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Katie M. Heffelfinger ____________________

Date

"I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes": Second Isaiah's Lyric Exploration of Divine Relational and Emotional Complexity

By

Katie M. Heffelfinger
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Hebrew Bible

____
Brent A. Strawn, Ph.D.
Advisor

____
F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, Ph.D.
Committee Member

____
Joel M. LeMon, Ph.D.
Committee Member

____
Carol A. Newsom, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

____
Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

____
Date

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By

Katie M. Heffelfinger
B.A., Anderson University, 1998
M.Div., Asbury Theological Seminary 2003
Th.M., Princeton Theological Seminary 2004

Advisor: Brent A. Strawn
Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary 2001

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Abstract

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While scholars largely agree that Isaiah 40-55 is written in poetic form, this recognition has not been applied to the question of Second Isaiah's overarching arrangement and meaning. This omission seems to be due in part to difficulties in unifying the categories of poetry and prophecy along with the lack of a clear method for dealing with a long series of poems as an artistic whole. Combining the insights of Roy F. Melugin with recent developments in lyric poetic theory, this project undertakes an approach to interpreting Second Isaiah as a meaningful whole that eschews narrative or discursive modes of organization, and instead employs specifically lyric strategies for cohesion. The study argues that, rather than presenting an argument to engage in some particular action or ethic, Second Isaiah presents itself primarily as an encounter with the divine speaking voice. This encounter with the speaking voice of Yhwh provides a fitting response to a historical setting in which the audience charges the deity with absence and abandonment. Like the various themes, motifs, and poetic structures that fragment and fracture Second Isaiah, the divine speaking voice is conflicted, speaking alternately in tonalities of compassion and wrath. Rather than attempting to smooth out these inconsistencies interpretively, or to eliminate them via redactional explanations, this dissertation views these vacillations as meaningful elements of Second Isaiah's presentation of the speaking presence of Yhwh. Through these "tonal shifts" in the divine voice, the audience is invited to imagine both the world of divine wrath and the world of divine compassion. Moreover, throughout the series of poems, the deity's voice

wrestles between the offer of reconciliation with the audience and divine fury at their resistance. This wrestling likely mirrors and is reflective of the conflicted attitudes and emotions of the poems' original audience around the issues of divine abandonment and reconciliation. In wrestling its way towards a resolution, the divine voice wears down the audience's resistance on its way to its eventual resolution in comfort. In this way, Second Isaiah illustrates a complex relationship between Yhwh and the people.

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Preface

This project began as an attempt to examine the conflicted motif of memory in Second Isaiah. As I attempted to locate that study in the context of readings of Second Isaiah's overarching message, it quickly became apparent that an interpretation of Second Isaiah's message that took sufficient account of its poetic nature was both needed and lacking. I was encouraged by my committee to shift my attention to this logically prior project with the hope of returning to the memory motif at a later date.

I am profoundly grateful to the members of my committee whose guidance has shaped my thinking and this project. My advisor, Brent A. Strawn, inspired much of my thinking on the necessary relationship between poetic form and meaning. His guidance and support throughout this project have been invaluable. His knack for asking questions that pushed me to think my own thoughts, only better, has made this a far better project than it otherwise would have been, and his detailed feedback on numerous drafts has vastly improved the manuscript. Carol A. Newsom's feedback and insights have been significant in shaping the project and pushing it toward intellectual and methodological rigor. I am grateful for her encouragement, support, and advice throughout my graduate school career. F.W. "Chip" Dobbs-Allsopp introduced me to the study of lyric poetry and its application to biblical studies, and has generously shared his expertise in this area throughout the project. Finally, Joel M. LeMon has been a helpful and available member of the committee, and has treated my questions with good humor and enthusiasm.

I also wish to express gratitude for my colleagues at Emory University who have provided numerous opportunities to discuss my work and whose support and encouragement have made an immeasurable difference in both the project and my life. I

am especially grateful to my classmates, Ingrid E. Lilly and Cameron B.R. Howard without whom I cannot imagine having been a graduate student.

Finally, I wish to express thanks to my family. My parents, Jim and Karen Grof, who instilled in me a love for the Bible at an early age, and who modeled industriousness and perseverance, equipped me for this work. The model provided by my mother, who faithfully read her Bible each morning of my childhood, has provided inspiration for my own daily tasks of reading and reflection. And last, but far from least, I wish to thank my husband, Jamie Heffelfinger. He has been my support and my comfort. His never-failing enthusiasm for our life together and his unrelenting belief in me has carried me through my own emotional vacillations during the course of this project. His patience with me, and his practical approach to life have kept me grounded and have meant the world to me. This project is dedicated to him on the occasion of our tenth wedding anniversary.

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Chapter One

Introduction: The Role of Poetry in the Interpretation of Second Isaiah

"To interpret a work is to display the world to which it refers by virtue of its 'arrangement,' its 'genre,' and its 'style'."[1]

Scholars have long recognized that Second Isaiah is poetic. As early as 1779, Bishop Robert Lowth devoted a considerable portion of the introduction to his translation of Isaiah to combating the "general persuasion, that some books of the Old Testament are written in Verse; but that the writings of the Prophets are not of that number."[2] Among more modern commentators, James Muilenburg is perhaps the most effusive in his praise of Second Isaiah as "a poet of remarkable lyrical gifts, a master of literary form, and a singer given to joy and praise."[3] Despite widespread agreement that Second Isaiah is written in poetry and the promising start made by rhetorical criticism, most recent scholarship on Second Isaiah has not furthered the examination of Second Isaiah's meaningful poetic arrangement.[4] Scholars have either neglected the question of the

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[1] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (trans. Robert Czerny; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 220.

[2] Robert Lowth, *Isaiah. A New Translation; with a Preliminary Dissertation, and Notes Critical, Philological, and Explanatory* (2nd ed.; London: J. Nichols, 1779), ii.

[3] James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction, and Exegesis" in *Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, and Jeremiah* (*IB*; ed. George Arthur Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5: 398.

[4] Recent proponents of the view that Second Isaiah is poetic in addition to Muilenburg include: Norman K. Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (ed., George Arthur Buttrick; 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:829; Marjo C.A. Korpel and Johannes C. De Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry: Isaiah 40-55* (Boston: Brill, 1998), 10; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 11; John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; 2 vols.; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 1:22; John Goldingay, *Isaiah* (NIBCOT 13; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001), 5; Peter D. Quinn-Miscall, *Reading Isaiah: Poetry and Vision* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 3; and John G. F. Wilks, "The Prophet as Incompetent Dramatist," *VT* 53 (2003): 530-543. There are a few modern detractors from the relative consensus that Second Isaiah is poetic. Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984) and Yehoshua Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion: A Study of Isaiah 40-48* (Bonn: Linguistica Biblica, 1981) defend the position that Second Isaiah should be read as oratory. The lack of a

meaning of Second Isaiah's overarching arrangement or have turned away from poetic approaches toward oratorical models. These tendencies have limited the results of their investigations. The movement away from attention to poetry seems largely influenced by two factors: (1) assumptions about the nature of prophecy and (2) the lack of tools for

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coherent claim to which the reader is to give assent or take action upon detracts strongly from this view. Additional discussion of the position articulated by Clifford is undertaken below. Various dramatic theories have been proposed, some of which join poetry and drama and are thus not exceptions to the prevailing view that Second Isaiah is poetic. An extensive response to the claim that Second Isaiah is drama rather than poetry is not necessary. A full and incisive critique of this position has been undertaken by Wilks, "The Prophet as Incompetent Dramatist." Wilks recounts the history of interpreting Second Isaiah as a drama, including (1) attempts to view Second Isaiah as a cultic drama to be performed at the New Year's Festival by H. Ringgren, "Zur Komposition von Jesaja 49-55," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie: Festschrift für Walther Zimmerli zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. von Donnner; Göttingen; Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977) and J.H. Eaton, *Festal Drama in Deutero-Isaiah* (London: SPCK, 1979), (2) as a drama for performance by J.D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (WBC 25; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), and (3) as a "liturgical drama" by Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Fortress: Minneapolis, 2001). In Wilks' estimation, each of these proposals falls short for a variety of reasons. I would argue that not least among the reasons dramatic theories fall short is the absence of any plot in which Second Isaiah's various voices are engaged. As J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 42, points out regarding Song of Songs, "the persistence of the dramatic theory of interpretation of the Song in various forms bears witness to readers' desire to find a plot, though dramatic theories falter on this very issue of plot, which they inevitably must provide from outside the textual world." The same could be said of dramatic approaches to Second Isaiah. Additionally, the way in which the voices are present in Second Isaiah, not as developed characters but as personified voices, argues against a genre designation as drama. Again, Exum's comments are instructive. She writes, "by identifying speakers and making the Song into a story about specific lovers of the past, the dramatic theory undermines some of the Song's most important features, its universality and timelessness" (*Song of Songs*, 78). I agree with Wilks' claim that R. Abma's attempt to read Second Isaiah's visual imagery as "stage directions for a *drama*" (emphasis original) constitutes a misreading based on a failure to understand the nature of poetry as imagistic (Richtsje Abma, "Traveling from Babylon to Zion: Location and its Function in Isaiah 49-55," *JSOT* 74 [1997]: 3-28). I agree wholeheartedly with Wilks' assessment, "whoever he was, Deutero-Isaiah was not a dramatist but a poet" ("The Prophet as Incompetent Dramatist" 542). While the category of dramatic poetry might be an option for joining Wilks' interest in Second Isaiah's poetic characteristics with the position of those he criticizes, dramatic poetry requires the presence of either a plot or identified characters, and, as will be demonstrated in ch. 2, Second Isaiah lacks these. Finally, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 68-69, argues that, "most of [Isaiah] 40-55 lies somewhere between what is clearly discursive prose on the one hand (e.g., 52:3-6) and generically identifiable poetic composition on the other." Blenkinsopp's contention depends heavily on his argument that Second Isaiah does not exhibit metrical consistency. However, metrical consistency is not a necessary element of Hebrew poetry. Indeed, G.D. Young, "Ugaritic Prosody," *JNES* 9 (1950):133, concludes regarding all Semitic poetry "[t]hat regular meter can be found in such poetry is an illusion." Similarly, Wilfred G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (New York: T&T Clark, 2001), 98, who defends the concept of meter in biblical Hebrew poetry notes that "the most noticeable aspect of Hebrew metre when described in accentual terms … is that no single poem is consistently written in one metrical pattern." Thus Blenkinsopp's objection does not detract from the claim that Second Isaiah should be read as poetry. Blenkinsopp's observation does however, highlight the fact that not all of Second Isaiah's poems are of equal lyric intensity. See further ch. 2.

dealing with collections of poems as artistic wholes. In light of recent advances in approaches to poetic collections, the present study advocates a return to the study of Second Isaiah's meaning in light of its distinctive poetic structure and does so by utilizing tools employed both by biblical scholars and contemporary poetic theorists. Before proceeding, a survey of scholarship leading up to this point is in order.

1. History of Scholarship

1.1. James Muilenburg

Though preceding scholarship had paid some attention to the overarching meaning and message of Second Isaiah as a whole, a significant new avenue for exploration of this question was opened up by the seminal commentary on Isaiah 40-66 by James Muilenburg and his subsequent SBL presidential address, "Form Criticism and Beyond."[5] In contrast to prior approaches that had either treated the final arrangement of Second Isaiah as a fairly random collocation of key words, or had atomized the work into formal units of such brevity that overarching synthesis was significantly hampered,[6] Muilenburg proposed attention to the larger poems, of which he considered the smaller units

[5] See Muilenburg, *IB* 5:385; idem, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969):1-18.

[6] Earlier efforts to comment on the shape of Second Isaiah included the *Stichwörter* theory of Sigmund Mowinckel, "Die Komposition des deuterojesajanischen Buches" *ZAW* 49 (1931):87-112, 242-260. Mowinckel argues that the arrangement of Second Isaiah's poems happened nearly automatically ("Die Komposition," 242) when keywords and formulas in one poem called another poem with the same or similar features to the collector's mind resulting in a sequence of poems linked by such catchwords. An approach that ascribes more conscious, thematic interest to the collector is that of Karl Elliger, *Deuterojesaja in Seinem Verhältnis zu Tritojesaja* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933). Elliger's critiques Mowinckel's approach calling it a "domino principle" (ibid., 223). He focuses on tracing the "train of thought [*Gedankengang*]" that binds the sections of Second Isaiah together (ibid., 232). Muilenburg, as will be noted below, relies upon a similar sense of Second Isaiah's progression of thought.

strophes.[7] Muilenburg's approach, which he named "rhetorical criticism," calls for attention to the boundaries of units, the development of thought within those units, and the distinctive elements of the literary artistry of individual works.[8] This attention to what is unique about a given passage, along with the emphasis on longer units, paved the way for more attention to the meaning and message of Second Isaiah as an extended whole and unity.[9]

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[7] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:385, explicitly rejects Mowinckel's *Stichwörter* theory in light of the "inherent unlikelihood of an ordering of material in such a purely mechanical way," as well as the stylistic indications of intentional ordering. Muilenburg also rejects extreme deployment of form criticism on Second Isaiah as "absurd" (ibid., 385).

[8] Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 8.

[9] A word about Second Isaiah as a unified final composition is necessary. For the purposes of this study, Second Isaiah will be delimited to chs. 40-55. This block of material, as R.E. Clements, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah," *Int* 36 (1982): 122, argues, forms "a reasonably coherent and unified whole … usually dated with confidence in the period of 546-538 B.C." Even Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 193, who argues against dividing between Second and Third Isaiah following ch. 55, does not dispute this date for chs. 40-55. Further discussion of the date of Second Isaiah is undertaken in ch. 3 of the present project. Also significant is the position of Rolf Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition Des Buches Jesaja," *VT* 34 (1984): 318, who claims that Deutero-Isaiah is a unified composition that formed the basis for the redaction of chs. 1-39 and the addition of chs. 56-66. H.G.M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 24, is somewhat more cautious, yet still comes down on the side of a unified composition. He writes, "we are not yet in the position where we can with confidence abandon the usual understanding of Isaiah 40-55 as an essential unity." Along with Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 51; Rolf Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 200; Williamson, *Book*, 240-241; and Clements, "Unity," 120-121, I expect that the final form of the book of Isaiah has been heavily redacted and that the process of composition began well before the exilic period and continued well after it. Of the various options available, I find Sweeney's four phase redactional schema most convincing. He posits that the final form of canonical Isaiah was achieved in the 5th century, that there was a post exilic redaction in the late 6th century, that there was a Josaianic redaction in the late 7th century, and that Isaiah had an 8th century kernel. I am persuaded by both Sweeney's and Rendtorff's arguments that while Second Isaiah was consciously a reflection on earlier Isaianic material, later redactors heavily shaped the earlier materials as well as the final form of the book in light of Second Isaiah following the return from exile. This post-exilic redaction of First Isaiah would include the significant addition of chs. 35-39 and the placement of the oracles against Babylon at the head of the oracles against the nations in 13-23. See Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 51; and Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition," 318. However, none of these redactional considerations diminishes the essential unity of Isaiah 40-55 which appears as the primary exilic element in this book.
Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (trans. David Green; SBL Studies in Biblical Literature Series 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 382, may be cited as a detractor from the approach I am proposing. He argues for phases of redaction in chs. 40-55 and comments: "[s]urprisingly, however, the book of Deutero-Isaiah, itself a theoretical construct of historical criticism, continues to be the subject of serious compositional analysis that deliberately studies the 'final text' synchronically. Despite its methodological incongruity, this approach has also yielded important insights." While Albertz is correct that Second Isaiah's very existence as a fifteen ch. whole is one of the

Despite its remarkable literary sensitivity and clear methodological articulation, Muilenburg's commentary does not conclusively answer the question of Second Isaiah's message.[10] Muilenburg's attention to the overarching flow of Second Isaiah is marked by a search for "the continuity of the prophet's thought."[11] Rather than present a claim about what meaningful statement or statements Second Isaiah as a whole makes about the world, Muilenburg's discussion of Second Isaiah amounts to a lengthy synopsis of the main thoughts of the series of poems.[12] As I will argue below, conceptual continuity does not seem the best model for understanding Second Isaiah's own mode of cohesion. Indeed, throughout Second Isaiah, thoughts, images, and ideas are juxtaposed in a fashion

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results of scholarship rather than an empirical fact, it is worth noting that as Seitz puts it, this is "one of those cases where 'the assured results of critical scholarship' are in fact assured" (Christopher R. Seitz, "Introduction: The One Isaiah // The Three Isaiahs," in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah* [ed. Christopher R. Seitz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 14). Seitz may overstate the case just slightly. However, it is worth noting that even those scholars who would argue in favor of treating Isa 40-66 as an essential unity and as the work of one author recognize some historical division within this larger unit. See for example the comments of Sommer, *A Prophet Reads*, 193, who writes, "I do not mean to deny that there are differences of thematic emphasis or ideological concern within Isaiah 40-66 and 35, nor would I gainsay the claim that the earlier chapters, which emphasize consolation, were written in exile, while the later ones were written in the Land of Israel and include a stronger element of disappointment." This study will treat chs. 40-55 as a finally unified composition that reflects on earlier materials and is apparently a composite of closely bound poems which were originally independent from one another. However, the final form of Isaiah 40-55 expresses its own particular voice in its own period in its finally compiled form. Earlier material upon which the exilic poet may have reflected will be considered at relevant points in this study. Later redactional materials may be best understood as reflections of their own period's appropriation of these materials and, while interesting, must lie outside the boundaries of this study.

[10] It is certainly the case that complex poetic works seldom proclaim one straightforward and simple message. However, as Murray Krieger and Michael Clark note, "most [poetic] … theories … insist on the capacity of poetry to make meaningful statements about the world" ("Meaning, Poetic," *NPEPP*, 739). This study does not expect that a long poetic work like Second Isaiah would make only one such statement about the world, but rather that its meaning would at least in part consist of the general thrust of those messages and be characterized by complexity and diversity. Throughout this study I will utilize the term "message" in this way. Indeed, as this ch. will further discuss, one of the primary aims of this study is a new approach to understanding Second Isaiah's message. This understanding of a work's message is in harmony with the use I make throughout the project of the Ricoeur's claim that, "meaning is the projection of a possible and inhabitable world" (*Rule of Metaphor*, 92). My critique of Muilenburg's synopsis lies not in its complexity, but rather in his failure to precisely state what meaning or meanings he understands Second Isaiah to express.

[11] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:385

[12] Muilenburg's synopsis, too lengthy to be recounted here, appears in *IB* 5:385-6. John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; 2 vols.; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 1:18, launch a similar critique writing, "paradoxically, Muilenburg's work is more compelling on matters of detail than on the larger scale. He has clear views on the bounds of units, their division into 'strophes', and the relationship of units to one another, but these views often seem impressionistic."

that defies the label "continuity." This is not to say that Second Isaiah, or poetry in general, may not convey thoughts. Rather, the coherence and continuity of those thoughts need not necessarily be the most significant or unifying factor in the poem or collection of poems.[13] Muilenburg's interest in "continuity" also becomes apparent in his exegesis. His work with Second Isaian texts tends to harmonize their internal inconsistencies and in particular to diminish indicting and angry elements that clash with Second Isaiah's more hopeful and comforting elements.[14] Thus Muilenburg's groundbreaking work has not solved the problem of Second Isaiah's overarching message, but has served rather to motivate and inspire numerous further inquiries into this question employing various refinements of "rhetorical criticism."

1.2. Roy F. Melugin

In his 1976 publication, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, Roy F. Melugin explicitly takes up the question of the message produced by the final form of Second Isaiah. His work straddles form and rhetorical criticisms, conjoining the well-established form-critical approach to rhetorical criticism's aim to understand the meaning of the whole as produced through distinctive aspects of formal and literary artistry.[15] Melugin laments what he sees in much previous scholarship as a "tendency to miss the significance of the

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[13] Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 78, is similar. See further below.

[14] Specific instances of this tendency will be noted in the course of my exegesis in following chs.

[15] While rhetorical criticism emerged out of form criticism and typically uses form-critical insights, Melugin is more traditional in his use of form-critical categories than is Muilenburg. This tendency is particularly evident in the way Melugin distinguishes himself from Muilenburg through his delineation of interpretable units according to genre concerns. Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 88.

literary relationships of the parts to the whole because of an almost exclusive concern with reconstructing the history of the development of the text."[16]

Melugin proposes to read from the "genre units" up, searching for the "kerygmatic intent" latent in the collection and juxtaposition of these units. He contrasts his own approach with the earlier attempt of Karl Elliger by eschewing total reliance on a search for the "development of 'thought'" in Second Isaiah.[17] Rather, he rightly observes: "[t]o concentrate almost exclusively on progression of *thought* is to rely on a method which is more suitable for a discursive mode of presentation. In poetry the forms and images are at least as important as the thought. By means of these the poet calls into being certain feelings and attitudes and associations which are not, strictly speaking 'thoughts.'"[18] In rejecting prior approaches, Melugin calls for methods for the study of the message of Second Isaiah's final arrangement "which are more sensitive to the artistry of the literature."[19] In this statement Melugin sounds a great deal like Muilenburg. While he maintains great affinity with Muilenburg's driving questions and approach, Melugin distinguishes himself from Muilenburg primarily in the delineation of units.[20]

Melugin makes the intriguing methodological suggestion that the progression between Second Isaiah's component units might be understood on analogy with the progression within those units themselves. That is, he proposes to read the structure of the whole of Second Isaiah on analogy with the structure of Second Isaiah's parts. He characterizes this progression with reference to Muilenburg as observable in "repetition

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[16] Ibid., 178 (emphasis original).
[17] Ibid., 78.
[18] Ibid (emphasis original).
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 88.

of words, phrases and images, development of theme, contrasting words and images, [and] change in tone."[21] He rightly notes the virtues of such an approach as dependent upon "discovering patterns which are actually in the text," and assuming "the likelihood that the arranger, sharing something of the spirit of the poet, understood that he was dealing with the language of poetry and arranged his material in artistic fashion also."[22]

Melugin's treatment of the kerygmatic aims of Second Isaiah's final arrangement makes its best contributions at the level of the arrangement of smaller genre units into "poems."[23] He repeatedly highlights the juxtaposition of trial speeches and salvation oracles. Melugin sees this juxtaposition as a distinctive and creative development by Second Isaiah which emerged primarily "for the purpose of dealing with the doubt occasioned by the exile."[24] From a rhetorical-critical standpoint the uniqueness of this juxtaposition is key, for it indicates that the juxtaposition of trial and salvation elements is central to Second Isaiah's overarching message.

Perhaps because of the space devoted to his careful treatment of the arrangement of each of Second Isaiah's genre units into the collection's larger component poems, Melugin's comments on the overarching message produced by the juxtaposition of these larger poems are relatively limited. His discussion of the message of the smaller units repeatedly emphasizes the sense that Second Isaiah claims that the future will be different from the past. This is evidently an element of Second Isaiah's message and is prominent in the thematic threads related to the "former things" and memory (see, e.g., Isa 43:18, 25-26; 44:7, 21; 46:8-9; 49:14-15; 51:13; 54:4). However, Melugin is able to talk much

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., 89.
[23] Ibid., 108.
[24] Ibid., 119.

more specifically about the kerygmatic intent of various poems being oriented toward a past and future distinction in his discussion of the Jacob-Israel section (chs. 40-48) than in the Zion-Jerusalem section (chs. 49-55).[25] Additionally, Melugin's concept of the kerygmatic intent is only vaguely sketched out and is worked out primarily at the level of individual poems rather than their collection into a fifteen-chapter whole.

Nevertheless, Melugin's approach suggests a promising way forward in the quest to understand the message of Second Isaiah in its final arrangement. Four insights drawn from Melugin's study are foundational for the study of Second Isaiah and for the present work:

1. Melugin's insistence on the meaningfulness of repetition and juxtaposition;
2. his observation of the uniqueness of Second Isaiah's frequent juxtaposition of judgment and salvation;
3. his suggestion that the search for an overarching structure should employ the analogy of the structure of Second Isaiah's individual units; and
4. his insistence on the poetic and imagistic rather than conceptual progress of Second Isaiah's overarching structure.

Scholarship since Melugin's work has, as Melugin himself observes in a recent article, largely taken his attention to the kerygmatic intent of the final arrangement as a launching point into questions of the meaning of the sixty-six chapter whole of the book of Isaiah.[26] However, apparently due to this attention to the book as a whole, very little

[25] This division of Second Isaiah into two major sections represents a relative consensus. See Tod Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 65. Further discussion of this division is undertaken in ch. 3, n. 41.

[26] Roy F. Melugin, "Isaiah 40-66 In Recent Research," in *Recent Research on the Major Prophets* (ed., Alan J. Hauser; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), 144.

work in the intervening years has been devoted to the question of the message of Second Isaiah itself as a self-contained unit in its final compilation.[27]

1.3. Richard J. Clifford

One striking, and highly influential, exception to this trend is the work of Richard J. Clifford. In his 1984 monograph Clifford, drawing on the work of Yehoshua Gitay, pursues Muilenburg's "rhetorical criticism" within the classical rhetorical realm of oratory.[28] Clifford, like Melugin, places his study explicitly within the stream of scholarship initiated by Muilenburg and differentiates himself from the founder of rhetorical criticism on two main fronts. He faults Muilenburg for describing Second

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[27] John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005) despite its promising title, is not a significant exception to this trend. Goldingay's book is, as the author explains, an extraction of the theological exposition from his co-authored two volume ICC commentary on Second Isaiah, the contribution of which I will examine below (ibid., vii). Goldingay claims the position that "the purpose of the prophecies is to get the people ready for that event," i.e. the return from exile (ibid., 7). This statement is presented as an assumption at the end of the author's five-page introduction to the commentary proper and receives no further evidentiary support. As I will comment below regarding the use of an understanding of Second Isaiah's message as urging "homecoming" in the wake of Clifford's work, this is not an uncommon approach, but one which typically goes unexamined and which is not as convincing as often thought.

[28] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 6, acknowledges his indebtedness to Gitay, who calls Second Isaiah "public address" and argues that Second Isaiah should be read through the lens of classical Aristotelian modes of rhetoric (Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 26-27). It should be observed here that much confusion in rhetorical-critical circles seems to spring from widely differing uses of the term "rhetoric" or "rhetorical." Muilenburg does not define the term but apparently uses it to imply that the text being considered is an intentionally-crafted work ("Form Criticism and Beyond," 9). Thus Muilenburg's work fits nicely into the category included in M.H. Abrams' now classic taxonomy of poetic theories as pragmatic poetics (see *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1953]). Pragmatic poetics, also sometimes called rhetorical poetics, focuses on the way in which the poetry is crafted to communicate with the reader. This seems to be the way in which Muilenburg's approach may be called rhetorical. As many subsequent scholars have pointed out, Muilenburg's work, which attempts to take account of the literary artistry and the meaning of the precise expression used, does not pay particular attention to the text as a persuasive discourse. Despite the lack of particular focus on persuasion in Muilenburg's work, his use of the term "rhetorical" has spurred interest within subsequent scholarship in a more vigorous understanding of the work as persuasive speech – i.e. rhetoric in the classical, Aristotelian mode. Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 27, is one scholar who has critiqued Muilenburg for his lack of attention to the persuasive aspects of the text. He writes, "it is obvious that Muilenburg's definition and use of the term rhetoric does not understand rhetoric as the art of persuasion. That is to say, both Muilenburg and his followers are concerned with style as a functional device for determining the literary unit and its structure, but their analysis is not oriented towards rhetoric as the pragmatic art of persuasion."

Isaiah as a "lyric poet," and for neglecting the historical context, "leav[ing] the poet's vision unconnected to a concrete proposal."[29] These positions are to be contrasted with his own "emphas[is on] the interpretation and persuasion that is going on in the speeches."[30] The idea that Second Isaiah is designed to urge "homecoming" for the exilic audience emerges as the central thesis of Clifford's work and has been widely adopted since.[31] He writes that his book attempts to prove that "Second Isaiah in a few closely argued speeches of considerable length urges his fellow Judahites to join him in that act through which they will become Israel," that is to return to Judah.[32]

Despite his repeated insistence that Second Isaiah should be understood as an orator and that the whole should be understood in terms of what it persuades the audience to do, Clifford does not offer a compelling argument for understanding Second Isaiah as oratory. Clifford acknowledges that his conception of Second Isaiah as orator is not widely held. He writes, "[t]hat the prophet is 'fair-spoken,' i.e. eloquent and lyrical, is

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[29] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 36.

[30] Ibid.

[31] E.g., Patricia Willey, "Sing to God a New Song: Using the Past to Construct a Future," *Reformed World* 46 (1996): 42, writes, "Second Isaiah was composed some fifty years later to argue that the exiles, who had recently been freed, should return and rebuild Jerusalem." Willey's take on the specific rhetorical aim of Second Isaiah is less clear in her monograph, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (SBLDS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), though she implies that it has to do with return from Babylon in her citation of Isa 48:20 in support for her claim for the "particularity and distinctiveness of its message" (ibid., 84) and elsewhere cites Clifford's interpretation apparently approvingly (ibid., 28). Walter Brueggemann, *Testimony to Otherwise: The Witness of Elijah and Elisha* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 9-10, similarly writes, "the recurring accent of Second Isaiah is that it is now the emergency moment when Jews may and must depart Babylon," though he wishes to read this departure as "imaginative" rather than "geopolitical." Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 66-67, notes that the aim "to persuade the exiles that YHWH is about to do "a new thing" on their behalf by commissioning Cyrus to conquer Babylon and free YHWH's people," applies only to chs. 40-48. However, his understanding of the intent of the remaining chs. also develops out of the homecoming context as it is "dominated by a rhetoric of reintegration in the service of an imagined return of the exiles to their former home." Blaženka Scheuer, *The Return of YHWH: The Tension Between Deliverance and Repentance in Isaiah 40-55* (Lund: Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, 2005), 3, states that "the main issues in Isa 40-55 are deliverance from the exile, the return of YHWH to his people and the return of the exiles to their land." As noted above, Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 7 also belongs in this list.

[32] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 5.

admitted by all. That he is at the same time 'persuading,' i.e. practical, given to sustained argument to move people to specific action, is by no means a common interpretation."[33] Clifford's admission that his understanding of Second Isaiah as urging specific action contrasts with the general opinion of biblical scholarship would seem to call for an argument in support of his designation. However, Clifford neither clearly designates what he means by "oratory," nor shows conclusively that this understanding is appropriate to the details of Second Isaiah itself.

Clifford repeatedly claims that Second Isaiah should be understood as an orator, yet he does not clearly define what he means by this designation. It is possible to surmise a general picture of Clifford's concept of oratory from several characterizations Clifford makes of his own approach and the approaches of others. The characterization noted above, "practical, given to sustained argument to move people to specific action,"[34] illustrates Clifford's expectation that the interpretation of Second Isaiah should arrive at a clear claim about what the prophet is asking people to do. Elsewhere he highlights this functional element in his notion of Second Isaiah's form of persuasion, writing, "Second Isaiah pleads with Israel to act."[35] A further illustration of this orientation towards specific action appears in Clifford's critique of Muilenburg. He faults Muilenburg for failing to attend to the persuasive force of Second Isaiah, a failure he glosses as "leav[ing] the poet's vision unconnected to a concrete proposal."[36] Thus, a primary element in Clifford's presentation of the oratorical model he proposes to apply to Second Isaiah is a focus on calling for a specific and active response on the part of the audience.

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[33] Ibid., 4.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 14.
[36] Ibid., 36.

An additional significant element that Clifford emphasizes in his comments about Second Isaiah as oratory is the notion of coherence. He describes the trait of "coherent and compelling argument," as "especially befitting oratory."[37] Elsewhere he emphasizes the "aim of this [i.e., Clifford's] book which stresses ... the coherence of the thought."[38] In sum: it is possible to surmise that Clifford's claim that Second Isaiah should be read as oratory involves expectations that it will issue in a clear call for a specific action and that it will persuade the audience to engage in that activity by means of a coherent argument. Each of these expectations fits Second Isaiah only partially.

It is not overwhelmingly apparent that Second Isaiah clearly calls for the specific action of return. Second Isaiah indeed calls for specific actions at times in the fifteen chapters, yet it is not entirely clear that these are the evident point of the whole, nor which of these actions should be taken as primary. Clear claims and exhortations are sporadic and certainly not the dominant mode of Second Isaian discourse. Explicit calls for the specific action of return occur only in Isa 48:20 and 52:11-12. Compounding the problem, the audience is commanded to do a variety of other things including to lift up their eyes (40:26; 49:18), not to fear (41:10, 14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 8; 54:4), to remind Yhwh of their past deeds (43:26), to remember "these things" (44:21), to return to Yhwh (44:22), to listen or pay attention to Yhwh (46:3, 12; 48:12; 51:1, 4, 7; 52:6; 55:3), to be gathered together (48:14), to draw near to Yhwh (48:16), to look to their ancestors (51:1-2), to awaken and shake themselves off (51:17; 52:1, 2), to cry out (54:1), to enlarge their dwelling place (54:2), to come to the waters (55:1), and to seek Yhwh (55:6). From this brief survey it seems that the commands not to fear and to pay attention to Yhwh are far

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[37] Ibid., 39.
[38] Ibid., 41.

more dominant in Second Isaiah than calls for the action of return. Even more troubling for the notion that Second Isaiah presents a clear call for a specific action are the contradictory commands to both "remember" (46:9) and "not remember" (43:18) the former things. Not only do Second Isaiah's imperatives cover a wide range of activities, not all of which are apparently connected to the activity of homecoming, imperatives are not the dominant verbal form in Second Isaiah. With much greater frequency, participles extol the virtues and characteristic activities of Yhwh. Also more frequent than imperatives directed at the audience are finite verbs with Yhwh as active subject. That Yhwh is by far the dominant actor in Second Isaiah undermines the sense that Second Isaiah is primarily about the audience's activity.

Though his argument depends heavily upon the concept, Clifford does not mount an argument that a clear call for a specific action, or in his terms a "concrete proposal," is a necessary element of Second Isaiah. The closest that Clifford comes to explaining his assumption of such a "practical" understanding of Second Isaiah is in his discussion of the nature of Hebrew prophecy. Clifford describes the nature of Israelite prophecy by illustrating the tight relationship between the social institutions of prophecy, monarchy, and temple; a context in which surely the notion of prophet as compelling national orator makes sense.[39] Clifford acknowledges the difficulties inherent in such an understanding of prophecy as applied to Second Isaiah, particularly the absence of the corollary institutions of monarchy and temple in Second Isaiah's period. However, Clifford does not take account of how these shifts may have impacted the function of prophetic figures in the exilic period. Clifford treats Second Isaiah as orator, depending largely upon his

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[39] Ibid., 15.

characterization of prophets in the monarchic period as orators. Thus, it is not Clifford's notion that Second Isaiah is prophetic that poses a problem, but his assumption that some sort of essential unity to the prophetic tradition existed despite massive social changes, and that this unity can and must be used to determine what Second Isaiah can and must (or cannot and must not) accomplish. Joseph Blenkinsopp acknowledges "the existence of a prophetic tradition." Yet, he cautions that "this tradition follows different lines in keeping with different types of prophetic individual and function."[40] I am in agreement with Blenkinsopp's assessment of the prophetic tradition. That is, I agree that there is enough continuity to discuss these books as "prophetic." However, this label should not be used to determine the message of these books. Rather, divergence within the tradition is to be expected. In the absence of monarchy and temple, it is not altogether unlikely that the role of the prophet shifted somewhat. For that reason, it is important to be attentive to the details of Second Isaiah itself as determinative of its communicative and prophetic aims, rather than imposing assumptions from a model of pre-exilic prophecy.

Further, Clifford's most extensive depiction of the way his oratorical expectations would look in prophetic literature points more to Second Isaiah's divergence from the model, than coherence with it. Clifford cites "Samuel's great speech in 1 Samuel 12 [as] a fine example of prophetic reinterpretation of the national story, [and as] good evidence that prophets were interpreters as well as proclaimers."[41] Indeed, Clifford takes Samuel as paradigmatic for Israelite prophets.[42] While Samuel's speech in 1 Samuel 12 is certainly presented as prophetic speech, exhibits an oratorical mode, and rehearses the national story to achieve its persuasive ends, Clifford's use of this text to define Second

[40] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 15.
[41] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 16.
[42] Ibid.

