an interpretation, especially of a syntactic structure, within the Hebrew Wisdom Literature is more difficult and the results less conclusive because of the linguistic, cultural and temporal gulf that separates the analyst from the ancient text. Consider the following caution Michael Hancher issues regarding the illocutionary analysis of a modern literary text, and then magnify the potential for ambiguity several fold for the analysis of a text such as Proverbs:

The risk of misunderstanding illocutionary force is frequent
enough in literature to require some precaution. Illocutionary
ambiguity is as common in spoken and written language as are
syntactical ambiguity [e.g., "the son of Pharaoh's daughter"] and
semantic ambiguity [e.g., "he caught a bug"]. Most sentences
can be used to execute many different speech acts. Fortunately,
the information contained in the context of a live utterance goes a
long way towards disambiguating all three kinds of ambiguity.
But, because the context available for understanding a *written*
utterance is narrower, ambiguities can persist. In the normal
course of events we may manage to muddle through such
complexities without having to think about them. But there are
times, in literature as in life, when we must deliberately study
what it is that is being done *in* what is being said, or else run the
risk of missing the illocutionary point altogether.[33]

Hancher has focused on the very point of this thesis, to "deliberately

study what it is that is being done *in* what is being said" in Lady Wisdom's

speech, in order to understand the illocutionary force — or, as also

referred to in this thesis, the "rhetorical function" — of her choice of

syntax. Indeed, it is in the study of such matters as this that Austin's

illocutionary interests overlap with the more traditional rhetorical critical

interests of scholars like Edward Corbett, who defines rhetorical criticism

as

...that mode of internal criticism which considers the interactions
between the work, the author, and the audience. As such, it is
interested in the *product*, the *process*, and the *effect* of
linguistic activity, whether of the imaginative kind or the
utilitarian kind. When rhetorical criticism is applied to
imaginative literature, it regards the work not so much as an
object of aesthetic contemplation but as an artistically
structured instrument for communication. It is more interested
in a literary work for what it *does* than for what it *is*.[34]

Corbett's concern for what a literary work "*does*" resonates with Austin's

for what illocutionary acts *do*. The concern of this thesis is to work from

the insight that literature and words *do* things, and to focus very tightly on how one aspect of a literary product does things — what a certain syntactic structure *does*; i.e., in terms of illocutionary force, how a certain syntactic structure functions rhetorically.

The purpose of this thesis, then, is to determine the relationship between syntax and mood in part of the Wisdom Speech of Proverbs 8. To put it another way, the purpose of this thesis is to determine what Lady Wisdom is doing *in* employing a certain syntactic structure — that is, to define the specific rhetorical function ("illocutionary force") of the intriguing string of temporal clauses in verses 27-29. The procedure followed by this thesis in arriving at such a definition involves the examination of the six other poetic passages in the Hebrew Bible which contain the same kind of temporal clause structure of interest in Proverbs 8. The major discussion of these passages (Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, Psalm 68, Job 29-31, Proverbs 1:20-33, and Ezekiel 32) is presented in Chapter Four. This will be preceded by a review of recent literature on Proverbs 8:22-31 in Chapter Two, and a restatement of thesis purpose, together with a more precise description of the temporal clause structure of Proverbs 8:27-29, in Chapter Three. The conclusion reached by this thesis on the relationship between syntax and mood in Proverbs 8:22-31 is set forth in Chapter Five.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] There are two writers who have especially influenced the author's choice of this thesis topic. Dr. John Snow, chief of the Wesley Band of Stoney Indians, author of *These Mountains are our Sacred Places* (Toronto: Samuel Stevens, 1977), and prominent Native religious philosopher, has seen Proverbs 8 as a bridge to a better understanding of North American Indian emphasis on the spiritual harmony of the creation; Dr. Snow has often discussed with the author his thoughts on the passage, thoughts which he has brought into a paraphrase of the opening to Wisdom's speech:

> Wisdom of Nature calls at all seasons.
> When will you learn from her instruction?
> Understanding speaks aloud and gives sound reasons.
> When will you listen, hear and take discretion?
>
> At the entrance of the forests wisdom hails,
> At the entrance of the prairies she is at hand,
> At the heights beside the mountain trails,
> And in the valleys she takes her stand.
>
> To you, "O brave" I call,
> My call is to the sons of the Red men,
> O brave warriors hear all,
> Walk the good path as the Great Spirit's men.
>
> (*These Mountains are our Sacred Places*, p.149)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whose writings resonate with the life-affirming spirit of the Hebrew Wisdom Literature, warns of the lie of seductive human arrogance that vows to rob humanity of its very soul; like the writer of

Proverbs 8, he has taken up the pen to defeat the lie with compelling words of beauty that point to the very Source of wisdom and righteousness, and especially through his Nobel Prize *Lecture* (Trans. Nicholas Bethell [London: Stanvalley Press, 1973]), has moved the author of this thesis to attempt the same.

[2] The terms "mood" and "repetition" require some clarification. Throughout this thesis the term "mood" is used, not in its grammatical sense, but in the literary sense of atmosphere or ambience (on which see M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 4th ed. [Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981], p.11). "Repetition" (such as is evidenced by the temporal clause structure of Proverbs 8:22-31 and usually referred to in this thesis by the term "concatenation" for reasons set forth in Chapter Three) is a rhetorical device which James Muilenburg has examined at some length in "A Study of Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," *Vetus Testamentum*, Supplement 1 (1953), 97-111. For more on Muilenburg and repetition, see below, note 20ff and related text.

[3] Other types of textual-critical problems (such as the uncertainty about *'āmôn* in Proverbs 8:30, and the redaction issues raised by O. Loretz) are considered within the literature review of Chapter Two.

[4] All quotations are from the RSV unless otherwise indicated.

[5] There has been considerable debate over whether *qānānî* should be translated as "created me" or "possessed me." Opinions on this are summarized throughout Chapter Two of this thesis. For the author's own conclusions on the matter, see Notes to Chapter Two, note 108.

[6] *qedem* joins with *rē'šît* in verse 22 to prepare the audience immediately for the powerful reminiscence about beginnings that is dominant through verse 31.

[7] *'ôlām*, a word often translated as "eternity" in the Psalms, here has the tone of great antiquity, of beginnings (refer to note 6 above). An interesting occurrence of this word appears in Jeremiah 6:16 *wᵊša'lû lintibôt 'ôlām* "and ask for the ancient paths," a reference that seems to resonate with the spirit of the Proverbs 8 passage.

[8] This thesis does not agree with the RSV rendering of *nissaktî* as "I was set up;" the arguments of P.W. Skehan (see discussion and notes under Skehan in Chapter Two) for the meaning "I was poured out" seem more convincing, especially if wisdom is associated with the ideas of instruction, language, fluidity of speech, etc.

[9] From verse 24 to 26 there are a series of what have come to be known as the *negative temporal clauses* of Proverbs 8. This thesis is not primarily concerned with these, but with the positive clauses that appear in verse 27 to 29, about which the most scholarly interest has been shown in terms of rhetorical criticism (see Chapter Three). For the negative clauses, consider the various discussions in Chapter Two, such as R.N. Whybray's, and Notes to Chapter Four, note 3.

[10] Note how this phrase, in its reference to wisdom's antiquity, must be a twist on an apparently common saying that shows up also in Job 15:7 in exactly the same wording except for being in the second person: *lipnê gᵊbā'ôt ḥôlāltā*, "were you brought forth before the hills?"

[11] These "when" clauses, extending from verse 27 to 29, will be discussed in more detail throughout the remainder of this thesis. For a structural analysis of them, turn to Chapter Three.

[12] It is the interpretation of this thesis, contrary to the RSV punctuation, that the sentence containing the temporal clauses beginning at verse 27 ends after the last stich of verse 29 and that a new sentence begins at verse 30, both verse 27a and 30a consisting of independent clauses (so NEB, NIV, TEV; but not G, JB).

[13] Opinion differs considerably on the meaning of *'āmôn*. The two most common interpretations are "master workman / architect" and "darling child." See Chapter Two for the various discussions on this point.

[14] On the matter of "rejoicing" consider also the discussion of O. Loretz in Chapter Two. Loretz sees this rather as an indication of "playing before God," and is therefore part of the picture of a "darling child" and not of a "master workman."

[15] James L. Kugel, "Some Thoughts on Future Research into Biblical Style: Addenda to *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 28 (1984), 107-17.

[16] James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981).

[17] Kugel, "Some Thoughts on Future Research into Biblical Style," p. 110.

[18] Ibid. Among the scholars doing the kind of poetic syntax studies relevant to his interests Kugel includes F.I. Andersen, A.M. Cooper, D.R.

Hillers, M. O'Connor, R. Sappan, W. Bodine, and W.R. Garr (p.117, note 3). To Kugel's list could also be added the many names of linguist-translators who, possessing unusual insights acquired in non-European linguistic and cultural settings, are addressing a wide range of syntactic issues in biblical studies closely related to those addressed by the scholars on Kugel's list; unfortunately, their writings do not often appear in the usual biblical journals but are found in the in-house publications of their respective agencies (bibliographies available through the United Bible Societies, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, among others).

[19] Ibid., p.111.

[20] Muilenburg, "A Study of Hebrew Rhetoric," p.109. See also note 2, above.

[21] Ibid., p.99.

[22] Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: its Life and Culture*, Vol.I-II (London, 1926), p.123; quoted in Muilenburg, "A Study of Hebrew Rhetoric," pp.99-100 footnote.

[23] Muilenburg, "A Study of Hebrew Rhetoric," p.109.

[24] J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962).

[25] Ibid., p.94.

[26] Ibid., p.108.

[27] Ibid., pp.99-100.

[28] Ibid., p.98.

[29] Ibid., p.105.

[30] Ibid., p.103.

[31] Ibid., p.108.

[32] Ibid., p.120.

[33] Michael Hancher, "Understanding Poetic Speech Acts," in *Linguistic Perspectives on Literature*, ed. M.K.L. Ching, M.C. Haley, and R.F. Lunsford (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p.302. For further background on speech act theory and its application to literary studies, see Mats Furberg, *Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts: A Main Theme in J.L. Austin's Philosophy* (Göteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1963); Samuel R. Levin, "Concerning What Kind of Speech Act a Poem Is," in *Pragmatics of Language and Literature*, ed. Teun A. van Dijk (New York: American Elsevier, 1976); and in K.T. Fann, ed., *Symposium on J.L. Austin* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969): Walter Cerf, "Critical Review of *How to Do Things with Words*"; L. Jonathan Cohen, "Do Illocutionary Forces Exist?"; Mats Furberg, "Meaning and Illocutionary Force"; and P.F. Strawson, "Intention and Convention in Speech Acts."

[34] Edward P.J. Corbett, "Introduction," in his *Rhetorical Analysis of Literary Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.xxii.

CHAPTER TWO

Proverbs 8:22-31 in Recent Scholarship

There has been, over the past half century, a great deal of scholarly attention paid to Israel's Wisdom Literature. General reviews of this scholarship have been prepared by W. Baumgartner (1951),[1] Ronald E. Clements (1976),[2] J. A. Emerton (1979),[3] Roland E. Murphy (1981),[4] and James L. Crenshaw (1985).[5] This present review is concerned specifically with Proverbs 8:22-31 and offers an overview of literature since 1962. The organization of the discussion is by scholar approximately in the order of his or her earliest treatment of the passage, the one major exception being Roland E. Murphy who will be considered lastly because of the scope and resonance of his work.

Overview of Scholarship since 1962

The year 1962 is significant as the beginning point for this overview, for it marks the publishing of the English translation of Gerhard von Rad's *Old Testament Theology* and the beginning of a new era in Hebrew Wisdom studies.[6] Indeed, Roland E. Murphy, with particular reference to von Rad's later volume *Wisdom in Israel,*[7] has lauded G. von Rad's contribution as "by far the most significant work on Israelite wisdom."[8]

Thus, Gerhard von Rad's scholarship has most certainly attained benchmark status and, for the purposes of this thesis at least, provides a convenient chronological point of reference.

Gerhard von Rad's major contribution to the understanding of Proverbs 8:22-31 is to see wisdom as "the mediator of revelation...the divine principle bestowed upon the world at Creation,"[9] that is, wisdom not as an attribute of God, but "an attribute of the world, namely that mysterious attribute, by virtue of which she turns towards men to give order to their lives."[10] To hear the voice of wisdom in Proverbs 8 is to enter upon "the decision about life and death, for what this wisdom has to bestow is life, life, that is, in the grand sense of the Old Testament, as a saving blessing."[11] While denying the possibility of theologically defining the wisdom of this passage, von Rad does describe this wisdom as "the form in which Jahweh's will and his accompanying of man (i.e. his salvation) approaches man. Wisdom is the essence of what man needs for life, and of what God grants him."[12] Thus, "wisdom is truly the form in which Jahweh makes himself present and in which he wishes to be sought by man."[13] It is in this connection that von Rad speaks of the "self-revelation of Creation,"[14] stating that "the deepest things which Israel said about God's Creation were given in Prov. VIII. 22ff.—the world and man are joyously encompassed by wisdom."[15] That is, by virtue of "its wondrousness and the wisdom of its design all Creation transcends itself in the direction of God. It is enclosed by a secret, encompassed by a *doxa*, pointing back to God."[16] This is what

is meant by "the religious provocation of man by the world."[17] While acknowledging the possibility of non-Israelite dependence for some of the imagery of Proverbs 8:22-31, von Rad maintains that it is the theological context that is critical: "these cosmological expressions...are a message of that wisdom which with the force of an ultimatum calls man to a decision about life and death (Prov. VIII. 35)," and as "the first part of the call to man" their function is "to strengthen its weight and authority, and to intensify the readiness to listen to it."[18] Indeed, for von Rad the elements of word, wisdom and creation are tightly interrelated in this passage, for "the word which calls man to life and salvation is the same word as that which as wisdom already encompassed all creatures at Creation. It is the same word which God himself made use of as a plan at his creation of the world."[19]

G. von Rad regards Proverbs 8:22-31 as the "highly artistic" second part of the larger didactic poem, 8:4-36 (Part 1, verses 4-21; Part 3, verses 32-36).[20] Part two consists of four subsections (verses 22-23, 24-26, 27-9, 30-31) the first and last of which have wisdom speaking about herself, the second describing the "situation before creation," and the third addressing Yahweh's creative action.[21] Part two has a subsidiary role to the larger poem, its independent significance being "only in so far as in it the voice which addresses men makes itself known. If one wishes to understand the speaker properly, then one must go right back to God's creation of the world, for here lies her origin."[22] The solemn style of first-person address coupled with the repetition of negative temporal

clauses and the presence of the playful child imagery suggests to von Rad

an undeniable Egyptian influence on the passage, an influence, however,

which has entered Israel with significant modification. This only goes to

prove for von Rad that "ideas which had their roots elsewhere came to

Israel's help when she needed them, in order to be able to progress in her

thinking within her own domain."[23] The extent of this modification is evident

in the character of wisdom in Proverbs 8:22-31 as compared to that of the

Egyptian *Maat*, for wisdom in the biblical passage "has no divine status, nor

is it a hypostasized attribute of Yahweh; it is, rather, something created by

Yahweh and assigned to its proper function," distinct from the creation yet

belonging in it"[24]—in the world, but not of it, so to speak. Thus, according

to von Rad, what Proverbs 8 is speaking about "is an event, something which

happens to man in the world and is actually brought upon him by the

world...the active influence of the environment on man, that is, of an

ordering power which affects him and corrects him."[25] G. von Rad thus

concludes that, on the basis of Israel's older teachings on Yahweh as

Creator and of the influence of Egyptian ideas, Proverbs 8:22-31 is "the

reinterpretaion of a very old insight which had never been expressed

before."[26]

As for the nature and function of the temporal clauses, von Rad

provides little comment other than recognizing in the "before...before..." of

verses 24-26 a stylistic dependence on Egyptian texts.[27] In another

context, however, von Rad notes that the exegetical problems posed by

Proverbs 8:22-31 can in part be traced to "the intense poetic feeling" of the

passage; he states that "it is precisely the solemn piling up of statements which often has as a consequence the fact that the meaning of what is being said remains ill-defined and undecided."[28] Yet this is precisely the point of the present thesis, that indeed it is in this "solemn piling up of statements"—or at least in the piling up of temporal clauses—that a significant clue to the meaning of the poem *is* to be found, about which more will be said later.

W. Vischer[29] understands Proverbs 8:22-31, the third strophe of a late composition, to be an independent unit of very early origins by virtue of its language and content.[30] Vischer regards the chapter as a whole to be a poem in which Wisdom openly appeals to mankind to listen to her and seek her, "for whoever finds me has found life."[31] Following W.F. Albright[32] and P. Humbert,[33] Vischer translates *qânâ*, not as "*erwerben*" ("acquire") but as "*erschaffen*" ("create").[34] Extensive treatment of *'âmôn*[35] results in Vischer leaving the term untranslated and merely brought over into his superb German translation as a loan word "*Amon*".[36] He considers the hypostasis/attribute question in relation to Proverbs 3:19-20, but cautions that "*auf alle Fälle huldigt der Hymnus keiner Göttin neben dem Herrn.*"[37] On the question of the temporal clauses, Vischer translates "*als...als...als...*," but is silent on the possibility of an evocative function for them.[38]

R.B.Y. Scott[39] sees Proverbs 8 as a "unified formal composition"

which is divided into three strophes and a peroration. The author

structures his poem on the length of the Hebrew alphabet — twenty-two

letters — as follows: first strophe (verses 1-11), twenty-two lines; second

strophe (verses 12-21 LXX), twenty-two lines; third strophe (verses

22-31), twenty-two lines; and the peroration (verses 32-36), eleven lines.

