



# A Proverb in Mind: The Cognitive Science of Proverbial Wit and Wisdom

*Richard P. Honeck*

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SEE SHORT BLURB FOR ALTERNATE COPY... A complex, intriguing, and important verbal entity, the proverb has been the subject of a vast number of opinions, studies, and analyses. To accommodate the assorted possible audiences, this volume outlines seven views of the proverb -- personal, formal, religious, literary, practical, cultural, and cognitive. Because the author's goal is to provide a scientific understanding of proverb comprehension and production, he draws largely on scholarship stemming from the formal, cultural, and cognitive views.

The only book about proverbs that is written from the standpoint of cognitive science, cognitive psychology, and experimentalism, this text provides a larger, more interdisciplinary perspective on the proverb. It also gives a theoretically more integrated approach to proverb cognition. The conceptual base theory of proverb comprehension is extended via the "cognitive ideals hypothesis" so that the theory now addresses issues regarding the creation, production, and pragmatics of proverbs. This hypothesis also has strong implications for a taxonomy of proverbs, proverb comprehension, universal vs. culture-specific aspects of proverbs, and some structural aspects of proverbs.

In general, the book extends the challenge of proverb cognition by using much of what cognitive science has to offer. In so doing, the proverb is compared to other forms of figurative language, which is then discussed within the larger rubric of intelligence and the inclination for using indirect modes of communication. Child developmental and brain substrates are also discussed.

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