Isaiah's role as prophet is not without problems.[43] Samuel's speech drastically differs from Second Isaiah's in ways that make it a poor partner for comparison. Samuel's speech clearly identifies its speaker and audience, stakes a claim, constructs a historical recital with clear narrative progression, issues a clear exhortation based on the lessons of the narrative recital, and cements the preceding exhortation with a verifying sign-act. In contrast, Second Isaiah is typified by none of these elements. A prophetic speaker is never explicitly named in Second Isaiah nor is the audience clearly identified. Exhortations to engage in specific action are present in Second Isaiah, but are not its most dominant element, nor are they built up to as the evident point of the work. Finally, Second Isaiah's use of tradition is not typified by the tidy narrative recital observable in 1 Sam 12. Rather, Second Isaiah frequently alludes to the traditions, as recent scholarship has shown, through citations of earlier texts.[44] Thus, Clifford's attempt to depict Second

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[43] While the final form of the book of Samuel presents this speech as prophetic, it is widely agreed that significant portions of this speech are editorial additions by DtrH. See e.g., Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (2d ed.; JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 19; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *1 Samuel* (AB 8; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), 214; Ralph W. Klein, *I Samuel* (WBC 10; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 112; Bruce C. Birch, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," in *The Book of Numbers, The Book of Deuteronomy, Introduction to Narrative Literature, The Book of Joshua, The Book of Judges, The Book of Ruth, The First and Second Books of Samuel* (*NIB*; eds. Leander E. Keck, et al.; 12 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 2:1060; Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel* (OTL; trans. J. S. Bowden; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 96. Since the Deuteronomistic historian presents this speech as prophetic, it may be considered evidence that the speech form was understood as an acceptable one for prophecy at the time of Samuel's redaction. However, the speech cannot be read as a straightforward account of a historical prophetic event given the attribution of the text to DtrH. Thus, it ought not be used, as Clifford appears to be using it, as determinative of what prophetic utterances may and may not accomplish. Additionally, as David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 316, has noted, Samuel is presented both as judge and as prophet in the Hebrew Bible and this text deals specifically with elements of Samuel's judgeship – i.e. that he has lead with integrity and has not taken bribes (1 Sam 12:3). If the presentation of Samuel's role in this case is mixed it ought not to be taken exclusively as paradigmatic and limiting of prophetic speech.

[44] Clifford acknowledges the allusive nature of Second Isaiah's style as discussed below. However, his description focuses on the way in which Second Isaiah "alludes" to "the core of his [own] thought" (*Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 38). Recent intertextual work includes the studies of Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*; Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; and Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*. These studies differ from Clifford's use of ancient Near Eastern parallels in their assumptions about how ancient texts interacted. While Clifford's work implies a unified view which allows one text to determine the meaning of another, these studies acknowledge that texts may make reference to one another in a

Isaiah as a parallel situation to that portrayed in 1 Sam 12 fails. Second Isaiah is not simply a speech like Samuel's stripped of its narrative context. Rather, it is both un-contextualized compared to Samuel and different in content and force. One applies 1 Samuel 12 as an interpretive key to 2 Isaiah only with peril. It is not compelling evidence that Second Isaiah should be taken as oratory. In point of fact, Second Isaiah differs from Clifford's oratorical expectations in precisely the same ways it differs from Samuel's speech. Second Isaiah lacks both a coherent overarching argument and dominant calls for action. Thus the assumption of an oratorical model is both unnecessary and seems to be an imposition of a framework that differs significantly from the expectations raised by Second Isaiah's own distinctive style.

Not only is Clifford unsuccessful in conclusively demonstrating that Second Isaiah both ought to and does call for specific action on the part of the addressee, his attempt to discuss Second Isaiah as exhibiting an overarching coherent and compelling argument does not convince. Indeed, his comments on the matter highlight the difficulty inherent in such a task. Clifford states that "the core of [Second Isaiah's] thought [the prophet] often only alludes to; he counts on the tradition to be so deeply ingrained in his audience's heart and head that mere hints suffice for the whole to be called up. Further, oratory, by definition occasional and practical, is resistant to summary."[45]

Clifford's attempt to demonstrate that Second Isaiah produces a coherent and compelling argument unified by the charge to the exiles to return home is insufficiently proven and depends upon significant harmonization between Second Isaiah's divergent elements. Clifford's approach to the unified persuasive aim of Second Isaiah consists in

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variety of ways including that they might appropriate, reverse, interpret, or revise texts with which they have obvious parallels.

[45] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 38.

attention to five polarities that he claims dominate the text of Second Isaiah.[46] He writes, "[f]ortunately the oratory itself provides a means of synthesis that does not pull apart expression and argument. Second Isaiah in all his speeches makes persistent use of five contrasted concepts which both shape and advance the thought and are themselves his major points."[47] Clifford's association of this mode with oratory is unsupported. At no point does Clifford adduce any examples of the use of polarities as a typical oratorical technique in either Israelite prophetic oratory or in the ancient world in general. His only methodological support for attention to polarities in Second Isaiah is an appeal to parallelism as a typical mode of Hebrew poetic discourse and an understanding of polarities on a thematic level as parallelism on a larger scale.[48]

More importantly, Clifford's discussion of the polarities does not demonstrate that Second Isaiah is held together by a coherent and compelling argument. Clifford himself places particular weight upon the polarities in his attempt to discover Second Isaiah's progression of thought and coherent unity. The importance that Clifford lays upon the polarities is evident in his comment: "[t]hrough the interplay of the concepts [the polarities], some of which appear in every speech, the prophet drives his thought forward. The polarities bear on both style and substance, form and content; thus they are an important clue to the unity of the speeches."[49]

Clifford's argument that these polarities are gathered into a unified message urging homecoming is a forced one, characterized by the imposition of categories foreign

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[46] Ibid., 41-58. These polarities are: "first and last things," "Babylon and Zion," "Yahweh and the gods," "Israel and the nations," and "the servant and the people."

[47] Ibid., 38.

[48] Ibid., 41-43. It is worth observing that Clifford's recourse to poetic modes of interpretation under the name of oratory reveals the extent to which his study actually depends on an understanding of Second Isaiah as poet, despite his critique of Muilenburg on this same point.

[49] Ibid., 5.

to the text at hand in order to render them coherent. Clifford conflates new exodus and creation images through his insistence that there was a single unified narrative of origins in ancient Israel.[50] He relies on the use that some texts about the exodus event make of ancient Near Eastern creation images to conflate these two categories such that all discussion of creation in Second Isaiah may imply a new exodus and thus contributes to his understanding of Second Isaiah's rhetorical program.[51] It is certainly the case that creation and exodus themes appear together in some texts and that this was a widespread practice in the Hebrew Bible. However, it is not the case that everywhere that one of these motifs is utilized the other is referenced as Clifford's use of the themes implies. A particularly clear example of Clifford's use of extra-textual information to render his polarities coherent appears in his exploration of the polarity of Yhwh and the gods. He writes, "[t]he proof of Yahweh's divinity is not, as might be inferred from a first reading of texts like 41:21-23, 25-26; 44:7, and ch. 48, that he is the only God who predicts events before they happen. The proof of divinity is suggested by the texts from Ugarit."[52] Clifford goes on to argue that since the Baʿal cycle understands the ability of a deity to "vanquish … threats to the cosmic order" as the proof of divinity, Second Isaiah's depiction of Yhwh's dominance must follow this pattern.[53] This interpretive move

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[50] Ibid., 18.
[51] Ibid, 45.
[52] Ibid., 47.
[53] Ibid., 47-48. Clifford's use of this Ugaritic parallel material is problematic on a number of levels. First, the texts from Ugarit are more than 700 years older than Second Isaiah. A great deal of change in a culture's conceptions of divinity can occur within that amount of time as the temporally closer examples of the divergent conceptions of Yhwh in J and P demonstrate. In support of this claim one might note the comment of Shemaryahu Talmon, "The 'Comparative Method' in Biblical Interpretation – Principles and Problems," in *Congress Volume: Göttingen 1977* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 325, that "sources closer to the Old Testament in time take pride of place over considerations of geographical proximity." Also problematic is Clifford's assumption that there was a "common ancient Near Eastern way" of assessing relative divinity (ibid., 48). While it may be true that certain commonalities between

allows Clifford to treat Second Isaiah's depictions of Yhwh as superior to other gods as evidence of Yhwh's role as Creator. As noted above, creation imagery implies new exodus in Clifford's interpretation of the polarities. Clifford writes, "Yahweh is the sole deity because he alone creates, he alone leads the Exodus-Conquest."[54] In this way, Clifford enlists Second Isaiah's claims that Yhwh is superior to the gods as contributors to the argument that the exiles should return home.

Clifford's tendency to use information from outside the text at hand to create cohesion among his five polarities weakens his claim that Second Isaiah presents a clear and compelling argument. Clifford's mode of demonstrating cohesion between the polarities depends heavily upon the reading-in of outside information in order to tie these motifs to his overarching theme and to create cohesion between the polarities where such does not exist. It is not the use of evidence from outside Second Isaiah per se that is problematic, but rather the particular way in which Clifford imposes these materials as determinative of the meaning of Second Isaian texts without sufficient attention to Second Isaiah's literary context itself. Samuel Sandmel's caution against "that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction" is helpful in this regard.[55] As exemplified in Clifford's discussion of the speech contained in 1 Sam 12, the parallels he

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relatively contiguous cultures exist, it is unfair to assume that they agreed on all points or that discourse apparently directed within the Israelite community must conform to broader conceptions if such existed.

[54] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 48.

[55] Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1. Also relevant is the caution issued by Talmon, "The 'Comparative Method,'" 356: "The interpretation of biblical features – whether of a socio-political, cultic, general-cultural or literary nature – with the help of inner-biblical parallels should always precede the comparison with extra-biblical materials." Indeed, an appropriate method works outward from the text under investigation focusing first on the text itself, then its larger context within biblical literature, then parallel materials in neighboring cultures.

adduces often make too much of small points of similarity, and he does not account for the individual distinctiveness of the texts he compares. The similarities are then read as determinative of the meaning of the Second Isaian text as though Second Isaiah derived directly from the parallel text though this impression is given without any argument for a genetic relationship between the texts or any awareness of possible distinctions between the uses that the different texts may make of the sources they reference.[56]

To sum up: Clifford's argument that Second Isaiah is designed to urge homecoming is insufficiently supported. Clifford does not convincingly argue that oratory is the most appropriate category within which to consider Second Isaiah. Neither does his work convince me that Second Isaiah need necessarily issue a call for action or display an overarching argument governed by logical coherence and persuasion. Despite the widespread adoption of Clifford's interpretation, it would seem that the subject of Second Isaiah's overarching message is still an open question and merits further investigation. In the sections and chapters that follow I will suggest that rather than Clifford's designation of oratory, Second Isaiah is more akin to lyric poetry.[57] Clifford's important insights into the communicative aims of Second Isaiah need not be tossed away by virtue of the adoption of a lyric model. Rather, as I will argue below, lyric poetry may embrace the task of communication and need not stand in any essential tension with the

[56] Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 6-31, includes a helpful methodological discussion delineating criteria for identifying genuine cases of literary allusion, and discussing the ways in which texts might interact with one another through allusion.

[57] It is true that both oratory and lyric poetry are models from outside the Hebrew Bible. As such, each are attempts to describe Second Isaiah as literature rather precise designations of Second Isaiah's genre. Even though I am arguing that the label lyric poetry fits Second Isaiah better than does oratory, it is important to note that either of these designations are approximations. See further, ch. 2 on this distinction in my use of the term "lyric poetry." The definition given in that ch. for lyric is that subcategory of poetic literature that is characterized by the absence of plot or discursive argument, and that thus must overcome the fragmentation produced by its commonly paratactic flow so as to achieve a sense of cohesion through other means, most notably the address of voice(s), musicality, and imagistic and/or stylistic use of language.

goals of prophetic literature. However, it is the case that there are important distinctions between my understanding of Second Isaiah as lyric poetry and Clifford's presentation of Second Isaiah as oratory.

First, in rejecting the category of oratory as the most salient descriptor for Second Isaiah's literary mode, I am rejecting Clifford's insistence that Second Isaiah must make a "concrete proposal." That is, I do not necessarily expect that Second Isaiah must issue a clear call for a particular action. It is entirely possible that Second Isaiah's communicative aims are oriented in some direction other than this one. However, this does not mean that Second Isaiah need be uninterested in its audience, or that it need not be persuasive.

Second, by rejecting Clifford's designation of Second Isaiah as oratory in favor of the model of lyric poetry, I am remaining open to the possibility that Second Isaiah may not ultimately aim at clear and "compelling argument."[58] That is, I do not expect that Second Isaiah must necessarily exhibit complete logical consistency throughout its fifteen chapters. Nor need Second Isaiah build throughout to a primary claim or central point. Clifford himself acknowledges the possibility of contradiction in ancient Near Eastern thinking.[59] And, as noted above, Clifford's comments on the nature of Second Isaiah's consistency highlight the difficulty of conceiving of the work as a sustained and coherent argument.[60] I will argue that the search for total thematic and logical coherence is unnecessary and imposes expectations on Second Isaiah that do not find resonance in the text itself. Second Isaiah does not progress in the form of a logical argument with claim, demonstration, and exhortation. Rather than the imposition of oratorical expectations, it

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[58] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 39.
[59] Ibid., 33.
[60] Ibid., 38.

seems that what is needed is an approach that takes account of Second Isaiah's internal inconsistencies. Such a model seems more appropriate to the task of discovering the overarching message of Second Isaiah than does oratory. As I will argue below, lyric poetry provides such a model.

1.4. Beyond Clifford

Since the publication of Clifford's work, scholarship has been largely uninterested in the question of the meaning and message of Second Isaiah's overarching arrangement. The widespread adoption of Clifford's thesis noted above may be one factor in this shift in scholarly interest. A brief sketch of recent works on Second Isaiah illustrates this recent shift in scholarly attention away from the question of Second Isaiah's meaning and message.

Recent scholarship has included a particular focus on Second Isaiah's tendency to allude and/or relate intertextually to other biblical texts. The excellent studies of Benjamin D. Sommer, Patricia Tull Willey, and Tod Linafelt have carefully examined Second Isaiah's strong inclination to allude to other Israelite literature.[61] This tendency is an important element in Second Isaiah's distinctive literary style and will be taken into careful account in the examination of individual poetic passages in the course of this study.[62]

Other recent work relates thematically to the subject of the present study, yet does not explicitly take up the question of Second Isaiah's message. A recent articulation of Melugin's observation that the oracles of salvation and the trial scenes stand in tension

[61] Ibid.; Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*. See n. 5644 on the distinction between the approach of these scholars and that employed by Clifford.

[62] See especially ch. 3's discussion of Second Isaiah's tendency to allude to Lamentations.

appears in the work of Blaženka Scheuer, who writes, "the consolatory message of salvation stands in tension with the harsh tone of accusation and the calls to return to YHWH. How are we to deal with the tension?"[63] Scheuer's response to this question focuses exclusively on examining Second Isaiah's ideas about repentance. Her approach thus differs from the approach adopted here which will focus largely on the dominant divine speaker in contrast to Scheuer's focus on humanity. However, her question once again highlights the centrality of this tension for an understanding of Second Isaiah's arrangement into a meaningful whole.

A recent commentary by John Goldingay and David Payne illustrates an awareness of the importance of poetry to the discussion of Second Isaiah's meaningful arrangement.[64] These scholars provide a meticulous treatment of Second Isaiah with exemplary literary sensitivity. They make several telling comments about the nature of the overall arrangement as poetic rather than discursive, yet their paragraphs on "The Message of Isaiah 40-55," are, like those of Muilenburg, more oriented toward extensive summary than focused claim, perhaps owing to the comprehensive demands of the commentary genre.[65]

Like Melugin and Clifford, I locate myself in the stream of scholarship inaugurated by Muilenburg's ground-breaking approach. Like these scholars, I attempt to answer the question, what message does the final arrangement of Second Isaiah

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[63] Scheuer, *Return of YHWH*, 2.

[64] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*.

[65] Goldingay and Payne, 19, compare the "movement through the chapters" to a "symphony or a suite," and remark upon the poetic nature of Second Isaiah (*Isaiah 40-55*, 1:22-25). Their description of the "message" of Second Isaiah is organized under five subheadings, "God, Israel, Jerusalem, the prophet, and the world," and extends over several pages (*Isaiah 40-55*, 1:49-57). Ironically, these same scholars critiqued Muilenburg for failing to move beyond summary in his description of the message of the work (see n. 12 above).

convey?[66] While I hope that the present study will achieve the clarity of articulation and attention to the breadth of Second Isaiah that Clifford's study offers, I advocate a return to Melugin's call for attention to the poetic artistry of the collection itself as a key to understanding the significance of its final arrangement. In contrast to the focus on a progression of thought implied in Clifford's oratorical approach, I will attend to the final arrangement of Second Isaiah through recourse to poetic analysis.

In the years since Melugin published his work, comparative poetics has seen the publication of tools for understanding the significance of the sorts of juxtaposition and repetition that Melugin observed in Second Isaiah.[67] This study will employ these approaches in harmony with Melugin's call for a more artistically-sensitive approach. Additionally, this study will orient itself toward the meaningful implications of the interrelation of the larger component poems of Second Isaiah, while attending carefully to representative individual poems. Thus, I will employ the recent work of theorists of poetry to further the discussion along the lines sketched by Melugin. First, I will examine the role of forces of disjunction in poetic meaning-making in the light of recent work on centripetal and centrifugal forces in poetry. Second, I will employ strategies

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[66] While I assume that Second Isaiah is composed of several originally independent poems, I will not attempt to delineate stages of composition within Second Isaiah, but will approach the question of its message from the perspective of the text as it finally and now stands. See Chris Franke, *Isaiah 46, 47, and 48: A New Literary-Critical Reading* (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 3; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 19, for the articulation of a similar approach to Second Isaiah also from a rhetorical-critical perspective. See n. 9 on discussions of the redaction of Isaiah as a whole. For the most part this study will treat the final form of Second Isaiah as that is represented by the MT. That the basic shape of Isaiah was fixed relatively early and is well represented by the MT is evident from the correspondence between 1QIsa[a], LXX, and the MT in order and content. This situation is in contrast the textual evidence for Isaiah's siblings among the major prophets. However, acceptance of the MT as a relatively reliable witness to the fixed form of Second Isaiah does not preclude text-critical analysis. Reference will be made to variants in the extant witnesses to the text wherever appropriate to determine a reading.

[67] E.g., Daniel Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry* (SBLMS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); M.L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall, *The Modern Poetic Sequence: The Genius of Modern Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

developed for reading poetic collections via the analogy of lyric sequencing as a means of understanding the way in which the whole of Second Isaiah is governed by the same forces as the parts.[68] Chapter two will specifically argue that the use of lyric tools for the analysis of Second Isaiah is appropriate. However, in order to show that these tools address some of the issues raised in the history of scholarship discussed thus far, the remainder of this chapter must of necessity assume some of chapter two's argument. Specifically, the remainder of this chapter will assume the validity of chapter two's argument that tools derived from the study of lyric poetry and the modern lyric sequence may be appropriately applied to Second Isaiah with helpful results.[69]

2. Explaining the Neglect of Lyric Poetic Tools

David L. Petersen and Kent Harold Richards observe that a

> problem confronting the study of Hebrew poetry is the isolation of the study of this ancient poetry from the study of non-Semitic poetry. As a result, the work of those who theorize critically about poetry in English and other languages has not regularly informed the analysis of Hebrew poetry …. In a related way, scholarly work on Hebrew poetry usually does not incorporate the broader discussions of poetry. With the recent exception of discussions that have utilized linguistics and poetics, this situation still obtains.[70]

Certainly this tendency observed by Petersen and Richards has contributed to the absence of studies applying tools derived from the study of modern poetry to Second Isaiah's meaningful arrangement. In addition, biblical scholarship's general failure to utilize the

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[68] The terms "lyric" and "lyric sequencing" will be important throughout this project. Each will receive full discussion in ch. 2. See n. 57 above for a definition of "lyric poetry" in this ch. Also in ch. 2, lyric sequencing will be described as a series of lyric poems linked together in the absence of a narrative framework to form a larger whole.

[69] See further there for the full argument and documentation.

[70] David L. Petersen and Kent Harold Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 6.

observation that Second Isaiah is poetic in an overarching account of its meaning seems primarily due to two main factors:

1. Designating the corpus "prophetic" with an operating (but seldom explicit) assumption that poetry and prophecy are mutually exclusive categories; along with
2. uncertainty over how to deal with large poetic collections.

2.1. Poetry and Prophecy

As evidenced by Bishop Lowth's work cited at the outset of this chapter, concern in biblical scholarship over how to deal with the relationship between prophecy and poetry is longstanding. While Hermann Gunkel took the poetic form of prophetic oracles to be evidence of their ecstatic origins, few scholars today are willing to equate literary artistry with frenzy.[71] Indeed, as Stephen Geller observes, one concern over the prophets as poets may result from the conflict between common conceptions about both prophets and poets, and the idea that these designations stand in tension. The conflict as Geller articulates it is that, "the former is a medium, the latter an artist."[72] It would seem, then, that the clash between human craftsmanship and divine revelation that emerges at times in theological debates about the nature of scriptural inspiration is at the heart of some of

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[71] Hermann Gunkel, "The Prophets: Oral and Written," in *Water for a Thirsty Land: Israelite Literature and Religion* (ed. K. C. Hanson; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 93, observes that the prophetic books exhibit both poetry and prose and writes, "enthusiasm speaks in prophetic form, rational reflection in prose. Prophetic 'speech,' therefore, was originally in the form of poetry." Gunkel correlates the transition from poetry to prose with the development of the prophets from ecstatics to religious thinkers (ibid., 94). R.W.L. Moberly, review of Hermann Gunkel, *Water for a Thirsty Land: Israelite Literature and Religion*, *VT* 52 (2002): 571, notes, "at this distance, however, many of Gunkel's unquestioned assumptions will strike the reader as distinctly open to question, not least the confidence with which he constructs his historical scenarios, and the strong Romantic sensibility which pervades all."

[72] Stephen A. Geller, "Were the Prophets Poets?" in *The Place is Too Small for Us: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 5; ed. Robert P. Gordon; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 154.

the resistance to the meaningful application of poetic observations to the interpretation of Second Isaiah.[73] Such classical theological debates need not detain the present discussion, however. Pragmatically, the belief – whether ancient or modern – that the prophets spoke on behalf of Yhwh does not preclude examination of the mode by which they did so.

A second concern, also rooted in conceptions regarding prophecy and poetry, is that poetry is unable to undertake meaningful address in the way that prophecy evidently does. The idea that the prophets were communicators emerges from the understanding that they were "mouthpiece[s] of a god."[74] The intense prevalence of direct address in the prophets and their specific interaction with historical circumstances support this conception.[75] Clifford's understanding of Second Isaiah as national orator and his rejection of the idea that the prophet was a lyric poet is related to such a communicative understanding of prophecy as noted above.[76] That the prophets were engaged in the communicative activity of conveying a message to an audience is beyond dispute. This

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[73] For a helpful account of the history of Christian thinking about the relationship between inspired revelation and human authorship see Paul J. Achtemeier, *Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 8-22.

[74] Geller, "Were the Prophets Poets," 154. Martti Nissinen, "Spoken, Written, Quoted, and Invented: Orality and Writtenness in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd; SBLSymS 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 239, describes a conception of prophecy as "the transmission of divine message to human recipients." His discussion highlights the communicative aspects of prophecy.

[75] In his ch. on "Prophecy and Poetry," Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 139, writes that "what essentially distinguishes prophetic verse from other kinds of biblical poetry is its powerfully vocative character." Alter's distinction does not diminish the extent to which biblical prophecy is poetic, but rather highlights one particular trait of prophetic poetry.

[76] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 36, articulates his distinction from Muilenburg in the following statement: "I differ in seeing Second Isaiah as an orator rather than a lyric poet." He supports this claim with reference to the "persuasion that is going on in the speeches" (ibid.).

aim is evident in both narratives about biblical prophets and from the works of the writing prophets.[77]

However, prophecy's communicative aims need not stand in any essential tension with its poetic form, though some modern conceptions of lyric might lead one to such a conclusion. Indeed, communicative aims are an important aspect of lyric poetry. The image of lyric poets as "wandering nomads muttering to themselves,"[78] or the poet as one who "talks to himself or to no one about his experience,"[79] is a symptom of what W. R. Johnson calls the "lyric catastrophe,"[80] which emerges only in the modern period. To the contrary, Johnson emphasizes the importance of address in classical lyric poetry, specifically in the use of the pronouns "I" and "you," both for the relevance of the work and for the authenticity of the poem's speaker.[81]

Indeed lyric poetry's profound interest in its audience is a trait it shares with prophetic literature. Rather than some detachment from the world, "what distinguishes the lyric poet from people who are not lyric poets is perhaps, in part, his extreme sensitivity to emotions."[82] It is these emotions that the poet communicates to the

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[77] Narratives about biblical prophets depict them speaking with the apparent aim of communication to specific audiences. For example, Isaiah of Jerusalem speaks an oracle directly to Ahaz (Isa 7:3-25); Jeremiah speaks to the worshippers in the temple (Jer 7) and to Zedekiah (Jer 21); Joel addresses his oracles to the "elders" and the "ones who dwell in the land" (Joel 1:2); Haggai presents his oracles to Zerubbabel (Hag 1:1). In addition, the high prevalence of vocatives in prophetic poetry (see n. 56) and the use of the messenger formula demonstrate the communicative aims of prophetic texts. On the messenger formula as indicating the communicative aims of the prophets, see Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. Hugh Clayton White; foreword Gene M. Tucker; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 98-128, and cf., Gene M. Tucker, "Prophetic Speech," *Int* 32 (1978): 35.

[78] W.R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 12.

[79] Ibid., 7.

[80] Ibid., 8.

[81] Ibid., 12 and esp., 16.

[82] Ibid., 33; see also, 4. Certainly it is the case that not all lyric poetry is particularly interested in the emotions. However, this is one way in which much of the world's lyric poetry corresponds with the materials we find in those biblical books commonly called prophetic and is introduced here to demonstrate,

audience. Certainly, at times in the history of lyric poetry and the study of lyric poetry, the centrality of emotions has been a central theme.[83] Interestingly, this is one point of correspondence between lyric poetry and biblical prophecy, and further evidence that there need be no inherent contradiction between the two categories. Indeed, if what we seek are dispassionate religious thinkers, then we ought not begin the search with the prophets.[84] Both the literary deposit left behind by Israel's writing prophets and the stories recorded about them paint a picture of particularly passionate people, consumed and directed by the emotions they felt over Israel and its relationship to its God.[85]

That ancient lyric poetry typically took the form of address is another piece of correspondence between prophetic literature and lyric poetry that may also be adduced as evidence of the potential for compatibility between the two categories.[86] That is, the communicative needs of the prophet led to the employment of techniques that significantly resemble what we find in ancient and modern lyric poetry. As "messengers"

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in part, that there need be no inherent contradiction between the communicative aims of the prophets and the medium of lyric poetry.

[83] As Adrian Pilkington, *Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Perspective* (Pragmatics & Beyond 75; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000), 142-3, summarizes: "The idea that poetry is primarily an expression of emotion (or feeling) was an important part of the Romantic theory .... The idea that poetry is best fitted to express emotion is at least as old as Longinus' *On the Sublime* .... It is an idea that has found its echo in the writings of many twentieth century poets." He claims that there is a "strong connection between emotion and poetry in general, and, more particularly, between emotion and the use of rhetorical devices in poetry." (ibid, 143) Indeed, the role of emotion in lyric gained particular prominence in the romantic period and is not a universal trait of lyric poetry. However, emotion is a widely recognized element of lyric poetry and one that happens to fit Second Isaiah in particular and the biblical prophetic literature in general.

[84] Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 4, states that "the prophet's words are outbursts of violent emotions." Similarly, Gunkel, "The Prophets: Oral and Written," 88, writes: "We must especially keep the 'signs' of these men before our eyes when we read their words. Men who did such exceptional things could not have spoken calmly and prudently."

[85] 2 Chronicles 35:25 reports that Jeremiah composed a lament over Josiah. Ezekiel 11:13 depicts the prophet crying out over the death of an Israelite leader he is called to prophesy against. Jonah becomes angry, and wishes to die in opposition to the message of repentance he is called to proclaim to Nineveh. Jonah's identical response to the death of a shade bush highlights his emotional characterization (Jonah 4:1-8).

[86] Again, the observation of Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 139, that *address* is the distinguishing feature of prophetic poetry is pertinent.

the prophets were to communicate with the people on behalf of the God. It is clear that divine emotional responses – including and not infrequently anger – to situations in the Yhwh-Israel relationship were dominant elements of the messages of Israel's prophets.[87] Similarly, lyric poetry was a mode of direct address, one that prized emotion and sought to communicate that and other elements of the relationship between the speaker and audience.[88] Additionally, the lyric mode allows the poet to write in the persona of the poem's speaker, or said differently to speak as the one for whom they were a messenger, allowing that figure to address the audience directly.[89] Thus, the lyric mode of address corresponds closely to the communicative aims of the prophets, and can be seen as one way in which the writing prophets may have gone about "getting out of the way" of the divine discourse with Israel. Because of these correspondences between the aims and content of lyric poetry and biblical prophecy, there is no inherent contradiction that would prevent the use of studies of lyric to clarify what is going on in prophetic poetry.

Though there need be no inherent conflict between prophetic and poetic aims, the question of how to designate and interpret Second Isaiah is not thereby entirely solved. Indeed, such a lack of conflict between poetry and prophecy does not mean that all poets were prophets or that all prophets were poets. As David L. Petersen has pointed out,

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[87] Hosea's extended metaphor of marital rupture is perhaps the clearest example of this dominant theme in the prophets. However, the issue of the relationship between Yhwh and Israel appears as a significant theme in virtually all of the writing prophets. First Isaiah's vineyard imagery (Isaiah 5) is directed at the failure of Israel to live up to divine expectations for them. Joel 2:18-29 depicts a glorious future whose security and abundance are secured by the presence of Yhwh. Amos 3:2 makes clear the special connection between Yhwh's commitment to Israel and the appropriateness of its punishment for apostasy. Indeed, the recurrent interest of the writing prophets in idolatry is one indication that the relationship between Yhwh and Israel is central to them.

[88] Johnson, *Idea of Lyric*, 3-4.

[89] The widespread use of the "messenger formula" in prophetic texts, Second Isaiah included, is one indication that the prophets spoke on behalf of Yhwh. As Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 93, notes "[t]he sentence found throughout the whole of prophecy by which the prophetic word is authorized as the word of God, 'Thus says Yahweh' (or said), is the message formula that is used repeatedly and very widely in profane speech. The prophet, as a messenger of God who delivers God's word, understands himself as the bearer of a message."

"prophetic literature may be created as either prose or poetry."[90] In the case of Second Isaiah the question is not whether it is written in poetry or prose; it is poetic.[91] Rather, the question is whether or not it is prophetic. While most of the prophetic books appear to be collections of poetic oracles, Second Isaiah stands out from many of these works in several ways. Unlike Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah, Second Isaiah's poems have *not* been supplemented with prose accounts of the life of their speaker (cf. Amos 7; Hos 1, 3; Isa 7:3, 20:2, 37-39). There is no call narrative in Second Isaiah despite scholarly attempts to find one (see cf. Jer 1:4-10, Ezek 1-3, Isa 6).[92] Neither is there any clear reference to any prophetic figure as the poet (cf. Amos 1:1; Hos 1:1; Jer 1:1-10; Ezek 1-3; Isa 1:1). Indeed, as A. Graeme Auld has noted, there are no occurrences of the root נבא anywhere in Second Isaiah. He remarks that "the silence of most of the 66 chapters of Isaiah on the topic of 'prophet' and 'prophesying' is almost deafening."[93] That silence has lead several scholars to speculate that Second Isaiah is not a prophetic book at all and that it only gains its associations with prophecy by virtue of being appended to First Isaiah. C.C. Torrey, a proponent of such a view wrote long ago, "it may be doubted whether Second Isaiah ever thought of himself as a prophet, but it is beyond question that he knew himself to be a master poet."[94]

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[90] David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 30.

[91] See further ch. 2.

[92] Discussion of the history of interpreting Isaiah 40 as a call narrative and my rejection of such an approach is contained in ch. 2.

[93] A. Graeme Auld, "Poetry, Prophecy, Hermeneutic: Recent Studies in Isaiah," *SJT* 33 (1980): 567-81.

[94] Charles Culter Torrey, *The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 90. A more radical position is taken by Robert P. Carroll, "Poets Not Prophets: A Response to 'Prophets Through the Looking Glass,'" in *The Prophets: A Sheffield Reader* (ed. Philip R. Davies; *The Biblical Seminar* 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996): 43-49. Carroll argues that the figures traditionally understood as prophets were not prophets at all, but "certainly poets, probably intellectuals,

While a primary assumption of this project is that Second Isaiah was indeed a poet, I do not wish to dispute the traditional notion that Second Isaiah was also a prophet. My position is simply that Second Isaiah can be and is *both*.[95] Second Isaiah's prophetic nature does not prohibit it from being considered poetry. Neither does Second Isaiah's poetic nature limit its ability to communicate in a prophetic mode on behalf of the deity. Rather, poetry and prophetic function meet admirably in the lyric mode and attention to Second Isaiah from a lyric perspective may contribute to the interpretation of both its poetic and prophetic characteristics.

2.2. Poetry and Fragmentary Meaning

Second, the lack of a method for dealing with long poetic compositions has hampered scholarly efforts to utilize the observation that Second Isaiah is poetic in the interpretation of its overall shape. Clifford, for example, objects to viewing Second Isaiah as lyric because he understands lyric as too short for the development of long and complex engagement with the audience. He writes, "the view that Isaiah 40-55 is made up of brief and fragmentary pieces has the inevitable corollary that the author is a lyric poet rather than a national orator," a position he opposes.[96] He combines this assertion

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and possibly ideologues" (ibid., 43). He believes the redactors of the "prophetic" books created the narrative traditions that give us the impression of prophetic figures standing behind these texts.

[95] While my discussion has focused on Second Isaiah as the object of this study, I would argue that this capacity to be both prophetic literature and lyric poetry extends to many of the writing prophets. As I will articulate more clearly in ch. 2, I suspect that the majority of biblical Hebrew poetry can be helpfully analyzed using lyric tools. Certainly, there are significant distinctions between the pre-exilic prophecy of Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah and the exilic period prophecy of Second Isaiah. Among the most notable of these is Second Isaiah's lack of a developed prophetic figure and tendency throughout to represent the poetry as the direct address of Yhwh. This trait will be discussed further in ch. 4. It is not my intention to present a diachronic analysis of the prophetic literary tradition. Rather, individual exemplars of prophetic poetry exhibit their own distinctive traits. This study focuses on the particular lyric traits of Second Isaiah and does not preclude similar analysis of other poetic prophetic works.

[96] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 4.

with the complaint that "the poet is thus stripped of his ability to write long and complex orations. The message is drained of subtlety and persuasive force."[97] Second Isaiah's units may be relatively short, but this brevity need not imply fragmentation nor does it necessarily prohibit meaningful communication. In general, poetic brevity does not imply incomprehensibility or lack of communicative aims.[98] Even Gunkel's insistence on originally short prophetic units did not prohibit him from making statements about their meaning.[99]

While lyric poems are relatively short, Second Isaiah itself is not. For this reason, it must be granted that Second Isaiah is probably too long to be considered a single lyric poem. One must reckon, instead, with it being a collection of lyric poems arranged into a meaningful whole. This scenario, though admittedly and necessarily speculative, is not altogether unlikely, given what scholars suspect about the composition of prophetic books. In similar fashion to the oracles of Amos, and First Isaiah, it seems plausible that Second Isaiah's component poems were originally presented orally to an exilic period audience.[100] These prophetic utterances would then have probably been recorded in some

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[97] Ibid., 34.

[98] Numerous studies and interpretations of short lyric poems illustrate this point. For example, Helen Vendler, *The Poetry of George Herbert* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 2-3, not only devotes an entire monograph to the interpretation of Herbert's lyric poems, but is able to cite a list of her predecessors in this project (3). Similarly, Ed Folsom and Kenneth M. Price, *Re-Scripting Walt Whitman: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), xv, conclude their work with an appendix detailing the variety of ways Whitman's work has been "printed and taught."

[99] Though Gunkel, "The Prophets: Oral and Written," 92, characterized prophetic speeches as relatively short, articulating a range from "two, three, or a few more long lines," up through "about a chapter in length," he nevertheless refers repeatedly to the "clarity" of these prophetic statements. As Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 105, points out, "[i]t follows from the requirements of the oral transmission that the message that the messenger has to deliver must be short …. Above all, it must be understandable. A message that is *only* received and repeated orally must strive to be both understandable and retainable since there are always just brief moments in which *everything* is learned" (emphasis original).