The structural similarity in this regard between this passage and others in

Proverbs 1-9 is suggestive of common authorship, according to Scott, and

leads to the conclusion that the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8 is

strictly literary and not ontological. Scott interprets *qānâ* as "acquire"

and *'āmôn* as *'ōmēn* "binding together," a divine attribute. Whatever

influence from Egyptian texts may be found in Proverbs 8:22-31 must be

understood as having no more than figurative signficance in the biblical

passage. Scott does not touch on the question of the temporal clauses.[40]

R.N. Whybray,[41] reacting to views on Babylonian and Egyptian

textual origins for Proverbs 8:22-31 held by B. Gemser[42] and by H.

Ringgren[43], argues that "none of these non-biblical texts resembles Prov.

viii 22-31 either in form or purpose."[44] Whybray pays particular attention

to the significance of the temporal clauses for Gemser's and Ringgren's

positions, stating that in Proverbs 8:22-31 "the function of the temporal

clauses is simply to expand the words 'at the beginning of his work' and 'the

first of his acts' in v. 22, asserting the priority of wisdom over all crea-

tures."[45] Denying that there is any question here of the relative priority of

the *Creator* vis-à-vis other gods and matter, Whybray finds in the biblical

texts rather the reference to "the relative priority of one of his creatures, wisdom, over the others."[46] He concludes that, since the only structural similarity in this matter between the biblical and the non-biblical texts is the presence of the negative temporal clauses of verses 24-26, the detailed themes of which are not similar, the argument of dependency on the basis of clause structure does not hold;[47] the biblical writer's "choice of this construction may be merely fortuitous."[48]

On the question of the personification of Wisdom, Whybray regards it merely as "a literary device to add vividness to the teaching,"[49] while on the question of identity Whybray holds that Wisdom is an attribute of God, Proverbs 8:22-31 being an expansion of 3:19. "Since God obviously needed wisdom in order to create the world, her connection with him must go back even earlier: he created Wisdom first of all."[50] Bringing together the matters of dependency and personification, Whybray concludes that the biblical writer "may have derived some of his imagery from non-Israelite mythological sources, but...this is no more than poetic imagery;"[51] verses 22-31 may be an interpolation, since the passage, unlike the rest of chapter 8, "stresses the close association between Wisdom and God."[52]

C. Kayatz[53] (a graduate student of G. von Rad) has presented a form-critical treatment of Egyptian wisdom literature and Proverbs 1-9, paying special attention to Proverbs 8 in terms of structure, first-person stylistic reference in Divine speeches (*"Gottesreden"*), Wisdom's relationship to Jahweh, the love of Wisdom (*"Die Liebe der Weisheit und*

die Liebe zur Weisheit "), Wisdom as life and protection ("*Schutz* "),
and Wisdom's relationship to the king.[54] In particular with regard to the
first-person reference in divine speeches, where she finds "conspicuous"
("*auffällig* ") correspondence between Proverbs 8:22-31 and the "*Maat-
Gestalt* ",[55] and with regard to the similarity in negative temporal clauses
between Proverbs 8:22-31 and the Egyptian texts,[56] Kayatz argues for an
Egyptian dependency, rejecting Whybray's text evaluation as being too
restricted and ignoring the issue of Wisdom's antiquity.[57] But subsequent
challenge to Kayatz's hypothesis has come from other scholars such as M.
Dahood[58] and Philip Nel. Nel comments that Kayatz is "over-awed by the
Egyptian analogy" and "places undue emphasis on the Egyptian background of
these hymns." He chides, "The hypostatization of *MAAT* in Egypt and of
wisdom in Israel is enough reason for Kayatz to conclude that such an in-
fluence existed."[59]

Mitchell Dahood,[60] while not addressing the issue of syntax, form,
or the rhetorical function of Proverbs 8:22-31 directly, argues on philo-
logical grounds for Phoenician (and not Egyptian) influence in the text
(*contra* Kayatz) and that *'āmôn* refers to YHWH and not Wisdom (*contra*
Whybray).[61]

William McKane, in his 1970 commentary on the whole book of
Proverbs,[62] does not regard chapter 8 as "a deliberate artistic unity" that
came into being at one time, since "the two passages (vv. 12-21 and vv.

22-31) do not have that artistic connection which can be explained with reference to the creative design of an author."[63] The fact that these two passages are juxtaposed "has to be explained by traditio-historical considerations." Wisdom's new style in the second passage "is intended as a reorientation, enrichment and supplementation" of the first passage. While in verses 22-31 "the intention is still that of powerfully recommending Wisdom to men," the apologist has been faced with new concerns because of "new situations and a different kind of hearer or reader," and thus he has constructed "a portrait of Wisdom which will be conducive to his didactic objectives."[64]

McKane does not deal with the question of the complex temporal clause structures of Proverbs 8:22-31, but rather devotes his attention to Near East lexical and mythological matters[65] and, in the process, rejects Kayatz's arguments for the influence of *Maat* in the passage, opting instead for a Canaanite underlying mythology.[66] As for the overall significance of the passage McKane concludes that verses 22-31 should be

> ...regarded as a speculative superstructure which is raised on
> the foundations of the empirical givenness and effectiveness of
> wisdom, and which tries to fill out the meaning of these
> phenomena by tracing the history of wisdom beyond the
> phenomenal world to a supra-historical *locus*, thereby
> supplying a theological explanation for the empirical dominance
> of wisdom.[67]

O. Loretz[68] has provided a stichometric study of Proverbs 8:22-31 concerning the two realms of Wisdom's play: before YHWH and before man.

On the basis of a reexamination of verses 30a-31b he has concluded that Wisdom's relationship with God in the beginning serves as a model for her later relationship with — her "turning toward" — mankind. "*Das Urgeschehen erscheint als Grundlage und Voraussetzung ihrer Gegenwart und ihrer Zuneigung zu den Menschen.*"[69] Loretz does not deal with the structural significance of the temporal clauses.

Jean-Noël Aletti has produced two fine articles that bear on the rhetorical significance of Proverbs 8:22-31.[70] In his treatment of the larger context of Proverbs 1-9 Aletti develops the role of *parole* in acting as a time buffer between the seduction and the commission of evil in terms of the tension between Wisdom and the portrayal of the loose woman.[71] He well notes the conundrum which results when deceitful speech ("*parole trompeuse*") starts using the same expressions as truthful speech ("*parole vraie*").[72] But Wisdom in her competition with the seductive loose woman is unique: Wisdom is "feminine without being female ["*féminine...sans être femme*"] because she existed before the creation of human beings." And Wisdom is "very near, in our homes and in our towns, but she embraces the entire universe."[73]

In terms of the detailed exegesis of Proverbs 8:22-31 Aletti finds many irreconcilable opinions on the two key terms (**qānānî** and **'āmôn**) that determine the interpretation of the poem, and concludes that no one of them adequately comprehends the poem's dynamism.[74] Holding that a

knowledge of the structure of the poem is critical to the understanding of its meaning, Aletti determines that the poem is governed by the presence of three personae evenly interspersed among twenty-two stichs: "Yahweh (11 stichs) Me (Wisdom) (11 stichs) Mankind."[75] Aletti sees the repetition of the temporal prepositional phrases as stylistic, showing the time when wisdom "was there," i.e., "next to God."[76] The rhythm of the clauses prepares for and underlines the final encounter ("*rencontre finale*") between wisdom and men.[77]

Alan M. Cooper, in his doctoral dissertation,[78] pays particular attention to Proverbs 8:22-31 as an example of a parallelistic poetry to which he applies insights from the structural linguistics work of R. Jakobson[79] and others. Since "parallelism entails the interaction of every element of the poem on every linguistic level," and "that interplay determines the shape of the poetic line and, as the character of the lines emerges, the structure of the entire text," Cooper holds that "no constituent structure can be ignored in any attempt to comprehend the structure of the whole."[80] While enthusiastic about the analytical procedures made possible by linguistics, Cooper is cautious of the ability of linguistic science to assess the patterns isolated in a text through the linguistic methodology,[81] noting that "while the poetic function focusses on the message for itself, that message does not exist in a void. It...entails the participation of an addresser and an addressee."[82] Nevertheless, for Cooper "the meaning of poetry is...inherent in its formal structure,"[83] and it

is that structure which Cooper has set out to define for Proverbs 8:22-31.

Cooper has dealt with the passage without regard to its immediate or extended biblical contexts; i.e. for Cooper the passage is a "whole poem."[84] Two stylistic features characterize this poem in Cooper's analysis: "juxtaposition of semantically parallel terms within a single cola"[85] and a "penchant for repetition, a typical means of providing textual unity in biblical poetry."[86] While noting the syntactic and phonological parallelism of the temporal clauses, he does not consider the possibility of a performative function for the repetition of the temporal clause structures, clearly because he has excluded the context from consideration, especially verses 32-36. Well aware of the effect of poetic language on reader response, he nevertheless misses a most significant manipulative device the poet has employed to get his point across and lead the reader on to making the right decision for *life*. As a consequence, Cooper concludes:

> the creative acts of God are the backdrop against which
> the poet makes his assertion that, of all things created, Wisdom
> is uniquely bound to mankind. Man may not have been created
> until the sixth day — and in this poem he is not created at all —
> but the guiding spirit of man, his essence and glory — his
> Wisdom — was the first and most precious of God's creations.[87]

His conclusion is troublesome, for it raises a question not only about the rhetorical function of the temporal clauses but about Proverbs as a whole: if man already *has* wisdom as "his essence and glory," then why must he be told to "*get* wisdom"?[88]

Hermann Timm[89] has provided a respectful reflection on Gerhard

von Rad's writings on Hebrew Wisdom. Timm treats Proverbs 8:22-36 not only in its textual context of Proverbs 1-9, which Timm classifies as "*lyrisch-spekulative Dichtungen*,"[90] but in the larger context of Solomonic tradition. Timm concludes that 8:22-36 is an appeal to its audience to show a "wide heart" in welcoming wisdom in just as Solomon did at the beginning of his reign,[91] to respond to the passage with "»*Wollest Du Deinem Knechte geben ein hörendes Herz*«."[92] His appreciation of the spirit of Proverbs 8:22-36 has moved Timm to warn against an academic approach that does not take into account the oriental mind.[93] Although he does not directly address the issue of the temporal clauses, his concern for recognizing the oriental *Sitz-im-Leben* is relevant to any rhetorical study of the passage.

Patrick W. Skehan, who in his earlier work on the seven columns of Wisdom sees Proverbs 8 (with chapters 1 and 9) as "the framework or setting within which" the seven "carefully wrought columns" of chapters 2-7 stand,[94] in his 1979 article "Structures in Poems on Wisdom..."[95] treats Proverbs 8 "as a representative of careful structuring in the development of a unified theme by a single skilled versifier."[96] Proverbs 8 consists of "seven uniform stanzas of five lines each,"[97] an analysis dependent on the structured presence of first-personal pronouns, the name YHWH, and certain other rhetorical devices, and on the exclusion of verse 11.[98]

For Skehan verses 22-31 constitute the fifth and sixth stanzas of the larger poem, and contain significant compositional patterns that are "at

once phonetic and syntactical that bond together more than two lines at a time: vv 27-29 offer the most obvious example."[99] After noting lexical and phonological patterns that bind together verses 22-31, and providing a superb statement of the meaning of *nissakti* and the idea of the pouring out of God's Spirit (v. 23a), Skehan proceeds to his treatment of verses 27-31 which he calls "the most remarkable stanza of the poem: syntactically the closest knit, and with its alliteration based on labials, the most pronounced."[100] As a final note on the unity of the chapter, Skehan says: "In Proverbs 8, those who would divide vv 22-31 from their context need to perceive that the verses are locked into place by v 35b of the concluding stanza."[101] Although he does not touch on the chiasmus, Skehan is to be commended for his convincing treatment of cohesion in chapter 8, and in verses 22-31 in particular.

Bruce Vawter,[102] reconsidering the question of *qānâ* in Proverbs 8:22, rejects the meaning "create" in favour of "took possession of wisdom as 'the first of his way(s)'"[103] While conceding that the conception of wisdom in Proverbs 8 is that of a "world-principle" or "rationale," Vawter is not convinced that "wisdom is seen as such precisely in virtue of its creation by God."[104] For in Proverbs 8 "Yahweh is not the creator of wisdom but its discoverer. The pre-existent wisdom which he discovers he then...makes the rationale of his creation of and dealing with man and his world;" it is this approach that, for Vawter, testifies to "postexilic Israel's contact with another wisdom tradition."[105] Arguing that *qānâ* is not

stative but transitive, Vawter rejects the argument of R.B.Y. Scott[106] that wisdom is merely an attribute of Yahweh. On the *Maat* debate, Vawter sides with Whybray's position "that while the deification of *maat* was fairly inevitable in Egyptian polytheism, such a development would have been much more difficult for the sages of Israel grappling with the same concept."[107] The matter of the temporal clauses of Proverbs 8:22-31 does not arise in Vawter's article, nor does it appear from his article that he has considered a rhetorical purpose to the use of *qānâ* throughout Proverbs 1-9.[108]

Philip Nel has addressed himself to matters of authority and genre in the Hebrew Wisdom Literature.[109] He regards Proverbs 8 as a Wisdom Teaching ("the systematic and logical combination of Sentences...about a specific topic") whose life-setting is the school (probably on the Egyptian pattern) and which contains a sub-unit of the Hymn genre (verses 22-31); it is of late origin, "after the stabilization of schools."[110] Of the Hymn genre, of which Proverbs 8:22-31 (along with Job 28 and Sirach 24) is an example, Nel says:

> The hymn, with its highly poetic rhythm, in the wisdom
> literature normally plays a subordinate role within another
> genre, but is undeniably a genre itself. Interestingly enough
> these hymnic parts frequently occur in the wisdom literature
> when the cosmic transcendence of wisdom (hypostatization) is
> emphasized or when dealing with the sphere of creation.[111]

Nel, with special reference to the form-critical studies of proverbial wisdom, maintains that there must be no separation of form and content in

the process of genre-description, "because the form itself is already a

certain expression of reality. *The content is without intention and*

scope when separated from the form and its functioning"[112]

(italics mine). On the matter of motivation, Nel develops this line of

thought even further: "motivation is not the mere result of a pedagogical

process..., but forms an intrinsic part of the admonition."[113] Since in

Proverbs 8:22-31 Wisdom is speaking as one with the highest authority, and

since she is speaking in a way to motivate the listener to the right choice

between the wrong way and the right, Nels' discussion here seems espe-

cially important. Nel continues:

> It is the motivation which makes the authority of the admonition
> evident. The authority is therefore to be sought in the
> admonition itself as far as it prescribes and demands the *ethos*
> of an existence devoted to and in harmony with the order of
> creation. Obedience to the admonition unlocks and reveals this
> order because this order is created in wisdom.... This wisdom,
> reflected in the order of creation..., is the wisdom which God
> gives to those who love him and those whose lives are directed
> by the *yir'at Jahweh*... It is only in the cadre of this religious
> principle that wisdom is obtainable.[114]

Thus Nel, without directly discussing the repetition of the temporal clauses

of Proverbs 8:22-31, has suggested an authority-motivation basis for their

interpretation.

Gale A. Yee[115] has provided a structural and stylistic analysis of

Proverbs 8:22-31, which she sees as Part 3 of a tripartite poem followed by

an Epilogue, and which she is able to detach "for separate study from the

rest of the poem on the basis of its distinct content and language."[116] Yee

divides verses 22-31 into three strophes, the first two of which (22-26, 27-30a) are "framed by means of distant antithetical parallelism," and the last (30b-31) in the form of a chiasmus.[117] While appreciative of earlier historical and philological work on the poem (e.g. by Kayatz, Gemser, Dahood, von Rad and McKane), Yee states that "the poem's meaning... may well lie within the poem itself, which is historically bound to Hebrew rhetorical conventions," conventions which with reference to "this Wisdom hymn have been rather neglected."[118] Noting the partial inadequacy of Aletti's bipartite division of the poem and his development of wisdom's mediating role, Yee argues for her tripartite division of the poem on the basis of the chiasmus in verses 30-31 which "structurally highlights Wisdom's mediative role" and further demonstrates the three-character mediation argued by Aletti.[119]

Yee regards the series of temporal clauses to be the most obvious feature of the second strophe, a feature which stylistically unifies the strophe,[120] justifies its division as a strophe, and is further characterized by its own chiasmus.[121] However, no evocative function for the temporal clauses is noted with reference to the rest of chapter 8.

Adele Berlin discusses Proverbs 8:22-31 as a case study in motif and creativity in biblical poetry.[122] In comparison with other passages containing a creation motif, the Proverbs 8 passage "concentrates on the initial acts of creation and the antiquity which they represent, the point being that Wisdom is even older, and therefore more venerable, than

creation," according to Berlin.[123] Structurally, the passage does not provide a chronological description of creation, but touches on various of the earliest facets of creation such as earth, water and sky.[124] Berlin follows Cooper's lexical, gramatical and phonological discussion of the text.[125] Her conclusion on the rhetorical force of the passage is that, because of its concern with Wisdom's place in creation and because Wisdom "is specially linked with the last thing that God created: man, ... it behooves man to follow its teachings."[126]

While not addressing specifically the question of the temporal clauses, Berlin comments: "Indeed, grammatical usage (syntax and morphology) can be a major reinforcement to the message of the text,"[127] a position she illustrates with a discussion of rhetorical question in two thematically related passages outside Proverbs.[128]

Roland E. Murphy,[129] whose writings on Proverbs 8:22-31 cover the entire period with which this chapter is concerned, provides a fitting conclusion to the present review of scholarship on the passage. For if von Rad, with whom this chapter began, is to be credited — by virtue of his insight into the self-revelation of creation — with being the initiator of a new era in the study of Proverbs 8, Murphy must be credited with being its contextualizer, always concerned with seeing the particular in terms of the whole of biblical tradition.

