

# The Song of Songs as a contribution to the radicalization of the idea of relationship

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## Topic

The poetic love language of the Song of Songs has always appealed to women and men in their deepest being. Regardless of allegorical, literal or spiritual interpretation, the text speaks of a positive gender relationship, which in love is characterized by mutuality and passionate togetherness, thus offering a counter-draft to patriarchal and capitalist concepts of society. In this radical relationship, gender boundaries are transcended and stereotypical role attributions relativized. The self-world relations in the Song of Songs are reflected in its millennia-old history of interpretation constantly re-actualizing this radical relationship in different historical, socio-religious and cultural contexts.

## Research Questions

- What does the Song of Songs tell us about humans, their environment (nature, animals) and their relationship with each other and God? What qualifies these relationships as radical?
- How can the resonance concept contribute to a re-actualization of the Song's meaning in theology and beyond?



Picture: Sieger Köder *Draußen steht er an der Wand unseres Hauses*

## Aim

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the variety of interpretations by suggesting a new way of reading and understanding of the Song of Songs and show how the message of this ancient text can be reactualized today in regard to its understanding of radical relationality: The transcending of gender dichotomies and the transformation of self—world relations.

## Methods

Methodologically, I am combining biblical anthropology and gender-fair exegesis with the resonance concept as a hermeneutical key:

- Special focus on the concept of „*konstellativer Personbegriff*“ from biblical anthropology
- Analyzing the self-world-relations of the Song of Songs and its interpretations with the parameters of affection, self-efficacy, transformation and unavailability as represented in the poetry and agents in the Song.

Song of Songs 2,9

דוֹמָה דוֹדִי לְצִבִּי אֹו לְעֶפֶר הָאֵילִים  
הִנֵּה-זֶה עוֹמֵד אַחַר כְּתִלְנוּ מִשְׁגִּיחַ  
מִן-הַחַלְלוֹת מִצִּיץ מִן-הַחַרְקָיִם:

*Westminster Leningrad Codex*

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.  
Look! There he stands behind our wall,  
gazing through the windows,  
peering through the lattice.

*New International Version*

## Results

First results of the work relate to the findings of the gender-fair exegesis:

- textual proof for blurred lines between the genders (use of personal pronouns, generic masculine use and direction of speech—who is talking to whom);
- comparing the understanding of radical relationality to other ancient cultures in the environment of Israel (like Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek etc.) in regard to love poetry and creation accounts;
- compiling the tables from the anthropological findings in the Song (cultural lives, natural environment, religious symbolism).

## Next steps

In regard to exegesis: finishing the gender-fair exegetical work in regard to Hebrew grammar and style, finishing the comparative work with other ancient love poetry,

- Biblical anthropology: analyzing the tables
- Applying the resonance concept to the results

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