[100] Whether Second Isaiah was originally written or orally composed is too complex a question to be undertaken here. As Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 4-5, notes, oral and written overlap considerably and indicators

written fashion.[101] It is not difficult to suppose that the orally performed poems were collected into a longer work or even that this longer work was eventually orally

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of oral composition may well appear within originally written works. While Second Isaiah certainly shows many of the marks of what Niditch identifies as oral culture (repetitions, formulaic language) (ibid., 10-11), and was composed in a period in which the culture was largely oral, it is impossible to tell for certain from this distance whether these poems were originally composed orally or not. Muilenburg thinks it unlikely that Second Isaiah was composed orally based on his sense of the poetry's complexity (Muilenburg, *IB* 5:386). Yet, as Albert Bates Lord, "Oral Poetry," *NPEPP*, 864, notes "[a]t times the complexity of structural interconnections between verses in oral traditional style is so great that it seems that one could have attained it only with the aid of writing." That is, complexity is not the exclusive domain of written poetry. Regardless the mode of composition, it does seem likely that Second Isaiah's component poems were at least performed orally – whether written down prior to performance or following it. The poems are addressed to the people, and while the "elites" exiled to Babylon may have been marginally more literate than the general population, it still seems likely that many in Second Isaiah's audience would have been unable to read. Karel Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 11, makes the following comment about the likely relative literacy in Israel in the ancient period: "The culture of the Israelites was predominantly oral. The ability to write down a name (Judg 8:14) or to read a letter (Lachish Letter 3) may have been quite common, but that does not mean Israel was a literate society. The transmission of cultural lore – stories of origins, legends of ancestors and heroes, dos and don'ts, professional skills and wisdom – was nearly always accomplished by word of mouth." Van der Toorn draws his conclusion from the comparative evidence of surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures whose estimated literacy rates range from 5 to 10 percent (ibid., 10). The level of literacy Van der Toorn describes would seem to argue in favor of viewing Second Isaiah as at least originally orally presented. Certainly, the ability to read poetry such as that found in Second Isaiah demands a significantly higher level of literacy than to write down one's name or read a letter. See further, F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Space, Line, and the Written Biblical Poem in Texts from the Judean Desert" (unpublished manuscript), 16, on the likelihood that Israelite poetry was oral owing to the "overriding orality of the ancient world." Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 203, despite his emphasis on the orality of ancient Israelite culture claims that "[t]he anonymous individual known as Deutero-Isaiah is likely to have been a prophet of the new stamp: he wrote his message, instead of preaching it in the streets." Van der Toorn makes this determination on the basis of his observation that by the time of the exile the Israelites would have become accustomed to collections of prophetic oracles, and such collections would have gained "scriptural authority" (ibid., 203). To my mind, this likely familiarity with prophetic collections does not overturn the likelihood that the majority of people in Second Isaiah's audience were illiterate and that the poetry was likely presented orally. However, Van der Toorn's comment further underscores the difficulty of determining with any precision whether Second Isaiah was originally oral or written poetry.

[101] There is considerable evidence for the writing down of prophetic collections both within the biblical canon and outside of it. Numerous biblical prophetic books retain marks of their prior existence as separate oracles. For example, pre-exilic prophetic collections occasionally use the formula "thus says Yhwh" to mark separate prophetic utterances (e.g., Isa 22:15; 37:6, 21; 38:1, 5; Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13: 2:1, 4, 6). The exilic period collections of Jeremiah and Ezekiel commonly include the notice that "the word of Yhwh came to" the prophet in a similar fashion (e.g., Jer 1:4; 2:1; 13:3; 14:1; 21:1; 24:4; 27:1; 32:26; Ezek 6:1; 7:1; 12:1; 24:1; 35:1). Framing narratives noting the circumstances under which the oracles were delivered especially those marked with a specific date, i.e., "in the days of" a particular king or event point to these books' existence as collections, particularly in the case of books that contain more than one such historical reference point (e.g., Jer 21:1; 27:1; Ezek 24:1; 26:1; Isa 7:1-3; 38:1). Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:28, similarly note the compilation of Isa 1-39 as a "possible model" for Second Isaiah's collection. There is also evidence for the recording of prophetic utterances in the broader ancient Near Eastern world. Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (Writings from the Ancient World 12; Boston: Brill, 2003), 98, observes that in the royal archives of Nineveh, prophetic oracles were recorded and also collected into larger compilations for preservation. These compilations

performed as a whole.[102] Indeed, Second Isaiah's juxtapositions between indignation and comfort over the course of the prophetic poet's oral performances may well have been noticeable to both the poet and the audience and led to the prophetic poet's fuller final arrangement of the poems into an organic whole.[103] What is distinctive about Second Isaiah's compilation of originally shorter prophetic poems is the extent to which the final collection privileges the whole over the parts. As Melugin points out, it is as if all marks of the original separations and compilation process have been "deliberately eradicated."[104] While many poetic and prophetic collections (e.g., Psalms, Amos, Hosea) retain obvious markers of their compositional process and composite nature, Second Isaiah displays no such discernible markers. Indeed, the absence of such marks in contrast to the other such biblical compositions provides a strong piece of evidence that the final form of Second Isaiah's unity is greater than simple collection.[105] That is, it seems to have been formed into an organic whole with some level of intentionality.

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seem to have involved editing and stylization. Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 177-8, cites this same Neo-Assyrian evidence as an indication that within the ancient Near East prophecies were written down and collected. He also notes the Deir Alla inscription as indicating a collection of oracles ascribed to Balaam (ibid., 175-6). This inscription parallels pre-exilic biblical collections such as Hosea and Amos with which it is roughly contemporaneous in the collection of a number of oracles by the same prophet (ibid., 176).

[102] Neh 8:1-18 gives an account of the public reading of a long work, probably the Pentateuch, which is widely regarded to be a composite text.

[103] Much more will be said about this juxtaposition in ch. 5. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:18, present a similarly speculative reconstruction of Second Isaiah's development.

[104] Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 175. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:19, also observe this phenomenon. They write, "Isaiah 40-55 is not a structured whole in the manner of a work such as Lamentations where we can distinguish between five separate poems, and trace concrete markers of structure such as the use of an acrostic form."

[105] It is true that the elimination of marks of Second Isaiah's earlier compilation could have been accidental owing to the typical scribal practice of writing both poetry and prose in a continuous fashion without obvious scribal marks of divisions, aside from word-dividers. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Space, Line, and the Written Biblical Poem," 18, argues that a running script was most likely used for both poetry and prose works based on the evidence of ancient Near Eastern scribal practices. However, that other compilations such as the Psalms and other prophetic books retained some signals of their original compilation makes Second Isaiah's lack of these markers less likely to be entirely an accident of its transmission. If Second Isaiah had exhibited clear formulaic markers of its component poems prior to its being copied in a continuous style, its composite nature would be as discernible as in these other works.

Scholars of literature have begun to study the ways in which collections of lyric poems create meaning as a whole through the study of what they call "lyric sequences."[106] Their idea of lyric sequences as lyric poems "writ-large"[107] is a way of analyzing the whole on analogy with the construction of its parts, an idea Melugin also suggested in his form-critical work on Second Isaiah. The use of this theoretical approach from the study of ancient and modern poetics as a heuristic model offers a promising way beyond the scholarly impasse over how to understand and interpret poetic works of significant length like Second Isaiah, a task that, in biblical studies at least, is only in its "infancy."[108] That is, the designation of Second Isaiah as lyric poetry need not imply that its units' brevity prohibits meaningful communication. Rather, the concept of the lyric sequence allows for reading the series of poems as a whole, thus extending its ability to take up complex issues and to engage its audience about them.

2.3. Implications of a Lyric Approach to Second Isaiah

As will be shown throughout this study, lyric poetry is a form that particularly revels in tensions, paradox, and disjunction – and Second Isaiah is a particularly tensive text.[109]

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[106] A full discussion defining "lyric sequences" and providing a justification for the use of this theoretical base in interpreting Second Isaiah will be undertaken in ch. 2. A preliminary definition is included in this ch. in n. 57.

[107] F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," in *The Evolution of Rationality: Interdisciplinary Essays in Honor of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen* (ed. F. LeRon Shults; Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 365.

[108] Brent A. Strawn, "Lyric Poetry" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings* (eds. Tremper Longman, III and Peter Enns; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 442. For examples of work on biblical texts which employ this approach, see Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse"; idem, "Song of Songs," in *NIDB* (5 vols.; ed. Katharine Sakenfeld; Nashville: Abingdon, forthcoming); idem, "Lamentations as Lyric Sequence," (unpubl. ms); idem, *Lamentations* (Int; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002); and Exum, *Song of Songs*. See ch. two for a more detailed discussion of the use of lyric poetics in the interpretation of biblical poetry.

[109] This claim will receive ample support over the course of this project. Ch. 4 examines the forces of cohesion and disjunction in Second Isaiah, while the primary subject of ch. 5 is the tensive interplay between divine rage and the expressed intention to comfort.

Second Isaiah alludes. It insinuates. It implies. Multiple levels of meaning are common and Second Isaiah repeatedly employs ambiguity, apparently intentionally.[110] The tension that Melugin observed between the judgment and comfort tendencies in Second Isaiah, both of which are strong, is one symptom of this turmoil. Yet, apparently due to its neglect of the full potential of the poetic nature of Second Isaiah, scholarship has often painted an overly harmonious view of Second Isaiah's meaning. The moniker "book of comfort" is widely known, and Claus Westermann's depiction of the prophet's task as "proclaiming salvation, and nothing but salvation, to his people"[111] fits squarely within the common view of Second Isaiah as all of one mind. As noted above, Clifford's creation of a cohesive argument out of the diverse materials in Second Isaiah depends to a large extent on harmonization. This tendency is also one of the drawbacks to Muilenburg's study, apparently due to his desire to find a coherent development of thought. It is time for a re-examination of the concept of Second Isaiah as entirely a "book of comfort" through attention to its various vagaries and vacillations, all of which are facilitated by its poetry on large and small scales.

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[110] I am in agreement with William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (3d ed.; New York: New Directions, 1966), 3, who comments that "the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry," and elsewhere discusses "intentional" use of paradox (ibid., xvi). I expect that intentional play among various word meanings without clear resolution is part of the artistic crafting of many poetic works including Second Isaiah. See ch. 2 for more discussion of the importance of word play in poetic meaning-making. Throughout the course of this study all translations of Second Isaiah are my own unless otherwise noted. I have attempted to preserve as much of Second Isaiah's ambiguity wherever appropriate and have endeavored to carry as much of the poetic character of the Hebrew text forward into the translation as possible. While equivalents for sound play and double entendre are never entirely possible, I have attempted to produce a translation in the spirit of the original in these matters. As noted in n. 4 in response to Blenkinsopp, not all of Second Isaiah's poems are of equal lyric intensity. Where tropes, imagery, and sound play occur in the original, I have tried to indicate similar artistry in the translation. However, where the concentration of such features is less intense, I have chosen to allow this lower level of crafting to show in the translation as well. Thus, just as the Hebrew poems constituting Second Isaiah are not of even intensity, so also my translations are not of even intensity.

[111] Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (trans. David M. G. Stalker; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 9.

3. Proposal and Plan

I undertake a new examination of the question "what message does the final arrangement of Second Isaiah convey?" in light of the claim that Second Isaiah's units, its form, and its arrangement are poetic. My thesis is that Second Isaiah explores the tensions, emotions, and conflicts that are bound up in the notion of a reconciliation between Yhwh and Israel. Through its particularly poetic features, Second Isaiah works to overcome its exilic audience's hesitancy to accept its proclamation. Attention to these features demonstrates that in response to concerns over divine absence and silence, *Second Isaiah's strongest cohesive device is not a thematic or discursive claim like homecoming or comfort but the overwhelming presence of the speaking deity.* Additionally, the exploration of the divine voice's conflicting emotional responses to the proposed reunion explores the breach from several angles and wears down potential resistance by the audience to this message of coming reunion through contrast, empathy, and vicarious expression. Thus, Second Isaiah communicates an encounter with the comforting presence of Yhwh in response to audience fears of Yhwh's absence and wrath. Second Isaiah achieves this meaning through a particularly lyric presentation highlighting the unity of a voice (not a "thought") in the face of formal and thematic disjunction and a stream of emotive tension that resolves in a tonality and metaphor that solidify its central claim of coming reconciliation between Yhwh and the audience.[112]

Chapter two expands upon the suggestions made in this chapter regarding the usefulness of the analogy of the lyric sequence for understanding Second Isaiah's

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[112] Discussion of my use of the concept of "tonality" will be undertaken in ch. 2. There I will employ the definition for tonality supplied by Morton D. Rich, *The Dynamics of Tonal Shift in the Sonnet* (Studies in Comparative Literature 31; Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 5: the speaker's "attitude toward the subject and toward the audience implied in a literary work."

arrangement. It will define necessary terms, illustrate the appropriateness of applying the concepts of lyric and lyric sequencing to Second Isaiah, and delineate several tools to be employed in interpreting Second Isaiah's overall flow. Specifically, this chapter will argue that, given its analogy with lyric sequences, Second Isaiah's disjunction is significant and meaningful. Further, the flow of the primary speaker's emotions in a sequence may point to the message of the sequence.

Chapter three examines the exilic period setting alongside the testimony of Second Isaiah itself in order to determine the situation Second Isaiah addresses and to illustrate its central concerns. Drawing upon (1) the cited speech of the implied audience, (2) examination of Second Isaiah's allusions to Lamentations, (3) careful exegesis of the opening lines of Second Isaiah, and (4) examination of the conflict between the audience's speech and that of the divine speaker, the chapter argues that Second Isaiah wrestles through conflicting emotional responses to its opening announcement of comfort. The question of the possibility of a comforting reconciliation between Yhwh and Zion becomes a central issue that seeks resolution over the course of the fifteen chapters.

Chapter four develops the idea that disjunction is significant and meaningful to examine Second Isaiah's flow. It argues that Second Isaiah achieves its unity not via thematic content, but by means of particularly *poetic devices* through which forces of cohesion and disjunction produce a tensive balance. Further, it claims that the most significant device for the ultimate cohesion of the work is the dominance of the divine speaking voice.

Chapter five builds upon chapter four's claim that the dominance of the divine speaking voice holds Second Isaiah together despite its particularly tensive nature, combining this insight with the claim that lyric prizes and communicates through emotion. The chapter examines the flow of emotive "tonalities" in the dominant divine speaking voice. In doing so it draws upon chapter three's claim that the central "intractable problem" around which Second Isaiah moves toward equilibrium is the question of the possibility and actuality of Yhwh's reconciliation with Zion. The emotive tension around this issue plays itself out in the contrasts between the tonalities of the divine voice, and eventually resolves definitively with comfort supported by the marriage metaphor.

The study concludes with a summary of the findings, an enumeration of the critical questions in the study of Second Isaiah that this study has addressed, and suggestion of avenues for further development of the work begun in this project.

Chapter Two

Second Isaiah and Lyric Tools

"Relevant theory grows out of direct engagement and sufficient empathy with literary works. They are great teachers if allowed to be"[1]

S. R. Driver has written that "Hebrew poetry is almost exclusively *lyric*."[2] While his claim certainly merits extensive investigation across the range of poetic texts included in the Hebrew Bible, that task lies outside the present study.[3] However, since the aim of this dissertation is to approach the task of interpreting Second Isaiah in light of Melugin's call for methods "which are more sensitive to the artistry of the literature," it will be important to assess to what extent Driver's description of biblical Hebrew poetry as lyric applies to Second Isaiah, and what implications this designation has for Second Isaiah's interpretation.[4] This chapter will define the category of lyric poetry and defend the claim that Second Isaiah is not an exception to Driver's dictum. In light of this claim, I will argue that lyric tools are appropriate and necessary means for interpreting Second Isaiah

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[1] M. L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall, *The Modern Poetic Sequence: The Genius of Modern Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), ix.

[2] S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: The Meridian Library, 1957), 360 (emphasis original). See further n.28 in this ch. on the way in which this dominance of lyric in biblical Hebrew poetry compares with the poetries of other ancient Near Eastern cultures.

[3] Such a study would also ideally distinguish the individual and distinctive characteristics of the various different exemplars of Biblical Hebrew lyric poetry. Some comparison of the features of various biblical Hebrew poems that would certainly be identified as lyric has already been undertaken by Daniel Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry* (SBLMS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989). His study characterizes poems according to the traits of centripetal and centrifugal forces. He locates the Psalms of Ascent towards the centripetal end of the spectrum, Song of Songs towards the centrifugal end, and describes Lamentations as finding a balance between these forces (ibid., 7). As I will have occasion to note below, Second Isaiah as a whole shares structural similarities with Song of Songs namely the lack of clear boundary markers. However, like Lamentations, Second Isaiah seems to find a balance between its centripetal and centrifugal forces. The means by which Second Isaiah develops its own cohesion is discussed in detail in ch. 4 of this study and should be considered a primarily element in discerning its own particular lyrical characteristics in both comparison and contrast to other biblical lyric poems.

[4] Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 88.

and will present some strategies for reading lyric poetry that I will apply to Second Isaiah in the chapters to follow.

1. Defining Lyric

In order to assess in what sense Second Isaiah may be usefully described as lyric poetry, a definition will have to be articulated for this category of poetic discourse that has been aptly called "particularly elusive of definition."[5] Additionally, elements of lyric poetry that may serve as indicators of its presence will be enumerated. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will define lyric as that subcategory of poetic literature that is characterized by the absence of plot or discursive argument, and that thus must overcome the fragmentation produced by its commonly paratactic flow so as to achieve a sense of cohesion through other means, most notably the address of voice(s), musicality, and imagistic and/or stylistic use of language.[6] The address of voice(s), musicality, imagistic and/or stylistic use of language, and even non-narrative and paratactic flow, which I have definitionally included as typical of lyric poems should be understood as components that must be utilized in a necessarily cumulative case argument. As Strawn points out, "no one element characterizes lyric to the extent that said element is found in no other genre of literature. Instead, lyric contains several key elements in high density and in particular

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[5] David Lindley, *Lyric* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 1.

[6] This definition correlates closely with various definitions employed by biblical scholars. For example Brent A. Strawn, "Lyric Poetry" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings* (eds. Tremper Longman, III and Peter Enns; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 438, notes, "[i]t is the density of brief scale, lack of plot or argumentation, prominence of the speaking voice over developed characterization, radical dependence on the language – especially expressive language – and the like that distinguish lyric." Also relevant is the definition of F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," in *The Evolution of Rationality: Interdisciplinary Essays in Honor of J. Wetzel van Huyssteen* (ed. F. LeRon Shuts; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 350. Dobbs-Allsopp likewise distinguishes lyric as "nonnarrative, nondramatic" poetry.

combination."[7] Thus wherever we encounter lyric, we will expect a high frequency of many of these traits, without expecting that every text that exhibits any one of them (or even a few) must necessarily be judged lyric, nor that all of these traits must be present in a text for it to be termed lyric. Again, it is the high density and close combination of these elements – along with other standard aspects of (in this case) biblical Hebrew poetry – that will enable a judgment that the piece is lyrical.

First, then, lyric is a subcategory of poetic literature. Though modern usage has tended to conflate the terms lyric and poetry, utilizing lyric as a nondescript synonym for all types of poetic texts, I intend a more specialized meaning.[8] Put simply, not all poetry should be understood as lyric poetry. However, all texts that we would like to call lyric should first of all be discernibly poetry rather than prose.[9]

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[7] Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 438.

[8] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 347, comments that the use of lyric as a synonym for poetry in modern discussion results from the assumption in those discussions that lyric is the "prototype of a poem."

[9] I do not propose that the distinction between poetry and prose is a simple one. I am sensitive to the claim of James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 302, that "'[p]rose' and 'poetry' are a matter of degree," for certainly there are many compositions that walk the line between heightened prose and poetry. However, I am in agreement with Ezra Spicehandler, "Hebrew Poetry," in *NPEPP*, 501, that "deny[ing] the very existence of biblical poetry," would be a "rather specious contention." Cf. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 4. Alter comments that Kugel, "comes perilously close to concluding that there is no poetry in the Bible, only a 'continuum' from loosely parallelistic structures in what we think of as the prose sections to a more 'heightened rhetoric' of parallelistic devices in what we misleadingly label verse." However, it is important to note that Kugel does not actually deny the existence of biblical Hebrew poetry (Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 302). In fact, in idem., "Some Thoughts on Future Research into Biblical Style: Addenda to *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*" JSOT (1984): 107-17, Kugel directly addresses the charge that his book has "gone too far" in rejecting the "idea of biblical poetry" outright (115). He clarifies his conclusion writing: "in the end I was forced to admit that something was to be said on both sides of the question, that, as I said twice in my book, the idea of biblical poetry *is* and *is not* correct, or elsewhere, that it is only an approximate fit, or in yet another formulation, that the idea of biblical poetry is both enlightening and misleading" (115). For the purposes of this project it is sufficient to acknowledge that the differentiation between poetry and prose in the Hebrew Bible is not entirely straightforward in all cases. However, Second Isaiah falls well within the group of texts that are clearly poetic and the existence of texts whose assignment is less clear does nothing to diminish the relevance of Second Isaiah's poetry for its interpretation. See ch. 1 and further below.

The idea that not all poetry is lyric poetry implies that there are other sorts of poetic texts from which lyric can be distinguished. In poetic criticism, from which the terminology of lyric is drawn, there are three primary categories into which texts are regularly assigned. These categories are understood to be quite fluid, and a certain amount of overlap among them is inevitable.[10] These three classic categories that evolved out of the discussion of Western literature are epic, dramatic, and lyric poetries. Epic poetry, typically a long(er) form, has plot and characters along with a narrator as its hallmarks. The works of Homer are classic examples of this type of poetry. Dramatic poetry, for its part, is "an enactment."[11] It is used for poems that imply a scene, or for plays that are written in poetic form. It, too, has characters and frequently a plot. Classic examples of this type of poetry within Western literature include *Oedipus, Faust*, and *Hamlet*.[12] Thus, the claims that lyric is non-narrative and non-dramatic emerge as significant distinguishing marks between those poems that should be understood as lyric and those that fall more nearly into one of the other major poetic categories.

In the absence of plot and argumentation, lyric poetry is typified by a paratactic flow. That is, lyric often moves and shifts in striking, jarring, and unpredictable ways. Lyric poetry may be said to hold together by a "rhythm of association" and to exhibit

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[10] Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 437.

[11] Ruby Cohn, "Dramatic Poetry" in *NPEPP*, 304.

[12] Ibid., 304. Ancient Near Eastern examples might include the "Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld," translated by Stephanie Dalley in *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (vol. 1 of *The Context of Scripture*; ed. William W. Hallo; Leiden: Brill, 1997): 381-384, which has characters (Ishtar, gatekeeper, Ereshkigal) and a narrator. A scene is clearly implied, and the expectation that this poem was used in a yearly ritual adds to the sense that it was an enactment. The distinction between epic and dramatic is in some instances difficult to draw. However, epics are typically long poems of multiple scenes. This poem, is, Dalley notes "a short composition of some 140 lines" (*COS* 1.108:381). Likewise, "Love by the Light of the Moon" translated by Yitschak Sefati (*COS* 1.169c: 542-43) is a dialogue with ascribed characters that implies a courtship scene.

"sudden shifts of topic, speaker, and theme."[13] Thus a corollary to the lyric trait of being non-narrative and non-discursive is the characteristic of the common presence of parataxis.

A further implication of the non-narrative and non-discursive nature of lyric poetry is that it is typically a short form. Without the overarching and cohering impact of plot or argument, the lyric cannot sustain itself, or the attention of its hearer, over long periods.[14]

An additional common aspect of lyric is vocality. Culler has described lyric's typical vocality noting that it "seems to be an utterance … the utterance of a voice."[15] Like parataxis, lyric's common presentation as the speaking of a voice or voices seems integrally tied to its non-narrative, non-dramatic character. Dobbs-Allsopp notes the common "absence of developed (fictional) characters, which more often than not appear to have mutated into disembodied or orphaned voices in the lyric."[16] Thus in contrast to dramatic poems, lyric poems frequently present the speaking of a voice or voices rather than the dialogue of characters. It is not the case that these "orphaned voices," must necessarily be un-named or entirely uncharacterized. Rather, the essence of their presence in the text is vocal rather than plot driven and a common mode of their speech is direct address. W.R. Johnson describes this trait as "a speaker or singer, talking to,

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[13] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 371; and Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 438, respectively.

[14] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 365, notes that, "a certain smallness of scale is generally associated with lyric" (364). Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 438, calls lyric "typically brief." Northrop Frye, "Approaching the Lyric," in *Lyric Poetry Beyond New Criticism* (eds. Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 31, notes that "there was a purist in the Greek Anthology who maintained that an epigram is a poem two lines long, and if you venture on a third line you're already into epic. But that seems a trifle inflexible …. Perhaps a more practicable approach would be to say that a lyric is anything you can reasonably get uncut into an anthology."

[15] Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 75.

[16] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 368.

singing to, another person or persons, often, but not always, at a highly dramatic moment in which the essence of their relationship, of their 'story,' reveals itself in the singer's lyrical discourse, in his praise or blame, in the metaphors he finds to recreate the emotions he seeks to describe."[17]

Musicality is a particularly ancient element of lyric. Etymologically, the term lyric derives from the stringed instrument upon which the accompaniment to this originally musical genre was presumably played in ancient Greece (the lyre). As J.W. Johnson notes, "l[yric] poetry may be said to retain most prominently the elements which evidence its origins in musical expression."[18] However, he acknowledges that "to speak of the 'musical' qualities of l[yric] poetry is not to say that such poetry is written always to be sung."[19] The presence of musicality may range from poems that are full-fledged hymns, "the quintessential specimen of lyric discourse (by any definition)," to texts that merely have a particular concentration of alliteration, assonance, and rhythm.[20]

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[17] W. R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 3.

[18] James William Johnson, "Lyric," in *NPEPP*, 713.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 353-54; see also, 377. Rhythm may be defined as "any sequence of events or objects perceptible as a distinct pattern capable of repetition and variation" (T.V.F. Brogan, "Rhythm" *NPEPP*, 1067). Rhythm, especially as commonly taken in the sense of a pattern of accents, is a particularly difficult element to pinpoint in biblical Hebrew poetry. The statement of Norman K. Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (4 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:829, summarizes the general position of the field well. He writes, "[t]he poetry of the OT is unlike classical, European, and even later Jewish poetry. Rhyme is virtually non-existent, and rhythm is flexible." An older expression of this same sentiment may be observed in the work of Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 361. Driver writes, "in ancient Hebrew poetry … there was (so far as has yet been discovered) no *metre* in the strict sense of the term" (emphasis original). F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Poetry, Hebrew" in *NIDB* (5 vols.; ed. Katharine Sakenfeld; Nashville: Abingdon Press, fc), 7 (mss. pagination), offers a strong statement of this position writing "the simple fact is that Hebrew verse is not metrical – at least not in any way that the term 'meter,' … retains any recognizable sense." Though the field is long past the practice of emending texts *metri causa,* admittedly there are a few scholars who still argue for Hebrew meter, for example, Wilfred G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (New York: T&T Clark, 2001), 98. However, he notes that "the most noticeable aspect of Hebrew metre when described in accentual terms … is that no single poem is consistently written in one metrical pattern." Similarly, Douglas K. Stuart, *Studies in Early Hebrew Meter* (HSM 13; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976) argues for "a system of meter based on the quantity of syllables per colon,"

Finally, lyric poems may be said to be typified by a "tropological density."[21] While imagery, metaphor, word play, enjambment, ellipsis, personification, and apostrophe may be properly said to be the common property and particular domain of all poetic forms, in lyric poetry they carry special weight and occur with particular frequency. As Dobbs-Allsopp has pointed out, in the absence of plot and developed characters these elements of word choice "must bear more of the meaning-making burden."[22]

2. A Word About Anachronism

Though the term "lyric" is an invention of the Greek world, and has been adopted and deployed heavily by later poetic critics, it is important to recognize that the use of the term is not for that reason inherently anachronistic. As J. W. Johnson has claimed, "l[yric] poetry has belonged to all ages."[23] Examples of poems that fit our modern understanding of the lyric genre may be adduced from Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt in periods pre-dating and concurrent with the existence of Israel. Sumerian poetry has

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(ibid., 9) but notes "incomplete graphic notation" (ibid., 15), "inconsistent orthography" (ibid., 16), as well as the possibility of "poetic license" (ibid., 16) as handicaps to his project. Though Stuart concludes with an overview of his concept of early biblical Hebrew meter, he acknowledges that "[m]any problems and uncertainties remain without immediate solution" (217). Additionally, one may note the position of Michael O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 66-67. O'Connor objects to what he refers to as the "Standard Description" of Hebrew poetry. The Standard Description includes the rejection of metrical requirements. In opposition to the Standard Description O'Connor proposes a syntactical rather than accentual metrical system. He argues that "non-metrical verse systems … would be indistinguishable from prose" and that such "verse is apparently unknown" (ibid., 66). He prefers instead to talk about "constriction" which is "of the same sort as a meter" though he notes, "given the standard usage of meter, it seems that it would be confusing to extend the term [and] … we have decided not to call the system a meter" (ibid., 67). The difficulties encountered by each of these scholars who attempt to defend some type of meter demonstrate the problematic nature of the project of determining biblical Hebrew meter. It seems best, with Lowth, to conclude that if biblical Hebrew poetry did have meter, it is now irretrievably lost. Robert Lowth, *Isaiah: A New Translation; With a Preliminary Dissertation, and Notes Critical, Philological, and Explanatory,* (2d ed; London: J. Nichols, 1779), x.

[21] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 364.

[22] Ibid., 356.

[23] J. W. Johnson, "Lyric," 726.

exemplars of lyric poems including hymns and love songs from as early as the Ur III period (e.g., "Bridegroom, Spend the Night at Our House Till Dawn").[24] Egyptian lyric poems include funeral songs as well as hymns and odes (e.g., "The Great Cairo Hymn of Praise to Amun-Re") along with love lyrics from the 19th and 20th dynasties (e.g., "Cairo Love Songs").[25] Additionally, biblical scholars have begun to use the term to describe several distinctly non-narrative poetic texts within the Hebrew Bible. Most notable among these are certain Psalms, the book of Lamentations, and the Song of Songs.[26]

Even in the ancient world it is possible to distinguish between poetic texts that depend upon a narrative or dramatic structure and those that operate paratactically in the absence of such a narrative superstructure. The "Epic of Gilgamesh" is appropriately so called, for it has the elements of epic poetry – a plot and developed characters along with parallelism and other indications of poetry.[27] Likewise, the Ugaritic corpus displays long

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[24] Yitschak Sefati, "Dumuzi-Inanna Songs" (*COS* 1.169:540) assigns a group of Sumerian love songs which includes "Bridegroom, Spend the Night in Our House Till Dawn," to this period the approximate date range of which he lists as 2100-1800 BCE. Examples of Sumerian hymns in lyric form include "To Nanshe," translated by Wolfgang Heimpel (*COS* 1.162: 526-531), "The Blessing of Nisaba by Enki," translated by William W. Hallo (*COS* 1.163: 531), and "Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur," translated by Jacob Klein (*COS* 1.166: 535-539). Numerous examples of Sumerian poems (including hymns) are translated in Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once…Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). Jacobsen refers to "Sumerian literature [as]…one of the oldest known literatures in the world" (xi) and dates the "oldest examples of written literary texts …from…roughly the middle of the third millenium B.C." (xi).

[25] Michael V. Fox, "Love Poems," *COS*, 1:125, notes that "the extant Egyptian love song texts all date from the 19th (ca. 1305-1200 BCE) and the early 20th dynasty (ca. 1200-1150 BCE)." Egyptian lyric hymns include "The Great Cairo Hymn of Praise to Amun-Re," translated by Robert K. Ritner (*COS* 1.25: 37-40), and "Two Hymns to the Sun God," translated by Miriam Lichtheim (*COS* 1.27: 43-44). Love lyrics include, "Papyrus Harris 500," translated by Michael V. Fox (*COS* 1.49: 126-127), "Cairo Love Songs," translated by Michael V. Fox (*COS* 1.50:127-128), and "Papyrus Chester Beatty I," translated by Michael V. Fox (*COS* 1.51:128-129).

[26] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse;" idem, "Lamentations as Lyric Sequence," (unpubl. ms.); idem, *Lamentations* (Int; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002); J.C. Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005). See also Strawn, "Lyric Poetry." Strawn helpfully summarizes the positions of these scholars and names these three books as "where lyric poems reside" (442).

[27] Benjamin R. Foster, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: A New Translation, Analogues, Criticism* (A Norton Critical Edition; New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), xi, calls Gilgamesh "the world's oldest epic masterpiece," comparing it to the prototypical epics of Homer. Foster also highlights such

poems governed by a plot. The stories of Baʿal, Kirta, and Aqhat each have a problem, climax, and resolution all communicated through the poetic medium. However, KTU 1.101, also found at Ugarit, is lyric and episodic describing Baʿal in hymnic form.[28]

Though it is clear that forms that have been convincingly called lyric are both sufficiently ancient and Near Eastern to overcome the charge of anachronism, the possibility of such a charge helps to point out an important distinction between the various uses to which this designation may be put. When modern poets write lyric poetry they may do so with an understanding of that category and its long history in mind (or at least operative in their milieu) and either write within, or in intentional tension with, its boundaries. I am certainly not suggesting that Second Isaiah was intentionally composed within a genre category named "lyric poetry." What I am suggesting instead, is that Second Isaiah participates in a large group of ancient Near Eastern poems that correspond in many ways to what we have come to call lyric poetry. Therefore, theories about the ways in which this sort of poetry means may be useful in thinking about it.

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poetic features as parallelism, figures of speech, and wordplay, alongside narrative development as elements of the Gilgamesh text (xvi-xxii).

[28] Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 439; Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 365. Both Strawn and Dobbs-Allsopp draw the conclusion that in contrast to other ancient Near Eastern cultures, the Hebrew Bible has no narrative poem equivalent and consequently label most, if not all, biblical Hebrew poetry lyric. Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 351, helpfully summarizes, the "aspiration toward something other than narrative may well be the most tractable lyric characteristic of Hebrew verse more generally." Their conclusions correspond to the observation of Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 27: "perhaps the greatest peculiarity of biblical poetry among the literatures of the ancient Mediterranean world is its seeming avoidance of narrative." The presence of KTU 1.101, clearly lyric by the standards we have articulated, among the texts discovered at Ugarit adds further weight to the argument above for the antiquity of this generic category, and the distinction between lyric and narrative poetic modes within a single ancient Near Eastern culture. On the poetry of KTU 1.101 see further, Katie M. Heffelfinger, "Like the Sitting of a Mountain: The Significance of Metaphor in *KTU* 1.101's (recto) Description of Baʿal," *UF* 39 (2007), fc.

3. Assessing Second Isaiah as Lyric

Given our discussion of lyric, it is possible to enumerate some characteristics of lyric poetry that may be used to demonstrate a particular text's affinity with this category. As noted above, an argument for the presence of lyric is necessarily a cumulative case argument. The following elements are characteristic of lyric poetry, and the accumulation of these features may help to illustrate the sense in which a poetic text may be helpfully discussed using a lyric approach:

1. Lyric poetry does not typically rely primarily upon plot or the interaction of developed characters to produce its cohesion and flow. In the consideration of whether or not Second Isaiah may be helpfully approached as lyric it will be important to determine if there is a palpable absence of plot and characterization. A significantly paratactic presentation could also be employed to argue for Second Isaiah's comparability with lyric in this regard.
2. Lyric commonly exhibits a high level of vocality, musicality, and a density of tropological language (metaphor, word play, enjambment, ellipsis, and the like). These traits certainly appear in all poetic types. Yet a particular concentration of them often appears in lyric poems. A high frequency of such elements in Second Isaiah would contribute to a cumulative case argument that it is shares significant traits with lyric poetry. A particular absence of such traits would work against such an argument.

3.1. Characteristic One: Second Isaiah's Units as Non-Narrative

As noted above, the lack of a narrative framework and paratactic structure are particularly significant characteristics of lyric poetry. In order to argue that Second Isaiah may be read as lyric poetry it is important to illustrate that the various individual poems that make up Second Isaiah exhibit a paratactic rather than narrative or dramatic structure. Parataxis may be defined as "a relative paucity of linking terms between juxtaposed clauses or sentences."[29] It produces an "adding"[30] effect or a sense of "piling up, swiftness, and sometimes compression."[31] It is possible to expand this concept to refer to the absence of linkages between thoughts, ideas, or even poems in sequence.[32] Throughout this study I will refer to parataxis on this broader than grammatical scale.

As W. R. Johnson notes, "[b]ehind every lyric, sometimes vaguely sketched, sometimes clearly defined, is a story that explains the present moment of discourse …. [I]n lyric poems … the story exists for the song, not the song for the story."[33] E. M. Forster comically depicts the desire for story as being among humanity's most primal urges. He describes the earliest "novelist" speaking to "an audience of shock-heads, gaping round the camp-fire, fatigued with contending against the mammoth or the wooly rhinoceros, and only kept awake by suspense. What would happen next? The novelist droned on, and as soon as the audience guessed what happened next, they either fell asleep or killed him."[34] Despite Forster's probable exaggeration, his depiction illustrates

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[29] Michael Patrick O'Connor, "Parataxis and Hypotaxis," *NPEPP*, 879.

[30] Albert Bates Lord, "Oral Poetry," *NPEPP*, 864, characterizes oral poetry, a heavily paratactic form, as having an "adding style."

