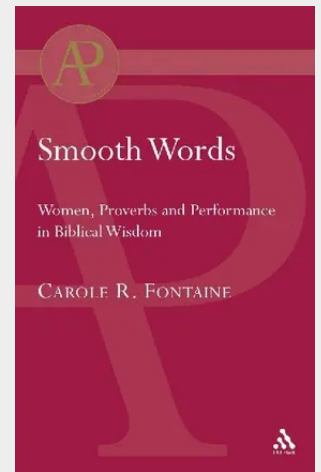


Smooth Words

Fontaine explores the social roles of women as depicted within the book of Proverbs, as well as the character archetypes and patriarchal ideologies which undergird the sages' portrayal. Using feminist folklore methodologies and performance studies, the author explores an alternative paradigm for understanding women's relationship to wisdom traditions in the ancient Near East, using parallel texts, later midrash and extrabiblical representations of biblical women associated with wisdom. Fontaine is thus able to show that women were culturally authorized 'performers' of the family-based wisdom traditions of teaching, economic problem-solving, and care-giving, and that these roles provided them with a platform to use their acknowledged wisdom in public roles.

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