Murphy treats verses 22-31 as an integral part of the rest of Proverbs 8 which he classifies as a "Wisdom Speech,"[130] the eleventh of

twelve instructions which begin at Proverbs 1:8 and end at 9:18.[131]

Proverbs 1-9 have as their setting a "teaching situation,"[132] either in the

court or the home, in which the audience are "the youth of post-Exilic

Israel."[133] In Proverbs 8 "the author has departed from the instruction

genre to use the WISDOM SPEECH in order to convince the student, and offer

inspiration and encouragement in the pursuit of wisdom."[134] The

personification of Wisdom in chapter 8 conveys "an unmistakable ring of

divine authority,"[135] an authority greater than that of a teacher, an

authority made evident by the imagery of riches, nobility and ultimately her

"relationship to the Lord and creation."[136] On the identity of Wisdom in this

passage Murphy is "not satisfied with the pale and inert answer that she

stands simply for an attribute of God,"[137] and is cautious in going too far

with von Rad's suggestion of Wisdom's immanence in nature;[138] Murphy can

conclude only that Wisdom "is given by the Lord ... and is to be the object of

Israel's quest."[139] On the question of non-Israelite dependence for

Proverbs 8:22-31 Murphy is likewise cautious,[140] and in particular

regarding Dahood's suggestion of Canaanite influence, finds that "convincing

evidence is still wanting."[141]

On the matter of the temporal clauses of Proverbs 8:22-31 Murphy

provides no detailed discussion. In "The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs,"

however, he provides an outstanding treatment of the context within which

the evocative force of the temporal clauses can be understood. With

reference to Proverbs 8 Murphy declares: "The kerygma of wisdom can be

summed up in one word: *life*."[142] On this matter the prophet and the

wisdom teacher in Israel stand as one.[143] "It remained for the pious Israelite to make his choice between life and death and for the sage to contrast the respective paths, the path of the just and the path of the wicked."[144] Ultimately for Murphy, "wisdom = (eternal) life."[145] With regard to the rhetorical qualities of verses 22-31 and the relationship of these verses to the remainder of chapter 8, Murphy speaks of how wisdom's "close association with Yahweh" has heightened "her kerygmatic stature." On this account, Murphy asks, "who can afford not to 'listen' (8:32) to her?"[146] But the irresistibility of wisdom's kerygma may derive not only from her "association with Yahweh," as Murphy has observed, but also, among other things, from the pulsating rhythm of the temporal clause structure that dominates wisdom's words, as the remainder of this thesis argues.

Summary

The historical/philological concerns of earlier work on Proverbs 8:22-31 (e.g., Dahood and earlier) have been, in recent literature, increasingly overshadowed by structural, rhetorical, and form-critical issues (Kayatz interacting between the historical and the form-critical). The general opinion is that verses 22-31 are cohesively part of the larger context of chapter 8 (well argued by Scott and Skehan, with McKane to the contrary), that the personification of wisdom here is strictly a literary device and not a hypostasis (though Vischer's concern is not to obscure the nature of Israel's monotheism), and that this wisdom is something other

than an attribute of God (perhaps an attribute of the world, as von Rad has suggested). The debate continues on the roots and meanings of *qānā* (the more expected alternatives of "acquire" and "create" having been joined by Vawter's choice of "discover") and of *'āmôn* (Loretz's suggestion of a two-phase approach to Wisdom's playfulness bearing on this).

Of particular interest is the emerging focus on higher-level form and function in arriving at meaning (e.g. by Cooper, Yee and Berlin). In this regard the repetition of temporal clauses in Proverbs 8:22-31 is no longer treated merely as an indication of Egyptian influence, or as a means of strophe bonding, or as merely "fortuitous" (Whybray). It has been suggested (Aletti) that the stylistically repetitive rhythm of the clauses somehow prepares for the ultimate encounter between wisdom and man, an approach which fits comfortably within the passage's authoritative/ motivational mood (Nel). However, a more precise definition of *how* the temporal clauses might function relative to such a mood is lacking in the literature. Especially in the light of a kerygmatic understanding of the passage (Murphy) it would seem a matter of some consequence to address this issue — to consider in detail this evocative relationship between syntax and mood in Proverbs 8:22-31. That is the goal of the following three chapters. Though the thesis discussion is analytical, the distinction between Western academic method and Oriental wisdom (Timm) has not gone without notice; may an enlightened mind serve an understanding heart.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1] W. Baumgartner, "The Wisdom Literature," in *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. H.H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), pp.210-37.

[2] Ronald E. Clements, "Interpreting the Wisdom Literature," in his *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), pp.99-117.

[3] J.A. Emerton, "Wisdom," in *Tradition and Interpretation*, ed. G.W. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), pp.214-37.

[4] Roland E. Murphy, "Hebrew Wisdom," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 101, No. 1 (1981), 21-34.

[5] James L. Crenshaw, "The Wisdom Literature," in *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

[6] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, *The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); the German version was published in 1957.

[7] Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. James D. Martin (New York: Abingdon, 1972).

[8] Murphy, "Hebrew Wisdom," p.125.

[9] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, p.441.

[10] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p.156.

[11] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, p.443.

[12] Ibid., p.444.

[13] Ibid., with reference to H.J. Kraus, "Die Verkundigung der Weisheit," in *Biblische Studien*, Heft 2 (Neukirchen, 1951), p.31.

[14] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, pp.144-176.

[15] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, p.448.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p.156.

[18] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, p.448.

[19] Ibid., p.450.

[20] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p.151; see also his *Old Testament Theology*, p.447.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., p.153.

[24] Ibid., pp.153-54.

[25] Ibid., pp.154-55.

[26] Ibid., p.155.

[27] Ibid., p.153.

[28] Ibid., p.144.

[29] W. Vischer, "Der Hymnus der Weisheit in den Sprüchen Salomos 8," *Evangelische Theologie*, 6 (1962), 309-26.

[30] Ibid., p.309.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Referring to W.F. Albright, "Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," Supplement of *Vetus Testamentum*, 3 (1955), 7.

[33] Referring to P. Humbert, *Betholet-Festschrift* (1950), pp.259ff.

[34] Vischer, p.310.

[35] Ibid., pp.313-14.

[36] Ibid., p.309.

[37] Ibid., p.315.

[38] Ibid., p.309 and passim.

[39] R.B.Y. Scott, *Proverbs/Ecclesiastes*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965).

[40] Ibid., pp.71-72.

[41] R.N. Whybray, "Proverbs VIII 22-31 and its Supposed Prototypes," *Vetus Testamentum*, 15 (1965), 504-14; rpt. in James C. Crenshaw, ed., *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (New York: Ktav, 1976), pp.390-400.

[42] Ibid., p.504, with reference to B. Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos*, *HAT* (1937), p.38f.

[43] Ibid., with reference to H. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Uppsala, 1947), p.102.

[44] Ibid., p.510.

[45] Ibid., p.509.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., pp.511-12.

[48] Ibid., p.513.

[49] R.N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs* (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), p.49.

[50] Ibid., p.50.

[51] Ibid., p.51.

[52] Ibid., p.49; see also p.52.

[53] Christa Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966).

[54] Ibid., pp.76-119.

[55] Ibid., pp.80-93.

[56] Ibid., pp.93-98.

[57] Ibid., in "Vorwort."

[58] Mitchell Dahood, "Proverbs 8, 22-31: Translation and Commentary," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 30 (1968), 521.

[59] Philip Nel, "The Genres of Biblical Wisdom Literature," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, 9 (1981), 137; Nel is here referring especially to Kayatz's subsequent work, *Einführung in die alttestamentliche Weisheit* (1969), pp.70-78.

[60] Dahood, "Proverbs 8, 22-31;" note also his *Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1963), and his "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography XI," *Biblica*, 54 (1973), 351-66.

[61] Dahood, "Proverbs 8, 22-31," passim.

[62] William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970).

[63] Ibid., p.351.

[64] Ibid., pp.351-52.

[65] Ibid., passim.

[66] Ibid., p.344.

[67] Ibid.

[68] O. Loretz, "Text und Neudeutung in Spr 8, 22-31," *Ugarit-Forschungen*, 7 (1975), 577-79. In terms of redactional issues which fall outside the rhetorical focus of this thesis, Loretz argues that the present text of Proverbs 8:22-31 is the latest stage of an earlier text which, according to his stichometric analysis, was arranged differently from its present form, its opening lines lost, and the tricola in verse 29 (a summary of creation) positioned such that they interrupt the flow of the original poem. Gale Yee (see note 115 below and its related text) has offered as an alternative to Loretz's position a convincing case for chiasm which supports the present text on structural and stylistic grounds. Patrick Skehan's cohesion studies on the passage also run counter to Loretz's conclusions, with Skehan seeing throughout the passage the tensions that argue for the text structure as it presently stands (see note 95 below). This thesis, also, is a consideration of the text as it presently stands.

[69] Ibid., p.578.

[70] Jean-Noël Aletti, "Proverbes 8, 22-31. Étude de structure,"

Biblica, 57 (1976), 25-37; and "Seduction et Parole en Proverbes I-X,"

Vetus Testamentum 27, No. 2 (1977), 129-44.

[71] Aletti, "Seduction et Parole," passim.

[72] Ibid., pp.140-41.

[73] Ibid., p.142.

[74] Aletti, "Proverbes 8, 22-31," p.25.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid., p.26.

[77] Ibid., p.37.

[78] Alan Mitchell Cooper, "Biblical Poetics, A Linguistic Approach" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1976).

[79] Referring to R. Jakobson, "Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry," *Lingua*, 21 (1968), 597-609; esp. pp.602-03.

[80] Cooper, p.72.

[81] Ibid., p.76.

[82] Ibid., p.77.

[83] Ibid., p.78.

[84] Ibid., p.112.

[85] Ibid., p.123.

[86] Ibid., p.124.

[87] Ibid., p.139.

[88] See note 108 below for a fuller discussion of this.

[89] Hermann Timm, "Das weite Herz: Religiöses Philosophieren in Israel; zu Gerhard von Rad's Weisheitsbuch," *Zeitschrift für Theologie*

und Kirche, 74 (1977), 224-37.

[90] Ibid., p.234.

[91] Ibid., p.236.

[92] Ibid., p.235.

[93] Ibid., p.236.

[94] Patrick W. Skehan, "The Seven Columns of Wisdom's House in Proverbs 1-9," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 9 (1947), 190.

[95] Patrick W. Skehan, "Structures in Poems on Wisdom: Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 41 (1979), 365-78. Skehan's conclusions on the cohesive structure of Proverbs 8:22-31, based partly on his examination of the stichometry of the passage, run counter to those of Loretz (see note 68 above) and are not inconsistent with Yee's rhetorical observations on the passage (see note 115 below and related text).

[96] Ibid., p.366.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid., pp.368-69.

[99] Ibid., p.369.

[100] Ibid., 371-72.

[101] Ibid., p.373.

[102] Bruce Vawter, "Prov 8:22: Wisdom and Creation," *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, 99 (1980), 205-16.

[103] Ibid., p.205.

[104] Ibid.

105 Ibid., p.206.

106 Ibid., pp.213-14, referring to Scott, *Proverbs/Ecclesiastes*, pp.71-72.

107 Ibid, p.215, referring to R.N. Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs* (London: SCM, 1965), pp.54-56.

108 The matter of *getting* wisdom, understanding, knowledge, truth, etc., is extremely important in Proverbs, occurring unambiguously with the active verb *qãnâ* in 1:5; 4:5,7; 15:32; 16:16 (2x); 17:16; 18:15; 19:8; and 23:23. But not only is this important as an indication that man does not automatically have wisdom as his "essence," as Cooper suggests (see note 87 above); it is also important for the question of the meaning of *qãnâ* in general throughout Proverbs, and therefore in 8:22. The verb is used in Proverbs *always* with the sense of acquiring wisdom and its associated ideas (although two substantival forms exist with a different area of meaning: 1:19 "owner," and 20:14 "buyer"); it never occurs unambiguously with the meaning of getting anything other than wisdom, etc.; and it certainly never appears unambiguously with the meaning of "create." This suggests, then, that the hotly debated occurrence of this verb in Proverbs 8:22 should be taken in a rhetorical, motivational sense: If *YHWH* "*got* wisdom," then *you* should *get* it, too! (In this case, then, it seems out of place to ask the question of *how* YHWH "got wisdom;" the rhetorical device here is the TESTIMONIAL, the RECOMMENDATION by reference to Someone Greater who also sees the worth of wisdom.) Even if paronomasia involving the less likely meaning of "create" should be proven, it would only

add to our understanding of just how skillful a verbal artist the author of Proverbs 8:22-31 really was; it would not change the rhetorical significance suggested above.

[109] Philip Nel, "Authority in the Wisdom Admonitions," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,* 93 (1981), 418-26; also his "The Genres of Biblical Wisdom Literature," already noted.

[110] Nel, "The Genres of Biblical Wisdom Literature," p.136.

[111] Ibid., pp.136-37.

[112] Ibid., p.142.

[113] Nel, "Authority in the Wisdom Admonitions," p.425.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Gale A. Yee, "An Analysis of Prov 8:22-31 According to Style and Structure," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,* 94 (1982), 58-66. Yee's contribution on the unity achieved through chiasm combines with Skehan's observations on other cohesive elements in the text (see note 95 above) to cast serious doubt on Loretz's redaction theory (see note 68 above).

[116] Ibid., p.58.

[117] Ibid., p.66.

[118] Ibid., p.59.

[119] Ibid., p.65.

[120] Yee makes reference here to the fine work by James Muilenburg, "A Study of Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," *Vetus Testamentum,* Supplement 1 (1953), 99.

[121] Yee, p.63.

[122] Adele Berlin, "Motif and Creativity in Biblical Poetry,"
Prooftexts, 3 (1983), 231-41.

[123] Ibid., p.233.

[124] Ibid., p.234.

[125] Ibid., pp.235-38.

[126] Ibid., p.240.

[127] Ibid., p.235.

[128] Ibid., p.236; in her discussion of the persuasive mind-changing
function of rhetorical questions in Isaiah 40 and Job 38-39, however, Berlin
errs in stating that the Proverbs 8:22-31 passage does not have a changing
of mind as its goal and also contains no rhetorical questions. Indeed,
Proverbs 8 *begins* with a rhetorical question ("Doesn't wisdom cry out?"),
and everything about Proverbs 8 — including verses 22-31 — appears
marshaled for this very purpose: to persuade the reader to take a different
course from the foolish young man of chapter 7. If in some sense Proverbs
8:35 provides the goal of the persuasive force of verses 22-31, then
Proverbs 8:1 establishes the fact that the whole chapter is a persuasive,
mind-changing instruction in the first place.

[129] Roland E. Murphy, "The Faces of Wisdom in the Book of
Proverbs," in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M.
Henri Cazelles*, eds. A. Caquot and M. Delcor, Alter Orient und Altes
Testament, Vol. 212 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukircher Verlag, 1981); "Hebrew
Wisdom," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 101, No. 1

(1981), 21-34; "Introduction to Wisdom Literature," *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968); "What and Where is Wisdom?" *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 4 (1977), 283-87; *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Esther*, Vol. 13 of *The Forms of the Old Testament Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981); *Wisdom Literature & Psalms : Interpreting Biblical Texts* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983).

[130] Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job...*, p.61; with reference to B. Lang, *Frau Weisheit* (Düsseldorf, 1975), pp.57-111, Murphy notes the "sapiential language and motifs with which Wisdom presents herself. In vv. 1-11 and 32-36, 'it is always the teacher who speaks—only, the words of the teacher sound more majestic in the mouth of Lady Wisdom' ([Lang] p.62)."

[131] Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job...*, p.49.

[132] Ibid., p.61.

[133] Murphy, "The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," p.4.

[134] Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job...*, p.61.

[135] Murphy, *Wisdom Literature & Psalms*, p.35.

[136] Murphy, "The Faces of Wisdom," p.340.

[137] Murphy, "Hebrew Wisdom," p.28.

[138] Murphy, *Wisdom Literature & Psalms*, pp.71-72; here Murphy states: "Gerhard von Rad (*Wisdom in Israel*, pp. 156-57) has rightly denied that personified Wisdom is merely an attribute of God. But he seems to divorce her from God when he characterizes her only as an

attribute of the world. Wisdom seems to be too closely identified with God (Prov 8:35, 'he who finds me finds life'), to be divorced from him. Rather, Wisdom is radically divine, God's gift, the divine summons issued to human beings through a creation on which God lavished his wisdom (Sir 1:9). [¶]The implications of this for the modern reader are rather 'heady.' Does the Wisdom of God still speak to us through creation, or (as we shall see Ben Sira claim) through the law, or (as Paul claims, 1 Cor 1:24, 30) through Christ? Why not through all these?" Compare here also "What and Where is Wisdom?" 283.

[139] Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job...*, pp.61-62.

[140] Murphy, "What and Where is Wisdom," pp.286-87; "The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," p.7.

[141] Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job...*, p.61.

[142] Murphy, "The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," p.9.

[143] Ibid., p.12.

[144] Ibid., p.13.

[145] Ibid., p.14.

[146] Ibid., p.7.

CHAPTER THREE

The Temporal Clause Structure

of Proverbs 8:27-29

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the structure of the temporal

clauses in Proverbs 8:27-29.