[31] O'Connor, "Parataxis and Hypotaxis," *NPEPP*, 879-80.

[32] This is the sense in which F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 25, discusses parataxis in Lamentations. He writes: "Ideas and images are routinely juxtaposed to each other without being explicitly linked."

[33] W. R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric*, 35. Cited in Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 438.

[34] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955), 46.

his definition of "story." Forster defines "story" as "a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence."[35] He goes on to note that a story "can only have one merit: that of making the audience want to know what happens next."[36] Plot is a somewhat higher level operation for Forster. He refers to plot, like story, as "also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality." That is, the interest is not merely in what happens next, but in the necessary relationships between what has happened and what happens next.[37] Cheryl Exum has noted that the temptation to read for plot even when it is absent is a "readerly tendency."[38] This readerly drive to find story and plot has notable exemplars in the various suggestions that have been made about the life of the prophet, and other such narrative readings, from Second Isaian texts. I will consider three of these in turn.

An example of this tendency appears in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, a text that has occasioned a great deal of attention and has led to a number of attempts to read it as a story, including as an account of the death of the prophet responsible for the bulk of Second Isaiah.[39] However, the poem resists such an interpretation as story. While there

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[35] Ibid., 47.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 86.
[38] Exum, *Song of Songs*, 42.
[39] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002), 349, summarizes the passage: "a co-religionist who had come to believe in the Servant's mission and message, one who in all probability was a disciple, speaks about the origin and appearance of the Servant, the sufferings he endured, and his heroic and silent submission to death." It is worth noting that even the supposition that there was a single prophetic figure who should be understood as the "servant" and who had disciples is an attempt to create a character whose life explains the unit. Another scholar who takes such an approach is Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 19. Baltzer claims that the servant songs "can be described as elements of an ideal biography." He comments regarding 52:14-53:12 that "this text describes the Servant's exaltation and his rehabilitation in a heavenly court of law. His life is recollected and, contrary to all appearances, is interpreted in his favor." This mode of "recollection" seems on some level to be an attempt to arrange the events in this poem into a time sequence. A summary of similar positions is provided by Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (trans. David Green; SBL Studies in Biblical Literature Series 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 426-27. Albertz notes that "even today, many prefer to understand the text as a reflection on the death of Deutero-Isaiah and on his prophetic office." He cites Odil Hannes Steck, *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja* (FAT 4; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992), 22, who writes that the unit presupposes the death and funeral of the

does seem to be some allusion to a story lying behind the poem, the story is not laid out in narrative form. Rather, it moves by association. The "we" of the poem comments on a variety of impressions of the servant that have little apparent sequence or logic to them. They say that he went up; that he was despised; that he bore the sorrows of the "we"; that the "we" erred; that he was killed and buried; that Yhwh crushed him; and that he would be great, would prosper, and would make many righteous. This poem is clearly not a straightforward narrative account of the suffering, death, and burial of the servant. It does not occur in a sequence that describes events coming either logically or chronologically next. Rather than a standard (or expected) narrative flow ending with burial, the burial references occur in the middle of the poem, framed by images of exaltation. If this is a narrative, it is a strangely and oddly organized one. Indeed, the poem does not supply the connections necessary to understand the sequence of events. Instead one might ask, as David J.A. Clines has, "what if the force of the poem – to say nothing of the poetry of the poem – lies in its very unforthcomingness, its refusal to be

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servant; and Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, *Studien zu Prophetie und Weisheit* (FAT 23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 231. In Hermisson's view, the death of the servant is already in the past from the perspective of the author. Albertz himself adopts a collective interpretation which is no less narrative. He interprets the poem as the expression of "the startled kings and nation [who] see in retrospect how Israel had mediated on their behalf: through its very existence, unimposing from the start, through the unspeakable suffering it had been forced to undergo throughout its history, and through its scandalous downfall, Israel had vicariously borne all their sins," (*Israel in Exile*, 427). Again, the retrospective implies a time sequence and thus attempts to invoke the conventions of "story." See also Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 175-79. While Clifford does not attempt to identify the "servant," his comments on this passage reveal the extent to which his analysis is dominated by an attempt to narrativize the poem. He refers to 53:1-11b explicitly as "the long narrative" (177) and notes that the "many" tell the servant's "story" (178). Fredrik Hägglund, *The Making of Embrace and Exclusion: Isaiah 53 in the Light of Homecoming After Exile* (Lund: Lund University, 2007), 2, presents an interpretation of the unit that reads Isaiah 53 as an attempt to explain the failure of the promised glorious return. His reading takes account of the difficulties and complexities of the poem and does not attempt to harmonize it with the other poems about the servant (ibid., 26). Additionally, Hägglund's approach, like the present study, examines the poem as dealing with an unresolved issue in the world of the poem's historical audience. However, my own approach differs from Hägglund's in that he treats Isa 53 as a post-exilic addition to Second Isaiah, which places it outside the time frame of the present study. While Isa 53 does differ significantly from the poems that surround it, as this study will have occasion to demonstrate, disjunction and disunity are typical Second Isaian stylistic traits and need not be seen as necessarily implying divergent dating.

precise and to give *information*"?[40] Clines' comment makes it clear that the poem is non-narrative and paratactic in its flow. This poem does not arrange events in a time sequence and thus lacks story according to Forster's definition. It also fails to explain the causal relationships between events, and thus lacks plot.

Another example is the introductory poem in 40:1-31. It, too, has been considered by many as a kind of narrative – in this case a call narrative.[41] Again however, it is clear that Isa 40:1-31 is far from a call narrative. There are no characters in chapter 40, only voices. While many scholars supply the background of a meeting of the divine assembly to account for the voices and their relationship to one another, this meeting is not present in the poem.[42] There is not a sequence of events or interactions between these voices that either causes the audience to wonder what will happen next or explains the causal relationships between events. Rather, the unit moves associatively.

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[40] David J.A. Clines, *I, He, We, and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53* (JSOTSupp 1; Sheffield: JSOT, 1976), 25.

[41] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 72-76. Though Clifford does not use the term "call narrative" he draws a close parallel between Isa 40:1-11 and Isaiah 6 and concludes with the assertion that the passage has accomplished the appointing of an earthly messenger. He repeatedly refers to the "prophet" as participating in the text and makes reference to the presence of a "divine council." More explicit in this regard is John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (AB 20; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 15-17. McKenzie titles the section of his commentary that deals with 40:1-11 "The Call of the Prophet" (15). Additionally, he asserts, "the poem describes a prophet's vocation, and may be compared to Isa vi; Jer i; Ezek i. Although Second Isaiah is skillful in the use of visual imagery, he does not employ it here; his vocation resembles the vocation of Jeremiah rather than the vocation of Isaiah or Ezekiel" (17). However, it is striking that the scene to which McKenzie most closely parallels Second Isaiah's supposed call narrative is actually a narrative with characters (Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, and Yhwh), a setting (in the days of Josiah), and an explicitly mentioned conversation between characters in this setting ("the word of Yhwh came to me," Jer 1:4) while Isa 40:1-11 has none of these things. Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays on the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 187-8, calls Isa 40:1-8 "a paradigmatic example" of the form "Address to the Divine Council." Earlier, idem., "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," *JNES* 12 (1953): 275, he referred to "Isa. 40:1-8 [as] … a parade example of this literary form [address to the divine council] in Second Isaiah." N. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZAW* 77 (1965): 297-323, articulates the formal elements of a prophetic call narrative based on the calls of Gideon, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah (ben Amoz), and Ezekiel before applying this grid to Isaiah 40. Habel claims: "[i]t seems plausible … that a heavenly council scene similar to that in Isaiah 6 is involved" (314).

[42] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:422, notes that "the scene opens in the council of Yahweh" an obvious expression of a setting that attempts to provide an explanation for the presence of the various voices and the sequence of their statements. Also, Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 72-73; and Cross, "The Council of Yahweh," 276-77.

The image of a voice crying out in v. 3, leads to another instance of a calling voice in v. 6. Then by further association, a herald is instructed concerning what to do with her voice (v. 9). These voice references do not flow logically from one another. Neither do they create a story about three voices with plot or dramatic interaction between them. Later in the poem, stanzas introduced by interjections (40:10-11, 15-17) are juxtaposed with chains of rhetorical questions (40:12-14, 17-26, 27-31) signaling abrupt shifts and disjunctions.[43] There is no overarching story that holds the various lines together,[44] and

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[43] I will use the term "stanza" throughout this project to refer to sub-units of poems despite the fact that according to Edward Weismiller, "Stanza" in *NPEPP*, 1211, the term is tightly correlated with end-rhyme and meter. I choose to use the term for its familiarity and intend to convey no particular metrical assumptions through its use. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:385, likewise uses a typically metrical term without arguing for a metrical approach to Second Isaiah. Muilenburg's term, strophe, depends upon the perception of meter according to Ernst Haüblein and T.V.F. Brogan, "Strophe," in *NPEPP*, 1215. David L. Petersen and Kent Harold Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 60, note that "'stanza' is most frequently understood to be a semantic unit, that is, a unit of meaning." While Petersen and Richards claim that the use of the term "stanza" "provides little leverage for the interpreter of Hebrew poetry," they do not doubt the existence of meaningful units within Hebrew poems (61).

[44] Throughout the present study I will employ the term "line" as the basic "unit of structure" (T.V.F. Brogan, "Line," *NPEPP*, 694) in the poems under consideration. Throughout Second Isaiah I find the line to be co-extensive with the basic units marked out by the Masoretes in most cases. That is, lines typically end with a *sof pasuq* and begin following the *sof pasuq* of the previous line. Second Isaiah primarily exhibits bicola and tricola, that is lines that may be further subdivided into either two or three parts. I have employed parallelism as my guide in making subdivisions between cola. The importance of parallelism in structuring and indicating the presence of biblical Hebrew poetry is widely recognized (see e.g., Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 6-7; Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* [rev. and exp.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008], 5). The divisions of cola on the basis of parallelism does not stand in any essential tension with the syntactic constraints proposed by Michael O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* and further elucidated by William Holladay, "*Hebrew Verse Structure* Revisited (I): Which Words "Count"?" *JBL* 118 (1999):19-32. While I find O'Connor's model to largely confirm the delineations I have made on the basis of parallelism, the flexibility of O'Connor's constraints (e.g., "from zero to no more than three *clause predicators*" [Holladay, "*Hebrew Verse Structure*," 21 (emphasis original)]) while certainly reflective of the actualities of regularity, or lack thereof, in biblical Hebrew poetry, leaves the determination of cola open to a certain extent. Throughout Second Isaiah parallelism provides a relatively reliable guide and is often confirmed by the MT's *atnach* placement. In some cases however, it is difficult to determine with certainty whether what MT marks as a single line (i.e. those words appearing between two *sof pasuqs*) is one long bicolon with internally parallel cola, or a pair of closely bound shorter bicola. On occasion I have decided in favor of the pair of shorter bicola, thus breaking MT's line into a pair of closely bound lines. Extreme line length would result in some cases if MT's markings were followed rigidly. For example, Isa 43:26 would be a 4-7 line if the accents are counted and the *atnach* is treated as a reliable indicator of the colon break. It seems better to regard this verse as two lines, one a neatly paralleled and balanced 2-2 bicolon, and the second a 3-2-2 tricolon. However, the difference between these options is admittedly interpretively negligible. Second Isaiah's lines exhibit a wide range of line lengths such that determination exclusively on the basis of line length is not possible. For example, Isa

there are no developed characters whose interaction is traced. Thus, the call narrative proposal is an attempt to read the poem by *supplying a narrative superstructure* and the overall pattern of the first poem could (and should) be understood as paratactic rather than narratival.

Finally, one may turn as a last example to a passage frequently printed in modern translations as prose – the parody of the idol-maker (44:9-20).[45] Numerous scholars have read this text as indicating a sequence of events involved in the process of idol making. However, such a reading must contend with the fact that the idol-maker does not go about his craft in a logical sequence. While this may be part of the point of the parody, further evidence against a narrative reading is supplied by the reiteration of the process by the divine speaking voice. Thus, vv. 18-20 exhibit a strongly repetitive relationship to the preceding description of the idolaters craft.

The passage's movement from molten material working (v. 10), to iron smithing (v. 12) to woodworking (v. 13) argues against a narrative sequence as the governing

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41:19 is presents no obvious further subdivisions on the basis of its parallelism, but stands as a 6-6 bicolon. On the other hand, much shorter bicola appear as well, e.g. 40:1 (3-2) and 54:7 (3-3).

[45] Some debate has ensued since the time of Duhm about whether this text is authentically a part of Second Isaiah. I concur with Baltzer that "on the literary level some arguments suggest that the passage is intimately connected with the rest of the book" (*Deutero-Isaiah*, 192). The evident echoing between this passage and the shorter idol-maker passage in Isa 40:19-20 is one such argument. This text admittedly utilizes the *wayyiqṭōl* form several times, though not with the frequency common to narrative texts. See Deirdre Dempsey, "The Verb Syntax of the Idol Passages of Isaiah 44:9-20," in *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald* (CBQMS 32; eds. Lawrence Boadt and Mark S. Smith; Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2001), 145-46. As Dempsey points out, "*BHS* attempts to resolve the problem of the tenses in the piece by suggesting a full nine occurrences where *wayyiqṭol* in the text should be emended to *weyiqṭol.* This *weyiqṭol* would then function as a timeless present of general experience." Dempsey concludes that "the option to revocalize them all as *weyiqṭol* … is in each case open," and her reading of the Masoretic pointing as plausible depends upon a meaning that is admittedly "not common" (ibid.,156). As Baltzer notes, the passage has "a seemingly inconsistent use of tenses. This is one more indication of DtIsa's skill in the use of language, not an indication that the passage is not genuine" (*Deutero-Isaiah*, 193). Additionally, its structure is dominated by parallelism and as we will see it has no narrative superstructure. Also relevant are the comments of Muilenburg, *IB* 5:510. Muilenburg concurs with the assessment that this text is poetry, writing "Torrey, Kissane, Fischer, and Ziegler render the passage in poetic form, and careful reading of the Hebrew confirms their judgment in this matter. The parallelism is apparent almost throughout, and the presence of strophes can hardly be denied."

principle of this text. This shift in materials has not gone unnoticed by commentators, and not surprisingly, scholars have created stories to explain this shift and its chronological or logical sequence.[46] However, these interpretations reveal more about scholars' presuppositions of narrative sequencing than they do about the meaning of the text in question, as no such storyline is suggested or required by the unit itself. It is just as reasonable to conclude that the divine speaking voice is not concerned with recounting the process of idol-making accurately but with supplying images of the ludicrous nature of the project.[47] Thus, several media come in for critique, but no logical connection is required between them, neither is it necessary to construct a story to explain the temporal sequence of the idol maker's shift in materials. Rather, the parody moves associatively and paratactically, taking up first one image of idol-making and then another.

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[46] See for example Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40*-55, 242. Blenkinsopp comments that "we are, so to speak, taken on a guided tour of an idol factory." In this way Blenkinsopp creates a framework for understanding the way in which iron smithing might move to wood in such a way that wood might be either logically or chronologically next. A similar tendency may be observed in the comments of scholars on the shorter idol passage (40:19-20), and its corresponding shift in materials and craftsmen. In that context the problem is exacerbated by the presence of the hapax המסכן. The various suggestions for the interpretation of this term have produced corresponding stories through which to read the passage ranging from the movement from the description of a rich person's idol to that of a poor person, to the shift from the molten creation of the idol itself to the creation of its wooden stand. These various positions are helpfully summarized by H.G.M. Williamson, "Isaiah 40:20: A Case of Not Seeing the Wood for the Trees," *Bib* 67 (1986): 1-19. Compare the comments of K. Van Leeuwen, "An Old Crux in Isaiah 40,20," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festscrift Willem A.M. Beuken* (ed. J. Van Ruiten and M. Vervenne; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 285. Van Leeuwen writes "v. 20 describes the final work that has to be done in order to complete the making of the image: after casting and decorating the image it has to be set up upon a pedestal. For every new action in the process the text mentions the artisan who is an expert on accomplishing that specific task." Again, the attention to chronology is significant in this explanation. The shift in artisans is explained by the progression to the task which comes next in the "story" of building an idol. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 111-12, presents an interpretation similar to my own. He notes that, "the section vv. 9-20 has several unusual words and difficult logic," and ultimately presents the poem as a pastiche of scenes involving various kinds of idol makers. Additionally, one may note the agreement of Muilenburg, *IB* 5:513, who writes, "[t]he carpenter or "worker in wood," is contrasted to the worker in iron of vs. 12. The poet devotes a strophe to each."

[47] Michael B. Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (ed., Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 26, notes the illogical sequence of the idol maker parody and comments that "it is methodologically precarious to fault a parody for its logic!"

Trees / Wood (עץ) form a running chain throughout the course of the idol maker passage, but without narrative sequencing. First the idol maker "forges trees" (v. 13) an arresting image probably alluding to the process of shaping the wood in carving it, then the idol maker cuts the trees of the forest (v. 14), then reference is made to planting as if the image of cutting a tree down reminds the poet associatively that it had to have been planted (v. 14b). Finally the image of building a fire with the tree as material is presented (v. 16), which leads the poet back to the process of making an idol from the wood (v. 17). This movement of the poem in returning upon itself is repeated in more dramatic form in the reiteration of all of these actions in the divine voice's recounting of what the idol maker in ignorance does not say (vv. 18-20). This sort of repetition is a typical element of poetic discourse.[48] Like parallelism, larger repetitions structure the movement of the work associatively.[49]

Thus, the movement of even this apparent "story" of the idol maker is non-narrative and non-dramatic. If there is a sequence of events driven by what comes either logically or chronologically next, the poem does not make that progression explicit. The "story," if there is one, is vaguely sketched and this feature allows the utterance of the divine voice about the idol maker to take center stage and the paratactic, associative, and imagistic nature of the depiction of the idol maker to shine through.

Each of these three examples, though seemingly likely candidates as texts within Second Isaiah that have discursive or narrative structures, indeed the apparent parade examples of narrative structure within Second Isaiah, has instead exhibited paratactic,

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[48] Marianne Shapiro, "Repetition," *NPEPP*, 1035.

[49] Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 99. Dennis Pardee, *Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetic Parallelism: A Trial Cut ('nt I and Proverbs 2)* (VTSup 39; New York: E. J. Brill, 1988), 66-67, refers to large scale repetition in terms of parallelism.

non-narrative movement. Other passages are even more manifestly non-narrative. Thus, I conclude that Second Isaiah's units exhibit a palpable absence of plot, do not rely on developed characters, and display marked and obvious parataxis. Thus, it seems these Second Isaian poems exhibit the first and most significant characteristic of lyric poetry.

3.2. Characteristic Two: Second Isaiah's Units and Vocality, Musicality, and Tropological Density

In light of the other major set of lyric traits listed above, Second Isaiah's units should exhibit vocality, musicality, and tropological density if it is to be discussed and interpreted on analogy with lyric poetry. Each of the units examined thus far are demonstrably utterances. The opening poem (40:1-31) highlights its nature as an utterance through the thematic recurrence of references to voices (40:3, 6, 9). The conclusion of this opening poem (40:25-31), and the parody of the idol maker (44:9-20) are spoken in the divine voice. Indeed, as I will have occasion to argue later in this project, the vast majority of Second Isaiah is spoken in the divine voice.[50] Throughout, the poetry has a vocative nature.[51] The divine voice highlights its own activity of speaking, foregrounding the quality of the poem as utterance. This foregrounding is particularly visible (as chapter four will have occasion to argue) in the recurrent self-reference of the divine speaker. But other voices highlight their vocality in the units examined thus far. For example, the "we" of chapter 53 is both self-referential and self-

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[50] A full defense of this claim is undertaken in ch. 4.

[51] The particularly vocative character of the poetry of Second Isaiah has already been commented upon in this project. See the discussion of prophecy and poetry in ch. 1, and in particular n. 75.

reflective. Each of the voices I have mentioned are not developed characters, but speakers, utterers, "orphaned voices" in the text.[52]

Second, lyric poetry is commonly musical. On this point, it is worth noting that a number of Second Isaiah's units have classically been termed "hymns" or "songs" by critical scholarship,[53] and that at one point in the poetry the prophetic speaker calls upon the addressee to "sing" (42:10, שיר).[54] It is not necessary to argue that these poems were originally written to be sung. Indeed, I do not wish to argue that any of the Second Isaian texts so described actually were. However, the common practice of referring to these poems as "songs" indicates the level of "musicality" observed by scholars, that is, these poems exhibit a certain concentration of rhythm, repetition, and sound play.

Dobbs-Allsopp notes that if "there is a pervasive musicality to lyric verse beyond narrowly performative aspect, it is to be found in 'those elements which it shares with the musical forms' – rhythm, meter, a pervasive heightening of sonority through alliteration, assonance, and the like."[55] These "musical" elements, especially alliteration, are frequent in Second Isaiah. Note, for example the sound play in ראו איים וייראו (Isa 41:5); the

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[52] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 368.

[53] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 32. Clifford notes that since Duhm's work, "the 'Servant Songs' as a separate group have become a fixture in biblical theology." Likewise, Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (Scripta Minora; Lund: Royal Society of Letters, 1983), 9, calls the 'servant songs' "one of the most well known axioms of modern Old Testament study." Indeed, a section in the introduction devoted to the "Servant Songs" called by this name seems obligatory in modern commentaries on Second Isaiah. See e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 76-80; Muilenburg, *IB* 5:407-10; McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, XXXVIII-LV; Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 18-22. Baltzer rejects Duhm's terminology referring instead to "The Servant of God Texts," 18. However, that his discussion is derived from Duhm's classification is evident in his opening description of these texts as being distinguished as a group since Duhm's commentary, (ibid., 18-19). Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs*, 15, devotes his monograph to disproving Duhm's theory of the independence of this group. Thus, Mettinger's farewell is addressed to the possibility of excising the servant songs from the rest of Second Isaiah and using them, independently, to determine the nature of Second Isaiah's speech about the servant (ibid., 45-46) rather than to the question of the appropriateness of the term "song."

[54] The verb רנה is also translated "sing" by many modern translations (ASV, KJV, NIV, NRSV) and is commanded at 44:23; 49:13; and 54:1.

[55] Dobbs-Allsopp, "Psalms and Lyric Verse," 377 citing Johnson, "Lyric," *NPEPP*, 714.

consonantal and vocalic sound play between וְגִיד ("neck") and וְאַגִּיד ("I declared") in Isa 48:4-5; the chiastic structure of 48:18; the alliteration of להנחיל נחלות (49:8) followed up quickly by ינהלם (49:10); the chiastic repetition in 50:4; and the alliteration and assonance of בְּשֶׁצֶף קֶצֶף (54:8). Such examples could be multiplied many times over.

Finally, much lyric poetry exhibits a significant concentration of troped language. Intensely imagistic language, as well as word- and sound-play typify Second Isaiah's poetry. For example, 49:17 plays with the similar sounds of the words בֹּנַיִךְ (builders), בָּנָיִךְ (sons), and אבניך (stones) – in some ways implying all three of these terms in its description of what is hurrying to return to Zion.[56] Poetic imagery recurs frequently. "Emotionally charged"[57] images such as the bereaved mother receiving her children back (49:18-21), the people etched into Yhwh's palms (49:16), and the highly sarcastic depiction of the idolater bowing down to a twig (44:9-20) are but a few examples of Second Isaiah's poetic level of diction.

Though examples could be multiplied of passages that exhibit the features of musicality and tropological density, one short passage chosen virtually at random will suffice. In 43:16-17 the poetic voice describes the deity using imagery from the crossing of the Red Sea tradition. The voice proclaims:

כה אמר יהוה
הנותן בים דרך
ובמים עזים נתיבה
המוציא רכב־וסוס
חיל ועזוז יחדו

[56] Both Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 323, and Islwyn Blythin, "Note on Isaiah 49:16-17," *VT*16 (1966): 229-30 observe this word-play. See further ch. 5.

[57] Emotionally charged images are those images that describe human emotions, or that employ "emotion terminology." I will define "emotion terminology" below as those words customarily taken lexically to refer to human emotions. See pp. 89-90 for a discussion of the role of imagery in the literary representation of emotion.

ישכבו בל־יקומו
דעכו כפשתה כבו

"Thus says Yhwh
the one who makes in the sea a way
and in the mighty waters a path,
the one who drives out rider and horse,
valiant and mighty together
they lie down, they will not rise
they are quenched like flax they are extinguished:"

As happens frequently throughout Second Isaiah, the poetic voice introducing divine speech disrupts the progression from messenger formula to message with a hymnic elaboration. The high concentration of participles provides assonance and a certain amount of rhythm through the repetition of *q®tēl* forms.[58] Additionally, the poetry is dominated by the presence of long *u*-vowels, not only in the third person masculine plural verbal endings that dominate the final cola, but also in the medial vowels of וָסוּס, וְעִזּוּז, and יָקוּמוּ.[59] Though strict meter is not a formal element of Hebrew poetry, it is worth noting as well that each colon of this poetic unit consists of three words. Thus the rhythm produced by parallelism is heightened by the repetition of even colon lengths.[60]

[58] Even Clifford, who eschews the lyric nature of Second Isaiah comments on the use of "language familiar to Israel from hymnody, especially the present participle commonly used for divine activity" (*Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 81). Clifford makes similar comments about the close link between participles and hymns throughout his work (ibid., 118, 132). Also relevant are the comments of Muilenburg, *IB* 5:494, who notes that the unit in question is "in the style of a hymn in participial construction." In his examination of Psalm forms Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (completed by Joachim Begrich; trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 30, cites chains of participles as "a characteristic piece of the hymn."

[59] Cf. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 172, who comments about the sound of these lines, "one can almost hear the army coming up."

[60] A count of the syllables in each line contributes still further to this sense of evenness. With the exception of the first line with 5 syllables, the pattern of the remaining lines is 7-8-7-7-7-8.

The first two lines after the messenger formula exhibit both parallelism and ellipsis.[61] The parallelism of the lines is highlighted syntactically and forms a governing pattern for the group of lines. The first pair of cola share a participle (הנותן) as their primary verb, as do the second pair of cola (המוציא), binding the two bicola closely to one another.[62] In the final pair of cola, the pattern is abruptly altered, but no less balanced. Each of the two cola in this pair contains two finite verbs of its own producing an *ababcc* grammatical pattern for the three lines as a whole.[63] The elliptical omission of הנותן or an equivalent by the second colon allows room within the seconding colon for an additional descriptor, the adjective עזים. The second bicolon participates in a parallel relationship with what has gone before. Its use of an opening participle parallels the structure of the earlier line. Here again, the second element of the pair elides a significant amount of material, depending heavily upon the thought of the previous colon. "Valiant and mighty together" makes little sense without the preceding claim that Yhwh makes the horse and rider go out. This elision allows space within the limits of the parallel line to add the elaboration "together." Finally, the last pair exhibits its own parallelistic structure. These two cola are heavily verbal, containing four finite verbs between them. The final colon contains a double-duty term, כפשתה. It is surrounded by relatively synonymous verbs. "Like flax" could be understood as modifying either or both of these verbs. Thus

[61] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 303-4, defines ellipsis as "the omission of a particle, a word or group of words within a poetic or grammatical unit, where its presence is expected." O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 122, refers to the possibility of ellipsis as "one important consequence of matching" (his term for parallelism). Like O'Connor, I see the two phenomena as closely related. Parallelism makes ellipsis possible by providing the expectation of a particular element, and thus the possibility of and conditions for recognizing its omission. In turn, ellipsis strengthens the relationship between the line pair by tying them more closely together.

[62] Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism: Revised and Expanded* (Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Dearborn, Mich.: Dove, 2008), 54, discusses the pairing of a verbal clause with a nominal clause, as is the case within these line pairs, in her discussion of syntactic parallelism.

[63] See ibid., 85-86, for a discussion of such grammatical patterning in Hebrew poetry.

the final colon of this elaborate introduction for the deity's speech forms a miniature chiasm.

Again, such an example could be repeated many times over – indeed, in every poem within Second Isaiah. The point then is made that the various poems that make up Second Isaiah share the second common characteristic of lyric poems – they exhibit a significant concentration of vocality and tropological density.

3.3. Summary: Second Isaiah's Units as Lyric Poems

To summarize to this point: building upon the consensus position that Second Isaiah is an exemplar of biblical Hebrew poetry,[64] I have proceeded to argue that Second Isaiah's units can and should be heuristically assigned to the sub-category of lyric poetry based on their non-narrative and non-dramatic flow, radical dependence upon parataxis, and concentration of musicality, vocality, and tropological density.

The determination that it is appropriate to apply tools derived from the study of lyric poetry to Second Isaiah has important implications for several enduring critical questions related to Second Isaiah. For one example, Clifford has noted that the length and number of units within Second Isaiah is an open question whose answer is largely dependent upon the assumptions of the interpreter about the genre category to which it is assigned.[65] The claim that the units are lyric poetry implies that they will be relatively

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[64] This consensus position was outlined at the beginning of ch. 1.

[65] Proposals in current research for the number of units in Second Isaiah range from 17 units by Clifford (*Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 39) to 70 units by Joachim Begrich (*Studien zu Deuterojesaja* [München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963], 13). Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 39, comments that "the number of units is vital and virtually predetermines a scholar's interpretation." Clifford himself determines that Second Isaiah is prose oratory and "there are few units [which] … leads one to concentrate upon rhetoric and compositional techniques that unify long composition" (ibid., 39).

short.[66] Additionally, since lyric commonly highlights the speaking of a voice, shifts in speaker may be considered as one piece of evidence for breaks between poems. Much more will be said in future chapters about the task of assigning Second Isaiah to its various poetic units.[67]

4. Tools for Reading Lyric Poetry

The aim of this chapter is not merely to suggest that Second Isaiah may be discussed in terms of the poetic sub-category lyric, but to argue that this designation opens up possibilities for interpreting Second Isaiah in ways that attend to its literary artistry. As chapter one argued, progress in examining Second Isaiah's overarching meaning has been significantly hampered by the unavailability of tools for interpreting sequences of poems as artistic wholes. Throughout the present study I will employ a lyric approach to interpreting Second Isaiah. That is, I will employ a literary method that attends specifically to the features Second Isaiah shares with lyric poetry. My contention is that this lyric approach offers possibilities for reading Second Isaiah in a new way. The lyric approach involves the application of several concepts gleaned from the work of both biblical scholars and literary critics, the application of which to Second Isaiah contributes to a better understanding of its meaning as an artistic whole. These tools include attention to the nature of lyric sequencing, consideration of the possibility of a text's

[66] In spite of the claim that Second Isaiah's units are likely to be relatively short it is important to point out that this conclusion does not necessarily lead to "the atomization of the chapters into small units on the assumption that the poem's length is coextensive with the form that is used" (Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 34). By "relatively short," then, I do not mean fragmentary or atomistic. Clifford refers to his own delineation of the units in Second Isaiah as "few" and by implication relatively long (ibid., 39). Clifford lists 17 units and considers himself in company with Muilenburg whom he cites as listing 24 units. My analysis leads to only 30 individual poems of varying lengths, a number not significantly larger than Muilenburg's.

[67] See ch. 4 for a full discussion of the breakdown of Second Isaiah's units, aspects of making this determination, and the difficulties involved in doing so.

examination of a situation from a variety of perspectives, appreciation of the significance of disjunction, attention to the rhetorical significance of the use of a unified voice to produce cohesion, and employment of modes of engaging the flow of a voice's tonality.[68]

4.1. Lyric Sequencing as a Lens for Reading Lyric Collections

In chapter one I had occasion to comment on Second Isaiah's length compared to the typical brevity of lyric poems. There I concluded that it is probably necessary to think of Second Isaiah as a collection of poems. However, this understanding does not preclude attention to the whole as a meaningful unit. Melugin's suggestion, "that we assume that there might be an analogy to the artistic use of language *inside* the genre unit and the way in which units are related to their context,"[69] provides a helpful way forward, for it suggests that one might consider the structure of the whole of Second Isaiah on analogy with the structure of its parts. As this chapter has argued, Second Isaiah's parts may be understood as lyric poems and are structured paratactically rather than discursively. Thus, what is needed for interpreting Second Isaiah as a meaningful whole is a strategy for reading the series of component poems in light of a paratactic rather than discursive arrangement. The concept of lyric sequencing, developed by critics of modern literature and recently drawn into biblical studies, is precisely an approach that treats the whole on analogy to the parts.[70]

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[68] These terms will receive definition and discussion below.

[69] Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 88 (emphasis original).

[70] Attention to the dynamics of lyric sequencing is relatively new both in poetic criticism and in biblical studies. As noted earlier, Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 442, refers to this sort of research into biblical poetry as being "very much in its infancy."

4.1.1. Defining Lyric Sequencing

Lyric sequencing is one way lyric poetry may achieve a broader reach than that allowed by its brief and episodic character. As Dobbs-Allsopp puts it, "[a] … means for increasing the lyric's otherwise confining amplitude is to successively link a number of individual lyric poems and mold them into a greater, organic whole. What gets enacted in such a process, then, is a sequence of lyric poems whose nature and dynamic, holistically considered, are essentially that of a lyric poem writ large."[71] Thus all the features I have identified as characteristic of lyric poems (non-narrative, non-discursive, paratactic, vocalic, musical, densely troped) typify lyric sequences, but on a larger scale. In particular, the concept of lyric sequencing implies that the relationships between various poems should, like the individual lines of lyric poems, relate to one another paratactically and in the absence of plot or discursive argumentation.

As with individual lyric poems it is important to point out that lyric sequencing is "quite common and knows very few chronological or geographical boundaries."[72] Dobbs-Allsopp notes:

> that the technological capacity for composing integrated lyric sequences was in evidence in the larger ancient Near East can at least be suggested in a preliminary way. The Mesopotamian penchant for collection and organization is well known and is exemplified by the existence of numerous literary catalogs of various kinds, including hymnic literature …. And then there is the outstanding example of the collection of forty-two Sumerian temple hymns that may date as early as the late twenty-fourth or early twenty-third century B.C.E. …. As for Egypt, one need only look as far as the multiple collections of love lyrics.[73]

Thus, like the category lyric poem, the concept of lyric sequencing can be heuristically applied to ancient series of lyric poems without suggesting that poets had a modern genre

[71] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 365.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 366.

category in mind. Said differently, lyric sequencing is not simply or only a modern phenomenon. Rather, lyric sequences seem to exist in the ancient world, and modern conceptions of how these sequences may be interpreted may prove to be useful in thinking about them.

Lyric sequences can take several potential forms. Collections can be clearly collections of separate poems, as is the case in the Psalter. In this form, lyric sequences foreground the individual lyric poems, forcing the reader to choose to read across the explicit breaks between poems for connections between poems. A stronger paratactic impact is achieved in texts that do not make explicit breaks between the poetic units but allow them to play off of one another directly and force the reader to determine the breaks between individual poems. Song of Songs is an example of such a sequence, and, so I will argue, Second Isaiah exhibits many of the same characteristics.[74]

4.1.2. Second Isaiah's Comparability with Lyric Sequences

Having determined that the individual units that make up Second Isaiah can be meaningfully understood as individual lyric poems, all that remains in order to argue that

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[74] Several scholars have referred to the Song of Songs in lyric terms. E.g., Exum, *Song of Songs,* 33-45, treats the work as a single long poem and includes a discussion of the issue of one poem or many (33-37) and a separate discussion of the lyric character of the book (42-45). However, as Strawn, "Lyric Poetry," 443, notes, "sequence is, in many ways, just another way to write a long lyric poem …, the distinction may be interpretively negligible." Strawn himself supports reading the Song of Songs as a lyric sequence rather than a single long poem as Exum does. Also pertinent are the comments of F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Introduction and Critical Notes Song of Songs" in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford University, 2001), 959-68. Dobbs-Allsopp favors a reading of Song of Songs as lyric sequence. He writes regarding the Song "the sequence is coherent and exhibits a lyrical structure that derives its unity from repetitions and juxtapositions rather than from narrative devices such as plot or character development" (959). See also, F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp "Song of Songs," in *NIDB* (5 vols.; ed. Katharine Sakenfeld; Nashville: Abingdon, forthcoming), 5:19 (mss pagination). There he more explicitly takes up the question of whether the Song is one long lyric poem or a lyric sequence, writing that "the alternative theory [to lyric sequence] most frequently pressed … that the Song is one long lyric poem, is difficult to imagine outside of the most literate of cultures." In addition Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 55, considers the Song of Songs a collection rather than a long poem.

they may be interpreted together on analogy with lyric sequences is to show that they hold together in the absence of plot or discursive argument. We have already seen that this is, in fact, the case. Second Isaiah has no developed characters, only voices. There are several voices that receive names throughout: Yhwh, the "servant," and Zion, for example. However, as many have noted, the "servant" and Zion never directly interact with one another, and though the deity speaks to both, there is no apparent cohesive story that binds these interactions.[75] If a story, as Forster maintains, can be evaluated on the basis of whether or not it makes "the audience want to know what happens next," then Second Isaiah lacks a story.[76] Additionally, the voices in Second Isaiah do not participate in a dramatic plot characterized by complication, climax, and resolution.[77] For example, who is the protagonist of Second Isaiah? What is his or her primary challenge? What constitutes the rising action? What problem is addressed? What would constitute a satisfying denouement? Indeed, there is no discernible storyline at all. There is no sequence of things that come, either logically or chronologically, next. Neither is there a logical flow of argument. What is the main point of Second Isaiah if it is understood as a logical argument? To what does it urge the reader to give assent? What claim does it make or what course of action does it urge? While Richard Clifford has argued very

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[75] Richtsje Abma, "Traveling from Babylon to Zion: Location and its Function in Isaiah 49-55," *JSOT* 74 (1997): 4, observes this Second Isaian trait as well. She writes: "The coherence of the speeches in their present state is not easy to fathom. The speakers appear in quick alternation, the address of a speech can change quite suddenly (50.1; 51.13) and many of the characters remain vague and unidentified (e.g. the servant). The relevant 'stage directions' seem to be lost." Abma's suggestion of missing stage directions suggests a particularly dramatic approach to the problem. Though she attempts to deal with the disjunction in a different manner than I have suggested, her observation supports my claim that there is a palpable discontinuity about Second Isaiah's progression.

[76] Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 27.

[77] Ibid., 86, refers to plot, like story, as "also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality." That is, the interest is not merely in what happens next, but in the necessary relationships between what has happened and what happens next. If Second Isaiah lacks a story, it certainly also lacks a plot.

specifically that Second Isaiah urges the exiles to make the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, it seems that his reading of this text as urging such a specific course of action is, as in the case of attempts to read for plot, imposed on the poetry and is an attempt to read discursively despite Second Isaiah's own conventions.[78] Despite Clifford's claims, Second Isaiah does not, in fact, privilege the exhortations to flee Babylon in such a way that these are the primary and evident point of the unit.[79] Neither is the work as a whole organized around a system of claims, with arguments or exhortations in support of those claims. Nor does Second Isaiah conclude with a clear call to action.[80] Rather than a unified argument, Second Isaiah appears to be an accumulation of utterances. Rather than a story or an argument, it offers a series of encounters with speaking voices.

One of the consequences of paratactic structure in lyric sequences that may be used to argue for its presence is its notable "re-arrangability." As Dobbs-Allsopp points out, in paratactically organized works, "the dislocation or omission of individual thematic units, unlike in sequentially structured discourse, will not render the whole unintelligible or make it incoherent. To the contrary, one of the hallmarks of paratactic structure is that thematic elements may be added, omitted, or exchanged quite happily."[81] In lyric sequences, the pattern produced by paratactic sequencing is significant, and carries some burden in the overall meaning-making. Rearrangement of the units changes that overall

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[78] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 5. See further ch. 1.

[79] Clear calls for a "departure" occur only at 48:20 and 52:11-12, hardly privileged moments in the movement of an oration or series of orations. By contrast, the opening lines of the sequence urge an activity: "Comfort, O comfort my people" (40:1) and the conclusion to the series also urges an activity "come to the waters," (55:1). Neither of these exhortations seems clearly tied to an overarching exhortation to return. Such a connection would have to be supplied by the reader, thus reading for argument in much the same way as Exum, *Song of Songs*, 42, has described narratival approaches as reading for plot.

[80] For more on the divergence between the overall flow of Second Isaiah and that of a discursive argument see my discussion of Clifford's claims about the rhetoric of Second Isaiah in ch. 1, and in particular Clifford's discussion of Samuel's speech as a comparison partner (*Fair Spoken*, 16).

[81] Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," 371.

meaning and pattern by highlighting and privileging different resonances and correspondences between units. The meaning of a sequence arranged differently would be altered but not eliminated by such rearrangement.[82] By contrast, in narratives and discursive prose, the omission or rearrangement of units would indeed create incomprehensibility. How would one understand the Joseph cycle if the episode in which the brothers sell Joseph was omitted or occurred after their reconciliation? How would one understand the Eden account if God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden before the account of their creation, or if the serpent urged them to eat from the tree after their expulsion? In contrast, Second Isaiah *could* be rearranged. If Yhwh addressed Zion prior to Jacob, if the "suffering servant" was introduced prior to Cyrus, or even if the work opened rather than closed with the invitation to come to the waters, the overall flow, impact, and meaning would be different certainly, but Second Isaiah would not be meaningless or incomprehensible.

Though examination of Second Isaiah's paratactic movement could be undertaken across each of the breaks between individual poems within it, an initial foray into the first few poems of Second Isaiah provides examples that support my case.[83] There is no plot driven or discursive connection from the first poem of Second Isaiah to the second. I have already argued that the opening poem (40:1-31) does not present a prophetic call

[82] Rosenthal and Gall, *Modern Poetic Sequence*, 27, discuss the arrangement of lyric sequences into a "graduated kinship of moods." Their description of Thomas Hardy's struggles to place his poems into a satisfying sequence highlights the way in which the order of a sequence contributes to its overall meaning (ibid., 27). Likewise, their assessment that Whitman's *Calamus* is a lesser work in its later editions because Whitman excised particular poems demonstrates that the omission of poems may do a work overall detriment. However, Rosenthal and Gall do not claim that without those poems *Calamus* is any less a sequence or is less comprehensible. It is merely inferior in their artistic estimation (ibid., 43). About the ways in which sequences produce meaning and hold together across these tonal shifts I will say significantly more later in this ch. and in ch. 5.

[83] A more extensive summary of the paratactic movement of Second Isaiah as a whole is provided in ch. 4.

narrative, but rather that it is a paratactic chain of the callings of various voices. These voices address the need to speak, the incomparability of Yhwh, and the frailty of humanity. While each of these subjects are possible topics that a developed character might explore in narrative form, perhaps undertaking a journey to overcome human frailty (as does Gilgamesh), or seeking out the divine for a contest of minds and wills (as does Job), the end of that poem (40:27-31) does not progress in any of these directions. Rather, the divine voice turns to address Jacob/Israel and accuses the addressee of ignorance of the incomparability of the deity. This accusation of ignorance gets developed in terms of Yhwh's vastly superior stamina to human beings and that idea in turn circles back around to the imagery of human frailty. Thus these stanzas are linked paratactically. They are bound together based on themes and images in which they both participate in similar ways. However, the cohesion of a plot or discursive argument is not attempted or attained. The poem that follows (41:1-7) is even more disjunctively linked, choosing a new addressee, the islands, to exhort to awe.[84]

Catchword associations, thematic recurrences, and refrain-like repetitions tease the reader of Second Isaiah to find coherence and an overarching organization to their recurrence, but in the end there is none.[85] An early description of the making of idols (41:6-7) gets developed further in the parody of the idol-maker (44:9-20) but there is no explicit connection between them, only the seconding effect of the repetition when the poems are read in sequence. Issues of memory and forgetting recur throughout, hinting at

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[84] For a full summary of Second Isaiah's paratactic flow, see further pp. 141-150.

[85] While the discussion of the idol maker passages above illustrated that readers of the text have historically "found" cohesion among these recurrences, this cohesion is imposed on the text by readerly activity. Second Isaiah itself exhibits significant tension among its various recurrences as chs. 3 and 4 will detail and as Appendix 1 illustrates.

thematic coherence.[86] However, any expectation of thematic and logical consistency is complicated by the explicit contrast between the call to "remember the former things" (46:9) and the exhortation "do not remember the former things" (43:18). References to water, both its scarcity and abundance, pop up here and there in various poems hinting at thematic unity, but they form no argument or story-line. Various images of the "fashioner" (יצר) play off of one another: Yhwh as Israel's fashioner, the parody of the fashioner of the idols, "fashioner" as a designation for the deity as creator. The presence of these various uses in proximity creates tensions for the others and places them in resonant relationships with one another. They do not, however, form a plot, an argument, or an oratory. Instead, all of these elements are typical of paratactic cohesion in which

> ideas and images are routinely juxtaposed to each other without being explicitly linked. This forces the reader to consider each idea on its own and then in relation to those that are most contiguous to it. Individual truths are allowed to surface and be experienced on their own, but are also ultimately required to be considered as a part of the larger whole, which acts as a strong deterrent to the domination of any single perspective.[87]

4.1.3. Implications of Reading Second Isaiah as Lyric Sequence

I have argued that Second Isaiah may be compared analogously to modern lyric sequences. The way in which Second Isaiah's individual poems are present is comparable to a chain of lyric poems linked paratactically without the aid of a narrative or discursive superstructure. This determination has several significant implications for an appropriate approach to the interpretation of Second Isaiah.

1. The delimitation of individual poems is a significant and challenging task. This is, of course, the case irrespective of what types of genre expectations

[86] References to memory occur in 43:18, 25; 44:21, 22; 47:7; 49:8-26; 51:13; and 54:4.
[87] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 25.

one employs when interpreting Second Isaiah.[88] However, it seems that the observation of Second Isaiah's particularly paratactic nature impacts the discussion of this issue. Since the paratactic cohesion the component poems exhibit within themselves is of the same sort as their macro-level cohesion, the poems frequently blend into one another with stanza breaks being difficult to distinguish from poem breaks. This insight suggests at least an explanation, though not a complete solution to the vastly divergent reckonings of the number of units in Second Isaiah by various scholars. Additionally, interpreting Second Isaiah on analogy with lyric sequences implies that one must distinguish the poems and examine them as poems in their own right in addition to consideration of how they interrelate thematically. Thus, the poems should ideally be distinguished from one another at an early stage of examination.

2. Significantly for the project of understanding the "message" of Second Isaiah, the unit is unlikely to aim primarily at a unified discursive claim or the resolution of a plot complication. Rather, the poetry is likely to succeed in creating an event or series of events – encounters with the uttering voice(s). The meaning of the poetry is thus likely to reside in the impact of these encounters rather than in a single paraphrasable point.
3. Finally, the approach to the text should take account of the nature of the text as a paratactic whole. As Dobbs-Allsopp writes, "collections … often require different, nonnarrative strategies of reading, where fragmentation

[88] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 39, notes the connection between the determination of unit length, a scholar's conception of Second Isaiah's genre, and the resulting interpretation.

> and the accommodation of fragmentation are often central aspects of the fiction enacted."[89] Thus, the approach undertaken in future chapters will involve an attentive resistance to the "readerly tendency" to read for plot.[90] Additionally, it will be necessary to attend to the insight of Roland Greene that the reader of a lyric sequence "must accommodate discontinuity as well as continuity, allow for the spatial dimension of lyric temporality, and offer a means of getting into and over the white gaps between the poems without brutally closing them."[91] This attention to the significance of discontinuity and resistance to narrativizing harmonization should extend both to the interpretation of individual units and to the ways in which Second Isaiah links its various units.

4.2. Disjunction as Significant and Meaningful

As chapter one indicated and the preceding description of the nature of lyric sequences has reinforced, any attempt to articulate the meaningful arrangement of Second Isaiah will have to reckon with Second Isaiah's tendency to progress paratactically by juxtaposition and repetition. Melugin's work has already pointed to this insight. Regarding Mowinckel's *Stichwörter* theory Melugin observed, "[t]he fault lies, not in having argued that verbal repetition was important in the association of units, but rather in having assumed that it was merely a mechanical means of arrangement. He ought to

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[89] Dobbs-Allsopp, "Poetry, Hebrew," 4:12 (mss pagination).
[90] Exum, *Song of Songs*, 42.
[91] Roland Greene, *Post-Petrarchism: Origins and Innovations of the Western Lyric Sequence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 20.

have asked: What is the *significance* of the repetition of words and phrases."[92] Likewise, Melugin's work repeatedly makes reference to "kerygmatic significance of … juxtaposition," highlighting his sense that juxtaposition is significant and meaningful.[93] While Melugin's observations about the frequent use of juxtaposition and repetition in the formation of Second Isaiah into a literary whole are pertinent, new approaches to further Melugin's insight that juxtaposition is significant have been developed in the years since he wrote. Useful tools to be employed by the present study for the interpretation of significant disjunctions include Rosenthal and Gall's observation that lyric sequences frequently work through the tensions surrounding an "intractable problem" and Daniel Grossberg's delineation of "centripetal" and "centrifugal forces." These will be discussed in turn.

4.2.1. Lyric and "Intractable Problem"

The examination of lyric sequences up to this point has repeatedly noted that sequences struggle between drives toward fragmentation and unity. This struggle is one symptom of the turmoil that is at the root of lyric structure. Rosenthal and Gall point out that, "the ability to hold in balance conflicting and logically irreconcilable energies, and to identify their presence and intensity, is felt as mastery over contradiction, mastery by poetic conversion into a pattern of unruly but mobilized affects."[94] This specialization in "irreconcilable energies," turns out to be an important key to the interpretation of lyric sequences.

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[92] Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 77.
[93] Ibid., 101.
[94] Rosenthal and Gall, *Modern Poetic Sequence*, 11.

Rosenthal and Gall describe the tension underlying modern lyric sequences in this way:

> In all the major sequences we find one overwhelming pressure at work: an urgent need to cope with an intractable situation. It presents itself as a sense of being balked, or of being beset by an engulfing flood of circumstance and consciousness that can be stayed only momentarily. The counter-efforts of sensibility lead to clarifying an inner state and relating it somehow to the intractable principle … through poetic equilibrium.[95]

Thus they identify an "intractable problem" as that which gives birth to the modern lyric sequence, the need that calls the work forth from the poet's pen, and the subject matter that its various poems explore. Lyric sequences, on this model, are a way of getting at a situation from all its sides, depicting the emotions involved, holding up the various competing elements, and leaving the tensions explored but ultimately unsolved. Another way in which Rosenthal and Gall talk about the lyric sequence's driving pressure is by describing the sequence as "a response to more than the sensibility can readily handle."[96] Though this description has distinctively modern psychological and individual overtones, its level of applicability to ancient writings is illustrated by the examples Rosenthal and Gall volunteer, "the palpable anxiety induced by social changes that seem to render past beliefs and ideas of personality obsolete; or, contrariwise, the passion to repossess the lost past – a people's old ways of speech and folkways and acute sense of place."[97] This is a description that surely resonates with what we know of the experience of the historical exile. Whatever else we may say about the exilic situation, "social changes" and a change in "place" are certainly fitting descriptors of at least part of the situation with which the exiles were forced to cope.[98] Indeed, despite the psychological overtones

[95] Ibid., 101.
[96] Ibid., 164.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid. See further the discussion of the historical circumstances of exile in ch. 3.

of Rosenthal and Gall's description, situations to which there is ultimately no answer long predate modern psychology, and lyric exploration seems one mode of dealing with them. Thus, at the heart of modern lyric sequences we often find some situation that might be named the text's "intractable problem," an irresolvable conflict that gives rise to the various expressions and tensions of the text, about which the text revolves, and in light of which the text strives to achieve a sort of equilibrium.

Though we have thus named the central organizing principle of a modern lyric sequence its "intractable problem," it is important to note that modern lyric sequences do not aim precisely at "solving" this problem. Rosenthal and Gall hasten to point out that the lyric sequence's, "*object is neither to resolve a problem nor to conclude an action, but to achieve the keenest, most open realization possible*."[99] I take Rosenthal and Gall's statement to mean that lyric sequences explore a situation from a variety of sides and perspectives. The emphasis is thus on the exploration rather than on explanation or solution. While an "intractable problem" may be at the heart of the sequence and organize its overall flow and even determine its subject matter, Rosenthal and Gall specifically call this problem "intractable." That is, the sequence seeks not to resolve the problem, but to explore it. The conclusion of the modern lyric sequence does not result in a solution of the problem, but in a certain resolution of the tension surrounding the problem. Voice is given to the complex streams of emotion that the intractable problem produces and a stasis is produced that frequently has the tenor of "all passion spent."[100]

Rosenthal and Gall's observations about the central "intractable problem" that gives structure and meaning to modern poetic sequences may find some applicability in

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[99] Ibid., 11 (emphasis original).
[100] Ibid., 57.

the interpretation of Second Isaiah as well. As Melugin's comments have already indicated, and as chapter three will have occasion to argue in detail, Second Isaiah repeatedly contradicts itself, shifts emphasis, and generally wrestles with possibilities introduced by its opening lines. To the extent that Second Isaiah presents itself as a text wrestling with and portraying emotions swirling around a complex and unresolved open question, the notion that lyric sequences seek a sort of stasis in response to an "intractable problem" is a useful analogy for examining Second Isaiah's progression and will be deployed in that fashion in chapter three. However, Rosenthal and Gall's theory will be employed only insofar as it is useful for examining Second Isaiah. There are limits to this applicability. In particular, Rosenthal and Gall's insistence that the intractable problem is not resolved by the lyric sequence does not fit the sort of resolution Second Isaiah displays. Thus, the analogy of the "intractable problem" will be employed in the particular ways in which it is relevant and useful for interpreting Second Isaiah. Namely, it presents the possibility of understanding a poetic text responding to an open question in a mode of exploration rather than answer, highlights the centrality of emotion to such a task, and presents a model for understanding contradictory perspectives within a single text and speaker as a mode of examining an issue from multiple sides. However, the present study will not assume that because Second Isaiah wrestles with a complex and emotional issue from multiple perspectives that it of necessity may not come to any resolution about that issue.

4.2.2. Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces

In order to understand the means by which a lyric sequence reaches an equilibrium about its central intractable problem, it is important to carefully examine the forces that produce its tensions. Daniel Grossberg has articulated an approach to understanding the forces that compete between pulling a lyric poem or series of lyric poems apart into fragmentary pieces, and holding it together into a cohesive work. He calls these warring forces centripetal and centrifugal.

"Centripetal" is Grossberg's term for those elements within a poem that provide cohesion and "help the reader grasp the poem globally."[101] Centripetal forces and poems structured by them emphasize the whole over the parts. Centripetal elements include repetitions, catchwords, parallelism, and boundary markers. Boundary markers are particularly significant for they include all those means by which the poem or series of poems demarcates its units. On the level of the individual poem, boundary markers are a strongly centripetal element. The explicit indication of a beginning and ending allows the reader to experience the poem as a complete and unified whole.[102] The Psalter is a prime source for biblical examples of centripetally oriented poems. Grossberg examines the Psalms of Ascent and places them toward the centripetal end of the continuum individually, though the emphasis on clearly demarcated poems is achieved at "the expense of the totality of the small collection."[103] While they are a sequence, the emphasis is on the individual poems as whole poems, and their demarcation from one

[101] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 11.

[102] Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 41, articulates how the independent knowledge of closure helps readers understand the structure of a poem as a whole. Her insights will be discussed extensively below in the section regarding closural devices.

[103] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 7.

another emphasizes their independent wholeness and completion.[104] On the level of the sequence, clearly demarcated units provide largely centrifugal impulses, however. They serve to focus attention on the individual poems at the expense of the sequence. However, a certain centripetality may be observed in those cases that the demarcation occurs via refrain or demarcated poems allow the reader to group the sequence's poems into units of meaning and thereby contribute to grasping the whole sequence globally. Much as Grossberg includes refrains and other internal structuring devices within individual poems in the category of centripetal forces since they give shape and aid the reader in assessing the individual poem's overall flow and structure, clearly demarcated poems within a sequence may, in certain cases, be seen as centripetally orienting the reader to the overall flow of the sequence as a whole.

Grossberg uses the term "centrifugal" for those features that tend towards disunity or that work against closure. Grossberg highlights the absence of explicit boundary markers as well as "the suppression of a narrative sequence [that] works against the apprehension of the creation in its dramatic integrality."[105] As one might expect, Grossberg places lyric poems at the centrifugal end of his spectrum. He notes, "modern lyrical poetry displays a strong penchant for the centrifugal structure."[106] Grossberg lists Song of Songs as a biblical example "near the centrifugal extreme on the centripetal/centrifugal continuum."[107] Centrifugal features and poems structured by them emphasize the parts over the whole.

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[104] Ibid., 7.
[105] Ibid., 11.
[106] Ibid., 6.
[107] Ibid., 7. Grossberg appears to treat the Song of Songs as a single poem. He notes the scholarly debate over the question of one poem or many (ibid., 55) and asserts that his location of the work towards

Grossberg thus conceives of poetic works as existing along a continuum. He describes this continuum as running from the most centripetally oriented and closed poems to extremely centrifugal and atomized poems. He notes that poems exhibiting both centripetal and centrifugal extremes are observable in antiquity.[108] In most cases, however, a balance of sorts is struck between centripetal and centrifugal features resulting in a more or less tightly bound structure that includes emphasis on both the parts and the whole.

In the following chapters, Grossberg's schema will be useful in identifying those features that contribute both to Second Isaiah's coherence and disjunction. It will be important to consider the relative centripetality or centrifugality of Second Isaiah as a whole and to determine how the forces of cohesion and disjunction contribute both individually and corporately to the meaningful implications of Second Isaiah's overall arrangement. The examination of these forces in detail is undertaken in chapter four.

4.3. The Significance of "Voice"

One of the observations about Second Isaiah's structure that will emerge most clearly from chapter four's attention to centripetal and centrifugal forces in Second Isaiah is the overwhelming dominance of the divine speaking voice. This should not be altogether surprising for, as this study has repeatedly stressed, lyric typically presents itself as an utterance. Thus, literary critics have produced theories of the significance of a lyric poem's voice or voices that will be of significant assistance in interpreting this central element of Second Isaiah's mode of expression.

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the centrifugal end of the continuum will contribute to the question. Yet, he does not explicitly take a stand on the question itself.

[108] Ibid., 7.

As M. H. Abrams observes, "to conceive a work as an utterance suggests that there is a speaker who has determinate personal qualities, and who expresses attitudes both toward the characters and materials within the work and toward the audience to whom the work is addressed."[109] Throughout the present study I will use the term "voice" to refer to this "first-person speaker … whose voice we hear in a lyric poem."[110] The nature, expression, and attitude of this voice are particularly central for the interpretation of lyric poetry. As this study has already noted, in the absence of a narrative superstructure the voices of lyric poetry are present primarily in vocative forms and lyric thus presents itself essentially as an encounter with a voice. The notion of lyric as encounter is vital to the interpretation of Second Isaiah for, as chapter three will show, an encounter is primarily what the implied audience calls for. Thus lyric form and rhetorical function meet admirably.

Carl Dennis has devoted significant attention to the impact that poetic voices have upon the compelling nature of poetic discourse. His observation that:

> What distinguishes the rhetoric of poetry from the rhetoric of discursive prose … is that its argument, in Aristotle's terms, is based more on *ethos* than on *logos*, more on the character of the speaker than on logical proof. For a poem to be convincing, the primary task of the writer is to construct a speaker whose company is worth keeping, who exhibits certain virtues that win the reader's sympathetic attention.[111]

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[109] M. H. Abrams, "Persona, Tone, and Voice," in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (8th ed.; Boston: Thompson Wadsworth, 2005), 226-29.

[110] Ibid., 227. Abrams uses the term "persona" to refer to this same element within the poem reserving the term "voice" to refer to the pervasive authorial presence behind a work which organizes the various personae. However, this particular delineation of the distinction is not universal. T.S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 89-102, famously articulated three "voices" of poetry, two of which were the elements which Abrams distinguishes as persona and voice. Following Eliot's example, I will utilize voice to refer to the poem's speaker without excluding the possibility that there are other senses in which a poem might have a voice.

[111] Carl Dennis, *Poetry as Persuasion* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 2. Dennis is consciously a part of the pragmatic rhetorical approach to poetry. He writes "my approach is in harmony with most approaches that regard the work as the product of conscious choices, including most thematic studies, and in particular with the kind of pragmatic rhetorical criticism that relates these choices to their

Thus, poetry persuades, not through argument but through encounter – encounter with the voice that utters. This concept will be relevant in the consideration of Second Isaiah's persuasive impact upon its implied audience in chapter three.

Finally, the presentation of Second Isaiah as prophetic literature makes possible "a high degree of identification between [the voice's] attitudes and those of the poet."[112] That is to say, since the speech of Yhwh whose voice the reader primarily encounters is presented as mediated by the prophetic poet, it is possible to assume a high level of correspondence between the attitudes of the governing arranger and the divine voice. Through this mediated voice "we have a sense … of a pervasive authorial presence, a determinate intelligence and moral sensibility, who has invented, ordered, and rendered all these literary … materials in just this way."[113] Thus the dominant voice of Second Isaiah – the Yhwh voice – is a central thread that holds the work together in the absence of a narrative superstructure. This voice will be carefully attended to as a primary indicator of the overall meaning of this work conceived of as an utterance.

4.4. The Centrality of Emotion

As a mode of expression that typically presents itself as an utterance, the emotions of the lyric poem's speaker are key to the interpretation of a lyric poem. Lyric is, as the present study has already noted, a form that often particularly prizes emotion. Literary critics who seek to explore this emotional aspect make frequent reference to the "tone" of a

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effect on the reader" (ibid., 10). For our purposes, it is important to note that Dennis is making a distinction between poetic rhetorical modes and prosaic rhetorical modes even though he is consciously drawing upon Aristotle's principles for oratory in the descriptions of both categories.

[112] Fabian Gudas, "Persona" in *NPEPP*, 901.

[113] Abrams, "Persona, Tone, and Voice," 228.

poem. As T. V. F. Brogan and Fabian Gudas comment, "the t[one] of a speaker's voice … reveals information about her attitudes, beliefs, feelings, or intent, or, barring that, at least about the real meaning of the utterance. T[one] may add to, qualify, or even reverse the meaning of what is said."[114]

Scholars have employed the term "tone" and others like it to discuss biblical Hebrew poetry. Melugin, for example, describes his own approach to the rhetorical criticism of Second Isaiah as attending to "repetition of words, phrases and images, development of theme, contrasting words and images, change in *tone*."[115] Likewise, Muilenburg makes frequent reference to the "mood" of the poetry, and Gunkel employs this latter term with reference to the Psalms as well.[116] While these scholars use the term casually without particular attention to defining its use, the concept of "tone" carries a particular definition within literary criticism. In order to apply the concept of "tone" to the appreciation of Second Isaiah as an utterance, it will be necessary to carefully define "tone" or "tonality" along with the associated terms "tonal flow," "tonal stream," and "lyric center" and to articulate modes for identifying and interpreting tonality.

The attitudes of a poem's speaker, those expressed by the "voice," constitute what literary critics refer to as "tone." I. A. Richards articulated the definition in this way: "the speaker has ordinarily an *attitude to his listener*. He chooses or arranges his words

[114] T.V.F. Brogan and Fabian Gudas, "Tone" in *NPEPP*, 1293.

[115] Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 88 (emphasis added).

[116] Muilenburg, *IB* 5: 382, 385, 386; Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (completed by Joachim Begrich; trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 24. Also relevant are the comments of Mark E. Biddle, *Polyphony and Sympohny in Prophetic Literature Rereading Jeremiah 7-20* (Studies in Old Testament Interpretation 2; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), 123, re Jeremiah: "The tonalities of YHWH's voice, the awareness of the determined outcome, and the presumption that the prophet was aware of what lay ahead from the outset necessarily condition any competent reading of the book." More specifically J.D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (WBC 25; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 606, claims that "Isa 40:1-9 announces the intentions of God that set the tone and mood for the rest of the Vision."

differently as his audience varies, in automatic or deliberate *recognition of his relation to them*. The tone of his utterance reflects his awareness of this relation, his sense of how he stands toward those he is addressing."[117] The term "tone" and its equivalent "lyric tonality" is thus a technical term in contemporary literary criticism that refers to the implied speaker's "attitude toward the subject and toward the audience implied in a literary work."[118] I will also use the term "affect" on occasion to refer to this same aspect of a speaker's utterance. Rueben Brower builds upon this basic definition of tone to delineate two primary elements of tone, "(1) the implied social relationships of the speaker to his auditor and (2) the manner he adopts in addressing his auditor."[119] He states that "to show exactly *who* is speaking in a poem it is necessary to consider *how* he speaks."[120] That is, the tonality of a poetic voice is a particularly potent element of poetic characterization and therefore a key element in the interpretation of a work.

"Tonal flow" refers to the progression of lyric tonalities within a poem or sequence of poems. Rosenthal and Gall note that the modern lyric sequence "is magnetized into structure by its points of highest intensity and by its ordering in time: the literal succession of its tonalities."[121] That is, the juxtaposition of poems with different tonalities contributes meaningfully to the overarching meaning of a sequence of poems. Typically, a lyric sequence does not consist of an unmodulated stream of steady and

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[117] I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), 182 (emphasis original).

[118] Morton D. Rich, *The Dynamics of Tonal Shift in the Sonnet* (Studies in Comparative Literature 31; Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 5. Rich's definition is explicitly based on that of Richards. While these literary critics use the term "tone," I will use the less common "tonality" throughout the present project to distinguish my usage from the more colloquial phrase "tone of voice" with which the concept is obviously related. This less common term may help to signal the technical sense in which I am employing the concept of tonality.

[119] Reuben Arthur Brower, *The Fields of Light: An Experiment in Critical Reading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 22.

[120] Brower, *Fields of Light*, 22.

[121] Rosenthal and Gall, *Modern Poetic Sequence*, 156.

consistent tonality. Certainly Second Isaiah also exhibits this trait as Melugin's observation of the frequent juxtaposition of judgment and salvation oracles evinces and as the poems examined in chapter five's study of Second Isaiah's tonal flow will show. Rather, a lyric sequence commonly moves by tonal shifts, some abrupt, some subtle, as it progresses through possible responses to the "intractable problem" and towards an equilibrium. Applying this understanding of a lyric sequence's progression will provide a heuristic model for interpreting Second Isaiah's movement from beginning to end. This approach will provide an alternative to the more linear, narrative, and discursive approaches to Second Isaiah's progress offered by Elliger, Muilenburg, and others.[122]

I will use the term "tonal stream" to refer to lyric tonalities within Second Isaiah that recur across the span of Second Isaiah's tonal flow. These recurrent tonalities cohere within themselves and give shape and movement to Second Isaiah's tonal flow. While "tonal streams" refer to the relationship of several poems that exhibit a similar tonality, it is not the case that all component poems of a tonal stream should be tonally identical. Rather, each poem within the tonal stream will exhibit key features of the tonality and significant similarities with other poems in the tonality, but will have its own particular shades of tonality.

"Lyric centers" are the peaks of intensity in a poem or sequence's tonal flow.[123] They are the points at which tonalities converge or where the affect is most intense. These lyric centers often intensify tonal streams that are present elsewhere in the sequence, thus making them a sort of climax of that tonality's flow.

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[122] Discussion of these approaches and their drawbacks is undertaken in ch. 1.

[123] Rosenthal and Gall, *Modern Poetic Sequence*, use the term "center" to refer to these units throughout their work. See e.g., 30, 54, 57, 277, and 443.

To be sure, the analysis of a speaker's affect is admittedly "highly subjective since it combines intellectual apprehension and emotional response."[124] This subjectivity need not ultimately prevent the study and discussion of emotion in literature, however. Pilkington describes the situation well. He writes:

> Only I know what my angst and despair are like, and even then only approximately. Although subjective and elusive, this is not to say that they must remain totally private. Literariness can be characterized in terms of the attempt to express these relatively ineffable "qualitative feels". Literature, Calvino suggests in his essay *Cybernetics and Ghosts*, is engaged in a continual attempt to express something that cannot properly or fully be said – or even implicated.[125]

As Pilkington's comments point out, the struggle to communicate what is purely private is one of the functions performed, however incompletely, by language. He acknowledges that "[d]espite the struggle it is possible to provide some purchase on the subjective character of experience through language."[126]

Our attempts to describe our inward and emotional experiences through language take on a descriptive character. As Kövecses observes, "the words for various emotions

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[124] Rich, *Dynamics of Tonal Shift*, 7. For both literary and scientific approaches the subjective aspect of the study of human emotions has presented problems. Morten L. Kringelbach, "Emotion, Feelings and Hedonics in the Human Brain," in *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader* (ed. Helena Wulff; New York: Berg, 2007), 37, observes that "exactly this subjective quality of the emotions is also what for many years made scientific investigation difficult. For if emotions are highly subjective and private experiences, how can we study them with objective means? Does the subjective quality of emotions mean that they are different for each of us.... Are emotions different cross-culturally?" Kringelbach argues that neuroimaging enables scientists to study this subjective area in their research (ibid., 37). He claims that there is a biological basis for human emotion, making them, to a certain extent at least, a universal human experience (ibid., 41). Similarly, Harold Blum, "Language of Affect," in *The Language of Emotions: Development, Psychopathology, and Technique* (ed. Salman Akhtar and Harold Blum; New York: Jason Aronson, 2005), 2, claims that "[b]asic affects are innate, species specific, and, because they are biogenetic dispositions, they are pan-cultural. These basic affects have been categorized ... as happiness, sadness, surprise, interest, fear, disgust, contempt, and anger. Each of the basic affects has its own neurophysiology and its own specific facial configuration." From a literary perspective Laurence D. Lerner, "Emotion," *NPEPP*, 328, observes that subjectivity is a common critique of the analysis of emotion.

[125] Adrian Pilkington, *Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Perspective* (Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 75; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2000), 144-5.

[126] Ibid, 145.

describe emotions."[127] Indeed, emotion is an intrinsic part of the human experience and the world's major languages have developed terms to discuss and describe it.[128] Hebrew is certainly no exception to the observation that basic terms for emotions exist in the world's languages.[129] The existence of words in the Hebrew language that are taken lexically as references to the human emotions (e.g., ירא "fear") are one indication of some ability on the part of Hebrew Bible authors to refer to, describe, or communicate about human emotions. These terms and those closely associated with them will be employed as "emotion terminology" in this project.[130]

The observation that the use of language to communicate subjective experience between persons takes the form of description highlights the importance of the role of metaphor in the language of emotion.[131] Pilkington comments that, "[t]he sophistication of our awareness of emotional states depends on the sophistication of the ways in which the cognitive properties of emotions can be represented"[132] and notes the difference between the stereotypical references to emotions conveyed by "emotionally-charged" words, and the more experiential, "non-standard and non-stereotypical," communication

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[127] Zoltán Kövecses, *Emotion Concepts* (New York: Springer, 1990), 12 (emphasis original).

[128] As Kringelbach, "Emotion, Feelings and Hedonics in the Human Brain," 41, notes, "[i]t was clear ... even form early behavioural cross-cultural studies, that there might be an innate, biological basis for emotional experience. Furthermore, analyses of emotion terms in all of the world's major languages have led to discussions on the existence and enumeration of the fundamental emotions that can act as basic building blocks of our entire emotional repertoire. Based on such research, up to seven emotions have been proposed: anger, disgust, fear, sadness, joy, shame and guilt."

[129] The existence of words in the Hebrew language that are taken lexically as references to the human emotions (e.g., ירא "fear") are indication of some ability on the part of Hebrew Bible authors to refer to human emotions.

[130] I will also occasionally refer to these terms as "emotion-laden." For individual discussion of the various terms I have interpreted as "emotional" and their definitional reference to human emotions see the descriptions of the various tonal indicators in ch. 5.

[131] Kövecses, *Emotion Concepts*, 4, notes that "[m]etaphors also play a significant role in the way we conceive of the emotions." Similarly, David Pugmire, *Rediscovering Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 97, observes that "[f]eeling is caught best of all in figurative language."

[132] Pilkington, *Poetic Effects*, 147.

of emotion provided by poetic metaphor.[133] Pilkington provides a pertinent example in discussing the metaphor "[h]e was burning with anger." Pilkington notes that, "[t]he feeling of burning is used to communicate the feeling of anger. There is something that it is like to burn, which is similar to what it is like to be angry."[134] David Pugmire describes the role that metaphor may play in the public communication of subjective emotions. He writes: "Metaphor, in particular, lends an oblique public character to feelings. By means of it they may be captured and communicated without being directly referred to or described at all."[135]

Literary critics typically employ descriptive and subjective adjectives to discuss and describe tone or tonality. These adjectives attempt to capture the attitude of a speaker towards the audience or subject matter of the utterance. Abrams provides the following illustrative list: "The tone of a speech can be described as critical or approving, formal or intimate, outspoken or reticent, solemn or playful, arrogant or prayerful, angry or loving, serious or ironic, condescending or obsequious, and so on through numberless possible nuances of relationship and attitude both to object and auditor."[136]

Despite the obviously subjective nature of such an enterprise, there are particular elements of poems that may be isolated as pointing toward tonality. In his extensive study of the tonal turn of randomly selected sonnets, Rich identifies shifts in imagery, sound, visual patterns, and grammar as particular indicators of tonal shift.[137] If changes in these poetic elements are reliable signals of tonal shift, then they may be understood as

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[133] Ibid., 156.
[134] Ibid., 157.
[135] Pugmire, *Rediscovering Emotion*, 97.
[136] Abrams, "Persona, Tone, and Voice," 227.
[137] Rich, *Dynamics of Tonal Shift*, 19-20.

elements that build tonalities. Attempts to describe the tonality of a poem should, therefore, pay particular attention to kinds of these elements.