Chapter One of this thesis raised the possibility that the complex

temporal clause structure of Proverbs 8:22-31 (and of verses 27-29 in

particular) serves more than merely as a syntactic device for stringing

together the content elements of a reminiscence, that perhaps *in* employing

the temporal clause structure Lady Wisdom is performing an illocutionary

act — is providing a clue to the rhetorical function of the passage. Chapter

Two presented a review of recent scholarship on Proverbs 8:22-31 which

indicated an increasing interest in the higher-level, rhetorical/structural

phenomena of the passage. However, although many have addressed the

issue of the temporal clauses, the field of biblical studies is left with vague

statements such as von Rad's (that the exegetical problems of the passage

can be traced to the "intense poetic feeling" associated with "the solemn

piling up of statements which often has as a consequence the fact that the

meaning of what is being said remains ill-defined and undecided"),[1] and

Aletti's (that the rhythm of the clauses prepares for and underlines the

final encounter between Wisdom and man),[2] and even Whybray's (that the choice of the clause structure is simply "fortuitous").[3] The purpose of this thesis is to add definition to the poetic piling up of the temporal clauses in Proverbs 8:22-31, to determine in what rhetorical sense this syntactic device prepares for something else in its context, and to demonstrate that the presence of the clauses is anything but "fortuitous." It has been established that the overall procedure for arriving at such a definition in this thesis is to examine the rhetorical function of similar temporal clause structures found elsewhere in the Hebrew biblical poetry, for clues as to the specific rhetorical function of the temporal clauses in Proverbs 8; the results of this examination are presented in Chapter Four. First, however, it is necessary to set down the criteria by which passages have been included in the wider examination of Chapter Four. That is the role of this chapter — to outline the structural features of the temporal clauses in Proverbs 8:22-31 that are relevant to the completion of this thesis. For this purpose the complex temporal clause structure of verses 27-29 has been isolated as the basis for the selection criteria.

The choice of the clause structure of verses 27-29 is justified on the following grounds:

(1) It best typifies the phenomenon of piling-up noted by von Rad.

(2) It is especially to these verses that Aletti is referring when he speaks of rhythmical repetition as a rhetorical device.

(3) It serves syntactically as the outstanding higher-level feature within the macrostructure of verses 22-31, as follows:

Sentence 1	Independent Clause	v. 22
Sentence 2	Independent Clause	v. 23
Sentence 3	Dependent Clause	v. 24a
	Independent Clause	v. 24a
	Dependent Clause	v. 24b
Sentence 4	Dependent Clause	v. 25a
	Independent Clause	v. 25b
	Dependent Clause	v. 26
Sentence 5	Dependent Clause	v. 27a
	Independent Clause	v. 27a
	Dependent Clause	v. 27b
	Dependent Clause	v. 28a
	Dependent Clause	v. 28b
	Dependent Clause	v. 29a-b
	Dependent Clause	v. 29c
copula	*w-* v. 30a	
Sentence 6	Independent Clause	v. 30a
copula	*w-* v. 30b	
Sentence 7	Independent Clause	v. 30b,c,31a
copula	*w-* v. 31b	
Sentence 8	Independent Clause	v. 31b

That is, whereas Sentences 1 and 2 consist of single, independent clauses, and whereas Sentences 6, 7, and 8 consist of independent clauses linked by the copula, and whereas Sentences 3 and 4 each consist of three clauses (an independent clause preceded and followed by a dependent clause), Sentence 5 (verses 27-29) stands alone in its complex structure consisting of seven clauses (an independent clause, preceded by one dependent clause and followed by a series of five more dependent clauses).[4]

Proverbs 8:27-29

בְּחֻקוֹ חוּג עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם: | בַּהֲכִינוֹ שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אָנִי 27

בַּעֲזוֹז עִינוֹת תְּהוֹם: | בְּאַמְּצוֹ שְׁחָקִים מִמָּעַל 28

בְּשׂוּמוֹ לַיָּם חֻקּוֹ וּמַיִם לֹא יַעַבְרוּ־פִיו 29

בְּחוּקוֹ מוֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ:

Outline of Relevant Features

The following is an outline of higher-level structural features present in Proverbs 8:27-29. These features underlie the search criteria detailed at the end of this chapter.

b- based Temporal Clause A	"When he established the heavens,"
Independent Clause	"I was there,"
b- based Temporal Clause B	"when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause C	"when he made firm the skies above,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause D	"when he established the fountains of the deep,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause E	"when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command,"

[asyndeton]   Ø

b- based Temporal Clause F   "when he marked out the
                                        the foundations of the
                                        earth[.]"[5]

Observations and Search Criteria

From the above it is, indeed, clear that this beautiful poetic passage

is characterized by a temporal clause syntactic structure that stands out

because of its unusualness. In one sentence there exists a piling up — a

concatenation — of six temporal clauses, the last five of which are

strung together *asyndetically* (i.e., juxtaposed without the presence of a

connective/copula *w* or some other device).[6] Furthermore, all of these

temporal clauses are introduced by the particle *b*- followed by the

infinitive construct; these are not temporal clauses introduced by particles

such as *kî*, *'ăšer*, or *'im*; the dependent clauses of verses 27-29,

then, are *b*- *based temporal clauses.*[7] Based on these observations

the following have been selected as the distinguishing structural features of

relevance for this thesis:

(1) The structure consists of a concatenation of temporal clauses.

(2) The clauses are governed by the particle *b*- .

(3) The clauses are juxtaposed asyndetically.

(4) The structure appears in a poetic passage.

That is, the syntactic structure in which this thesis is interested

consists of a series of asyndetically concatenated *b*- based temporal

clauses found in a poetic passage. These are the structural features which have served as the search criteria for locating the texts under consideration in Chapter Four. In this search, "series" has been interpreted to mean "two or more."

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p.144; see also discussion associated with Notes to Chapter Two, note 28.

[2] Aletti, "Proverbes 8, 22-31," p.37; see also discussion associated with Notes to Chapter Two, note 77.

[3] Whybray, "Proverbs VIII 22-31," p.513.

[4] See Notes to Chapter Four, note 3, for other reasons for concentrating specifically on the syntactic structure of verses 27-29 through the remainder of this study (cf. also Notes to Chapter One, note 9).

[5] For the purposes of this thesis, and contrary to the RSV, the ending of the sentence is judged to be after verse 29.

[6] The term "parataxis" is also used to describe this style of clausal juxtaposition without the use of a connective/copula. It is noteworthy that asyndeton is a characteristic not of the whole of Proverbs 8, but only of the section from verse 22 to 29.

[7] See GKC S 164 d-g for a fuller discussion of the ways in which temporal clauses in Hebrew are introduced. It is fully understood that what in fact exists in Proverbs 8:27-29 are a series of prepositional phrases functioning like temporal clauses; that is, they are infinitive constructs dependent on the preposition *b-*. It is sufficient for the argument of this thesis, however, to refer to them simply as *b-* based temporal clauses and leave it at that; to provide a more detailed microstructural syntactic

analysis of the clauses would obscure the macrostructural concerns of the thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Similar Temporal Clause Structures Found

Elsewhere in Hebrew Biblical Poetry

The purpose of this chapter is to consider all instances of

asyndetically concatenated *b*- based temporal clauses found in Hebrew

biblical poetry, other than Proverbs 8:27-29, to determine the nature of the

contexts in which they occur, and on the basis of that information, to

attempt a definition of the rhetorical usage of this syntactic feature — or in

Aletti's terms, to determine in what sense the rhythm of these clauses

prepares for and underlines something else in their contexts.[1] For the

purposes of this search the structural focus has been very narrow,

allowing only such passages as have the particular syntactic pattern

consisting of two or more temporal clauses, each beginning with the

particle *b*- followed by an infinitive construct, asyndetically connected in a

series with at least one of the clauses occurring line-initially,[2] and the

other(s) occurring line- or stich-initially; that is, the search looked only

for passages which are of the syntactic type isolated in Proverbs 8:27-29 in

Chapter Three of this thesis.[3] Excluding Proverbs 8:27-29, the corpus of

such passages, established by the author by means of a detailed inspection

of the BHS text, consists of: Deuteronomy 32:8, Judges 5:4, Psalm 68:7-8

(=68:8-9 H), Job 29:2-7, Proverbs 1:27, and Ezekiel 32:15.

Before proceeding with the investigation of these six passages — and of the rhetorical function of the temporal clause structure within them — a few more words on illocutionary force are in order. The latter half of Chapter One summarized parts of J.L. Austin's speech act theory, with special emphasis on illocutionary acts — speech acts in which something is being done *in* saying something. The concept was illustrated by the sentence, "The house is on fire," which when shouted amidst smoke in the middle of the night does more than merely state a fact; it carries the illocutionary force of a warning. The relative ease of determining the illocutionary force of an utterance/locution in live discourse was contrasted to the greater difficulty of determining illocutionary force in literature, especially in ancient literature.

Clues to determining illocutionary force, both in live speech and in literature, are often perceived more by intuitive than by analytical processes, more in the (somewhat loose) association of speaker and audience with ideas, events and settings than in (somewhat tighter) syllogistic dependencies. The following examples may be helpful in further clarifying the kinds of clues that an audience look for in determining illocutionary force.

Bob walks into the service department of a car dealership and says to someone: "My car stalled at the first signal down the street." To understand the locutionary meaning of Bob's sentence it is sufficient to refer to a good English dictionary and grammar. Thus, the audience will

know that the word "car" refers to a four-wheeled vehicle, usually powered by a petroleum product, used for transporting people and things along highways, that the word "my" indicates that the speaker of the sentence probably has ownership of the car, that the phrase "my car" syntactically functions as the subject of the verb "stalled," and so forth. But to know what Bob is doing *in* making this statement — i.e., to understand the *illocutionary force* of Bob's remark — it is necessary to know something of the discourse context and background (people, events, prior experiences, etc.) associated with his remark but not necessarily present in the surface structure of the locution itself — information without which the *force* of the sentence remains ambiguous.[4] Consider how an awareness of this further information helps disambiguate the illocutionary force of Bob's remark in the following instances:

(1) If Bob has never been in this dealership before, and is speaking to someone who is standing behind the service counter dressed in what is obviously a service department uniform, Bob *in* making his remark is probably *issuing a plea* for urgent on-the-road automotive help; Bob could have prefaced his remark to the service attendant with a performative such as: "*I am pleading* [for your immediate assistance, in saying to you] 'my car stalled at the first signal down the street.'"

(2) But if Bob had just ten minutes earlier left that same service department, having paid them several hundred dollars to fix his car so that it would not keep stalling at signals, and if Bob is addressing his remark to the service attendant who had assured him there would be no more problem

with the car, then Bob *in* making his remark is not so much issuing a plea as *making a complaint*; Bob could have prefaced his remark with a performative such as: "*I am complaining* [in saying to you] 'my car stalled at the first signal down the street.'"

(3) On the other hand, if Bob is an automotive mechanic who happens to work for this car dealership, and having just arrived ten minutes late for work he is addressing his remark to his boss, then Bob *in* making his remark may not so much be issuing a plea for help or making a complaint as *giving an excuse* or *making an apology*; Bob could have prefaced his remark with a performative such as: '*I am apologizing* [for arriving late to work in saying to you] 'my car stalled at the first signal down the street.'"

Thus, depending on the circumstances associated with Bob's speech act *of* making his remark, he was performing different speech acts *in* making his remark — the *illocutionary force* of his remark differed according to associated factors in the discourse context: a *plea*, a *complaint*, or an *apology*.

(4) In the third instance above, however, there remains a further *ambiguity* in illocutionary force that leaves Bob's remark open to misunderstanding. Bob arrives late to work and addresses the remark to his boss. The boss responds: "Oh, that's okay, Bob; no need to apologize." Bob, outraged, replies to his boss: "I'm not *apologizing*! I'm *confronting* you with the fact that you still haven't given me the raise I've been requesting for over a year, now, so that I could afford to replace

my old junk heap!"

The immediate feedback in this live speech setting has made possible the disambiguation of the illocutionary force of Bob's remark. Such dialogue is not possible with the interlocutors of ancient literature, however, nor is the reader of ancient literature always able to pick up sufficient clues from the immediate context (the associated circumstances) of a passage to choose which among several illocutionary force options is in focus in a given utterance/locution. The reader, applying discourse-level strategies, may have to look for *illocutionary force patterning* that emerges from a broader sampling of literature.

A good illustration of what is meant by *illocutionary force patterning* can be found in the use of background music and sound effects in motion pictures. For example, several old Westerns in a row feature the sound of a bugle just as the camera focuses in on the cavalry commencing their valiant rescue of some beleaguered fort. Then along comes another Western about some isolated homestead that is under attack throughout the film. The film is drawing to a close, and all looks lost for this poor frontier family. But seconds before the closing credits the audience hear in the distance the bugler's familiar, evocative notes. And even though no film footage of cavalry actually appears on the screen, the audience know that all will end well; the cavalry are on their way to save the day. The illocutionary force of the bugler's refrain can be stated as a performative: "*I announce good news* [in playing these notes, that help is on the way]." The audience, conditioned by the illocutionary force patterning of closely

associated phenomena, have become wise in the cinematographic convention
that links the bugler's notes to the communication of rescue-by-cavalry.
The scriptwriter, in understanding this convention, intentionally exploits it;
and the audience, intuitively familiar with this convention, catch the drift
of the writer's intention. Pavlov's dog salivates again!

It is somewhat in this vein that the determination of illocutionary
force by pattern pressure is to be carried out in this chapter through the
examination of the discourse contexts of the six aforementioned passages.
However, with reference to the stalled car example, the discourse
phenomena with which this thesis is concerned are not the elements of
whether the car had just been serviced or whether the speaker is a
customer or an employee of the service department, but the elements of
general mood and contextually associated ideas. With reference to the
Western movie example, the concern of this thesis is not with the
illocutionary force of a bugler's refrain, but with the illocutionary force —
i.e., the rhetorical function — of the temporal clause structure of Lady
Wisdom's speech. With reference to "The house is on fire" example, this
thesis is not concerned with the intention of the speaker in employing *words*
to warn the audience to flee the burning house, but with the intention of Lady
Wisdom in employing a stylistic *syntactic device*: how does she want her
audience to take her remarks? what mood is she attempting to project?

This thesis, then, is primarily concerned with the illocutionary force
of a syntactic structure in and of itself, and not with the words which
manifest that structure. Thus, the following six passages are brought

together, not by virtue of similarity in wording or theme, but by virtue of having in common essentially the same syntactic structure. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the six passages for contextual clues that will assist in Chapter Five's interpretation of the rhetorical function of that syntactic structure in the Proverbs 8 passage.

The discussion of the six passages will proceed as follows: First, there will be a presentation of the locutionary data upon which this chapter is based. For each of the six passages there is provided the quotation from BHS consisting of the temporal clauses and their associated independent clause, together with an outline description of how the quotation meets the syntactic pattern requirements of this investigation. This data display shall serve as the evidence for saying that *essentially the same syntactic utterance/locution* (not necessarily the same *lexical* utterance/ locution) is being made in all six cases, just as the same utterance/ locution of bugle notes was made on the several occasions in the Western movie example.

Secondly, there will follow a context synopsis for each of the passages. These synopses focus on elements which appear to provide clues to the illocutionary force / rhetorical function of the temporal clause structure within each passage. The synopses serve a purpose similar to that served by the Western movie scenarios in the above example, in that they provide a sampling of locution contexts, greater than one instance, from which the patterning of associated phenomena can be observed.

Chapter Four will conclude with a discussion of the illocutionary force patterning in the six passages, the main point of the bugler-and-cavalry example. This discussion serves as the bridge to Chapter Five's definition of the rhetorical function of the asyndetically concatenated *b*-based temporal clauses in Proverbs 8.

Locutionary Data

The following are the locutionary data upon which this chapter is based. For each of the six passages there is provided (1) the BHS quotation, graphically highlighted and keyed to (2) the structural outline of the passage.

Deuteronomy 32:8

<div dir="rtl">

B[בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם]פ A[בְּהַנְחֵל עֶלְיוֹן גּוֹיִם]פ

יַצֵּב גְּבֻלֹת עַמִּים לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

</div>

Deuteronomy 32:8 fits the syntactic structural pattern under investigation as follows:

b- based Temporal Clause A	"When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause B	"when he separated the sons of men,"
Independent Clause	"he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God [sons of Israel (H)]."

Judges 5:4

יְהוָה בְּצֵאתְךָ מִשֵּׂעִיר בְּצַעְדְּךָ מִשְּׂדֵה אֱדֹום
אֶרֶץ רָעָשָׁה ....

Judges 5:4 fits the syntactic structural pattern under investigation as follows:

Vocative	"Lord,"
b- based Temporal Clause A	"when thou didst go forth from Seir,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause B	"when thou didst march from the region of Edom,"
Independent Clause	"the earth trembled..."

Psalm 68:7-8 (= 68:8-9 H)

אֱלֹהִים בְּצֵאתְךָ לִפְנֵי עַמֶּךָ ᴬ בְּצַעְדְּךָ בִישִׁימוֹן ᴮ סֶלָה:
אֶרֶץ רָעָשָׁה ...

Psalm 68:7-8 (= 68:8-9 H) fits the syntactic structural pattern under investigation as follows:

Vocative	"O God,"
b - based Temporal Clause A	"when thou didst go forth before thy people,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b - based Temporal Clause B	"when thou didst march through the wilderness,"
Interjection	"*Selah*"
Independent Clause	"the earth quaked..."