As noted above, particular words or images may also function as potent tonal indicators. As Brower observes, "in general a single word that seems primarily to fix a certain tone inevitably carries some shade of feeling."[138] Thus those terms whose sense is emotionally-laden will merit special attention in the examination of tonality. In the case of Second Isaiah references to "comfort," (e.g., 40:1; 49:13; 51:3, 19; 52:9; 54:11) or "rage" (e.g., 42:25; 51:13, 17, 20, 22) spring readily to mind as examples of emotionally laden terms that may heavily impact tonality and aid in its identification. However, as Brower cautions, it is important not to simply equate the tonality of a poetic unit with the feeling such emotional terms represent. As he observes, "of course no one should miss the big emotion or the main idea in reading any poem. But if our reading ends at either of these way stations, we may be enjoying a stock experience instead of the one offered by the poem before us."[139] In my discussion of the tonalities of various poems in chapter five, I will have frequent occasion to point out the detailed ways in which various poems qualify the tonality indicated by these feeling-laden terms.

The most potent indicator of tonality derives from context. As Richards notes, "words are chameleon-like in their feeling, governed in an irregular fashion by their surroundings."[140] Thus a reading that attends to the tonality of a poem's speaker must determine what clues to the shades of feelings of particular words the context provides. Brower articulates the sense in which context is useful to the project of determining tonality in his statement: "our recognition of a manner always depends on a silent

[138] Brower, *Fields of Light*, 31.
[139] Ibid., 33.
[140] Richards, *Practical Criticism*, 213.

reference to a known way of speaking and on our perceiving variations from it."[141] That is, setting, cultural convention, and the form of a piece of literature, create readerly expectations about its tonality. A formal legal proceeding creates the expectation of a solemn tonality. A letter from a friend creates the expectation of a familiar tonality. To whatever extent a particular expression differentiates itself from the general expectation created by its form and setting, its individual tonality may be further described. In the case of satire, the total reversal of tonal expectations produces a particularly strong indicator of tonality.

A variety of contexts might contribute to the sense that a given utterance deviates from a known way of speaking. As Brower points out, "we can point out an allusion or show how a phrase in the immediate context recalls some larger context and with it certain conventions of speech; we can quote comparable expressions from other pieces of literature or from any realm of discourse whatsoever."[142] Thus, analysis of a poem's tonality ought to pay attention to conventions within the poetry and to deviations from conventions. In the case of Second Isaiah such deviations might include juxtaposition between very different attitudes and modes of speaking within Second Isaiah itself or the use of and deviation from conventions known within biblical poetry and biblical prophecy such as those identified by form criticism.

Since lyric tonalities are produced through compositional techniques that locate the implied speaker and implied audience in relationship and illustrate the speaker's attitude, approaching this aspect of Second Isaiah's lyric presentation must proceed through close analysis of the text and its poetic diction. Brower rightly comments that

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[141] Brower, *Fields of Light*, 23.
[142] Ibid., 23.

"the way to arrive at an adequate critical remark is the way of good reading."[143] The task of careful reading for tonality involves both attention to "the special, often minute language signs by which the poet fixes the tone for us," and engagement both with the "known way[s] of speaking" to which it may refer and from which it may deviate.[144] As Brower notes, "the application and choice of methods must be at least as flexible as the poet's manipulation of tone." The employment of such a flexible approach to the sequence of tonalities in Second Isaiah's dominant speaking voice is taken up in chapter five.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has claimed that Second Isaiah is not an exception to S. R. Driver's categorical claim that virtually all poetry in the Hebrew Bible is lyric poetry, but rather one piece of evidence for its accuracy. Given that argument I have proceeded to lay out some elements of a lyric approach by which a better understanding of the nature of lyric poetry and lyric sequencing may contribute to the interpretation of Second Isaiah as a whole. In light of the wise counsel of Rosenthal and Gall that served as the epigram to this chapter, it is important to point out that all of the approaches to lyric and lyric sequencing that I have described have emerged directly from various scholars' careful work with texts that are analogous to Second Isaiah by virtue of their lyric traits. Additionally, in the chapters that follow, I will employ the lyric approach only to the extent that it illuminates, clarifies, or aids in the interpretation of traits that a careful examination of Second Isaiah reveals to be resident in the poetry itself. I do not intend to

[143] Ibid., 33.
[144] Ibid., 29.

indicate that all elements of the lyric approach I have outlined are applicable in equal degrees to all biblical poetic texts – or even all of Second Isaiah - nor that these elements may be laid over poetic texts as a template. Rather, the approach highlights features that have emerged from the study of analogous literature and that happen also to find resonance in Second Isaiah. In addition, these lyric traits that I have named as part of the lyric approach to Second Isaiah are the traits that I have found most applicable to Second Isaiah. They do not exhaust the possibilities of lyric poetic analysis. Rather, although the approach I will take in the chapters that follow is one way of reading Second Isaiah using lyric tools, it is not the only possible way.

Chapter Three

The Problem of Comfort: Second Isaiah's Rhetorical Environment and its Intractable Problem

"How will I assure you?
What could I imagine for you, O daughter Jerusalem?
What will I compare to you,
that I might comfort you, O virgin daughter Zion?
For your shattering is as great as the sea.
Who will heal you?[1]

The historical setting into which the poetry was deployed has a significant impact on the interpretation of Second Isaiah. It is altogether appropriate that interpreters attend to the rhetorical setting of the utterance given Second Isaiah's presentation as both heavily vocative lyric poetry and as prophecy.[2] However, simply because we are able with relative certainty to assign Second Isaiah to a particular period of years and probable geographic locale, these assignments alone do not solve the problems of its interpretation. First, the setting to which we are able to assign Second Isaiah is one that we know relatively little about.[3] Second, the act of establishing a historical reconstruction does not constitute interpretation in itself though reconstructions have at times been offered in its place. As I indicated in the first chapter, Clifford's position has garnered wide appeal. His position is that the purposeful intent behind Second Isaiah is to urge departure from Babylon and return to Palestine. In this chapter I will further question that position and the similar claims of Brueggemann since both scholars allow their historical

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[1] Lam 2:13.

[2] As Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66* (Int; Louisville: John Knox, 1995), 3, writes: "As with all of the prophets, so too with Second Isaiah it is mandatory that the interpreter be well aware of the historical and, to the extent possible, the social realities that the prophet is addressing."

[3] See e.g., the comments of Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile* (trans. David Green; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 3. Further discussion of the lack of evidence for forming a clear picture of exilic life appears below.

reconstruction of the sequence's situation to overly influence their understanding of its meaning.[4] Instead, I will suggest that the central issue with which Second Isaiah wrestles should be determined primarily from the issues Second Isaiah addresses, the embedded speeches of the audience that appear within Second Isaiah, and Second Isaiah's allusions to other biblical texts. I will argue that the driving dilemma Second Isaiah wrestles with is the tension between Yhwh's stated intention to reconcile with Zion and the difficulties inherent in such a reconciliation, not least of these being the audience's doubts about Yhwh's trustworthiness. The audience's likely unwillingness to accept the proclaimed comfort, evidenced in their cited speech, gives rise to a response in the divine voice that both confirms and rejects their fears in its attempt to persuade the audience of the certainty of divinely proclaimed comfort. I will support this claim by examination of Second Isaiah's citations of the speech of its implied audience, its allusions to Lamentations, the claims of the sequence's opening lines, and the further development of the comfort theme and its juxtaposition with indictment throughout the course of Second Isaiah. This central concern is thus a matter of relationship and one that is open and resists simple solution. This is, in short, the "intractable problem" of Second Isaiah. This notion, drawn from the study of modern poetic sequences, will therefore be employed to consider how this problem plays out in the poetry of Second Isaiah.

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[4] See ch. 1 for a discussion of the divergence between Clifford's approach and that of the present study. See also Walter Brueggemann, *Testimony to Otherwise: The Witness of Elijah and Elisha* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 9.

1. Situating Second Isaiah

Widespread agreement exists that Second Isaiah ought to be dated to the events surrounding the fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.[5] References to Babylon (43:14; 47:1; 48:14; 48:20) as well as her eventual conqueror, Cyrus (44:28; 45:1), are primary pieces of evidence for this dating.[6] Second Isaiah is obviously directed at and knowledgeable about the late exilic historical context. It knows the name of Babylon's Persian conqueror and can foresee the looming transition to Persian control. However, Second Isaiah does not know the details of Cyrus' entry into Babylon.[7] Second Isaiah depicts a violent overthrow of Babylonian power (Isa 47), while historically the transition

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[5] R.E. Clements, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah," *Int* 36 (1982): 122, writes that Second Isaiah is "usually dated with confidence in the period of 546-538 B.C." Likewise, David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 59, corroborates a date for this text near the end of the exile writing, "much in Isaiah 40-55 reflects the time just as Cyrus was defeating the Mesopotamian powers …. Since these chapters know about Cyrus, seem to refer to Babylon about to fall, reflect certain aspects of the Cyrus edict, and do not know about the difficult realities that those who returned faced, we may situate this literature in the general period of 550-530." Scholars who agree with this general date also include Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 3; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (trans. David M. G. Stalker; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 3; John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40-55* (2 vols; ICC; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 1:28; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (AB 19A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 2002), 93; and Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 97. Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 30, who dates Second Isaiah significantly later "between 450 and 400 B.C.E." represents his own position as a departure from what he recognizes as the relative consensus of the field. Likewise, Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 7, who treats Isaiah 40-66 as written in the 8th century by Isaiah of Jerusalem is clearly aware of his departure from the consensus of the field. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 3-6, goes further, tracing the history of the consensus position back to Duhm and mounting an argument against this date for Second Isaiah.

[6] John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (AB 20; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), xvi, cites the references to Cyrus specifically as evidence for distinguishing Second Isaiah from chs. 1-39. Christopher R. Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40-66: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections" in *Introduction to the Prophetic Literature, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel* (*NIB* 12 vols.; Ed. Leander E. Keck, et al; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 6:315, notes that the Cyrus references do "not appear to be … interpolation."

[7] McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, xxix, notes the contrast between Isa 46-47 and the peaceful surrender of Babylon to Cyrus. This discrepancy is almost certainly the "reasons" to which McKenzie alludes (*Second Isaiah*, xviii) "why Second Isaiah must fall not only in this period, but more precisely between 550 and 540 B.C."

seems to have been quite peaceful.[8] Likewise, Second Isaiah's apparent ignorance of the situation in Palestine following the return from exile including the difficult circumstances of reconstruction provide sufficient evidence for dating it well before these circumstances emerged.[9] Thus a date late in the exilic period, but prior to Cyrus's entry into Babylon, roughly around 540 BCE, may be assigned with relative confidence.

The straightforward nature of assigning a date to Second Isaiah stands in stark contrast to the difficulty of determining much about Second Isaiah's context based on that date. Nearly every study of the historical circumstances of the exilic period begins with a caveat about the difficulties involved in the historical reconstruction of this period.[10] Rainer Albertz has aptly named the situation in this way, "The exilic period … represents a huge lacuna in the historical narrative of the Hebrew Bible. It stands as a murky, gaping hole in the history of Yahweh and his people."[11] However, it is not only the shortage of biblical material with which to reconstruct the history of this period that presents a problem. The Babylonian Chronicle, which would presumably provide significant information about the activities of the Babylonian rulers is fragmentary and is

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[8] Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 113, describes the situation in this way: "The Neo-Babylonian Empire fell into the lap of Cyrus (558-530) almost without a fight. On October 29, 539 B.C.E., he entered Babylon and with great propagandistic extravagance had himself hailed as a liberator." T. Cuyler Young, Jr., "Cyrus," *ABD*, 1:1231 notes that "the Neo-Babylonian empire ultimately fell almost without a battle."

[9] One may point in particular to the resistance to and difficulties involved in rebuilding Jerusalem's city wall detailed in Neh 3-6. Second Isaiah presents this same task as divinely accomplished utilizing precious stones (Isa 54:11-12). While this depiction is poetic and surely not aimed at the specifics of historical reality, it also betrays no awareness of hardship or struggle in the rebuilding of the wall.

[10] See, for example, the comments of David Vanderhooft, "Babylonian Strategies of Imperial Control in the West: Royal Practice and Rhetoric," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 255, who writes, "[a]dmittedly, reconstruction of the condition of Judahite deportees in Babylonia in the sixth century remains a hazardous enterprise because of sparse data."

[11] Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 3.

missing parts of Nebuchadnezzar's and Nabonidus' reigns and all of the reigns of Amel-Marduk and Labashi Marduk.[12]

In addition to textual difficulties in reconstructing this period there is a significant level of uncertainty with regard to the archaeological evidence as well. Limitations to archaeological reconstruction of the period in Palestine include the relatively small number of finds clearly datable to this period, and difficulties determining the period's boundaries.[13] In contrast to their Assyrian predecessors, the Babylonians left little material evidence of their presence with the exception of destruction layers.[14]

The situation of those exiled to Babylon is similarly murky.[15] While scholarship has commonly taken a relatively positive view of their living conditions, little is known with any certainty.[16] This lack of certainty about the living conditions of the exiles has not been altered by recent discoveries. Even the recently discovered TAYN corpus is, as

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[12] Ibid., 47.

[13] Charles E. Carter, "Ideology and Archeology in the Neo-Babylonian Period: Excavating Text and Tell," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 306, cites the period's "relative brevity, its continuation of Iron II material culture, and the paucity of excavations with remains dating specifically to this period."

[14] Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732-332 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 308, writes, "the most prominent feature left by seventy years of Babylonian domination in Palestine was the total destruction and devastation of all the main cities that had flourished during the Assyrian period." Vanderhooft, "Babylonian Strategies," 253-4, comments that "very little explicitly Babylonian material culture appears in the Levant in the sixth century … Neo-Babylonian stamp seals, despite their ubiquity elsewhere, are exceedingly rare; there are no examples of Neo-Babylonian architecture; while only one cuneiform inscription fragment is known that might date to this period, and, significantly, it is not an administrative text."

[15] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 101, concurs writing, "[t]he little that we know or can surmise about the life of these small Jewish or Judeo-Babylonian settlements has to be cobbled together out of inadequate source material with the help of a good deal of inference."

[16] See for example James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction, and Exegesis" in *Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, and Jeremiah* (*IB*; ed. George Arthur Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5:396. He writes of the exiles in Babylon, "[n]or was their lot grievous. They apparently enjoyed considerable freedom. They seem to have had their own houses (Jer 29:5) and were permitted to gather together (Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1). Land was assigned to them, and many of them became farmers, as the names they gave to their towns suggest: Tell Abib ("hill of corn") and Tell Charsa ("hill of the plow"). As time went on some of them engaged in trade, and by the fifth century many of them had acquired a reputation in business."

Laurie E. Pearce notes, "frustratingly silent about .... the social status of Judean deportees in Babylonia."[17] Scholars frequently surmise from the literature of the period, Second Isaiah in particular, that the exiles needed considerable urging to return to Palestine. Indeed, Clifford's understanding of the meaning of Second Isaiah is governed by this assumption. He represents the situation in this way: "By the 540's, the exilic community was largely second-generation. They evidently preferred owning property and slaves in Babylon to returning to ruins and fields of uncertain ownership."[18] Based on this depiction, Clifford concludes that "Second Isaiah had a difficult audience."[19] If significant resistance to return existed, it is impossible to be certain whether this reluctance to return was due to prosperity in their new homeland or a preference for the known over the risky unknown. Albertz notes that there were significant risks to return. He argues that "it was clearly an open question whether ancient claims to property ownership would be recognized," paired with relatively slight interest in the peripheral province on the part of Cyrus.[20] To these risks may be added the long journey and the potential for tension between those who returned and those who remained behind.[21] However, despite the confidence with which Clifford is willing to assign to the exiles both slaves and property, the evidence is significantly less conclusive.

In truth, there is reason to doubt the traditionally rosy picture of life in exile. While it is true that the various indications are that the exiles were settled together in

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[17] Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 407.

[18] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 13.

[19] Ibid., 13.

[20] Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 127, 124.

[21] Bustenay Oded, "Where is the 'Myth of the Empty Land' to be Found? History Versus Myth," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 70, argues that while "a protracted class struggle between exiles and non-exiles over land rights does not fit the evidence … one should not exclude the possibility that a certain degree of tension arose between returnees and those who remained in Judah during the exile."

ethnically homogenous settlements, it is not apparent that this was a benevolent decision on the part of the Babylonians.[22] Daniel Smith-Christopher interprets this same evidence as a marginalization of conquered peoples who were not so much permitted to settle together, but rather were forcibly settled together by the Babylonians.[23] While this group settlement did have the positive impact of maintaining and reinforcing group identity, it may not necessarily be an indication of freedom of movement. Smith-Christopher also cites the frequent allusions to the slavery in Egypt in exilic literature to surmise that from the perspective of some in exile, the exile was not to be seen in an entirely positive vein.[24] Additionally, as Smith-Christopher points out, the Neo-Babylonians' own depiction of their treatment of deported population groups supports the assessment implied in the exilic period biblical writings. Extant Neo-Babylonian documents make reference to these populations as forced laborers.[25] While it is apparent that some exiles found some measure of prosperity by the time of the Persian Period, it is not apparent that this was the widespread condition of the exiles during Babylonian control. Albertz cites Zechariah and Ezra as indicating that "the Babylonian golah at the end of the exile was in a position to make a sizable financial contribution to Jerusalem" as an indication of this

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[22] The various indications of this practice include the testimony of the biblical texts referring to particular settlements (e.g., Ezek 1:1) as well as the supposition that this was one of the means by which the exiles maintained their identity, which they evidently did. Moshe Beer, "Babylonian Judaism," in *ABD* (6 vols.; ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:1077, points to this same evidence. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 100 cites Ezek 1:1; 3:15; Ezra 2:59 = Neh 7:61; and Ezra 8:15-17. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 5, concludes that "notices in the Book of Ezekiel leave no doubt that they [the exiles] were settled in communities of their own, and could therefore continue to enjoy some measure of communal life."

[23] Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 65-68.

[24] Ibid., 65-68. Elsewhere, (Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* [Bloomington, Ind.: Meyer-Stone, 1989], 203) he refers to "'imprisonment' [as] … a dominant exilic metaphor and image."

[25] Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587-539 BCE) in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Interpretations* (ed. James M. Scott; New York: Brill, 1997), 24-25.

relative affluence.[26] However, it is worth noting that these indications of wealth come from somewhat later in the Persian period than the rise of Cyrus. Likewise, many of the scholarly claims that the exiles engaged in foreign trade and became prosperous business people are based solely on the Murashû archive documents, which contain a few Judean names listed among other merchants.[27] These documents date from the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II (464-404 BCE) and are thus approximately a century removed from the events of Cyrus' rise and Second Isaiah's proclamation.[28] They should not be given undue weight in reconstructing the conditions of life in exile during the Neo-Babylonian period.

Despite the lack of concrete evidence for the particularities of life in exile, the confidence with which Second Isaiah may be assigned to a historical period and geographical setting has at times overly determined the interpretation of the text itself. An example of this tendency may be seen in Walter Brueggemann's interpretation of Second Isaiah.

Brueggemann is one among many scholars who sees Second Isaiah as urging departure from Babylon. He writes, "the recurring accent of Second Isaiah is that it is

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[26] Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 102.

[27] E.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 101. In his description of the situation of those exiled in Babylon Muilenburg, *IB* 5:396, does not mention the Murashu archive, but his comment that "by the fifth century many of them had acquired a reputation in business" seems to allude to these documents, and it is worth noting that the fifth century is some time after Second Isaiah was likely written. Matthew W. Stopler, "Murashû, Archive of" in *ABD* (6 vols.; ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:928, writes that, despite particular interest in the Jewish personal names in the Murashû texts, "[l]ittle can be said of them … that distinguishes them from other inhabitants of the region. The term 'Jew' never appears in the Murashû texts, whether to characterize an individual or a group." Indeed, Michael David Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents* (HSM 7; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976), 121, concludes his study of the names in the Murashû: "It is … impossible for the most part to identify the Jews among the West Semites at Nippur." Elsewhere he refers to another scholar's attempt "to derive from [the names in the archive] some conclusions concerning the social and religious life of the Jews in Babylonia during the fifth century," as "tendentious" (2).

[28] Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 69; Stopler, "Murashû, Archive of," 927.

now the emergency moment when Jews may and must depart Babylon."[29] Unlike Richard Clifford, however, Brueggemann does not mean this historically and physically. He is quick to add, "the primal departure from Babylon is not geographical, but imaginative, liturgical, and emotional."[30] For Brueggemann, the goal of Second Isaiah is to convince the people to embrace "Jewishness," which he glosses as "alternative identity."[31] This concept of urging Jewishness is clearly drawn from Brueggemann's reconstruction of the historical context for this work. He asserts, "no doubt many deported Jews found it easier to be a Babylonian Jew, and for some that status was only a transition to becoming Babylonian."[32] While Brueggemann's location of the poetry within the Babylonian exile is certainly the consensus position, with which I agree, his comment that the pressing concern in that context was that one might become Babylonian is given no further support than his otherwise unsupported "no doubt." Certainly, one might imagine that such a temptation existed for the exiles in Babylon. The contrast between Zion and Babylon, and the polemics against the idol makers might each, in their own way, be employed to support such a claim.[33] However, these are not the only, or even primary themes and issues Second Isaiah takes up. Further proof would be demanded if the case that Second Isaiah revolves around a concern over choosing "Jewish" identity over Babylonian identity were to be accepted. As this project has been

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[29] Bruggemann, *Testimony to Otherwise*, 9.

[30] Ibid., 9. Regarding Clifford's more literal departure proposal, see ch. 1.

[31] Brueggemann, *Testimony to Otherwise*, 10.

[32] Ibid, 9.

[33] Smith, *Religion of the Landless*, 58-63, discusses sociological models for understanding the formation and retention of identity in "minority contexts" (58). His discussion demonstrates one mode by which an understanding of the exilic setting as involving the threat of assimilation might be supported. However, his discussion also demonstrates that the threat of assimilation is not a straightforward matter in which the only options are assimilation or a single approach to the formation of identity. Rather, he highlights a variety of strategies for the maintenance of identity employed by different groups in different social contexts.

and will continue to argue, Second Isaiah may be broadly conceived as revolving around the issue of the relationship between Yhwh and the people. While resistance to Babylonian assimilation, rejection of idols, and the formation of an identity based on the Yhwh-Israel relationship are all elements of Second Isaiah's relational concern, these elements are only part of what Second Isaiah has to say about this issue.

Though he does not present sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the threat of assimilation was the primary concern in the rhetorical situation of Second Isaiah, Brueggemann goes on to lay his entire interpretive schema for Second Isaiah on the backbone of this claim that the exiles were being exhorted to choose "Jewishness."[34] Though he claims too forcefully that the impulse behind the speaking moment of Second Isaiah is the temptation towards assimilation, Brueggemann correctly highlights the embedded speech of the people in Second Isaiah and notes that these lines (e.g., 40:27; 49:14) reveal that the "exiles' own sense of things … [was] that Yahweh was not engaged or worth trusting."[35] However, rather than building upon the interpretive payoff of such an observation, Brueggemann quickly subsumes Second Isaiah's insistence on relationship to his notion that Second Isaiah focuses on urging the people to choose "Jewishness." He writes "the news is that Yahweh is back in play, creating choices.

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[34] One might note that there is no term for "Jewishness" in the text of Second Isaiah and that the text itself prefers to refer to its addressee not as "Jew" but as Jacob, Israel, my servant, and my people. Indeed, many scholars would debate the appropriateness of the term "Jew" in this period. As J. Andrew Overman and William Scott Green, "Judaism (Greco-Roman Period)," in *ABD* (6 vols.; ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:1038, point out, "[t]he transformation of Israelite religion caused by the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., the cessation of the sacrificial cult, and the Babylonian Exile supplies the contours of the larger Judaic framework within which the various Judaisms developed." Thus, it is tenuous to discuss "Jewishness" in this period both because of the nascent quality of anything that could be appropriately labeled Judaism and because of the variety of expressions which the Judaisms of the period took. Referring largely to the later Hellenistic period, Shaye J.D. Cohen , *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 3, argues: "Jewish identity in antiquity was elusive and uncertain …. there was no single or simple definition of *Jew* in antiquity."

[35] Brueggemann, *Testimony to Otherwise*, 12.

Yahweh is back in play on the lips of the one moved to new utterance .... The poet creates an environment for choice, for decision, for homecoming, for new, faithful action, none of which is available or choosable without this utterance."[36] As Brueggemann's observation reveals, the problem of suspected divine abandonment is crucial to Second Isaiah's negotiation of this relationship. Brueggemann acknowledges the presence of this motif within Second Isaiah, yet his interpretation of Second Isaiah focuses more heavily on the *potential* for the Second Isaiah to be concerned about assimilation based on its historical setting than upon the expressed concerns of the implied audience as cited by Second Isaiah itself. Thus Brueggemann, while observing some helpful features of the text, overwhelms its particularities in his rhetorical schema and conflates assumptions derived from reconstructions of the historical context and meaning.

2. Indications of Exigence within Second Isaiah

Because of the inconclusive nature of the historical evidence we have been able to muster to reconstruct the historical exigence of Second Isaiah's discourse, it will be necessary to turn our attention to the rhetorical situation and driving concerns of Second Isaiah as disclosed by the speaking voices within Second Isaiah.[37] The primary concern of the

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[36] Ibid., 13-14.

[37] Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader* (ed. John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit and Sally Caudill; New York: The Guilford Press, 1999), 220, defines rhetorical situation as, "a complex of persons, events, objects and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence." This exigence Bitzer elsewhere refers to as that "which strongly invites utterance" (ibid., 219). Oratory tends to regard its exigence as something that can be changed via human activity. For this reason, oratory typically calls for a particular solution to which the hearer is urged to acquiesce and particular actions in which the receptive hearer is expected to engage, a trait which justifies Bitzer's description of oratory as "pragmatic" (ibid., 219). The present study has had occasion to note its departure from models of understanding Second Isaiah as oratory (see ch. 1). The absence of particular pragmatic activities that Second Isaiah advocates constitutes one piece of evidence for the rejection of its categorization as oratory.

implied audience that Second Isaiah appears to be responding to is, as Brueggemann has correctly noted, their apparent fear that Yhwh has abandoned, forgotten, or neglected them, in Brueggemann's terms, "that Yahweh was not engaged or worth trusting."[38] The present study assumes that Second Isaiah's primary intended audience was the community of exiles in Babylon. Several pieces of evidence may be cited in support of this designation. First, while the recurrent interest of this series of poems in Babylon's imminent fall (43:14; 47:1; 48:4) would likely have resonated with many people groups in the ancient Near East in the late 530s to early 540s BCE, of the groups of Yhwh worshippers to whom these poems could potentially have been addressed, these events seem of the greatest immediate pertinence to those exiled to the region surrounding that city.[39] Second, the audience itself is treated as being in Babylon. The instructions to "go out from Babylon" (48:20) are a relatively strong indication that the addressee is located within Babylon.[40] Additionally, the relatively detailed accounts of Babylonian religious practices (40:19-20; 44:9-17; 46:1) seem to indicate an implicit familiarity with Babylonian life most easily acquired while resident in Babylonia itself. Certainly, a determination that Second Isaiah's poetry is primarily addressed to exiles resident in

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Instead, the nature of Second Isaiah as addressing an "intractable" rather than solvable problem provides an important distinguishing element between our description of lyric sequence and oratory. The notion of a "rhetorical exigence" which calls forth speech appears in many ways similar to an "intractable problem" which calls forth poetic expression. However, the two differ precisely in their approach to the nature of the problem and an appropriate response to that problem. While rhetorical oratory aims to offer clear choices or to suggest specific actions in response to the situation and to make its case compelling, lyric feels no compunction to flatten out inconsistencies, indeed it revels in them. Indeed, contradictions are the very heart and soul of good lyric. The term "exigence" is used here to indicate the historical situation that calls forth the utterance of Second Isaiah. While the terminology is drawn from the realm of rhetoric, it is important to note that its use does not necessarily imply that the utterance evoked by the exigence will provide a solution or call for a practical response.

[38] Brueggemann, *Testimony to Otherwise*, 12.

[39] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:32, draw a similar conclusion.

[40] Ibid. are similar.

Babylon does not eliminate the possibility that these poems would have been of interest to and relevant for other audiences of Yhwh worshippers during the period.

Among the figures named in the text, the audience of exiles in Babylon should be most closely identified with Jacob/Israel, the references to Zion's children, and many of the otherwise unspecified addresses to "you" (masculine forms). That the series of poems opens with a section heavily devoted to addresses to Jacob/Israel provides one point of support for this association.[41] Clearly, the addressee Jacob/Israel is central to the communicative aims of this poetry, and this centrality is evident from the outset. Additionally, these are the figures who most nearly fit the historical situation of the primary audience. These figures are depicted as captives or "sold" (42:22, 24; 50:1), as absent from Jerusalem (49:21; 51:19-20), and as returning to Jerusalem from Babylon (43:14; 48:20). These are also the figures to whom most of the imagery related to Babylon and her fall are addressed (e.g., 48:14-16). Thus when Yhwh addresses Jacob/Israel, Zion's children, or "you" those utterances should be read as directly addressing the exilic audience.

The image of Zion seems to function largely as a depiction of the audience's destroyed homeland. Though the image of Zion may implicitly include, and secondarily address, those left behind, these people are not the primary interest of this description.[42]

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[41] As Tod Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 65, recognizes, "there is a consensus among scholars that the final form of chapters 40-55 can be divided into two large sections of 40-48 and 49-55." Chs. 40-48 are heavily dominated by address to Jacob/Israel (ibid., 66).

[42] As Antoon Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour: A Form Critical Study of the Main Genres in Is XL-LV* (VT Sup 24; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 108, points out, the image of Zion is a somewhat flexible figure. He writes, "[w]hen the prophet addresses Zion, he metaphorically means the whole community. One must keep the complex character of the Zion image in the oracle: Zion is the destroyed Jerusalem, that is to be rebuilt and repeopled, but it is also the community of God's people, and as such Yahwe's spouse and the mother of many sons." Indeed, Zion is spoken of as Yhwh's people (51:16) (Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:39). However, this is not the dominant depiction of Zion in these chs. Rather, Second

Rather, Zion is figured primarily as city, and as woman. The more literal city depiction highlights the association of this addressee with a particular place.[43] The prevalence of the city depiction, even in poems that also address Zion as woman, indicate the importance of this attachment to place for the use of the Zion figure in Second Isaiah (e.g., 49:16; 54:11-12). The metaphor of Zion as woman builds upon a common trope in Israelite literature,[44] and functions within Second Isaiah to highlight Zion's relationships, both to Yhwh and to the exiles.

As noted above, the exiles are portrayed within the Zion poems as Zion's children. This connection is relatively explicit in the poetry. Zion's children are those who have gone away into captivity or been sold (50:1), or who are returning to her (49:18). This imagery neatly pairs up with the historical circumstances in which the audience of exiles found themselves. They had been taken away from the city Zion, and were now being instructed by Yhwh to return (52:11). Though the addresses to Zion are not directed at the audience, they do function largely as implicit addresses to the audience. As will be discussed below, Zion and Jacob/Israel speak much the same

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Isaiah's preference is to represent Zion as a city or as woman. As Carol A. Newsom, "Response to Norman K. Gottwald, 'Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55,'" *Semeia* 59 (1992):76, points out, in comparison to Lamentations "the representation of Zion is strategically simplified in Second Isaiah. She is not represented as in exile or as wandering. Rather Zion's geographical location is stressed." While it has been suggested that this lack of interest in the people still resident in Zion may serve the ideological aims of the community of exiles, i.e. their claim to the land and leadership roles upon their return (e.g., Norman K. Gottwald, "Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Eagletonian Reading," *Semeia* 59 [1992]: 51-53), it seems best to regard this absence simply as a focus upon the exiles' own concerns. That is, a lack of explicit reference, need not necessarily indicate a hostile attitude. Rather, Second Isaiah's focus upon the despair, fear, and sense of abandonment resident within the exilic community itself, may indicate an inability or an unwillingness to think concretely and personally about the pain felt by other members of the Judean community. That is, the lack of reference to those left behind in Judah may simply indicate a narrow focus on the concerns of the addressed audience. See Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:38-39, for an expression of a similar position.

[43] See further Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40*-55, 1:42, and Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 225, on this point.

[44] See the portrayals of Zion as woman in e.g., 2 Kgs 19:21; Ps 9:14; Isa 1:8; 10:32; 16:1; 37:22; Jer 4:31; 6:2, 23; Lam 1-2.

complaint against Yhwh. Indeed, Zion's suffering may have been one way the exiles envisioned and expressed their own sense of alienation from the deity, i.e. through alienation from the city. Certainly the exiles' release and Zion's comfort are repeatedly presented as paired and linked images (e.g., 49:13-18; 52:9-11; 54:1). Thus it is reasonable to conclude that the Zion images should be read as addressing a figure distinct from the audience, but with whom the audience strongly identifies. For this reason, the attitude with which Yhwh addresses Zion should be seen as largely paralleling the attitude implied toward the audience.

On the other hand, those figures with whom the poetry does not work to identify the audience (i.e. Babylon, the idols, other nations), should primarily be read in the opposite manner. The addresses to Babylon and the idol maker for example address neither the audience, nor figures with which the audience would identify themselves. Condemnation of Babylon (e.g. 47:1-15), and promises of destruction of the tyrant (49:24) thus work to offer promises of comfort and reconciliation to the audience. On occasion, however, the poetry does seem to offer a critique of the audience through these images. Jacob/Israel is referred to as idolatrous (48:5), and the poem describing Babylon's destruction is immediately juxtaposed to an indictment of Jacob/Israel that employs similar language and themes (48:1-11).[45] Thus, at times it seems these indictments of the audience's enemies provide images that will elsewhere be deployed to further critique the audience by drawing comparisons between their enemies and themselves.

[45] See further the discussion of this passage below.

As noted above, the words spoken by the audience highlight the sense of a breached relationship between Yhwh and the addressees. This concern over the relationship between Yhwh and the people is indicated both in the implied audience's attributed speeches embedded within Second Isaiah's poetry and in the expressions of the people's voices directed towards their God within the poetry of Lamentations to which Second Isaiah repeatedly and directly alludes.[46]

2.1. Embedded Speeches as Indicators of Rhetorical Environment – the Audience's Perspective

Second Isaiah views the relationship between Yhwh and Israel as a breached relationship. The language of the text itself shows how Second Isaiah imagined the exile as a breach of relationship between the people and the deity. Second Isaiah gives the most explicit indications of this understanding in the few quotations of the people's speech embedded in the speech of the deity (Isa 40:27-28; 49:14). Clearly, Second Isaiah's audience exhibits a mood of despair. These statements indicate the apparent fear on the part of the audience that Yhwh has abandoned, forgotten, or neglected them. Twice in these chapters the poet cites voices associated with the people and, then refutes them by the divine voice. The first instance is Isa 40:27-28:

"Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
'My way is hidden from Yhwh,
and from my God. My justice he discounts?'
Do you not know …"

[46] In defense of this claim see further below.

Here, Jacob/Israel is cited as complaining about the deity's neglect. Later in the sequence Zion will add her voice on this same issue as indicated by the claim:

"But Zion said 'Yhwh forsook me,
my Lord forgot me.'" (Isa 49:14).

The only speech of the audience or figures with which the audience closely identifies cited directly by the speaking voice of the text revolves around this concern over being forgotten or neglected.[47] These citations highlight the centrality of this complaint and the feeling of despair and mistrust in the relationship between the poetic speaker and the audience.[48] Indications of possible concern over human frailty pair up with these cited speeches to lend support to the idea that the poet is speaking into a context of significant concern and apprehension. The repetition of the expression "the people are grass, grass withers, a flower wilts" (Isa 40:6-8), may, in fact, be an implicit acknowledgement of the mindset of the hearers.[49] Additionally, the opening exhortation to comfort and frequent repetition of the phrase "do not fear" (Isa 41:10, 13, 14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 8; 54:4) hint at a people who seem to be caught up in circumstances beyond their control and that make them nervous, uneasy, and unhappy.[50]

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[47] The audience also "speaks" the "we" language of Second Isaiah. However, the use of "we" language should probably be understood as an attempt by the prophetic poet to put particular words on the lips of the audience. They thus represent more the prophetic poet's understanding of the audience than their own. It is telling that each of the "we" utterances describe the people in terms of their sin (42:24 and 53:1-6). This observation reinforces the sense that the prophetic poet largely assigns fault to the audience in the breach between Yhwh and Israel.

[48] Brueggemann's comments cited above point in this direction. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:30, similarly write that the community exiled in Babylon, "believes that Yhwh has abandoned it." Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 48; and Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 194, treat the embedded quotation in 40:27 as a natural response to the exilic situation.