Job 29:2-7

2 מִי־יִתְּנֵנִי כְיַרְחֵי־קֶדֶם   כִּימֵי אֱלוֹהַּ יִשְׁמְרֵנִי:

3 בְּהִלּוֹ נֵרוֹ עֲלֵי רֹאשִׁי   לְאוֹרוֹ אֵלֶךְ חֹשֶׁךְ: ᴬ

4 כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיִיתִי בִּימֵי חָרְפִּי   בְּסוֹד אֱלוֹהַּ עֲלֵי אָהֳלִי: ᴮ

5 בְּעוֹד שַׁדַּי עִמָּדִי   סְבִיבוֹתַי נְעָרָי: ᶜ

6 בִּרְחֹץ הֲלִיכַי בְּחֵמָה   וְצוּר יָצוּק עִמָּדִי פַּלְגֵי־שָׁמֶן: ᴰ

7 בְּצֵאתִי שַׁעַר עֲלֵי־קָרֶת ᴱ בָּרְחוֹב אָכִין מוֹשָׁבִי: ᶠ

Job 29:2-7 consists of a single *b*- based temporal clause, a one-clause interruption, and a concatenation of five more *b*- based temporal clauses, an order which, of the six passages considered in this chapter, fits most closely to the pattern found in Proverbs 8:27-29. The structure of the Job passage is as follows:[5]

Independent Clause (wish)	"Oh, that I were"
Comparison	"as in the months of old,"
Comparison	"as in the days when God watched over me;"
b- based Temporal Clause A	"when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness;"
Comparison	"as I was in my autumn days,"
b- based Temporal Clause B	"when the friendship of God was upon my tent;"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause C	"when the Almighty was yet with me,... my children ... about me;"[6]
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause D	"when my steps were washed with milk, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil!"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause E	"When I went out to the gate of the city,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause F	"when I prepared my seat..."

Proverbs 1:26b-27

אֶלְעַג ‎ בְּבֹא פַחְדְּכֶם :
בְּבֹא כְשָׁאֲוָה פַחְדְּכֶם וְאֵידְכֶם כְּסוּפָה יֶאֱתֶה
בְּבֹא עֲלֵיכֶם צָרָה וְצוּקָה :

The structure of Proverbs 1:26b-27 fits the syntactic pattern under investigation, but differs from the other examples in that this passage is future-oriented, whereas the other passages have been past-oriented:

Independent Clause	"I will mock"
b- based Temporal Clause A	"when panic strikes you,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause B	"when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,"
[asyndeton]	Ø
b- based Temporal Clause C	"when distress and anguish come upon you."

Ezekiel 32:15

בְּתִתִּי אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁמָמָה וּנְשַׁמָּה אֶרֶץ מִמְּלֹאָהּ
בְּהַכּוֹתִי אֶת־כָּל־יוֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה :

Ezekiel 32:15 fits the syntactic pattern as follows:

b - based Temporal Clause A	"When I make the land of Egypt desolate and...the land is stripped of all that fills it,"[7]
[asyndeton]	Ø
b - based Temporal Clause B	"when I smite all who dwell in it,"
Copula	"then"
Independent Clause	"they will know that I am the Lord."

In review, then, it can be seen from the above data that *essentially the same kind of syntactic locution* has been performed in each of the six passages as was performed in Proverbs 8:27-29 and described in Chapter Three. That is, all the above share in common the presence of the asyndetically concatenated *b* - based temporal clause structure (usually abbreviated hereafter **SL,** for **SYNTACTIC LOCUTION**). It must now be determined, on the basis of an analysis of the function of the **SL** within the context of each passage, what further common ground exists among these several manifestations of the **SL.** Do they all share a common illocutionary force, as in the example of the bugle call? Or do they function with differing illocutionary forces, depending on the context, as in the example of Bob's statement: "My car stalled at the first signal down the street"? Can the illocutionary force(s) be defined?

Synopses

In the example of the bugler and the cavalry, in order for the movie audience to become aware of the illocutionary force of the notes — and, indeed, whether the notes were of any consequence at all, or were merely random background noise — it was first necessary for the audience to observe *several* instances of the bugler's notes in relation to other aspects of the film. Only then could the audience feel confident that they were experiencing something intentional and significant, something that deserved interpretation because of contextual clues that the bugler was trying to do something *in* sounding his bugle in a certain way. So, too, with the **SL**, before an interpretation of illocutionary force can be suggested, it is first necessary to have an overview of the six contexts of the **SL**. The following synopses are for the purpose of providing such a contextual overview. The illocutionary interpretation of the **SL** will appear in the section after this under the heading, Illocutionary Force Patterning.

Deuteronomy 32:8

The **SL** in Deuteronomy 32:8 is part of the direct discourse context of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43, bounded by a narrative introduction 31:16-30, and a narrative closer 32:44-47). The Lord commissioned Moses, soon to die, to write this song and teach it to the people of Israel as a "witness" for the Lord against the people (31:19) who, upon settling into "the land flowing with milk and honey" (31:20), would forsake the Lord's covenant with them and would "play the harlot after the

strange gods of the land" (31:16). Having played the harlot, the people would experience "many evils and troubles" for which they would try to lay the blame on the Lord (31:17). But the Lord covers himself by means of this Song — a song that "will live unforgotten in the mouths of their descendants" (31:21) — so that when the people experience the consequences of their actions, they will be confronted by this witness: "I told you so."

A synopsis of this passage, and thus of the context of the syntactic locution, is made difficult by the context of the chapter as a whole, on the one hand, and by the literary characteristics of the chapter as such, on the other hand. In its larger context, the Song of Moses serves as an act of witness to the renewal of the Covenant and to the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Just as in the Near Eastern treaties, the gods were called upon to witness the commitment of the parties to the treaty, so here "heaven and earth" are called upon to witness Israel's commitment to God, made in speaking the words of the Song, in an act of covenant renewal. Thus, on the one hand, Moses is said to have spoken the words of the Song; on the other hand, the words are explicitly taught to the people for their own use (and that of subsequent generations) in future acts of covenant renewal.

Internally within the Song,[8] this double role of Moses' proclamation and instruction to the people persists. The Song is characterized on the one hand by the undertones of covenant; it is marked on the other hand by the elements of instruction, which impart to the Song its didactic and wisdom

overtones. The *rîb*-pattern and elements of the prophetic lawsuit, which G.E. Wright has detected in Deuteronomy 32, are probably to be explained as an adaptation of language suitable to the covenant-witness aspects of the Song. (Given the focus of this thesis, however, the pre-history of the Song of Moses vis-à-vis its present context in the prose narrative of Deuteronomy has not been examined in detail).

The Song opens with an invitation to "heavens" and "earth" to heed the words of the speaker (31:30-32:3) and then proceeds into the content of Moses' speech, starting with a contrast between the way of God — "the Rock," perfect, faithful, just and right (32:4) — and the way of the people (32:5). There follows an appeal to Israel, a "foolish and senseless people," on the basis of their special origin: "Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?" (32:6). This appeal is developed at once in terms of a concerted reflection on the earliest days as rehearsed in the oral instruction of the family and elders: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you" (32:7). At this point there begins a reminiscence over Israel's relationship with the Lord (32:8-27). *The* **SL** *stands at the very beginning of this recounting* and serves as the opening into the heart of the reminiscence (32:8). Like two mighty strikes on some giant gong, these *b* _ *b* _ clauses summon Israel to recall her most fundamental national feature: Israel is the Lord's portion, the Lord's "allotted heritage" (32:9). This reminiscence goes on to speak of the Lord's mercy to his people, whom he kept "as the apple of

his eye" (32:10); it then speaks of the folly of those who forsook their Rock, and the consequences of their folly — consequences tempered only by God's concern that Israel's enemies might misunderstand the intent of his reprisals against Israel.

Verses 28 to 42 of the Song are a reflection on the above account, beginning where the previous section left off with the potential for ignorant response by Israel's adversaries. Here the focus is on the Lord who both kills and makes alive, wounds and heals — the Lord who has compassion on his servants, but takes vengeance on those who hate him. Two metaphors of contrast stand out in this section — the rock and the vine: "Their rock is not our Rock," (32:31) and by implication of the phrase "their vine comes from the vine of Sodom" (32:32), "[their vine is not our Vine]." "Their" rock and vine are the way of death; "our" Rock and Vine, the way of life.

The Song ends at verse 43 with a call for the nations to praise God's people on the basis of the justice of God's actions, a theme introduced in 32:4. The Song finished, Moses concludes with an earnest plea: "Lay to heart all the words which I enjoin upon you this day, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law'" (32:46). To this he adds a life-affirming explanation: "For it is no trifle for you, but it is your life, and thereby you shall live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess'" (32:47).

Judges 5:4

The SL in Judges 5:4 is part of the direct discourse context of the

Song of Deborah (Judges 5:2-31, bounded by a narrative introduction 4:1-5:1, and a one line narrative closer 5:31c followed by a new narrative section on Israel vs. Midian 6:1ff). The Song occurs immediately after the account of Barak's defeat of Jabin's army and the death of the Canaanite general, Sisera, at the hand of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite — all as Deborah the Israelite prophetess foretold. Because Israel had done "what was evil in the sight of the Lord," the Lord had sold Israel into the hands of Jabin the king of Canaan, who "oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years;" the people of Israel "cried to the Lord for help" (Judges 4:1-3). As a result, Deborah had delivered to Barak the Lord's command that he should lead an army against Sisera. But Barak had refused to go forth unless Deborah went with him. Deborah did go with him, and the Lord was victorious on behalf of his people; but the pride of victory over Sisera was not to be Barak's but the woman Jael's (4:4-23). On the day that Israel finally destroyed Jabin, Deborah and Barak sang what has come to be known as the Song of Deborah (4:24-5:1).

The Song of Deborah has been recognized by the majority of scholars as one of the most ancient examples of Hebrew poetry extant in the Hebrew Bible. Its archaic grammatical forms, together with its poetic vigour and sense of realism, combine to form a part of the evidence for the Song's antiquity. In literary terms, the passage is a *Victory Hymn*, conveying to God praise for the victory won over the Canaanite forces. Its praise is conveyed by means of a series of vignettes, or episodic passages, which together combine to convey the sense of exhilaration over the battle as a

whole. The concluding verse, contrasting the enemies and friends of the Lord (5:31), may indicate a subsequent didactic (or even *wisdom*) role for the Song, its initial role in celebration being transformed later to one of teaching.[9]

The Song opens with praise to the Lord for the fact that Israel's leaders behaved like leaders and Israel's people willingly did their part (5:2).[10] Then comes the announcement that a song is being made to the Lord, and that kings and princes should pay attention (5:3). At once the Song breaks into phrases addressed to the Lord, "when thou didst go forth from Seir, when thou didst march from the region of Edom" (5:4). These lines are reminiscent of other (early?) passages, in which God's march from the desert is recalled. The blessing of Moses begins with a similar reminiscence (Deuteronomy 33:2), and Psalm 68:7-8 contains similar words (which are discussed below, given the common SL). A similar, though less precise, parallel is also to be found in the introduction to Habakkuk's prayer (Habakkuk 3:3). These parallel passages suggest that the language forms a conventional part of a prologue, perhaps used in poems focusing on the warlike acts of God; the words may be either reminiscent, or may suggest the notion of the particular advent of God from his desert "home," though the commonality of the language implies that the former possibility is more likely.

As in Deuteronomy 32:8, so here, too, the SL sounds forth as a gong, the *b _ b _* signaling the audience that reminiscence is under way — a reminiscence of the Lord's mighty acts on behalf of his people, a

commemoration of the Lord's deliverance of Israel from the oppressor.

For "in the days of Jael" the enemy had so terrorized the people that travel

was no longer safe and the will to fight was almost gone — until Deborah

arose (5:6-9). At last there was something worth singing about wherever

people were found: the triumphs of the Lord and of his "peasantry"[11] — a

matter that called for a song from Deborah (5:10-12). The Song goes on to

mention by name those divisions who served with valour, and singles out for

shame other divisions who held back from battle (5:13-23). Special tribute

is paid to Jael, "of tent-dwelling women most blessed," for her tent-peg

victory over Sisera (5:24-27). The reminiscence closes with a vignette of

Sisera's mother awaiting her son's return from battle and indulging in

wishful speculation over his delay (5:28-30). The Song closes with an

exclamation: "So perish all thine enemies, O Lord! But thy friends be like

the sun as he rises in his might" (5:31).

Psalm 68:7-8 (= 68:8-9 H)[12]

The SL in Psalm 68:7-8 (68:8-9 H) is part of what has generally been

regarded as the most difficult of the Psalms to interpret in view of the

apparent lack of cohesion among its various elements. For the present

purposes, this thesis will assume for the SL a very restricted four-verse

context of Psalm 68:7-10 (= 68:8-11 H), a unit which bears striking

similarity to Judges 5:4-5, not only syntactically, but thematically and

lexically, as well. Psalm 68:7-10 is addressed to God in the second person

(except for verse 8), and therefore qualifies as direct discourse. This

second-person referencing, together with other cohesive factors, helps establish both the unity and the boundaries of the passage. (Its neighbouring units speak of God in the *third* person.)

The syntactic and thematic similarity between Psalm 68:7-8 (=68:8-9 H) and Judges 5:4, and the thematic (but not syntactic) similarity between these passages and Deuteronomy 33:2 and Habakkuk 3:3, have already been noted above. Both Psalm 68:7-8 and Judges 5:4 may belong to the same period but are distinct from one another, according to W.F. Albright who sees the two verses from Psalm 68 as the fifth incipit (poem beginning) within a catalogue of thirty such incipits.[13] M. Dahood, who shares the widely held opinion that Psalm 68 is "textually and exegetically the most difficult and obscure of all the psalms," regards Albright's article as "basic…for the resolution of the numerous problems besetting this psalm" while himself holding to a "much greater conceptual unity throughout the composition than [Albright's] analysis allows."[14] It is certainly more than coincidental, however, that two of the seven instances of the asyndetically concatenated *b*- based temporal clause structure in Hebrew biblical poetry occur in the thematically similar passages of Psalm 68:7-8 (8-9 H) and Judges 5:4; at the minimum this fact suggests the existence of a stylistic tradition linking content with a set syntactic form, or, alternatively, it may suggest a direct literary link between the two passages.

The passage opens with the *b* — *b* — of the SL echoing the footsteps of God as he marched through the wilderness to rescue his languishing people (68:7-8). The passage appears to be reminiscent in character, as

in the parallel texts, although in this context (within the severe limitations of scope) the reminiscence leads to a pastoral, rather than a military, setting: here, the theophany of Sinai, with its accompanying phenomena of earthquake and storm, culminate in a suggestion of a well-watered land capable of sustaining God's needy "flock" (68:9-10). In summary, if Albright's general hypothesis is correct, one is limited considerably in drawing any firm conclusions from the context of the syntactic locution in Psalm 68. On the other hand, the limited context suggests reminiscence in the positive terms of the pastoral imagery which follows, and the several parallel passages (including Deuteronomy 33:2 and Habakkuk 3:3) give general support to an interpretation of this text in terms similar to the Song of Deborah; the SL provides an initial reminiscence of a positive kind prior to a development of the theme of God's provision. The possibility that the immediate context is an incipit, furthermore, suggests that the SL introduces an even longer discourse not fully present in Psalm 68.

Job 29:2-7

The SL in Job 29:2-7 is part of the direct discourse context of Job's longest speech, a soliloquy extending from 29:2 through 31:40. The passage is immediately preceded by Job's hymn on wisdom (Job 28), and immediately followed by the introduction to Elihu's speech (32:1-5).

A one-verse introduction establishes that Job is resuming his discourse (29:1). Those listening on as Job speaks include his three friends — Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar — and presumably a forth friend,

Elihu (32:1-5; cf. 2:11). Job begins his soliloquy with a wish that he could
return to the "good old days" before all his troubles engulfed him (29:2).
He indulges his nostalgia with a twenty-three verse reminiscence which
opens dramatically with the SL, the *b* _ *b* _ *b* _ *b* _ *b* _ *b* _ thumping
like the beat of Job's broken heart as he thinks back to the days when life
made sense (29:3-7). By analogy to motion picture production, each beat
zooms in ever more tightly on the action, as the camera first scans the
general setting (Job's relationship with the Almighty and the blessings of
Job's children 29:2-5), then moves in on the middle ground of Job's pleasant
walk in life ("when my steps were washed with milk, and the rock poured
out for me streams of oil" 29:6), and finally focuses on the heart of the
reminiscence (the "gate" and "square" 29:7) where the actors begin their
performance on the set of Job's bewildered memory (29:8ff). And, oh,
what memories! All ages listened admiringly to Job as he sat in the square
(29:8-10), for he had won the respect of his fellow man through a life of
justice, mercy and righteousness (29:11-17). When he spoke his audience
took heart and guidance from his words (29:21-25). He could well expect a
long, fruitful life, and could look forward to dying the peaceful death of the
blessed (29:18-20).

But no, all that is but a fading dream. Yesterday's memories and
today's realities are quite the opposite (30:1-31). Continuing his soliloquy,
Job bemoans his present fate. Disreputable people now get away with
insulting him (30:1-8). His name, once synonymous with honour, has
become a byword for scorn (30:9). Unrestrained maliciousness assails him

from all sides (30:10-14). His "prosperity has passed away like a cloud" (30:15), his sickness devastates him day and night (30:16-18) — all "because God has loosed [his] cord and humbled [him]" (30:11), all because "God has cast [him] into the mire" (30:19). Thus Job confronts God directly: even in Job's cries for mercy, God has been inattentive, cruel and unjust — indeed, God has behaved exactly the opposite toward Job from how Job has behaved toward his fellow man (30:20-26); God has abandoned Job to ignominy, death and decay (30:27-31).

None of this makes any sense to Job as he ponders: Why, God? Why? (31:1-40). Does God *really* think I've been ogling the girls? (31:1-4). Has God *ever* had a reason to question my integrity? (31:5-8) Have I ever even *considered* messing around with my neighbour's wife? (31:9-12) Have I *ever* withheld justice from my servants, or mercy from the needy? (31:16-23) Certainly God would not think I regard gold more highly than him, or that I would idolotrously attribute my prosperity to some lucky star, or that I would rejoice at the downfall of my competition? (31:24-30) Is there any evidence whatsoever to suggest I have been more concerned with personal comfort and pious appearance than with hospitality and moral candour? (31:31-34) Has greed ever been the basis for my land management and business policies? (31:38-40) If the Almighty thinks I have failed in any of these ways, let him put his accusation in writing, let him try to prove his case! All I ask for is the opportunity to prove my innocence! (31:35-37)

Thus Job ends his soliloquy. It is not an easy passage to classify in

literary terms, in part because it contains portions that could be classified in different form-critical categories, and in part because the author's genius and creativity resist any simple classification. Thus the soliloquy begins with language reminiscent of the mood of individual lament psalms, although the focus is not initially upon the calamities of the present, but upon the missing blessings of the past. Then the mood of the passage changes from lament to challenge, in which a more legal form of language is employed in the protestation of innocence (31:5-40). But although the sub-classification in literary terms of the parts of the soliloquy is difficult, the mood of the whole, and the literary brilliance by which that mood is conveyed, are sufficiently clear. And the context of the SL is clear enough; it is set in the midst of memories of happy days in the past, which in turn make the present so unbearable.[15]

Proverbs 1:26b-27

The SL in Proverbs 1:26b-27 is part of the direct discourse context of Wisdom's first speech of the Book of Proverbs (1:20-33), which is immediately preceded by the first of the father-to-son instructions (1:8-19), and immediately followed by the second father-to-son instruction (2:1-22). The passage has generally been recognized as a close parallel to Proverbs 8, as seems unquestionable in view of theme, vocabulary and overall style. The presence of the SL is no exception to this similarity.

As the passage opens, personified Wisdom is pictured making her urgent appeal while standing in the public areas of human affairs — in the

street and marketplace, on makeshift platforms and in the entrance of the city gates (1:20-21). She is addressing her remarks to the simple who "love being simple," the scoffers who "delight in their scoffing," the "fools who hate knowledge" (1:22). The nature of Wisdom's remarks is that of a "reproof" (1:23) the intensity of which is emphasized by Wisdom's reference to her exasperation with the way her audience have failed to heed her counsel in times past (1:24-25). Her gentle advice scorned, Wisdom declares she will sit back now and laugh and mock as the consequences of folly teach their own *harsh* lessons of panic, calamity, distress and anguish (1:26-27; cf. 1:31-32). It is here that the SL is found, with its gavel-like *b* — *b* — *b* — pounding out the judgment-by-consequences reserved for those too stupid to listen to Wisdom's gentler instruction. Once the consequences are in effect, Wisdom can no longer be called upon for help (1:28), for the simple have made their decision — a decision to forsake knowledge and the fear of the Lord, a decision to go their own way no matter the cost (1:29-31). Wisdom concludes with the moral to her speech: those who insist on their own way are asking for death and destruction, while those who choose the way of Wisdom enjoy security and freedom from the "dread of evil" (1:32-33).

Despite the similarities between this speech of Wisdom and that contained in chapter 8, it is clear that there are also fundamental dissimilarities with respect to content, and therefore to the context of the respective SL's. As will be discussed more fully at the end of this chapter and the beginning of the next, the notes of warning and reproof dominant in

this passage are in strong contrast with the positive tone of Proverbs 8.
And although there are didactic elements clearly present in both texts,
Wisdom's role as teacher in Proverbs 8 is overshadowed in this passage by
Wisdom's more prophetic role as warner and proclaimer of judgment.
Thus, the SL functions in an anticipatory context of coming judgment, which
would form the context of Wisdom's mocking of those who had refused
instruction. The prophetic language and mood have been pressed into
service to communicate the negative dimensions of Wisdom's teaching.[16]

Ezekiel 32:15

The SL in Ezekiel 32:15 is part of the direct discourse context of
Ezekiel 32:1-16, a lamentation which the Lord commanded Ezekiel to raise
over Pharaoh, king of Egypt (32:1-2). The lamentation is to be chanted by
"the daughters of the nations" (32:16). It is bounded at beginning and end by
other words of the Lord to Ezekiel concerning Egypt.

In literary terms, the context for the SL in Ezekiel is that of one of
the "foreign nation" oracles which, as a whole, constitute one of the last
major sections of the book of Ezekiel. These "foreign nation" oracles
(25:1-32:32), as in the other prophetic books, are addressed to the various
nations that were Judah's (or Israel's) neighbours and contemporaries in
the ancient world. In Ezekiel, particular oracles addressed to various
nations (Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre and Sidon) are followed by a
series of oracles all devoted to Egypt. The Egyptian oracles are dated for
the most part (although it is difficult in many instances to determine where

one oracle ends, and the next begins); poetic form dominates, although

prose portions exist in some of the oracles. The oracle in Ezekiel 32:1-16,

like those surrounding it, is dominated by the divine declaration of coming

judgment, expressed in rich poetry with the undertones, in many places, of

mythological language. Thus the general context of the syntactic locution

under examination, in the setting of the "foreign nation" oracles as a whole,

is one of anticipation of God's coming judgment upon Egypt.[17]

After a brief prose introduction of the time, nature, and intended

audience of this "word of the Lord" (32:1-2), the lamentation proper opens

with an accusation against Pharaoh who regards himself as "a lion among the

nations" but is in reality nothing more than a dragon that muddies the waters

(32:2). Building on the figure of the dragon, the Lord announces that he

will catch Pharaoh with a dragnet, throw him up on the land, feed him to the

wild animals, scatter his remains across hill and dale, and bring darkness

over his land (32:3-8). Thus, the Lord will make the other nations appalled

at Pharaoh (32:9-10). For "the sword of the king of Babylon" will humble

Egypt so that no longer will the rivers be muddied, but will be clear,

running "like oil" (32:11-14). Then, in an emphatic review and declaration

of his intent in all this devastation, the Lord concludes the lamentation with

the SL: *b* _ *b* _ — "When I make the land of Egypt desolate and ... the land

is stripped of all that fills it, when I smite all who dwell in it, then they will

know that I am the Lord" (32:15). The point of the lamentation, then, is to

let Pharaoh know who is really in charge; Pharaoh may *think* that he is a

"lion among the nations," but the Lord will put him in his place.

Illocutionary Force Patterning

Now that the six **SL** contexts have been summarized, what can be said about the illocutionary force / rhetorical function of the **SL**? Does any pattern emerge? Is the presence of the **SL** in and of itself merely incidental, fortuitous? Or is it intentional, significant? The following observations of patterning indicate not only that the presence of the **SL** is rhetorically significant but that the **SL** bears illocutionary forces capable of definition:

(1) All six instances of the **SL** appear in *direct discourse* contexts:

(a) Deuteronomy 32:8 is part of the *šîrâ* "Song" which Moses spoke to the assembly of Israel (31:30).

(b) Judges 5:4 is part of the Song which Deborah (and Barak) *tāšar* "sang" (5:1). The presence of the vocative *yhwh* "Lord" together with the second-person subject referencing in the temporal clauses *bᵊṣēʾtᵊkā … bᵊṣaʿdᵊkā …* "when thou didst go forth … when thou didst march" in 5:4 further supports the direct discourse nature of the passage.

(c) Psalm 68:7-8 (8-9 H), although part of a psalm ascribed *lᵊdāwid* "to/of David" (68:1 H), has already been noted as problematic. Nevertheless, the presence of the vocative *ʾᵉlōhîm* "God" together with the second-person subject referencing in the temporal clauses *bᵊṣēʾtᵊkā … bᵊṣaʿdᵊkā …* "when thou didst go forth … when thou didst march" in 68:8H qualifies this as direct discourse (see Judges 5:4 above).

(d) Job 29:2-7 is part of Job's *māšāl* "discourse" (29:1) which

he spoke in the presense of his friends (29:1; 32:1-5).

(e) Proverbs 1:26-27 is part of the speech delivered by *hokmôt* "Wisdom" (1:20, here probably a plural of abstraction) to the *pᵊtāyim* "simple ones" (1:22).

(f) Ezekiel 32:15 is part of the *qînâ* "lamentation" which *dᵊbar- yhwh* "the word of the Lord" instructed Ezekiel to say concerning the king of Egypt (32:1-2).

(2) All six instances of the **SL** contain reference to the Lord or to that which can be metonymically related to the Lord, such as Wisdom:

(a) In two instances the Divine reference is in the first person. (i) In Proverbs 1:26-27 *hokmôt* "Wisdom" (1:20) is the abstract plural antecedent to the first person singular subject of the independent clause *ᵊelᶜag* "I will mock." (ii) In Ezekiel 32:14-15 *ᵃdonāy yhwh* "the Lord God" (32:14) is the antecedent to the first person subject of the temporal clauses *bᵊtittî ᵊet-eres misrayim šᵊmāmâ* ... "when I make the land of Egypt desolate" (32:15a) and *bᵊhakkôtî ᵊet-kol-yôšᵊbê bāh* "when I smite all who dwell in it" (32:15c).

(b) In two instances the Divine reference is in the second person. (i) In Judges 5:4 the vocative *yhwh* "Lord" is the antecedent to the second person subject of the temporal clauses *bᵊsēᵊtᵊkā* ... "when thou didst go forth ..." and *bᵊsaᶜdᵊkā* ... "when thou didst march ...." (ii) In Psalm 68:7 (= 68:8 H) the vocative *ᵊelōhîm* "God" is the antecedent to the second person subject of the temporal clauses *bᵊsēᵊtᵊkā* ... "when thou didst go

forth ..." and *bᵊsaʿdᵊkā* ... "when thou didst march ...."

(c) In two instances the Divine reference is in the third person.
(i) In Deuteronomy 32:8 *ʿelyôn* "the Most High" is the subject of the first
temporal clause *bᵊhanḥēl ʿelyôn gôyim* "When the Most High gave to
the nations their inheritance" and the antecedent to the third person subject
reference in the second temporal clause *bᵊhapridô bᵊnê ʾādām*
"when he separated the sons of men" and in the independent clause *yasṣēb*
gᵊbulōt ʿammîm "he fixed the bounds of the peoples...." (ii) In Job
29:2-7 the Divine reference is less direct, and clearly present only in the
first three of the six temporal clauses. *ʾᵉlôah* "God," the subject of the
appositive clause *ʾᵉlôah yišmᵊrēnî* "God watched over me" (29:2b), is
the antecedent to the possessive in *nērô* "his lamp" and *...ʾôrô* "his
light" (29:3). *ʾᵉlôah* "God" is part of the subject noun phrase in the
second temporal clause *bᵊsôd ʾᵉlôah ʿᵃlê ʾāhᵃlî* "when the
friendship of God was upon my tent" (29:4). *šadday* "Almighty" is the
subject of the first half of the third temporal clause *bᵊʿôd šadday*
ʿimmādî "when the Almighty was yet with me" (29:5).

(3) Four instances of the SL occur discourse-initially (Deuteronomy
32, Judges 5, Psalm 68 and Job 29), while two occur in the latter half of
their discourses (Proverbs 1 and Ezekiel 32). This distribution parallels
the reminiscence/prophecy distinction in (4) and (5) below.

(4) Four instances of the SL occur at the onset of *reminiscence*

(past-oriented), while two occur at the climax of *prophecy* (or prophecy-like) passages (future-oriented). Within the *reminiscence* passages (Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, Psalm 68 and Job 29) the **SL** is the host to words of positive (in contrast to negative) memories directly associated with the blessings of the Lord:

(a) In Deuteronomy 32 the **SL** opens a reminiscence on the Lord's favour toward Israel. It follows a stern reminder of Israel's special origin: *hᵃlôʾ - hûʾ ʾābîkā qānekā* "Is not he your father, who created you?" (32:6). The **SL** is the host structure for the words which begin unfolding the substance anticipated in the immediately preceding command *zᵃkōr yᵃmôt ʿôlām* "remember the days of old" (32:7). The heart of the reminiscence is this: *ʿelyôn* "the Most High" (32:8) alone, *kᵃneśer* "like an eagle" (32:11), rescued Israel from the wilderness, nourished Israel, and exalted Israel (32:10-14). These are positive memories, and serve to contrast the ways of other nations, whose rock is not Israel's Rock, and whose vine is not Israel's Vine (32:28-33). These positive memories are associated with Moses' concern for Israel to remain faithful to the law of the Lord, for *hûʾ ḥayyêkem* "it is your life" (32:47).

(b) In Judges 5 the **SL** opens a reminiscence over the Lord *yhwh*'s (32:4) mighty battle on behalf of Israel in the days of Deborah. As in the case of Deuteronomy 32, so here, the **SL** is the host structure for words that begin unfolding the details of a very memorable event — words which, in Judges 5, are addressed to the Lord and form the preamble to a

recounting of Sisera's defeat. These are positive memories that are carried by the **SL**. In the larger context, they serve to contrast the unhappy fate of the Lord's enemies, while celebrating the blessedness of the Lord's friends who are *kᵊṣēʾt haššemeš bigburātô* "like the sun as he rises in his might" (5:31).

(c) In Psalm 68 the **SL** opens a reminiscence very similar in word and structure to that of Judges 5. Here, however, as noted above, the words are addressed, not to the "Lord" *yhwh*, but to "God" *ʾᵉlōhîm* (68:8H). The passage recalls how "the earth quaked, the heavens did pour down rain, at the presence of God" — *ʾereṣ rāʿāšâ | ʾap-šāmayim nāṭᵊpû mippᵊnê ʾᵉlōhîm* (68:9H) — when God restored his heritage, Israel. Here, too, the **SL** is the carrier of positive memories — memories permeated with the joy of national revitalization under the goodness of God (68:10-11H). How these memories serve the larger context is not possible to say because of the problematic nature of the Psalm and its composition, as noted above.

(d) In Job 29 the **SL** opens, not a *national* reminiscence as in the above three instances, but a *personal* reminiscence within a soliloquy, as Job thinks back to the days before his grief when *sôd ʾᵉlōhîm*, "the friendship of God," was with him (29:4) and his fellow man respected him. The **SL** serves as the host structure for words depicting the setting and circumstances of events in Job's idyllic nostalgia. These are, indeed, positive memories, but they serve only to make Job all the more miserable because they contrast so sharply with his present plight in which God and

the good life seem to have forsaken him forever and without reason
(30:1-31:40).

(5) Within the *prophecy* passage (Ezekiel 32) or *prophecy-like*
passage (Proverbs 1) the **SL** is host to words of negative (in contrast to
positive) consequences directly associated with scorning the way of the
Lord:

(a) In Proverbs 1:20-33 (a prophecy-like passage within a
didactic context) the **SL** is the structural host to words depicting the sad,
and by implication *self*-inflicted consequences in store for those who
reject Wisdom's gracious assistance (1:24-25), who do not choose *yir'at*
yhwh "the fear of the Lord" (1:29). The consequences? Panic will strike
k⁰šō'â "like a storm;" calamity will come *k⁰sûpâ* "like a whirlwind;"
"distress and anguish" will beset such fools (1:27). For *m⁰šûbat*
p⁰tāyim tahargēm "the simple are killed by their turning away" (1:32).
The negative consequences reflected in the **SL** serve to contrast the happy
state of those who *do* choose *yir'at yhwh* "the fear of the Lord," for of
such people Wisdom declares: *šōmêaꜥ lî yiškān-betah* "he who
listens to me will dwell secure" (1:33).

(b) In Ezekiel 32:2-15 (a lamentation within a prophetic context)
the **SL** is structural host to words emphatically summarizing the negative,
God- inflicted consequences in store for the king of Egypt because of his
arrogant, troublesome ways (32:2, 15): *'ᵃdōnāy yhwh* "the Lord God"
(32:14) will make the land of Egypt *š⁰māmâ* "desolate" and will smite

kol-yôšᵊbê bāh "all who dwell in it" (32:15). The intended result of
these unhappy consequences will be *yodᶜû kî-ᵃnî yhwh* "they [Egypt]
will know that I am the Lord" (32:15). Unlike the other five instances of the
SL, this instance is unassociated with any explicit contextual reference to
the blessing of God and the life-happiness of being under his protection,
although the familiar theme of the "foreign nation" oracles, namely
judgment's role in imparting a knowledge of God, is clearly present.

The above observations indicate definite patterning of the **SL** into two
groups: (1) reminiscence usage, and (2) prophetic usage. Both groups
consist of locutions which (1) are performed within direct discourse
contexts and (2) are directly associated with the action of God. In the case
of the four *reminiscence* passages (Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, Psalm 68
and Job 29-31), all instances of the **SL** (1) occur reminiscence-initially,
and (2) are host to words of *positive memories* which (a) speak of the
goodness and blessing of the Lord in times past to his people Israel or to his
servant Job, (b) contrast with the negative situations described elsewhere
in the discourse context, and (c) serve as enticements for keeping on with
(or returning to) the way of the Lord, the way of the good life. In the case
of the two *prophetic* passages (Proverbs 1 and Ezekiel 32), both
instances of the **SL** (1) occur not discourse-initially, but medially
(Proverbs 1) or finally (Ezekiel 32) as the climax of their discourses, (2)
are host to words of *negative consequences* which (a) are self-inflicted
by those who choose the way of folly over the way of the Lord (Proverbs 1),

or are God-inflicted as judgment against Pharaoh's arrogance (Ezekiel 32),
(b) contrast with the positive situation found elsewhere in the discourse
context (Proverbs 1), and (c) serve as a lesson for others to continue in
the way of the Lord, Wisdom and life (Proverbs 1).

On the basis of the above, this thesis proposes the following
interpretations of illocutionary force / rhetorical function for the **SL** (the
SYNTACTIC LOCUTION consisting of the asyndetically concatenated *b*- based
temporal clause structure): (1) in *reminiscence passages* the **SL** has
the illocutionary force of *an alluring reminder of how good life is
when God is "on your side";* (2) in *prophetic passages* the **SL** has
the illocutionary force of a *grave notification of the negative
consequences awaiting the proud and foolish.*[18] Chapter Five, next,
will apply these findings to the main concern of this thesis — the definition
of what Lady Wisdom is doing in using the **SL** in her speech in Proverbs 8.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1] Aletti, "Proverbes 8, 22-31," p.37. See also this thesis, Chapter Two, discussion associated with Note 77.