[49] This is the position taken by Muilenburg, *IB* 5:429, who writes, "[t]he prophet is here expressing the despondency of his contemporaries." Likewise Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 40-41 links these despairing words with the attitude of the "vanquished nation" (41).

[50] These occurrences of the exhortation "fear not" are significant elements of the "salvation oracle." Joachim Begrich, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *ZAW* 52 (1934): 81-92, and idem, *Studien zu Deuterojesaja* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1963), 15, delineated the major elements of this form which he called the *priesterliche Heilsorakel*. He understood the salvation oracle as a form which primarily responded to

2.2. Allusions as Indicators of the Rhetorical Environment

Second Isaiah is widely recognized to allude frequently to Lamentations. This relationship between the two texts confirms the sense that Second Isaiah speaks into a situation that views the relationship between the people and their God as fractured. Scholars who have argued that Second Isaiah directly responds to Lamentations include Norman K. Gottwald, Carol A. Newsom, Patricia Tull Willey, and Tod Linafelt.[51] It is not the case that Second Isaiah and Lamentations merely share similarities, or that they emerge in the same general period and for this reason speak to similar themes. Rather, as Willey's meticulous study of Second Isaiah's citations of other texts shows, Second Isaiah knew and cited Lamentations.[52]

The poetry of Lamentations cries out to God for consolation from a place of pain, and in particular charges Yhwh with abandoning Zion. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp highlights Lam 1:1; 2:1, 3, 6, 7, 8; 5:20, and 22 as "specific allusions to God's abandonment of

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the concerns of the people expressed in lament. Both Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 11, and Philip B. Harner, "The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah," *JBL* 88 (1969): 418, comment on the dependence of later scholarship on Begrich's insight in this regard. As Harner helpfully summarizes, Begrich "argued that second Isaiah intentionally utilized this form to address a people languishing in exile."

[51] Norman K. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (SBT 14; London: SCM Press, 1954), 106; Carol A. Newsom, "Response to Norman K. Gottwald, 'Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55'" *Semeia* 59 (1992): 76; Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (SBLDS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 5; and Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 63. While each of these studies has favored a discursive approach to the interaction between Second Isaiah and Lamentations with attention to the way in which Second Isaiah takes up the rhetoric of Lamentations, the present study will attend to the way in which the lyric sequence of Second Isaiah answers the tonalities and intractable problem of the lyric sequence of Lamentations. For discussion of Lamentations as a lyric sequence, see ch. 2. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1: 39 make approving comments about the notion that Second Isaiah quotes Lamentations. However, their work is not as systematically oriented toward examining the relationship between these two texts as the works cited above.

[52] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 76-84, discusses her methodology for determining legitimate cases of intentional allusion. Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 32, articulates a methodology for assessing cases of genuine intentional reuse of earlier texts which depends in part upon demonstration that the pair of texts shares combinations of terms which are not a part of a "stock vocabulary." He considers the evidence sufficient to determine that Second Isaiah "utilized not only vocabulary clusters that happen to be found in the Book of Lamentations, but texts from that book as well" (ibid., 127).

Jerusalem."[53] In the poignant opening instance of this motif, Jerusalem is figured as a "widow" – a metaphor that, as Adele Berlin notes, "implies that Jerusalem has lost her 'husband,' that is, that God's presence has departed."[54] The last of these abandonment allusions Tod Linafelt describes as "near untranslatable trailing off of 5:22, 'For if truly you have rejected us/ bitterly raged against us ….'"[55] This plea which begins "return us, O Yhwh, to you," (Lam 5:21a) leaves the ending of Lamentations open, begging Yhwh for a response and for a resolution of the audience's self-proclaimed state of abandonment.[56] Indeed, Berlin proposes that "Lam 1, and perhaps the entire book, is a call to God to be Zion's comforter."[57] Similarly Dobbs-Allsopp writes, "[a]rising out of a context that is stridently incongruous with Judah's past experiences of God's beneficent sovereignty, these poems confront God with the hurt and pain of this lived reality … as a means of mobilizing God, reactivating the Yahweh of old, and converting God's present fury into future favor."[58] Yet, despite the obvious call of Lamentations for a response from Yhwh, no response comes. Rather, "God's silence is pervasive, even deafening, in Lamentations."[59] The silence of the beseeched deity reinforces the sense of abandonment and absence about which Lamentations complains. Thus distress over the absence and silence of Yhwh are central thematic concerns of Lamentations.

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[53] F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 31.

[54] Adele Berlin, *Lamentations* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 49. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 68, concurs, writing that "the absence of God is figured thematically through the divine abandonment theme … and imaginatively as part of the metaphorical surplus of the widow imagery …. God is implicitly understood as the unmentioned dead husband."

[55] Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 74. Linafelt further defends this translation and interpretation of the line in his subsequent article: idem, "The Refusal of a Conclusion in the Book of Lamentations," *JBL* 120 (2001):340-343.

[56] Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 30, comments that with this ending Lamentations "is left opening out into the emptiness of God's nonresponse."

[57] Berlin, *Lamentations*, 48.

[58] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 24.

[59] Ibid., 39. Berlin, *Lamentations*, 49, similarly takes note that "God's only response is silence." Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 89, is similar.

Second Isaiah's response to the complaints of Lamentations highlights the breach between the deity and the people that characterizes the rhetorical context of this poetry. Most vividly, the dominance of the divine speaking voice in Second Isaiah brings an end to the "deafening" divine silence of Lamentations.[60] The mode by which Second Isaiah responds is aptly captured by the comments of Alan Mintz: "Prophecy offers consolation not just in the promise of divine deliverance but in the very fact that through the prophet again God speaks."[61] Certainly, one way in which Second Isaiah responds emphatically to Lamentations' complaint is in the pervasive presence of Yhwh as a speaking voice in the series of poems.[62] Yhwh's overwhelming speaking presence in Second Isaiah is one way in which the poetry attempts to overcome the audience's voiced despair and mistrust.

From beginning to end, Second Isaiah's language and imagery intersect with the complaints of Lamentations. While Lamentations repeatedly insisted that Zion had "no one to comfort" her (Lam 1: 2, 9, 17, 21), Second Isaiah dramatically begins with a proclamation of coming comfort.[63] Lamentations depicts Zion as a widow and bereaved mother (Lam 1:1, 16), images that are widely recognized to constitute a charge of spousal abandonment by Yhwh.[64] The restoration of Zion's children in Isa 49:18 and 54:1-12 and the employment of the marriage metaphor for Israel's relationship with Yhwh (Isa 50:1; 54:1, 6) line up directly with Lamentations' spousal abandonment complaint. Linafelt argues that Second Isaiah may even be seen as "an attempt to 'fix' the end of

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[60] As Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 89, notes, "[w]hereas YHWH's voice was conspicuously absent throughout Lamentations, it is heard in Second Isaiah as an answer to Daughter Zion's complaints, reversing her sufferings and transferring them to her enemies."

[61] Alan Mintz, *¥urban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 41.

[62] Ch. 4 articulates the dominance of the divine voice in contrast to other voices in Second Isaiah.

[63] Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (AB 7A; 2nd ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 78, takes note of this repetition and comments that it contributes to "a certain evenness of mood." About the relationship between Isaiah 40:1-2 and Lamentations see further below.

[64] See above.

Lamentations."[65] Linafelt points out that Zion's complaint in Isa 49:14 to which Yhwh will respond is "nearly a direct quote from Lamentations 5:20."[66] Finally, Second Isaiah concludes with an invitation to "come to the waters" (Isa 55:1), explicitly taking up the thirst language and imagery Lamentations used to highlight the pathos of the people's plight (Lam 5:4).

Willey's characterization of the relationship between Second Isaiah and Lamentations as "deeply contrapuntal" is thus both widely acknowledged and well supported.[67] However, while Second Isaiah does indeed engage in overturning and reversing the complaints of Lamentations, as the examples above illustrate, it also continues the stream of "bitterly raging" in the "indignant indictment" tonality, as chapter five will argue.[68] As I will suggest below, this expression of divine rage in the "indignant indictment" tonality, likely functioned as yet another mode of appeal to the audience to accept the divine proclamation of comfort, one that functioned by placing the possibilities of comfort and rage in sharp relief. The audience's suspicion that Yhwh was not trustworthy could not be overcome without acknowledgement of the experience of the divine anger and a way to place that anger fully in the past. Thus, Second Isaiah both acknowledges and responds to the tension between the need for a comforter and the comfortlessness of Zion. Both the anger of the deity and the compassionate response to Zion are retained by Second Isaiah, which is "deeply contrapuntal" within itself. Second Isaiah may well answer Lamentations, but the response is neither simple nor univocal.

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[65] Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 74. Likewise, Mintz, *¥urban*, 44, states that, "[t]he text of Second Isaiah displays a consciousness of its role as an antidote to the discourse of lamentation."

[66] Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 72.

[67] Patricia Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 89.

[68] The phrase "bitter raging" is drawn from Linafelt's translation of Lam 5:20. See n. 55. A full discussion of the tonalities of the divine voice in Second Isaiah including the "indignant indictment tonality" is undertaken in ch. 5.

3. The Tension Between the People's Complaint and the Divine Response

Indications of the central concern of the implied human audience have pointed to the fear that Yhwh has rejected, forgotten, or abandoned Yhwh's people. These concerns highlight the doubt and apprehension to which Second Isaiah' responds. In this sense, Clifford is right that "Second Isaiah had a difficult audience."[69] For, as this section will argue, the divine voice's stated intention to comfort Zion would meet with significant resistance from an audience so described. Since comfort, in order to be effective, requires the acceptance of the one to whom it is offered, if Yhwh is to comfort the audience through Second Isaiah, the audience will have to be convinced to accept this offer of comfort, indeed that the offer is real and trustworthy. The acknowledgement of the audience's fears and doubts are one mode by which Second Isaiah works to overcome resistance to the message of comfort. At times in this attempt to overcome audience resistance Second Isaiah seems to invite the audience to imagine the full implications of their doubts by depicting the deity as "bitterly raging."[70] Thus the divine voice's acknowledgement of the audience's resistance and doubt plays out in the tension within the divine voice between the intention to comfort and expressions of the divine rage.

Second Isaiah privileges Yhwh's speech in its response to the audience's fear of divine abandonment. As noted above, on one level this mode of response is a way of explicitly and structurally answering the complaint of divine absence. That is, in Second Isaiah Yhwh is not only present, but consistently the poetry's dominant speaking voice.[71] As Mintz claims, "[i]n the covenantal relationship, the discourse of lamentation is the

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[69] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 13.
[70] See note 68.
[71] Ch. 4 will defend and build upon this claim.

discourse of Israel; consolation is God's."[72] Thus, whatever resolution Second Isaiah reaches regarding this fear of abandonment, it is appropriate that it comes from the speaking of the divine voice. Though Second Isaiah is obviously interested in its audience as evidenced by its highly vocative style, the conflict between the audience and the divine speaker plays out almost entirely within the divine voice. Their complaints are embedded and answered, but it is more than that. Their likely resistance surfaces in the movement towards exasperation and indictment that threatens to undo the promise of reconciliation and comfort.

Just as the audience's speech reveals a fractured relationship between the people and the deity, so also the speaking voice of Yhwh treats the relationship as broken and wrestles with the difficulties inherent in the intention to reconcile. Not least of these difficulties is the resistance to such reconciliation that the embedded speeches of the people portray. The tension between Yhwh's intention to comfort and the people's doubts over Yhwh's reliability produces the central problem of the sequence which is revealed in the juxtaposition of the divine voice's promises of comfort, and the expressions of aggravation and acknowledgements of past rage.[73]

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[72] Mintz, *¥urban*, 41.

[73] This study has already observed that juxtaposition of salvation and judgment is typical of Second Isaiah. Full argumentation in support of this characterization is undertaken in ch. 5.

3.1. Opening Announcement of the Intention to Comfort – Isa 40:1-2[74]

The conflict between the divine announcement of comfort and the audience's fear and doubt surface immediately in the opening lines of the first poem of the sequence. The initial words of Second Isaiah are among the most well known in the Hebrew Bible, and have widely been considered to "strike the dominant mood for the entire collection."[75] However, as closer examination of the alternation of moods in Second Isaiah's primary voice will illustrate, Second Isaiah is not typified by just one "dominant mood."[76] The opening lines of Second Isaiah's first poem offer the starting point for the alternation of moods that is to come. They proclaim coming comfort from Yhwh, and thus stand in sharp tension with the doubt and uncertainty that typifies the expression of Second Isaiah's audience. Though part of a larger poem, only the opening lines need be

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[74] These lines open the larger poem Isa 40:1-31. They are treated here as a stanza within the larger poem. Detailed treatment of the entire poem is not necessary to demonstrate that Second Isaiah opens with an announcement of the intention to comfort Zion. The beginning of the stanza is delimited by the shift in genre from prose (Isa 39) to poetry (Isa 40) which marks its beginning as well as the beginning of the larger poem of which it is a part, and indeed of Second Isaiah. The stanza's conclusion is marked by a shift in speaker, addressee, subject matter, and tonality. Stephen A. Geller, "A Poetic Analysis of Isaiah 40:1-2," *HTR* 77 (1984): 413, comments that these two vv. are "self-contained enough to possess the internal coherence of a discrete unit." Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah 40-66*, 50, also treats vv. 1 and 2 as a separate "strophe" from v. 3. The limits of the larger poem are somewhat less obvious. Indeed, many scholars break Isa 40:1-31 into two poems (40:1-11, 12-31) (Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 31; Muilenburg, *IB*, 5:415; Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 71; and McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 15). Certainly, there is a shift at v. 12 from description to the use of a series of rhetorical questions. However, the clarity of this break is complicated by the continuation of interest in Yhwh's activities from v. 11 into v. 12. Additionally, these verses (vv. 11 and 12) exhibit a probable continuity of speaker. The divine voice will not take up speaking the rhetorical questions until v. 25 where it mirrors the chain of questions spoken in the anonymous voices of vv. 9-24. While the poem as a whole exhibits a relatively paratactic flow as will be observed in the summary of poems in ch. 4, it does exhibit a certain amount of thematic continuity throughout. Issues of voices and speaking (40:2, 3, 6, 9, 21, 26, 27), Yhwh's strength (40:10, 26, 29), plant imagery (40:6, 7, 8, 24), and the use of questions (40:6, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 21, 25, 27, 28) run throughout Isa 40:1-31. MT appears to agree with this division of the opening poem. While units within 40:1-31 are marked with *setumas*, there is a *petucha* following v. 31. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 301, also considers vv. 1-31 the first poem.

[75] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:422. Peter Damian Akpunonu, *The Overture of the Book of Consolations (Isaiah 40:1-11)* (Washington, D.C.: Peter Lang, 2004), 69, notes that "[t]he dominant theme of the Overture is consolation and that is the first word of the book." Elsewhere Akpunonu (80) writes, "comfort … summarizes the message and purpose of the book." Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah 40-66*, 47 writes that the exhortation to comfort "establishes the tone" of Isaiah 40-66. As Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 49 puts it, "This sentence sums up everything that DtIsa has to proclaim."

[76] See ch. 5 for a full defense of this claim.

examined to make the point that Second Isaiah opens with an announcement of comfort. These lines can be translated:

[1] "O comfort, comfort my people,"
says your God.[77]
[2] "Speak upon the heart of Jerusalem and meet[78] with her
for she has completed[79] her conscription,[80]
for her punishment has been paid,
for she took from the hand of Yhwh twice for all her transgressions."

The opening pair of words bear heavy freight. They announce the divine speaker's intentions, and signal at least one mode by which the divine voice proposes to provide comfort to Zion, that of tender speech. The opening announcement "'O comfort, comfort my people' says your God" (40:1) highlights both the centrality of comfort to Second Isaiah, and the relationality of that comfort. Emphatically, the divine voice commands comfort through repetition, a favorite form of emphasis in Second Isaiah's poetry.[81]

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[77] The lineation of this verse follows MT's markings. The remaining line of the stanza (v.2) is a neatly structured tricolon. Thus, v. 1 would be an unusual monocolon if not so divided. While there is no obvious parallelism to give the opening line a clear division into bicola, this delineation makes sense. Further, even the short colon "says your God" meets O'Connor's minimum standards in terms of constituents. It has both a finite verb and a second constituent – the subject of that verb (Cf., William Holladay, "*Hebrew Verse Structure* Revisited (I): Which Words "Count"?" JBL 118/1 (1999), 21-24.

[78] I am taking קרא to be playing between the first meaning of "call" and the second of "encounter." While it will clearly mean "call" later in this ch. when it is the object of a voice, here it seems possible to read it as describing the meeting in which this "tender speaking" is to take place. Geller, "Poetic Analysis," 416, also reads קרא as polyvalent in this line in light of the parallelism with "speak to the heart."

[79] I am reading with the MT in contrast to 1QIsa[a] which makes the subject of the verb masculine, presumably referring to Yhwh. The masculine subject is unnecessary in the context and likely reflects a change for theological reasons – i.e. to supply the idea that Yhwh is the one who has made Jerusalem's service complete and to excise the idea that Jerusalem fulfilled the entire punishment for her sins.

[80] *HALOT*, 3:994-95, notes that the term may connote the Levites' time on duty, compulsory labor, or military service. Here duty is translated "conscription" to note the forced nature of the condition.

[81] Other such repetitions in Second Isaiah include: 43:11, 25; 51:9, 12, 17; 52:1, 11. Muilenburg, *IB*, 5:389, includes this feature in his catalog of repetitions in Second Isaiah.

The primary meaning of נחם in the *piel* is "comfort" or "console."[82] This is the most obvious meaning of these words in the context of 40:1 and is the main way in which the opening pair of imperatives has been read by commentators. The comments of Debra Moody Bass express this sense of the root well. She states that "the word 'comfort' is used here to denote relief from the suffering and oppression Israel experienced at the hands of the Babylonians."[83] The notion of Second Isaiah as the "book of comfort" receives its first piece of evidence here in its opening words.[84] Indeed, Baltzer comments regarding 40:1, "God's fundamental decision in favor of his people has been made; that is

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[82] *HALOT*, 2: 689; Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, BDB (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 637.

[83] Debra Moody Bass, *God Comforts Israel: The Audience and Message of Isaiah 40-55* (New York: University Press of America, 2006), 95. Akpunonu, *Overture to Book of Consolations*, 71, is similar, writing "[c]omfort implies putting an end to a sad and distressful situation, soothing the pains with the assurance of a new and better order." Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 98 goes further in applying the notion of comfort to the exilic situation: "'Comfort in Second Isaiah can connote bringing Jerusalem's citizens home and rebuilding her ruins (52:9; cf. 49:13) or transforming her waste places into a virtual paradise (51:3; cf. 54:11)."

[84] McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 16-17, concurs writing: "The opening words have given the Book of Second Isaiah the title of 'Book of Consolation.' Second Isaiah is much more than a book of consolation, but this is certainly a dominant theme." Arvid S. Kapelrud, "The Main Concern of Second Isaiah," *VT* 32 (1982): 51, comments that "Second Isaiah is often called 'the prophet of consolation.'" John F.A. Sawyer, "Isaiah and Zionism," in *Sense and Sensitivity: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll* (JSOTSup 348; eds. Alastair G. Hunter and Philip R. Davies; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 249, notes that "in Jewish literature from Ben Sira onwards, Isaiah is the 'Prophet of Consolation." Such an opinion of Second Isaiah was evidently held among the tradents responsible for 4QTan©umim. This text introduces a series of quotations from Second Isaiah with the phrase "and from the scroll of Isaiah, consolations," or perhaps "and from a scroll of Isaiah of consolations." (ומן ספר ישעיה תנחומים) (4Q176 1.I.4) [text drawn from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; New York: Brill, 1997), 1:358-9, who translate "And from the book of Isaiah: Words of consolation" (ibid., 359)]. C.D. Stanley, "The Importance of *4QTan©umim (4Q176)*," *RevQ* 15 (1992): 576, claims that the collection of Second Isaian citations was "compiled (so it would seem) to offer a word of divine 'comfort'" and suggests that the scroll is "a written record of one person's progressive reading through a limited portion of Scripture (*Second Isaiah*) in which certain passages that appeared to speak to the concerns of the reader and/or his broader community were copied down for later reference." Other scholars who discuss this series of quotations from Second Isaiah in the scroll as "consolations" include Johann Maier, "Tan©umin and Apocryphal Lamentations," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds., Lawrence H. Schiffmann and James C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:915; and Philip R. Davies, "Biblical Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation* (eds., Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 1:160. Among scholars who refer to Second Isaiah as "book of comfort" or "book of consolations," one might list: John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (AB20; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 16-17; Akpunonu, *The Overture of the Book of Consolations*; F. Duane Lindsey, "The Commission of the Servant in Isa 49:1-13," *BSac* 139 (1982): 129; and John W. Olley, "'No Peace' in a Book of Consolation. A Framework for the Book of Isaiah?" *VT* 49 (1999): 351-70.

the note that irradiates all else."[85] Westermann's understanding of the import of the command to comfort is similar; he writes that "what comforts Israel is the word of the messenger now sent to her with the proclamation that God has forgiven his people and resolved upon their deliverance."[86]

As noted above, Zion should be understood not as the exilic audience, but as a figure closely identified with them. Surely the audience would have heard a reference to themselves in the opening proclamation "my people." As "my people" stands in parallel to Jerusalem, already in the opening line the poetry reinforces the sense of identification between the audience and the city. Zion's comfort is their comfort as well. Given the preceding description of the audience's perspective, it is reasonable to suppose that these opening imperatives may have met with some resistance or at least come as something of a shock. Indeed, given the audience's perspective and the historical setting into which Second Isaiah was spoken, when taken in the straightforward sense of "comfort," the verb pair signals a distinct change of the divine mind in Isa 40:1. In light of the well established allusive connection between Lamentations and Second Isaiah noted above, Second Isaiah can be seen as responding directly to Lamentations' repeated claim that Jerusalem has no comforter with this opening pair of imperatives.[87] Thus, the opening poem begins with a reversal, an overturning of the desperate and abandoned situation of Zion articulated so wrenchingly by Lamentations. While Lamentations bemoaned Zion's lack of a comforter, Isa 40:1 proclaims "comfort" for Zion. Thus the opening words announcing comfort directly engage the audience's complaint. But more than that, the

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[85] Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 49.

[86] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 34.

[87] A full discussion in support of the claim that Second Isaiah responds to Lamentations' complaints about Zion's comforter-less-ness is undertaken above.

opening pair of imperatives, read in the light of this mind change in Yhwh from wrath to comfort foreshadow the vicissitudes of the poetic sequence's primary speaker. Throughout the poems that follow, Yhwh's speech will alternate between expressions of consolation spoken tenderly and more stinging exhortations. As I will argue, the juxtaposition of these attitudes is one way in which the divine voice works to overcome audience resistance to its message of comfort.[88]

The opening calls to comfort are plural imperatives. As Blenkinsopp comments, "we are struck at once by the failure to identify the people addressed at the beginning of this major section of the book."[89] This peculiarity has been widely observed and discussed with suggestions having been made that Yhwh is exhorting a group of prophets, a collection of divine council members, or even the people themselves to carry out the comforting.[90] Such speculations are unnecessary in light of the insistent ambiguity and relationality of the poetry. Surely, some sort of agent is referenced as the one providing the comfort. However, it is not essential to determine who this agent is.

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[88] See further ch. 5's discussion of the tonalities of Second Isaiah's poems.

[89] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 178. Similarly, Seitz, *NIB* 6:334, notes that "it is not stipulated clearly who is being addressed." Geller, "Poetic Analysis," 415, comments, "[t]he primary ambiguity is famous: the uncertainty in regard to speaker and audience." Akpunonu, *Overture to the Book of Consolations*, 61, comments that "this imprecision is deliberate."

[90] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40*-55, 180, argues for the addressee as a group of prophets in light of the plural imperative. Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 82-84; Seitz, *NIB* 6:334; H.G.M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 37-38; Bass, *God Comforts Israel*, 91; Hanson, *Isaiah 40-55*, 15, support divine council members as the addressees. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 297, refers to the addressees as "divine attendants." Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia: Übersetzt und Erklärt* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902), 256, extends the addressee of the exhortation to comfort to anyone who is able to comfort. However, he notes that this ability applies primarily to the author. As Akpunonu, *Overture to Book of Consolations*, 66, points out, particularly in the case of the divine council suggestion, crucial narrative elements are missing from Isaiah 40 which would contribute to the sense that a divine council scene is being depicted. Akpunonu lists "a divine statement," "a discussion/deliberation," and "a divine decision" and highlights the absence of the full scene in support of his claim that "arguments in favor of Divine Council are not convincing." Likewise, Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah 40-66*, 50, may be cited as one unconvinced by the divine council suggestion noting that "nothing in the context of Isaiah would lead one to look for the idea here."

Rather, the agent gives way to direct comfort from Yhwh quite quickly, and may be seen as a stage along the way to Second Isaiah's fuller articulation of divine comfort.

The imperatives function, however temporarily, to distance Yhwh from the provision of comfort, at least by one degree. As Landy points out, "in a sense it is God who comforts [with these imperatives], but at one remove."[91] More pointedly Landy asks, "why does God eschew, for the moment, the voice of comfort, as if he cannot commit himself to the poetic/prophetic venture?"[92] Certainly, this doubt about Yhwh's commitment to carrying out the promise of comfort is one of the hesitancies of the audience that the sequence of poems works to overcome. The imperatives' implication that some agent will offer the comfort rather than comfort coming through Yhwh directly may be one way in which the opening lines permit space for the doubts of the audience. As further analysis will show, this approach of allowing and even provoking the audience to consider the consequences of their worst fears being realized is one way in which Second Isaiah goes about making its appeal to the audience to accept the divine proclamation of comfort. Such a strategy may be already lurking in the use of the opening plural imperatives.

The distance between Yhwh and the act of comforting produced by the plural imperative form is immediately overcome by the articulation of the recipient of that comfort. Indeed, this opening line's announcement of coming comfort immediately and explicitly articulates the relationship between the comforter and the comfortee. Yhwh is not announcing comfort to just anyone, but to "my people," (עמי) that is, those for whom this address comes from "your God" (אלהיכם). Geller emphasizes the way in which the

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[91] Francis Landy, "The Ghostly Prelude to Deutero-Isaiah." *Biblical Interpretation* 14 (2006): 335.
[92] Ibid., 337.

use of the covenantal language "my people" and "your God" in this line pushes against the imperative forms of the verbs.[93] He writes that, "[o]n the syntactic level the line presents a proclamation to 'comfort' Israel. On another, allusive level, the pronominal suffixes open a direct, unmediated line of communication. It is, in effect, a divine exclamation: 'My people! Your God!'"[94] Thus the poetry subtly overturns the suspicion that the comforting is done at a distance or via an agent. In a sense, comfort is both commanded to be spoken and spoken by Yhwh.

Not only does the opening announcement of comfort highlight the relationship between Yhwh and Israel explicitly and emphatically as relational, it does so more subtly as well. The use of the term נחם paired with the following command to "speak upon the heart of Jerusalem" (דבר על לב, 40:2) characterizes the comfort offered both in terms of tenderness and relationship. While the offer of comfort is inherently relational, several of the biblical contexts in which נחם appears highlight this relationality by placing it in settings that emphasize the marital or familial relationship between comforter and comfortee.[95] In 2 Sam 12:24 David comforts וינחם (*piel*) his wife Bath-Sheba after the death of her first son. Likewise Isaac "was comforted" or perhaps "comforted himself" וינחם (*niphal*) after the death of his mother by taking his wife Rebekah into his mother's tent (Gen 24:67).[96] נחם (*piel*) in Ruth 2:13 paired with the phrase דבר על לב indicates that Ruth is comforted through the speech of the man who will become her husband. In

[93] This use of covenantal language in Isa 40:1 has been observed by many commentators. E.g., Muilenburg, *IB* 5: 424; and Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 49-50.

[94] Geller, "Poetic Analysis," 415.

[95] This use occurs with both *piel* and *niphal* forms.

[96] The tent setting combined with the notice that "Isaac took (לקח) Rebekah and she became a wife to him," is a relatively standardized formula used for the initiation and consummation of a marriage in the Hebrew Bible contexts (see, e.g., Gen 38:1; Exod 2:1; 6:20, 23).

another distinctive pairing of נחם (*piel*) and דבר על לב, Joseph offers reassurance to his brothers following their father's death (Gen 50:21). In this case, the comfort extends beyond the offer of compassion in a time of bereavement, and includes reassurance that the comforter's anger has passed, making it a particularly relevant parallel to Second Isaiah's deployment of this language.

The relatively rare construction דבר על לב (Isa 40:2) that appears paired with the exhortation to נחם (40:1) further illustrates both the relationality of this comfort and the tender persuasiveness with which it is, at least initially, offered in Second Isaiah.[97] This phrase is frequently used of a man's speech to a woman whom he is trying to persuade in the context of a sexual or marital relationship.[98] Shechem speaks in this way to Dinah in Gen 34:3, Boaz speaks in this way to Ruth in Ruth 2:13, the Ephraimite Levite chasing his estranged concubine resolves to win her back in this way (Judg 19:3), and the context of Hosea 2 makes such implications explicit in its depiction of Yhwh's reunion with Israel (Hos 2:16). Certainly, later in the sequence of poems Second Isaiah will employ the metaphor of a marriage relationship between Yhwh and Zion as a depiction of the

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[97] Geller, "Poetic Analysis," 416, has a similar interpretation, arguing that "woo" is a potential translation for this Hebrew phrase. He notes further that Israel must be "seduced" back to Yhwh and that "the almost sexual connotation is carried here by the sequence of feminine suffixes in the following lines" (ibid., 417). Landy, "Ghostly Prelude," 338, is more explicit writing, "[t]o speak to the heart may be an idiom for sexual seduction or reconciliation, as in Hos. 2:16, and anticipate bridal imagery later in the book." Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah 40-66*, 49-50, comes very near to treating the phrase as implying sexual nuance. He cites the Shechem and Ruth contexts as examples of the use of this phrase as "affectionate," highlights that "the tone of affection is underlined in that the address is to the feminine Jerusalem," and summarizes the import of the address as "[h]er lover has not cast her off." Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 51, also seems to leave open the possibility of reading the phrase as "woo" referring to it as "a phrase meaning the language of love" and citing the Genesis, Judges, and Hosean texts noted above. Terry W. Eddinger, "An Analysis of Isaiah 40:1-11 (17)," *BBR* 9 (1999): 125, draws a similar conclusion calling the verbal phrases of the second line "love lavished words."

[98] A handful of male-male conversations that are described in this way carry familiar and intimate tones. Joseph speaks in this way to his brothers (Gen 50:21), Hezekiah speaks in this way to encourage the Levites (2 Chron 30:22), and David is urged to speak in this way to his warriors to keep them loyal (2 Sam 19:8). In each of these instances, persuasive intent is clear.

comfort being offered to the addressee (e.g., 49:14-50:3; 54:1-17). The presence of this phrase in Isa 40:1-2 indicates that Isa 40:1-2 may hint at the marriage metaphor, thus characterizing its offer of comfort as particularly relational.

Again however, the very language employed by the poetry to offer comfort, may also function on another level to acknowledge the audience's objection. Even as the hints at a familial, or even marital metaphor for Yhwh's reconciliation with Zion create the expectation of a positive resolution of the tensions regarding Zion's coming comfort, this same imagery leaves open negative possibilities. Not all of the contexts cited to illustrate the sexual and marital overtones of דבר על לב are positive. Indeed, the intention to "speak to the heart" of the Ephriamite Levite's concubine in Judges 19 lead directly to her death and the use of the same phrase in Hosea 2 follows a particularly terrifying expression of divine wrath and punishment. As has been widely noted, the marriage metaphor does not always depict a harmonious relationship between the people and the deity. Indeed, it often employs images of domestic violence as expressions of the punishment for idolatry figured as adultery.[99]

[99] Brad E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, (Academia Biblica 20; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), is an extensive study of the marriage metaphor in Hosea 2 and includes a chapter on the "Metaphors of Wife/Mother, Fornication, and Adultery," 81-110. Diane Jacobson, "Hosea? No! A Metaphor that Kills," *WW* 28 (2008): 193, 195, comments regarding Hosea 2 that "[t]he poetic patterns of speech and word intended to show God's mercy and forgiveness reverberate with patterns of both pornography and abuse" (193). Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, "The Imagination of and the Power of Imagination: An Intertextual Analysis of Two Biblical Love Songs," JSOT 44 (1989): 75-88, notes that Hosea 2 shares the phrase דבר על לב (speak to the heart) with "two other biblical stories [Genesis 34 and Judges 19] about sexual violence" (84). However, it should be noted that the "violence" of Shechem's behavior in Genesis 34 is debatable. The sequence of verbs in Gen 34:2 indicates that Shechem ראה (saw), לקח (took), שכב (lay with), and ענה (humbled) Dinah. This last verb ענה, sometimes translated "raped" is used elsewhere to refer to a particular form of "disgrace" that makes a woman ineligible for another marriage, likely the loss of her virginity (e.g., Deut 21:14, 22:29). The ordering of the verbs, placing ענה last, following the notice that Shechem "lay with" Dinah, further supports the contention that the verb does not indicate an act of violence leading up to the act of intercourse, but rather a result of that activity – Dinah's shaming. If this is the case, Shechem is guilty of seducing Dinah, but not of raping her. Louis H. Feldman, "Philo, pseudo-Philo, Josephus, and Theodotus on the Rape of Dinah," *JQR* 94 (2004): 253-77,

As this discussion has illustrated, the opening words of Second Isaiah introduce "comfort" as the theme of the poetic prophet. However, the audience's likely resistance to such a proclamation may be implicitly acknowledged in these opening lines. Nascent in the opening proclamation lurks also the reminder that a shift to "comfort" is a change of mind on the part of Yhwh. This mind change is muted somewhat by the possible distance created between the divine speaker and the actual offer of comfort, through the use of the imperative and its implied agent. In addition, the relationality of the comfort offered is heavily emphasized by the covenantal language and possible allusion to the martial metaphor for Yhwh's relationship with Zion common in the prophetic writings. In this relational image again lurks the audience's complaint, for, as noted above, one of Lamentations' charges was spousal abandonment. In these opening lines, Yhwh offers comfort, places emphasis upon the relationship between Yhwh and Zion, and may implicitly acknowledge the audience's complaint through the choice of words used to express that promise of comfort.

3.2. Further Expressions of the Comfort Theme

Blenkinsopp refers to the "theme of comfort" as a "leitmotif" within Second Isaiah.[100] Indeed, the comfort language of Second Isaiah forms a running thread that stretches from its opening words through to its final occurrence near the end of the sequence. The claim that "Yhwh has comforted" either Zion or the people even forms a refrain at one point in the sequence (49:13; 51:3; 52:9). This declaration would seem to conclusively answer any audience doubts about whether Yhwh could be trusted to act upon the opening lines'

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notes that in the biblical account "Shechem is presented in a light that is far from completely negative" (255).

[100] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 179.

stated intention to comfort. Yet, Second Isaiah's persistent indeterminacy will not allow this clear claim regarding the certainty of Zion's comfort to be the final word. Right in the middle of this series of claims that "Yhwh has comforted" Zion, the voice of the text asks, "who will comfort you?" (Isa 51:19).[101] Despite the fact that this question appears rhetorical and serves to highlight the pitiful nature of the people's plight described in the preceding verses, the very phrasing of the question stands in stark contrast to the assurances that "Yhwh has comforted" Zion noted above. This deployment of נחם may not cancel the certainty of the preceding claims, but at the very least stands in a certain amount of tension with the preceding and following assurances that Yhwh has comforted Zion. The final occurrence of the comfort leitmotif, refers even more negatively to Zion as "stormed and not comforted" (54:11) and while this, too, seems to refer to the past, it at least presents the image of Zion as comforterless, an image Second Isaiah largely works to overcome in its allusions to Lamentations as noted above. The strongest evidence that "comfort" is not uniformly and undeniably determined throughout the progression of Second Isaiah comes from the disjunction between these claims and the angry speeches of Yhwh, as chapter five will discuss in detail. Though many of the comfort motif occurrences raise the expectation that Yhwh will (or has) comforted Zion, the angry indicting tonality of poems interspersed with these promises and spoken by the very voice proclaimed as the comforter undermines the certainty of this expectation. Thus, the likely doubts of the audience over whether Yhwh will comfort them and Zion

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[101] Mintz, *¥urban*, 45, notes, "in Lamentations there could be no possible answer to this question beyond the brave resolve of the poet to serve through his metaphors as a makeshift substitute. In Second Isaiah it is none other than God who becomes – directly and immediately – the consoler of Israel." However, it is worth noting that the very asking of the question implies that at least at this point in the sequence, the matter is not yet ultimately decided.

remain. These doubts constitute the central question with which the sequence of poems attempts to deal.