[2] Exception to the line-initial criterion is made only in the two cases (Judges 5:4 and Psalm 68:7) where the first of the temporal clauses is immediately preceded by a vocative form.

[3] *b*- based temporal clause structures specifically outside the scope of this thesis include *syndetically linked* sets (e.g., Prov. 6:22; 11:10; 21:11; and 28:12 — all used in an Instruction; and Ezek. 29:7, used with content of blame and judgment, with Hos. 10:10 as a chiastic variation); and sets of *syndetically linked parallel temporal clauses dependent on a common b*- (e.g., Job 38:8-11, used with content of Disputation; although some examples of this type, such as Job 29:3,5,6 and Prov. 1:27, do fall within the scope of the thesis because of being subunits within larger structures with which this thesis *is* concerned). Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, the pair of *b*- based temporal clauses of Proverbs 8:24 are excluded from consideration, not by virtue of being verbless clauses, but by virtue of not being concatenated (the two clauses are separated by the independent clause manifested by the verb *ḥôlālti*); the *b*ᵊ*terem* construction of Proverbs 8:25 is excluded from consideration because it is lexically a frozen form (not the product of a live

syntactic process such as found in the *b*- clauses of verses 27-29), and is not followed by the characteristic infinitive construct of the temporal clauses with which this chapter is concerned (nor are there to be found in the Hebrew biblical poetry any examples of *concatenated b^eterem* clauses, Jeremiah 1:5 consisting of two independent sentences syndetically joined and each containing a *b^eterem* clause, and Psalm 90:2 H being a solitary *b^eterem* occurrence).

[4] The appeal here to context, when applied to the primary task of this thesis, is at the same time productive and frustrating. Because of the elusiveness of significant portions of what might be defined as context, the conclusions reached by this thesis must of necessity be viewed as tentative. Anthony Wootton, *Dilemmas of Discourse: Controversies about the Sociological Interpretation of Language* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), pp.43-59, in laying the groundwork for his treatment of ethnomethodological strategies for analyzing meaning in "talk" — for explicating "the *methods* by which glosses (talk) are produced and heard as ordered phenomena" (p.59) — well notes the complexity of any such consideration of context in the interpretation of illocutionary force. Wootton points to the open-endedness of context, citing the speech acts of *promise* and *command* as examples of the inadequacy of rule-based analysis of illocutionary force. It is not that these forces do not exist — indeed, they are very powerful, Wootton maintains. It is rather that the traditional methods for analyzing them are weak (p.58).

[5] It is recognized that the RSV, JB, and NIV are syntactically justified

in beginning a new sentence at verse 7. From a thematic perspective of nostalgia, however, this thesis will follow the LXX and AV in keeping the two temporal clauses of verse 7 with the preceding context, beginning a new sentence at verse 8.

[6] The RSV rightly reads "when my children were about me," even though a lexical support for "when" does not appear in the Hebrew text itself; by context pattern pressure the clause is to be interpreted as dependent in parallel structure with "the Almighty was yet with me" of v.5a. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this thesis all of v.5 will be counted as *one* temporal clause since both parts of the clause are governed by only one *b-*.

[7] Only one *b-* appears in this compound clause, although the RSV in its translation of the sentence introduces each of the two parts of the compound clause with "when."

[8] R.N. Whybray, in *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), p.154, lists Deuteronomy 32 among the passages which, on the basis of a terminological investigation, show the influence of an intellectual tradition in Israel. Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p.374, also points to the Wisdom characteristics of Deuteronomy 32, noting that "it includes very practical advice...; its function is to remind and to educate the people in the way they should take;" he points also to the covenantal nature of the passage: "The song functions as a part of the witness to the renewal of

the covenant; when Israel sang it, they would bear witness to their understanding and agreement to the full terms and implications of the covenant" (p.373). It is in regard to this covenantal feature that Craigie comments on *qânâ* in verse 6c: the verb here is "not the more familiar *bârâ'* which is employed in Gen. 1:1. The same verb (*qânâh*) is used in Exod. 15:16 in the song celebrating the Exodus from Egypt. Thus the phrase *he created you*, in its context, alludes to both the Exodus and Sinai as the events connected with the 'creation' of the people of the Lord. That 'creation' was initiated in the grace and covenant love of the Lord, and for Israel to forget that grace and to act perversely was tantamount to forgetting its very *raison d'être* " (p.379). It is this same verb which is found in Proverbs 8:22 with regard to the creating/getting of Wisdom. When taken in conjunction with other features such as the asyndetically concatenated temporal clauses, this fact is suggestive of a covenantal quality to the Proverbs 8 passage—mankind's *raison d'être* being to walk in the way of Wisdom, in the fear of the Lord. (On the matter of covenant, see also G. Ernest Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. B.W. Anderson and W. Harrelson [London: SCM, 1962], pp.26-67; note especially his classification of verses 7-14 as "kerygma: appeal to the mighty acts of God," p.35.)   On the translation of verse 8a, G.R. Driver, "Three Notes," *Vetus Testamentum*, 2 (1952), pp.356-57, understands (instead of "gave the nations their inheritance") "'strewed the nations (as) through a sieve'. *i. e.* disposed of them as units about the world;" even if Driver's translation

is correct, however, it does not affect this thesis' analysis of the temporal

clause usage. For a selected bibliography on The Song of Moses, see

Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, p.375.

[9] Judges 5:4-5 has been regarded as perhaps the clearest example of

theophany in the Hebrew Bible (see Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, The Anchor

Bible [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975], pp.108, 118, with his reference

to Jörg Jeremias, *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestament-*

lichen Gattung [Neuenkirch: Neuenkirchener Verlag, 1965], and to J.

Blenkinsopp, "Ballad Style and Psalm Style in the Song of Deborah: A

Discussion," *Biblica* 42 [1962], 61-76). The Song as a whole is "cultic...in

the sense that for early Israel common life is best understood in terms of

the covenant with Yahweh" (Boling, *Judges*, p.117). The overall literary

quality of Judges 5 is that of "fine poetry, and in no sense »primitive«...the

subtle language of a gifted poet" (Peter C. Craigie, "Deborah and Anat: A

Study of Poetic Imagery [Judges 5], *Zeitschrift für die alttestament-*

liche Wissenschaft, 90 [1978], 375).

[10] Peter C. Craigie, "A Note on Judges V 2," *Vetus Testamentum*,

18 (1968), 397-99, addresses the uncertainty of the translation of Judges

5:2; after considering the possibility that the alternate rendering "locks,

flowing hair" (based on LXX B) refers to "men gathering up their hair when

going into battle" (p.398), Craigie argues on the basis of Arabic cognates

and Hebrew poetic parallelism for the translation: "When men wholly

dedicated themselves in Israel, / When the people offered themselves

willingly, / Bless the Lord!" (p.399).

[11] Peter C. Craigie, "Some Further Notes on the Song of Deborah," *Vetus Testamentum*, 22 (1972), 350, notes the uncertainty of the translation "his peasantry" for *pirzônô* (Judges 5:11, cf. 5:7), arguing instead for "his warriors" on the basis of the battle character of the Arabic *baraza*, the support of Habakkuk 3:14 (where such a translation "clarifies an otherwise difficult passage"), and the military atmosphere of Judges 5:11.

[12] Verse numbering for Psalm 68 will follow the RSV text unless specifically marked "H" for the Hebrew text verse numbering.

[13] W.F. Albright, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 23, No. 1 (1950-51), 20. (See also W.F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968], pp.26-27.)

[14] M. Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), p.133.

[15] For general discussion of the unity of Job 29-31 and the relationship of 29:2-7 to these three chapters and to the book as a whole, see: J.L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), pp.105-6; R.A.F. MacKenzie, "Job," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol.1, ed. R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer, and R.E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp.526-28; R.E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job...*, pp.38-39; and M.H. Pope, *Job*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), pp.207-39. No treatment of the rhetorical significance of the temporal clause

concatenation is to be found in these works, however.

[16] On the structure of these verses and their context, Phyllis Trible ("Wisdom Builds a Poem: The Architecture of Proverbs 1:20-33," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 94 [1975], 509-18) describes the chiasmus of the passage as the basis for its "homiletic, advisory, didactic, and prophetic dimensions" (p.518). See also: C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9*, pp.119-34 (in which she defines Proverbs 1:20-33 as a "Wisdom Sermon"); and P.W. Skehan, "The Seven Columns of Wisdom's House in Proverbs 1-9." Concerning the mood of the passage, W. McKane, *Proverbs*, observes that Wisdom, as a preacher, "employs prophetic forms of address (reproof and threat) and she lays claim to the authority of Yahweh for what she speaks, but she does not speak like a prophet. Her vocabulary is that of the wisdom teacher, not that of the prophet, and there are still traces of the Instruction in this piece. Wisdom does not demand repentance; she demands attentiveness and recognition that she is an authoritative teacher who ought to be heeded and obeyed... There is a concern to demonstrate that the acquisition of wisdom cannot begin without a right religious attitude ('fear of Yahweh'), and wisdom is a charismatic gift dispensed by a spirit-filled teacher (Wisdom)" (pp.276-77). (Having noted McKane's position, this thesis still sees a prophetic *quality* about Proverbs 1:26-27.) Von Rad sees Wisdom in this passage as "the voice of primeval order" which, as a created thing, "is as real as other works of creation" (*Wisdom in Israel*, pp.161-62); this voice, which speaks with the authority of Yahweh, is a "saving voice" which can be forfeited "through

disobedience" (p.163). Whybray is correct when he says of this passage:
"instead of the schoolmaster, it is the teaching itself which comes to life
and pleads with the pupil to pay attention!" (*The Book of Proverbs*,
p.19). This touches on the question of authority which R.E. Murphy
addresses in "The Faces of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs:" "Personified
wisdom is a much stronger figure of authority than the teacher. In 1:20-33
she adopts the threatening tone which was sounded in the Israelite prophets:
she calls, but the people do not listen (1:24; cf. Jer. 7:24-27; Is. 65:2, 12;
66:3-4). Her 'laughing' at the doom of those who fail to heed her recalls the
divine ridicule and laughter of Pss. 2:4; 59:9" (p.340; cf. Murphy, "The
Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," pp.7-8).

[17] For a general discussion of this passage and its context see: G.A.
Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of
Ezekiel*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner
Sons, 1937; rpt. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951); Walther Eichrodt,
Ezekiel: A Commentary, The Old Testament Library (London: SCM,
1970); Arnold J. Tkacik, "Ezekiel," in *The Jerome Biblical
Commentary*, Vol. 1, ed. R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer, and R.E. Murphy
(Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968). For a very readable
popular presentation see Peter C. Craigie, *Ezekiel*, The Daily Study Bible
(Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983). For a treatment of the "Foreign Nation
Oracles" see Duane Christensen, *Transformations of the War Oracle in
Old Testament Prophecy: Studies in the Oracles Against the
Nations* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975).

[18] It could be argued that the illocutionary force / rhetorical function classifications "*alluring* reminder *of how good life is when God is 'on your side'*" and "*grave* notification *of the negative consequences awaiting the proud and foolish*" should be reduced to merely "*reminder*" and "*notification*" in an unmodified form, to be consistent with J.L. Austin's list of illocutionary force labels such as *assurance, warning, answer, verdict, criticism,* and the like (see this thesis, p.9). Such an argument maintains that to say more than "reminder" and "notification" is to draw too much from the propositional content of the locution.

In response, two factors should be noted as support for the use of the fuller form of the classifications: (1) In terms of the argument of this thesis regarding the force of the syntactic structure *in and of itself*, it must be remembered that this thesis is not bound to some "traditional" application of Austin's theory; rather, this thesis, concerned with solving a specific problem of interpretation in a Hebrew Wisdom poem, makes use of a functinal *adaptation* of that theory. In fact, this thesis is not concerned with the *whole* of speech act theory, but with essentially one part, that of *illocutionary force.* This term, *illocutionary force,* can be applied to communication strategies other than normal, complete speech , as Austin himself acknowledges with reference to the raising of one's finger to request silence (Wootton, p.49). Since it is with the communication significance of a *syntactic feature* that this thesis is concerned, and not with the words that manifest that feature, the propositional content hosted

by the syntactic feature is regarded as part of the associated circumstances — the "context" — which help establish the interpretation of the illocutionary force of the syntactic feature.

(2) The longer classifications "alluring reminder..." and "grave notification..." are simply circumlocutions for single-word expressions not readily available in the English lexicon, just as "assurance" and "warning" are single-word expressions that are available in the English lexicon but that could be expressed with longer circumlocutions such as " confident declaration" and "information given beforehand of impending danger." Related to this question is the matter of generic vs. specific classification, as seen in Austin's terms "answer" and "verdict," where "asnswer" is the more generic term and "verdict" the more specific. In that "verdict" is a more specific kind of "answer," "verdict " could be expressed in a circumlocution such as "the *answer* of a jury given to a court concerning a matter of fact in a civil or criminal cause committed to their examination and determination" ("verdict," *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, italics mine). So in the case of "alluring reminder...," the illocutionary force is not that of just *any* kind of reminder, but of a *specific* kind of reminder, a reminder always associated with the self-evidently alluring qualities associated with being recipient of the Lord's blessings. And in the case of "grave notification...," the illocutionary force is not that of just *any* kind of notification, but of a *specific* kind of notification, a notification always associated with the gravity of the negative consequences awaiting those who arrogantly scorn YHWH and his ways.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the significance of Chapter

Four vis-à-vis the rhetorical function of the asyndetically concatenated *b*-

based temporal clause structure of Proverbs 8:27-29. (In this chapter, as

in the last, the temporal clause structure will sometimes be abbreviated

SL, for SYNTACTIC LOCUTION.)

In the preceding chapter's example of the Western about a pioneer

family under attack, the final instance of the bugler's notes occurs just as

the film is drawing to a close; at the very last minute the audience hear the

sound of a bugle and, even though no cavalry appear on the screen and no

other clue is given, the audience know that the beleaguered family are about

to be rescued and all will end well. The audience know this not by virtue of

experiencing only this *one* instance of these bugle notes in a motion

picture, for in that case the purpose of the notes within the sound track

would be too ambiguous, signaling who knows what — all is lost? someone

just got killed? the barn is on fire? maybe Geronimo signed a peace treaty?

Indeed, the bugle notes might be serving as nothing more than random

background noise to communicate an atmosphere of commotion. The

reason the audience know what is about to happen — the reason they are all

sitting on the edge of their seats cheering wildly and upsetting their popcorn and softdrinks — is that they have experienced this kind of thing before in other Westerns. What remains implicit in this one film had already been made explicit in the others. They know what to expect; their other movie-going experiences have prepared them. The bugler's notes work their evocative magic on them — their minds and hearts "see" what this time their eyes do not.

In much the same way, the reader experiencing Proverbs 8:22-31 as a *singular* exposure to the asyndetically concatenated *b*- based temporal clause structure (the SL) may barely think of it as anything more than the author's pleasing way of stringing words together — a syntactic feature somewhat incidental to the flow of thought. Yet, like the audience who through several exposures to similar Westerns are able to discern the bugle's function in the film, so too, the reader through several exposures to syntactically similar passages is better able to discern the rhetorical function (if any) of the SL. The strategy of this thesis has been to provide just such a broader exposure as a means to a more enlightened understanding of Wisdom's speech in Proverbs 8.

However, as noted in the example of Bob saying "My car stalled at the first signal down the street," it is possible for the same locution to have more than one illocutionary force, depending on the associated circumstances of the speech act. Thus, the strategy of this thesis has also taken into account the possibility that the SL might have *more than one* rhetorical function, depending on the specific context of the SL — the

associated circumstances of the **SL**. The question then becomes one of options — which, if any, of the illocutionary force options best explains the rhetorical function of the **SL** in Proverbs 8?

The review of literature in Chapter Two demonstrated that, although the **SL** in Proverbs 8:22-31 has been recognized for its rhythmic pattern that prepares for what follows, a precise definition of *how* it prepares for what follows was lacking; an evocative function was hinted at, but how the clauses functioned evocatively was left undefined. The purpose of this thesis has been to arrive at such a definition utilizing a methodological adaptation of J.L. Austin's speech act theory, especially that part dealing with illocutionary force. After isolating and describing the **SL** of Proverbs 8:27-29 (Chapter Three), a search was made throughout the rest of Hebrew biblical poetry to find all other instances of syntactically similar structures (Chapter Four). Six passages were noted (Deuteronomy 32:8, Judges 5:4, Psalm 68:7-8 [68:8-9 H], Job 29:2-7, Proverbs 1:27, and Ezekiel 32:15) and their temporal clause structures isolated, compared, related to their discourse contexts, and analyzed for patterning suggestive of **SL** illocutionary force / rhetorical function. Two **SL** usage patterns emerged from the six passages: *reminiscence* and *prophetic.* It was observed that the reminiscence usage functions always in a *positive* context with respect to God.[1] In at least two instances (Deuteronomy 32 and Judges 5) it is reminiscence in the context of cause and effect: *when* God acted in such and such a fashion, the consequence was positive for Israel, this substance

in turn serving in a secondary sense as didactic, and thus falling within the general context of wisdom. In the more precise wisdom context of Job 29, the reminiscence is positive in substance, contrasting with a negative present estate. But in every case the substance of the past reminiscence was shown to be positive as such and serving a positive role in its larger context. It was further observed that the prophetic usage, by way of contrast, functions as a grave notification of the unhappy/negative consequences awaiting the proud and foolish. There are available, then, at least two options — *reminiscence* and *prophetic* — for explaining *how* the SL in Proverbs 8 functions evocatively within its context.

This present chapter will argue that, on the basis of the patterning and interpretation suggested in Chapter Four, the SL in Proverbs 8 is likewise of the reminiscence group, and that the extra information provided by Proverbs 8 allows a further overall clarification of the illocutionary force / rhetorical function of the SL within that group: that the usage in Proverbs 8 (together with Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, Psalm 68, and Job 29) functions as a *wisdom reminiscence*, defined as an alluring reminder of how good life can be under God's blessing and along Wisdom's path. The following summary chart and associated discussion will defend this interpretation:

Summary Comparison of All Instances of Asyndetically Concatenated b-Based Temporal Clauses (SL)							
	Pr 8	Dt 32	Jg 5	Ps 68	Job 29	Pr 1	Ez 32
Direct Discourse Locut'n	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Form of Discourse	speech: hymnic	song	song	hymn (?)	solilo-quy	speech: prophtc	lament: prophtc
Divine Reference (1st, 2nd, 3rd Person)	1 חכמה 3 יהוה	3 עליון	2 יהוה	2 אלהים	3 אלוה שדי	1 חכמה	1 אדני יהוה
Location in Discourse	mid.	initial	initial	initial	initial	mid.	final
Time Orientation	past	past	past	past	past	future	future
Kind of Content in SL	memory (pers.)	memory (nt'l)	memory (nt'l)	memory (nt'l)	memory (pers.)	conseq. (pers.)	conseq. (nt'l)
Mood of SL Content	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	negtv.	negtv.
Conclusion on SL Illocutionary Force / Rhetorical Function	**WISDOM REMINISCENCE**: an alluring reminder of how good life can be under God's blessing and along Wisdom's path.					**PROPHETIC NOTIFICATION**: the proud man's end.	

Chapter Four noted that all other instances of the **SL** occur in direct discourse contexts. The **SL** in Proverbs 8:27-29 also occurs in a direct discourse context (8:4-36). The speaker is *ḥokmâ* "Wisdom" (8:1a, or *t^əbûnâ* "understanding" 8:1b). Wisdom identifies her audience as *ʾîšîm* "men" (8:4a, or *b^ənê* *ʾādām* "sons of men" 8:4b, *p^ətāyim* "simple ones" 8:5a, *k^əsîlîm* "foolish men" 8:5b, and *bānîm* "sons" 8:32). Wisdom presents her discourse in the form of a lecture (or Wisdom Speech): *n^əgîdîm* *ʾᵃdabbēr* *ûmiptaḥ* *ś^əpātay* *mêšārîm: kî -* *ʾᵉmet yehgeh ḥikkî* "I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right; for my mouth will utter truth" (8:6,7a). She emphasizes the didactic nature of her remarks by calling them *mûsārî* "my instruction" (8:10) and *mûsār* "instruction" (8:33), and devotes her

entire speech to extolling the virtues of her instruction. A further matter

of interest is the hymnic quality of the SL's narrower context (8:22-31), a

quality which relates it even more closely to the song and hymn passages of

Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5 and Psalm 68 (the last being less certain because

of difficulties in form classification).

Chapter Four also noted that all other instances of the SL are

directly associated with the action of God (or that which can be

metonymically related to God, such as Wisdom), a nominal or pronominal

reference to whom is explicitly present within the SL. The Proverbs 8 SL,

bearing two such references, is no exception to this pattern. The *indirect*

Divine reference is in the first person *ʾᵃnî* "I" (8:27) the antecedent of

which is *ḥokmâ* "Wisdom" (8:1), the speaker, who claims (8:27) that

throughout the creation of the universe she was in the very presence of the

Creator *yhwh* "the Lord" (8:22), the *direct* Divine reference. *yhwh*, in

turn, serves as the antecedent to the third-person subject reference in

each of the SL's constituent temporal clauses: *baḥᵃkînô...* "when he

established..." (8:27a), *bᵉ ḥûqô...* "when he drew..." (8:27b), *bᵉʾ ammᵉṣô...*

"when he made firm..." (8:28a), *bᵉ ʿ azzᵉzô...* "when he established" (8:28b,

following G variant reading), *bᵉ śûmô...* "when he assigned" (8:29a), and

bᵉ ḥûqô... "when he marked out..." (8:29c).

Chapter Four noted further that two instances of the SL occur

discourse-medially (Proverbs 1) or finally (Ezekiel 32), are

future-oriented, and emphasize the sad consequences in store for the

proud, scornful individual (Proverbs 1) or arrogant king and nation

(Ezekiel 32). The Proverbs 8 SL does *not* share these characteristics, with the exception that it does seem to occur discourse-medially (itself a matter of some debate among scholars, who disagree on the unity of the chapter — see discussions in Chapter Two).

Chapter Four noted, on the other hand, that four instances of the SL (Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, Psalm 68, and Job 29) occur discourse-initially, are past-oriented, and emphasize positive memories of God's blessings either nationally to Israel (Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5 and Psalm 68) or personally to Job (Job 29). It was further observed that the positive connotations hosted by the SL in these passages (other than Psalm 68) contrast with elements of national or personal negative connotations later in their discourse contexts. Except for location in discourse (as noted above), the Proverbs 8 SL shares all these characteristics.

The *past-orientation* of the Proverbs 8 SL is emphasized in the opening lines of this hymnic strophe where Wisdom states of her origins, *yhwh qānānî* "the Lord created me" (8:22). When did the Lord create her? Wisdom gives ten synonymous answers: (1) *rē'šît darkô* "at the beginning of his work" (8:22a), (2) *qedem mip'ālāyw mē'āz* "the first of his acts of old" (8:22b), (3) *mē'ôlām* "ages ago" (8:23a), (4) *mērō'š* "at the first" (8:23b), (5) *miqqadmê - 'āreṣ* "before the beginning of the earth" (8:23b), (6) *b'ên - t'hōmôt* "when there were no depths" (8:24a), (7) *b'ên ma'yānôt nikbaddê-māyim* "when there were no springs abounding with water" (8:24b), (8) *b'terem hārîm hāṭbā'û* "before the mountains had been shaped" (8:25a), (9)

lipnê g³bā‛ôt "before the hills" (8:25b), and (10) *‛ad-lō² ‛āśâ ²ereṣ w³ḥûṣôt w³rō²š ‛oprôt tēbēl* "before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world" (8:26). Then, as to add even greater emphasis, Wisdom gives six more synonymous past-time references — the six clauses of the SL —, this time boasting of actually being there (*śām ²ānî* "I was there" 8:27a, and *²ehyeh ²eṣlô* "I was beside him" 8:30a) (1) *baḥᵃkînô šāmayim* "when he established the heavens" (8:27a), (2) *b³ḥûqô ḥûg ‛al-p³nê t³hôm* "when he drew a circle on the face of the deep" (8:27b), (3) *b³²amm³ṣô š³ḥāqîm mimmā‛al* "when he made firm the skies above" (8:28a), (4) *ba‛ᵃzôz ‛înôt t³hôm* "when he established the fountains of the deep" (8:28b), (5) *b³śûmô layyām ḥuqqô...* "when he assigned to the sea its limit..." (8:29a), and (6) *b³ḥûqô môs³dê ²āreṣ* "when he marked out the foundations of the earth" (8:29c). Indeed, Wisdom's memories go back a *long, long time* !

That *positive* reminiscences are associated with the Proverbs 8 SL goes almost without saying. But, as if the joy implicit in her presence at the creation of the universe were not enough, Wisdom exuberates in a chiasmus of four more phrases to make her delight undeniably explicit: (1) *²ehyeh ša‛ᵃšu‛îm yôm yôm* "I was daily his delight" (8:30b, RSV following the G reading *ša‛ᵃšu‛āyw*), (2) *m³śaḥeqet l³pānāyw b³kol-‛ēt* "rejoicing before him always" (8:30c), (3) *m³śaḥeqet b³tēbēl ²arṣô* "rejoicing in his inhabited world" (8:31a), and (4) *ša‛ᵃšu‛ay et-b³nê ²ādām* "delighting in the sons of men" (8:31b).

Do these positive memories *contrast with negative notes* later in the discourse? By all means! In her summation Wisdom begins by echoing the joyful note of the SL: *ʾašrê ʾādām šōmēaʿ lî_* "happy is the man who listens to me..." (8:34), for *mōṣᵊʾî māṣāʾ ḥayyîm wayyāpeq rāṣôn mēyhwh* "he who finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord" (8:35, following Q). The summation closes, however, on a stern, unhappy note: *wᵊḥōṭᵊʾî ḥōmēs napšô* "but he who misses me injures himself" (8:36a), and even more sadly *kol-mᵊšanᵊʾay ʾāhᵉbû māwet* "all who hate me love death" (8:36b).

What was not so clearly set forth in Chapter Four was the "wisdom" quality of all the reminiscence SL's. With the addition now of Proverbs 8, a *didactic* pattern is emerging. This is apparent enough from the Job 29 and Proverbs 8 passages, both of which are by definition "wisdom." There is no problem in seeing Deuteronomy 32 the same way, for as noted earlier, it, too, can be regarded as "wisdom," especially here in view of the didactic command *bînû* "consider" (32:7a) coupled with reference to the instructional role of *zᵊqēneykā* "your elders" (32:7d). Psalm 68 is too problematic to include in this discussion. That leaves Judges 5, the Song of Deborah, which certainly also serves an oral (and subsequently literary) instructional role, a poetic reminiscence to be transmitted, considered, and enlightened by. (Although a *literary* classification of Judges 5 as wisdom is clearly problematical, a *functional* classification of the Song, in the light of the wisdom character of 5:31, would not be unreasonable.) Thus, it seems fair to label the illocutionary force of this group of passages

not merely "reminiscence" — not merely a memory of something for no particular reason — but a *wisdom reminiscence*," a memory that has didactic intent.

Furthermore, this didactic feature has an *alluring* quality about it. In Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5 and (perhaps) Psalm 68 the SL suggests to Israel: If things go so well when you are under the blessing of the Lord, why would you possibly want to follow any other way, especially since the other ways are associated with unhappiness, even death? In Job 29 the SL tantalizes Job with the allurement of nostalgia — oh, how he would love to get back to the good old days and enjoy once again *šadday*'s showers of blessing. In Proverbs 8 the SL is part of a personal appeal in which Wisdom counters the seductive words of the loose woman of Proverbs 7 (who makes her pitch, For a good time follow me — *ʾel-ḥadrê-māwet* "to the chambers of death" 7:27b) with a scrapbook of wonderful memories and her own sweet words (For a *better* time follow *me* — and find *ḥayyîm* "life" 8:35a).

There remains but one patterning problem in classifying the SL in Proverbs 8 with the reminiscent group: its *irregular* location in the discourse. In the other four members of the reminiscence group the SL occurs discourse-initially. In Proverbs 8, the SL occurs discourse-medially. Although this by itself should not disqualify the Proverbs 8 SL from the reminiscence classification, the matter deserves, nevertheless, some comment. The first possibility is that the author of Proverbs 1-9 (if a single author be accepted) had as his personal style the placement of the

SL in the middle of his Wisdom Speech discourses, as evidenced in Proverbs 1, as well. The difficulty with this possibility lies in the significantly different tone of the content hosted by the SL in the two passages (Proverbs 1 is negative and Proverbs 8 is positive) and in the difference in discourse movement of the two passages (the SL in Proverbs 1 occurring with the climax, and the SL in Proverbs 8 anticipating the climax). The second possibility concerns the unity of Proverbs 8, a new discourse beginning at 8:22, which would place the SL near the beginning of the second discourse in the chapter (a matter already addressed in Chapter Two). A third possibility is that 8:27-29 is actually an excerpt (incipit?) lifted out of another poem and placed at this location in the Proverbs 8 discourse in response to the creation theme of 8:22-26. The structural arguments put forward by Skehan (Chapter Two), however, seem strong enough that, even if 8:27-29 is a quotation, it is necessary to see 8:27-29 as fully and artfully incorporated into the rest of the host discourse. Whatever the case, there remains this anomaly in SL patterning in the Proverbs 8 discourse. Although the presence of this anomaly suggests the need for further study into the literary structure of the passage, the concern of this thesis is not with source or redaction criticism, but with a convergence of linguistic and rhetorical criticism. In spite of the lingering problem of location in discourse, a conclusion to SL rhetorical function in Proverbs 8 is now in order.

This thesis concludes, therefore, on the basis of the above arguments, that the asyndetically concatenated *b*- based temporal clause structure (the "SL") of Proverbs 8:27-29 functions rhetorically with an illocutionary force of a *wisdom reminiscence*, an alluring reminder of how good life can be under God's blessing and along Wisdom's path. Like the bugler's notes that evoke a sense of thrill and hope, the wisdom reminiscence evokes memories of the Source of life — *yhwh* "the Lord" — and the path of life — *ḥokmâ* "Wisdom," the way of the Lord.

How, then, does this repetitive syntactic structure prepare for what follows in its context? In the mouth of Lady Wisdom it subtly says to its audience, not "I'm in the mood for love," but "I'm in the mood for *life*!" When the audience heard this concatenation of temporal clauses it was as if a father were to lower his voice and begin addressing his son in slow, measured tones, reminding his son of good times in the past as a motivator for right action in the present, and evoking within the son a response of pounding heart and a mood of anticipative alertness. The temporal clause structure *signals* that this kind of mood-evoking reminiscence is in progress, just as surely as the bugler's notes *signaled* that a rescue-by-cavalry was in progress. Wisdom has placed this syntactic feature at the very crossroads of her speech: she reminisces all the way back to before creation; she appeals to mankind to make the life-affirming choice. Her words are all the more beautiful for their severity; the grandeur of nature serves merely as her platform.

Most assuredly, the presence of the temporal clause structure within

its context is not "fortuitous," as Whybray has proposed;[2] it is deliberate, powerfully conceived and executed. Nor is it obscuring, as von Rad has suggested;[3] to the contrary, it is enlightening, the signal feature which tells the reader how to take the immediate context of verses 22-31 in relation to the remainder of the chapter.

The audience quite rightly may ask of Lady Wisdom: "Why are you telling this to us? What are you doing *in* structuring your words in this manner?" And Lady Wisdom's answer is (expressed in a performative formula): "*In* saying this — *in* structuring my words in this syntactic manner — *I am attempting to lure you into my way through reminiscing over the wonderful acts of the Lord and my special relationship to him.*" Lady Wisdom, *in* using this syntactic device, is signaling her audience that they are not merely listening to some nice little homily on the beauties of creation and what a glorious time it was "way back then." Rather, they are hearing words in the most measured, serious tones — memories which at once recall the greatest antiquity and now *call for the most present decision.* Wisdom's words are irresistable not only because of her position of authority but also because of her skill as an artist in employing the evocatively pulsating rhythm of the temporal clause structure that resonates with the gravity of her kerygma, a kerygma which, as Roland Murphy has said, "can be summed up in one word: *life.*"[4]

This study has implications for further work in Hebrew Bible. Chapter One referred to James L. Kugel's call for a rigorously descriptive

study of biblical Hebrew syntax. It is hoped that this present thesis will suggest new and intriguing ways of looking at Hebrew syntax, especially as a means of gaining a more enlightened understanding of what the biblical authors are "getting at" *in* making their statements in certain syntactic fashions. J.L. Austin's study of speech acts — and in particular his work on illocutionary force — bears further consideration in this regard, especially as it relates to more recent studies in discourse analysis. In all this study of detail, Herman Timm's concern (noted in Chapter Two) must not be lost sight of — that the enlightened mind should serve an understanding heart.

לִמְנוֹת יָמֵינוּ כֵּן הוֹדַע וְנָבִא לְבַב חָכְמָה:

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

[1] The matter of the *positiveness* associated with the reminiscence usage has been developed on pp.91-93, above. This element of positiveness, manifested in the words hosted by the **SL** as read within the context of the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures, is so overwhelming that Professor Harold Coward (personal communication) has raised the question: could the rhythms of the reminiscence **SL** be serving to evoke an experience of the numinous? Although this is a tempting thought, especially in the light of Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, and Psalm 68 (all of which are characterized, along with Proverbs 8, by exalted hymnic qualities), there is not sufficient evidence in the context of these passages to argue that any part of the original audience actually had such a numinous experience as the result of encountering the **SL** in and of itself, nor is there any clear indication that the evoking of such an experience was intended by the authors of the **SL**. Nevertheless, intuitively Professor Coward's suggestion feels comfortable and is certainly worthy of further investigation. (Related to this, see Notes to Chapter Four, note 18, for a review of the way in which J.L. Austin's concept of illocutionary force has been adapted for this thesis' process of defining the force of an **SL**.)

[2] Whybray, "Proverbs VIII 22-31 and its Supposed Prototypes," p.513.

[3] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p.144.

[4] Murphy, "The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," p.9. See Notes to Chapter Two, note 142 and related text discussion.

The implications of this thesis' conclusion run counter to those of Alan Cooper on Proverbs 8:22-31 (see discussion of Cooper in Chapter Two). Cooper equates Wisdom here with "the guiding spirit of man, his essence and glory...the first and most precious of God's creations" ("Biblical Poetics, A Linguistic Approach," p.139), as if Proverbs 8 had been written in Athens instead of Jerusalem and were speaking about the intrinsic virtues of man. Throughout Proverbs 8 and its neighbouring discourses wisdom is not viewed as an *attribute of man*— as something which comes naturally from within the heart of man —, but as *that which originates from outside of man*, from the Lord, and is passed down through the generations of mankind by instruction, father-to-son, teacher-to-student — an instruction grounded in the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7). Thus, in terms of Proverbs 8, to "be wise" or to "have wisdom" does not refer to life-qualities derived from innateness, but to life-response derived from acquisition of godly teaching: "*Hear* instruction and be wise...Happy is the man who *listens* to me" (Proverbs 8:33, 34; italics mine). Only in this sense does the rest of Proverbs 1-9 make sense, as for example the instruction in 3:5-8:

> Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
> and do not rely on your own insight.
> In all your ways acknowledge him,
> and he will make straight your paths.
> Be not wise in your own eyes;
> fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.
> It will be healing to your flesh
> and refreshment to your bones.

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