4. Tension Between Comfort and Indictment

As the preceding analysis has shown, Second Isaiah exhibits an obvious structural tension between its audience's expressed doubts regarding their ongoing relationship with Yhwh, and the divine voice's insistence that it is announcing comfort and reconciliation with them. The very offer of comfort produces such a tension. In particular, the offer of comfort creates a struggle from the audience's perspective over whether or not Yhwh can be believed to be providing comfort to Zion. As the vacillations of the divine voice will show, this tension may even extend to whether the audience's resistance and reluctance will ultimately frustrate Yhwh's stated intention to comfort.

The tension and struggle involved in Yhwh's offer of comfort to Zion comes through clearly in the vacillations of the divine voice in Second Isaiah. As noted above, the divine voice repeatedly announces and confirms this comfort (e.g., 49:13; 51:3; 52:9). Yet, the divine voice does not always speak in ways that sound comforting. Indeed, at times the divine voice speaks in an apparent rage and threatens punishment. Chapter five will take up more explicitly the tonal vacillations of the divine voice.[102] For now, it is sufficient to point to two ways in which the divine voice embodies the tension involved in reconciliation with Zion, and to offer preliminary suggestions about how these expressions contribute to Second Isaiah's central problem and function in Yhwh's appeal to the audience. The two primary expressions of this tension in the utterances of the

[102] In ch. 5 I will discuss in detail the characteristics of the indictment tonality. In the conclusion of that ch. I build upon this section's claim that the vacillation of the divine voice is one way in which Second Isaiah works to overcome audience hesitancy to accept its proposal of comfort.

divine voice are: acknowledgements of past rage, and expressions of exasperation with the audience.

4.1. The Divine Voice and Past Rage

At several points the divine voice depicts past episodes of divine anger at and punishment of the people (41:28-29; 42:17; 42:25; 43:22-24, 27; 48:8; 50:1-2; 54:7). These expressions of the divine voice would seem to confirm the depiction of the relationship between Yhwh and the audience as breached. As such, they offer an acknowledgement of the audience's understanding of the situation. Indeed, they present one element of the audience's apparent struggle to accept the offer of comfort. That is, given the experience of Yhwh's anger in the past, how can such rage be overcome? These utterances seem to work to counteract the potential rejection of Yhwh's offer of comfort as not embracing the realities of the relationship. If, indeed, the audience sees Yhwh as not trustworthy, as their charges of abandonment and neglect suggest, then a compelling offer of reconciliation must take account of the relationship as it has been.

Some of the expressions of past rage seem designed to offer a justification of that past divine rage. The people are told that they were sinful from the beginning (43:27; 48:8), and are charged with past unfaithfulness and idolatry (43:22-24). These charges supply causes for past anger and punishment, and place the blame upon the addressees. In this way, the expressions of past rage function as a self-defense designed to mitigate the charges against the deity, by pointing to the behavior that merited the punishment. At the same time, these expressions of past rage, in assigning fault to the addressee, raise the specter of future divine punishment. If the audience resists the reconciliation such that it

cannot be accomplished, fault for the continued breach in the relationship would certainly lie with them. As chapter five will argue, these depictions of divine wrath, even if set in the past, evoke the punishing power of the deity and lead the audience to imagine the implications of the failure of Yhwh's promise of comfort. Thus, these expressions of divine wrath and punishment in the past, while acknowledging the audience's complaint, also function rhetorically to support the divine speaker's contention of coming comfort for the audience.

4.2. Divine Rage and Present Threat

Not all of the expressions of indictment spoken by Second Isaiah's divine voice are firmly in the past. Indeed, the divine voice at times expresses exasperation and rage at the audience in a way that seems ongoing (e.g., 46:8,12; 48:1-2; 51:12; 52:5). Threats of future punishment include devoting Jacob to the ban (43:28) and testing in a furnace (48:10). Even at some moments not focused on indicting Israel for specific actions or issuing threats of coming punishment, Yhwh's interaction with the audience takes on a strident tone. Rhetorical questions (e.g., 40:12-14, 21; 42:19, 23; 45:11, 21; 46:5; 50:1-2; 51:12; 55:2), devaluation of the audience's knowledge (e.g., 45:9-10; 48:8), and explicit rejections of the audience's claims (e.g., 40:27; 49:15) showcase the divine speaker's apparent exasperation and the audience's probable unwillingness to accept the offered and proclaimed comfort.

These present expressions of divine anger seem to function largely to urge the audience to accept the divine offer of comfort. They depict a divine speaker who is increasingly frustrated by the apparent need to keep urging the audience to embrace the

proclaimed comfort, and who therefore increases the strenuousness of these appeals. In the more ominous of these passages, (e.g., 43:28 and 48:10), the rage within the divine voice and the threat of future punishment hints that the offer of comfort may be withdrawn or that at the very least reconciliation will not be accomplished without the audience's consent – leaving the relationship breached. As chapter five will suggest further, the realistic exploration of this possibility is one way Second Isaiah works to overcome its audience's reluctance to accept its proclamation of comfort. Through these passages the audience is invited to imagine a future in which reconciliation has not occurred. These threats of punishment when juxtaposed with the more comforting elements in the total sequence work to overcome audience resistance to the message of comfort through contrast. That is, the imaginative possibilities these indicting passages open up are drastically less appealing when compared to the imaginative possibilities offered by the comfort passages. This juxtaposition and the contrast it invites in effect urges the audience to accept the offer of comfort, perhaps while there is still time.

5. Comfort as Intractable Problem

To summarize to this point: the driving question with which Second Isaiah wrestles is the one left open by Lamentations and articulated by Second Isaiah's audience itself – the question of whether or not reconciliation, figured as "comfort," can be accomplished within the relationship between Yhwh and the audience. This central problem is not easily solved. It is a problem of relationship, one in which emotions play a central role. At this point, the notion of the intractable problem of lyric sequences emerges as a

helpful lens through which to examine Second Isaiah's central issue.[103] It is thus another example of a way in which a lyric approach proves helpful in the analysis of Second Isaiah.

What makes the question of whether Yhwh will be able to comfort Zion "intractable" is not the absence of a clear claim. Obviously, Yhwh's claim to be Zion's comforter is clear and straightforward enough. Indeed, this offer even responds to Lamentations' complaint. Yhwh is the comforter that Lamentations seems to demand.[104] Rather, the intractable problems with which the sequence wrestles are the audience's implied (and explicit in 40:28) doubts about whether Yhwh will in fact comfort Zion, whether and how the anger that prompted the circumstances of destruction and exile could possibly be overcome, and in what way an assurance of such comfort could be proven. That is, Second Isaiah struggles through the overwhelming and seemingly irresolvable emotions that swirl around its central issue of comfort.

The tension and intractability of Second Isaiah's problem emerge through the interaction of the major tonalities of the divine voice, as detailed analyses of those tonalities will show.[105] Throughout, the audience's doubts and reluctance are present in the rhetorical situation of the text, and implied in the address of the deity. However, the utterances of the self-proclaimed divine comforter overwhelmingly dominates the poetic sequence. Thus, the sequence's open-endedness about whether or not comfort and reconciliation will be accomplished are voiced largely by the party urging such reconciliation.

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[103] See ch. 2 for a discussion.

[104] As noted above, Berlin, *Lamentations*, 48, considers "Lam 1, and perhaps the entire book … a call to God to be Zion's comforter."

[105] See ch. 5.

As the brief analysis of Isa 40:1-2 above has shown, the sequence's opening lines declare coming "comfort," yet seem subtly to acknowledge the audience's hesitancy. Later in the same poem the depiction of the people as grass (40:6-7) gives voice to the audience's despair, and more strident declarations by the deity challenge them directly asking, "do you not know?" (40:21). Just a few verses later, Yhwh will refute Jacob's complaint about Yhwh's absence with this same rhetorical question (40:27).[106] These somewhat more strident expressions of the divine voice are a taste of the tension exhibited by the juxtaposition of the poems to come in the sequence. Throughout the poems that follow, the divine voice vacillates between promises of comfort spoken tenderly and angry indictments calling into question any expectation of comfort that might come from Yhwh.[107] Thus Second Isaiah raises expectations that Yhwh will comfort Zion and yet it seems in some ways to dash those same expectations. As I have suggested, and as chapter five will argue further, this apparent dashing of such expectations is one way that the poetic structure works to build urgency behind the offer of comfort, urging the audience to accept it while time remains. The conflict in the divine voice reflects the complex emotions surrounding reconciliation, highlights the difficulty with which reconciliation is achieved, and responds to the audience's uncertainty and hesitancy to accept Second Isaiah's response to Lamentations. This hesitancy seems to grow out of both the circumstances into which the poetry is deployed

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[106] See further ch. 2, pp. 54-55 for a discussion of the broader poem.

[107] This study has made frequent recourse to Melugin's observation of the typical alternation between judgment and salvation oracles in Second Isaiah in support of this claim (see ch. 1). Rikki E. Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation? Isaiah 40-55 and the Delay of the New Exodus" *Tyndale Bulletin* 41 (1990): 35, also highlights Second Isaiah's use of polemical forms and the incongruity between these and the opening announcement of comfort. A detailed examination of this alternation from the perspective of lyric tonalities is undertaken in ch. 5.

and the inherent unprovability of such promises as the presence, as opposed to the absence, of Yhwh.

The historical and literary circumstances in which the poetry emerges contribute to the hesitancy and emotional conflict that make the problem of Zion's comfort so intractable.[108] W. R. Johnson describes one category of lyric poetry as "a…singer, talking to, singing to, another person or persons, often, but not always, at a highly dramatic moment in which the essence of their relationship…reveals itself in the singer's lyrical discourse, in his praise or blame, in the metaphors he finds to recreate the emotions he seeks to describe."[109] In this light, Second Isaiah would be the "song" of the deity in the midst of what is undoubtedly a "dramatic moment" in the relationship between God and the people addressed. The "essence" of the relationship is fractured; reconciliation is uncertain. The severity of this "dramatic moment" is revealed by the particular images and metaphors used to illustrate the speakers' emotions, the recourse to Lamentations' depiction of the relationship as fractured, and the vacillation between Yhwh's consoling and indicting dispositions.

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[108] Though it is certainly true that lyric poetry is not rigidly tied to historical circumstances, frequently the intractable problem with which a series wrestles may be illuminated by attention to the personal or political situations in which they emerged. Clear examples of this approach may be seen in the discussions of M. L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall, *The Modern Poetic Sequence: The Genius of Modern Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). Their treatment of the psychological stresses that led Ezra Pound to compose his Pisian Cantos from within the Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa (ibid., 219) and the correlation between W.B. Yeats' Civil War Sequences and the circumstances of the Irish Civil and Independence Wars (ibid., 102-109) are illustrative examples.

[109] W. R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 3. Johnson categorizes lyric poems in light of the pronouns they employ. His comments here are drawn from his description of what he terms the "I-you" poem, the category into which the vast majority of Second Isaiah would fall if one employs Johnson's rubric.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the driving dilemma Second Isaiah wrestles with is the open question of whether or not the comforting reconciliation between Yhwh and the audience will reach fruition. This question is played out almost exclusively in the divine voice which takes up both the position of certain comfort, and the angry tone that the audience's embedded speeches would imply that they expect. That the fractured relationship between Yhwh and the audience is a central concern of the sequence is indicated by Second Isaiah's citations of the speech of its implied audience, its allusion to Lamentations, the claims of its opening lines, and the further development of the comfort theme throughout the course of sequence. To return to the metaphors dominant in Second Isaian scholarship, it can be seen already that this is a book not solely about a *journey*, but about a *relationship* – the relationship between Yhwh and Yhwh's people. As a poetic text about a fundamentally conflicted relationship, Second Isaiah wrestles through various conflicts knit into the mode of its expression and voiced by its dominant speaker. Chapters four and five examine the ways in which Second Isaiah explores these tensions on its way toward (but maybe never reaching) comfort, reconciliation, a relationship restored.

Chapter Four

A Paratactic-Cohesive Whole: Lyric Unity in Second Isaiah

"Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)"[1]

As noted at the outset, the aim of this study is a fresh approach to the meaning of Second Isaiah as a unity in light of the application of the model of the lyric sequence. Therefore, it is important to consider carefully in what sense Second Isaiah is a unity and how the means of its cohesion, and the forces that work against those means, contribute to its overall impact. As chapter two argued, a lyric sequence is a whole composed of multiple lyric poems that hold together with a distinctively associative and tensive form of cohesion. Further, as chapter three argued, Second Isaiah is a series of poems about a fundamentally conflicted relationship. Thus both structurally and thematically, tension and ambiguity are typical of Second Isaiah and must be considered carefully in any examination of how Second Isaiah both holds together and creates meaning.

This chapter will examine the specific features of both cohesion and disjunction that contribute to Second Isaiah's particular cohesion. In doing so it will employ the attention to centripetal and centrifugal forces that chapter two highlighted as one element in a lyric approach. In light of these observations, this chapter will argue that it is a viable project to interpret Second Isaiah as a whole. However, a unified reading of Second Isaiah cannot treat it as entirely harmonious, consonant, or cohesive. Instead, Second Isaiah's tensions, its dissonances, disharmonies, contradictions, and counterpoint

[1] Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* (East Aurora, N.Y.: Roycrofters, 1904), 69.

keep the poetry moving, give it shape, and ultimately impinge strongly on its meaning. In these sorts of ways Second Isaiah engages its “intractable problem” in a particularly lyric fashion. Contrary to prior approaches that have narrativized wholistic meaning – apparently by a misconstrual of Second Isaiah’s genre – Second Isaiah achieves its unity not via thematic content, but by means of *poetic devices*. Second Isaiah’s particular poetic unity is driven by forces of both cohesion and disjunction producing a tensive balance between the two. As this chapter will argue, the most significant device for ultimate cohesion is the dominance of the divine speaking voice.

1. Tension and Balance: Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces

As noted in chapter two, lyric poetry typically reaches a point of equilibrium between the forces that bind it together (centripetal forces) and those that threaten to tear it apart (centrifugal forces). Both forces are significant, and careful examination of each is necessary prior to any discussion of the possible equilibrium they reach. Second Isaiah has strong elements of both centrifugality and centripetality that merit investigation in our attempt to make sense of how it holds together as a work and addresses its central, intractable problem. I will look first at the forces of disjunction in Second Isaiah. Second, I will treat both the failed and successful attempts Second Isaiah’s forces make at cohesion. Finally, I will characterize the sense of equilibrium achieved and point to the dominance of the divine voice as key to this balance.

2. Centrifugal Forces and Disjunction in Second Isaiah

A recurrent accent of this study has been that Second Isaiah is dominated by ambiguity, disjunction, and outright paradox. Some of this disjunctiveness is produced on the thematic level through the contradictions Second Isaiah presents within itself. Even regarding the theme of comfort and reconciliation which is central to this sequence of poems, Second Isaiah is not unified, as chapter three argued. While the divine voice strenuously denies Zion's charges of abandonment in one poem (49:15-16), elsewhere Yhwh admits "for a short moment I forsook you"(54:7).[2] As chapter three illustrated, this thematic turmoil reveals a series of poems wrestling through the tensions surrounding its intractable problem. However, Second Isaiah's disjunction is not merely thematic, it is embedded in the very poetic structure of the sequence. This structural disjunction appears in the significant presence of centrifugal forces.

Several centrifugal forces work against overall cohesion and undermine Second Isaiah's consistency. Prominent centrifugal forces in Second Isaiah include abrupt paratactic shifts (see section 2.1), the seemingly random presence of concrete references (see section 2.2), and the lack of clear terminal closure (see section 2.3). These forces together focus attention on Second Isaiah's individual parts at the expense of the whole. This trait highlights the urgency of moment to moment engagement with Second Isaiah's individual parts and its uttering voice. Additionally, these forces downplay emphasis on the collection of poems as a whole by frustrating the readerly desire to grasp the sequence globally.

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[2] For further examples of thematic disjunction in Second Isaiah, see below.

2.1. Parataxis and Its Impact

First, Second Isaiah's parataxis is its most obvious and dominant centrifugal element. This study has already provided significant occasion to argue that Second Isaiah is characterized by an overwhelmingly paratactic structure and that this trait tends to produce "extreme disjunction."[3] In chapter two I discussed parataxis noting that it may be defined as "a relative paucity of linking terms between juxtaposed clauses or sentences."[4] Parataxis produces an "adding,"[5] listing,[6] or associative effect or a sense of "piling up, swiftness, and sometimes compression."[7] Barbara Herrnstein Smith glosses paratactic structure as "where the principle of generation does not cause any one element to 'follow' from another."[8] In his discussion of parataxis in Lamentations, Dobbs-Allsopp characterizes parataxis in this way: "Ideas and images are routinely juxtaposed to each other without being explicitly linked."[9] As I noted in chapter two, parataxis need not be limited to the grammatical level. On a larger scale, it is possible to consider the paratactic impact of the juxtaposition of larger units including whole poems.

Indeed, a survey of the sequence of Second Isaiah's component poems illustrates that they hold together more by juxtaposition and association than by clear linkages and progression.[10] The initial poem of the sequence (40:1-31) is markedly paratactic within

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[3] Daniel Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry* (SBLMS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 11. For a discussion of parataxis in Second Isaiah, see ch. 2 pp. 52-60.

[4] Michael Patrick O'Connor, "Parataxis and Hypotaxis," *NPEPP*, 879.

[5] Albert Bates Lord, "Oral Poetry," *NPEPP*, 864, characterizes oral poetry, a heavily paratactic form, as having an "adding style."

[6] Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 99, highlights the "list" as "one of the ... most obvious forms that paratactic structure may take.

[7] O'Connor, "Parataxis and Hypotaxis," *NPEPP*, 879-80.

[8] Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 99.

[9] F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 25.

[10] The summary that follows is oriented towards illustrating the lack of clear connection in Second Isaiah's overall poetic flow. It does not aim at close exegetical work with the summarized texts. That task

itself. An opening proclamation of comfort (40:1-2) shifts suddenly to a series of stanzas characterized by the calling of voices (40:3-11). These voices call for preparations for the coming of Yhwh (40:3-5) and declare the frailty of humanity (40:6-8). Another voice, that of a herald, is charged with proclaiming the coming of Yhwh (40:9-11) before the poem shifts again to a litany of Yhwh's incomparable traits (40:12-24). The poetry then picks up the chain of claims Yhwh's incomparability in an adding fashion (40:25-31) and moves by association to the ability of Yhwh to give strength to the weary (40:27). No explicit link is made between these elements within the opening poem. Rather, the announcement of voices and their sayings seem to move by a rhythm of association. Thematically, the elements are bound, and there is a movement that carries the poetry forward. However, there are also sharp shifts of subject matter without obvious indications of the connection between ideas.

Suddenly, and without introduction, Yhwh speaks the opening words of the next poem (41:1-7). This poem, addressed to the previously unmentioned islands (41:1) describes a coming conqueror in militaristic terms. This subject matter stands in juxtaposed tension to the end of the preceding poem. While in the previous poem Yhwh was the one who renewed strength (יחליף כח, 40:31) for the weary, here the distant peoples are commanded to renew their strength (יחליף כח, 41:1).

In explicit contrast to the poem just described, the divine speaker turns to speak to Jacob/Israel (41:8-20). The "but" (ו) of the poem's opening colon does provide some

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is taken up for selected texts in ch. 5. In that context, wherever a poem is introduced for examination its boundaries are discussed. In this survey, that task not undertaken. The survey proceeds without specific argumentation for poem breaks with the notion that the parataxis discussed for each of these breaks contributes to Second Isaiah's overall paratactic feel whether each of them occurs at a break between a poem or not. On the necessarily tentative nature of determining divisions between poems and for an articulation of my own mode of making such decisions see further pp. 173-4 of this ch.

explicit link between the poems, but does not entirely eliminate the sense of a sharp shift. The description of Yhwh's provision for Jacob/Israel that eliminates the need for fear and contrasts with the fearful nations culminates in an exultant declaration that all will recognize Yhwh's creative activity (41:20).

Legal charges (41:21-29) seem to interrupt the preceding poem's almost hymnic elaboration. No linkage is provided between these two. They stand juxtaposed and unconnected. The charges are directed at the gods of the nations, who are declared unable to rise to Yhwh's challenge regarding their ability to tell the future. Their depiction resonates strongly, but is not explicitly connected with, the images in which the fearful people trusted (41:6-7). Furthering the poem's association with the second poem of the sequence, the challenge to the gods to declare the future develops into a description of a coming conqueror (41:25), echoing the use of that motif in the earlier poem. The poetry also recalls the first poem of the series through its reference to Jerusalem's herald (41:27).

Another sharp shift introduces a new figure, the servant, without connection to the previous poem (42:1-4). The preceding poem's concluding description of the idols of the nations as "wind and formlessness" (41:29) does nothing to create any expectation of a new figure. Nor does the introduction of the servant make any explicit or logical connection with that description.

A less disjunctive shift occurs in the movement to the poem that follows the servant's introduction (42:5-9). Here Yhwh seems to speak directly to the servant though the poetry never makes that connection explicit. This address to a figure called by Yhwh largely focuses on description of Yhwh in terms of Yhwh's creative activity. The images

used to describe Yhwh recall the imagery of the sequence's second and third poems, and the declaration that Yhwh will not share praise with idols reiterates a motif of several preceding poems.

A hymn (42:10-13) seemingly interrupts the series of poems. Without introduction or any explicit connection to either what precedes or follows an unnamed speaker, likely to be identified with the prophetic poet, exhorts the audience to sing Yhwh's praise. The imagery used to glorify Yhwh in the hymn is drawn from among the several poems that precede it in the sequence. The "islands" (42:10) are referenced as is the desert (42:11). Warrior imagery, like that used to describe the coming conqueror is also deployed to describe Yhwh in this hymn (42:13).

Again, without transition or explanation, a new poem begins (42:14-20). Suddenly Yhwh is speaking, declaring a coming parching of the wilderness. The image of a laboring woman (42:14) that opens this poem resonates in some ways with the furious soldier of the end of the preceding poem (42:13). However, no connection is made between them, they seem to hold together merely by association. The poem turns to address those described as led through the parched wilderness and directs their attention to the servant (42:18-20).

A new poem (42:21-25) begins when a new voice starts to discuss Yhwh's pleasure in glorifying someone's teaching, perhaps that of the servant from the end of the prior poem. This voice then quickly shifts to a description of the people's punishment as a result of their rebellion (42:24).

A second poem with an explicit introductory and connecting element (43:1-21) appears next in the series of poems. The opening "but now"(ועתה), provides a rare sense

of connection and progression between the preceding poem's description of Yhwh's anger and the following promises of redemption.

Without overt transition, the next poem in sequence (43:22-28) shifts from these promises of redemption and provision to accusation and argument.[11] The first four bicola of the poem begin with the negative particle (לא), highlighting the focus this poem places upon the people's omissions in contrast to the preceding poem's focus upon Yhwh's provision. The accusations culminate in an invitation to go to trial (43:26) and a threat of punishment (43:28).

Another employment of the introductory "but now" (ועתה) marks the beginning of a new poem (44:1-5). The introductory element highlights the contrast between the preceding poem's threat of extreme punishment and the subsequent poem's description of coming blessing.

A new poem (44:6-22) begins without explicit connection, opening with the formula "thus says Yhwh." Yhwh had already been speaking in the previous poem, and the formula does nothing to provide any connection between the two poems beyond a listing of divine utterances. This new utterance focuses upon the superiority of Yhwh to the idols and Yhwh's unique divinity.

Once again a hymn punctuates the series of poems (44:23). Again, an un-introduced, and un-named voice calls upon the poem's hearers to sing Yhwh's praise. Another new divine utterance poem (44:24-28) again begins with the messenger formula, as though picking up the list of divine declarations following the hymnic interruption.

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[11] An opening *waw* (ו) does mark the beginning of the poem, but hardly explains or provides satisfying connection between the preceding poem and this series of "nots."

This divine self-glorification picks up various themes familiar from other poems in the series (i.e., creation, superior foreknowledge, and images of desiccation and restoration).

Cyrus, briefly mentioned by name in the conclusion of Yhwh's previous utterance, becomes the addressee of a new poem (45:1-8) which continues the list of divine utterances introduced by the messenger formula. There is an almost catchword association between the two poems. Yhwh mentions Cyrus, then turns to address him directly. As is typical of the divine utterances in Second Isaiah, the address to Cyrus focuses heavily upon Yhwh's activities and self-glorification of the divine speaker through references to Yhwh's past and characteristic actions.

A particularly abrupt paratactic shift marks the beginning of a new poem (45:9-25). This poem turns suddenly to charge an unspecified audience with inappropriately questioning the deity. The poetry elaborates this charge in terms of Yhwh's creative activity, divine superiority, and power.

Again without introduction or connection a new poem (46:1-13) begins by describing specific Babylonian deities, highlighting their lack of power. There are obvious thematic connections with the preceding description of Yhwh, yet the poetry builds no explicit bridge between the poems, nor does it introduce the new poem with any form of linkage. The poem progresses by comparing these idols' lack of power to Yhwh's power, and by indicting the audience for their failure to remember this distinction.

A second Babylon focused poem follows (47:1-15). No explicit connection is made between the preceding poem that developed out of observations about Babylon's idols and this poem's address to Babylon. The connection between them is in some ways

that there is a Babylon poem, and in addition, another Babylon poem, that is, they hold together though a list-like form of cohesion. This second Babylon poem is a thoroughgoing condemnation of the city personified as a woman and addressed to her.

Without linkage or connection, a new poem (48:1-11) begins with the deity turning to address Jacob/Israel. This address bears little thematic connection to the preceding indictment of Babylon and focuses throughout on Yhwh's anger at Israel over its stubbornness. A new divine address to Jacob/Israel follows (48:12-22). Though the two poems share a speaker and addressee, they embrace very different themes. While the first of these divine addresses focused on indicting Israel for its stubbornness, the poem that follows promises coming deliverance and expresses disappointment over the addressee's past failings (48:18). Near its conclusion, the poem expresses one of the sequence's charges to the people to depart Babylon (48:20). The un-introduced, un-explained, comment that "there is no peace ... for the wicked" (48:22) stands in paratactic relationship to the poem it draws to a close.

The servant speaks a new poem (49:1-13) addressed to the islands who have not been directly addressed since early in the series of poems. There is no obvious relationship between either the preceding poem's promises of deliverance, or its concluding warning of no peace for the wicked, and this poem's description of the servant's vocation. The opening imperative "listen" (שמעו) provides no explicit link with what has preceded. The poem progresses through several divine utterances, presented as though they are communicated by the servant (49:5). The servant's poem concludes in a hymnic fragment calling the audience to praise Yhwh (49:13).

A new poem (49:14-50:3), whose disjunction from what has preceded is signaled by its opening “but” (ו) introduces Zion’s objection to the proclamation of deliverance. The poem progresses in a paratactic, adding style with the deity responding first to the voiced doubt, and then to several other potential doubts. As the poem moves it picks up elements of indictment culminating in the rejection of the metaphor of divorce (50:1).

Again without introduction, the servant breaks into the sequence of poems as the speaker of a new poem (50:4-11). In addition to the lack of explicit connection between this poem and Yhwh’s preceding rebuttal of Zion’s charges of abandonment, the servant’s poem bears little apparent thematic connection with the preceding poem. It describes the servant’s experiences of public ridicule and Yhwh’s vindication. Like the preceding poem, the servant’s speech gathers indicting elements as it progresses, culminating in accusations against the audience.

A new poem (51:1-8) is marked by the opening exhortation “listen to me.” This exhortation gives structure to the new poem as a whole introducing each of its main movements. The speaker of this new poem is unclear and this lack of clarity adds to the sense that the new poem is not fully introduced. The new poem is addressed to those who pursue righteousness and this new addressee demonstrates the poem’s lack of clear connection to what has preceded. While the earlier audience was indicted, the new audience is characterized by their desire for righteousness. The poem progresses by listing reasons that the audience may expect deliverance and turn away from fear.

The sudden interjection “awake, awake” addressed to the arm of Yhwh marks the abrupt beginning of the next poem (51:9-16), the first of three poems closely bound by the double imperative form. The arm of Yhwh has not been mentioned in the immediate

context and the exhortation to awake is neither introduced nor explained. There is no obvious connection between the encouragement addressed to the people, and this cry for divine action. The poem itself is a dialogue between an un-named speaker and the divine voice, which turns to indict the un-named speaker for inappropriate fear (51:12-13).

The next closely bound poem (51:17-23) echoes the preceding poem's double exhortation creating a list-like movement between the poems. Indeed, the use of this structural repetition in an adding fashion illustrates the paratactic connection between these poems. In this poem Yhwh's utterance, designed to rouse Zion, mirrors the earlier attempt by an un-named speaker to rouse Yhwh's arm.

A third poem in this short series opens "awake, awake" (52:1-12) and again expresses Yhwh's encouragement to Zion. This poem draws the series of poems marked by double exhortations to a close as it includes a double exhortation at its conclusion, the second of the calls for the people to go out from Babylon (52:11).

Without transition, a new poem (52:13-53:12) directs attention to the servant and progresses through an extensive description of that servant. Again, without transition, a new poem (54:1-17) shifts abruptly from description of the servant to an exhortation to Zion to sing. The poem shifts thoroughly away from attention to the servant, though he was the dominant subject of the previous poem, and no connection is offered to explain this shift. This penultimate poem presents Yhwh's comforting of Zion as certain and completed and draws upon thematic threads from throughout the series of poems. It concludes with promises of security and safety as the inheritance of Yhwh's servants.

Finally, the last poem (55:1-13) of the sequence opens abruptly as well. It invites whoever is thirsty to drink their fill. No connection is supplied or implied between

Yhwh's preceding address to Zion and this invitation to the waters. The poem progresses through a listing of instructions in an adding style. Addressees are commanded to direct their attention to a series of things (to the divine speaker, to David, to the coming of nations they do not know) and they are exhorted to seek Yhwh. Finally, they are told their journey will be joyful and are promised an eternal sign.

Not only is parataxis observable on the level of the whole series of poems, it functions within poems in the movement from line to line. Notable in this regard is the jarring notice "'there is no peace,' says Yhwh 'for the wicked'" (48:22) that stands apart from and unconnected to the poem it concludes. The examination of a brief poem will suffice to show that parataxis operates within Second Isaian poems. Isa 44:24-28 takes up a common theme within Second Isaiah. In this poem, the divine voice is extolling Yhwh's virtues through an elaborate list heavily dominated by participial forms. The poem reads:

[24] Thus says Yhwh your redeemer,
and your fashioner from the womb:
"I am Yhwh, maker of all,
stretcher out of the heavens by myself,
spreader of the earth, who was with me?
[25] Frustrator of signs of liars,
and diviners he will make fools of.
The one who returns wise ones behind,
and their knowledge he makes a mockery of.[12]
[26] The one who establishes the word of his servant,
and the advice of his messengers he makes complete.
The one saying to Jerusalem, 'She will be inhabited,'
and to the cities of Judah 'you will be built,'
and to the villages, 'I will establish them.'
[27] The one saying to the ocean deep, 'be desolate,'
and to the depths 'I will dry your rivers.'
[28] The one saying to Cyrus, 'my shepherd,'
and 'all my plans he will complete.'

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[12] Here I am following *HALOT*, 3:1328.

And saying to Jerusalem 'be built,'
and to the temple 'be founded.'"

The poem is, as I have already noted, a list-like accumulation of participial attributions. Following the elaborated messenger formula, the initial tricolon piles up three participles without a single connective device. The attributions are simply juxtaposed and their thematic similarity is allowed to build. Following this opening tricolon, a pattern emerges in which the opening colon of a line has no grammatical link to what precedes, but the second colon is united with it by means of a simple *waw* conjunction (ו). The participles pile up extolling Yhwh's creative abilities (44:24), and superior knowledge (44:25). The list structure intensifies in, and following, the fifth line, a tricolon. From this point forward, the opening participle of each line is the same (האמר) through three lines. The list becomes more specific from participial phrases that characterize Yhwh, to participial phrases that characterize Yhwh's speaking.[13] These three lines are linked through repetition, but not through obvious logical progression. The first of these lines elaborates what Yhwh says concerning Jerusalem's restoration (44:26), while the line that immediately follows makes a cosmic reference to Yhwh's speech drying up the sea (44:27). Another line adds what Yhwh says concerning Cyrus (44:28a), before the list circles back around to Yhwh's speech concerning Jerusalem (44:28b). The final line exhibits the only line initial conjunction in the whole poem and

[13] Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah* (New York: Paulist, 1984), 118, notes this repetition of participles referring to Yhwh's speech. James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction, and Exegesis" in *Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, and Jeremiah* (*IB*; Ed. George Arthur Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5:518, likewise observes the "threefold" repetition of the participle.

shifts the form of the verb from the participle to the infinitive construct (ולאמר).[14] These shifts to the use of the conjunction and the abandonment of the participle may be seen as changes that produce closure.[15] The use of the line initial conjunction as a closural device is a signal of the relative paucity of linking words in this poem and further contributes to the sense that the poem's overall structure is paratactic.

The centrifugal impact of parataxis is to maximize the importance of each individual moment in the sequence as a whole. Each line is important in its own right. The reader cannot skim over a perplexing line assuming that later lines will fill in missed details, for the poetry might abruptly shift and the thrust of skimmed lines would thus be lost.[16] Neither can the reader bracket the divergent elements of seemingly minor parts of the sequence or poem, subsuming them into the overall flow, as is often done with narrative digressions that do not further the plot.[17] In the absence of plot, parataxis highlights the importance of each line and its individual expression.[18]

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[14] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:520, comments on this shift in verbal form writing, "[t]he last two lines of the verse are usually deleted. They are attached awkwardly by the conjunction and the infinitive construct, which the LXX alters to conform to the participles of the preceding triad."

[15] Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 34, highlights the importance of change in poetic structure for the production of satisfying closure.

[16] Ellen F. Davis, "The Soil that is Scripture," in *Engaging Biblical Authority: Perspectives on the Bible as Scripture* (ed. William P. Brown; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 41, notes, "[y]ou cannot skim poetry for plot, and you cannot read it in distraction." Davis draws this idea from Wendell Berry, *What are People For?* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 90.

[17] See e.g., George W. Coats, *Genesis*: *With an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 260. Coats treats the story of Judah and Tamar as a narrative digression within plot of the story of Jacob's children.

[18] As F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 25, notes regarding the impact of parataxis in Lamentations: "Ideas and images are routinely juxtaposed to each other without being explicitly linked. This forces the reader to consider each idea on its own and then in relation to those that are most contiguous to it."

2.2. Concrete References

Second, Second Isaiah's concrete references contribute to its centrifugality. Grossberg notes that "elements of a realistic record of events may complicate the text at hand by the introduction of alien, obfuscating objective data into a lyrical artistic system. This mingling of historical and lyrical genres may thus open the text and contribute to the centrifugal movement."[19] This centrifugality is the way the scattered references to the historical person Cyrus appear to function in Second Isaiah. Surrounded as he is by archetypal and/or anonymous figures (e.g., Zion, Israel, Babylon, Jacob, the idol-maker, and the servant), as well as grand, sweeping themes (e.g., creation and the divine superiority of Yhwh), Cyrus stands out as peculiarly specific, earthy, and historical. Cyrus, quite simply, draws attention to himself through his level of non-fit with the remainder of Second Isaiah. This level of non-fit has been widely observed and commented upon resulting in a variety of proposals for various redactional layers or suggestions for deletion of the Cyrus passages.[20] While I am not proposing deletion, this

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[19] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 11. It is noteworthy that in general, Grossberg treats historical references as potentially "ambivalent." However, whether or not they contribute centripetally or centrifugally seems to depend upon their particular deployment in a given poem. In the case of Second Isaiah, historical references in a highly lyric context appear to function centrifugally.

[20] Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *Kyros im Deuterojesaja-Buch: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Theologie von Jes 40-55* (FAT 1; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 186, treats the Cyrus materials as originating in a *Kyros-Ergänzungen* (Cyrus supplement). Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (trans. David Green; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 399, accepts Kratz's proposal that the Cyrus oracles emerge from a supplementary redactional layer, but considers the inclusion of this material to be the work of the first redactor and thus includes the Cyrus oracles as constituent materials within his reconstruction of the first edition of Second Isaiah. Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 38-44, devotes a section of his commentary to the argument that all references to Cyrus are "interpolations." Though Torrey's argument rests on deletion of the Cyrus occurrences *metri causa*, a practice in general disrepute today, his observation that the Cyrus references are a misfit in their "immediate context" observes the same tension between Cyrus and his surroundings that I am observing. I am not arguing that the Cyrus references are redactional additions nor that they should be deleted. However, the observations upon which these arguments for deletion rest support my contention that Cyrus' specificity strikes the reader as somewhat out of harmony with the remainder of Second Isaiah's poetry. Thus, there is evidence that Cyrus has been perceived as a centrifugal figure though preceding scholarship did not use the term and drew

sense among scholars that the Cyrus passages are somehow out of place in Second Isaiah illustrates my point. Cyrus stands in tension with the themes of Yhwh's cosmic victories over the watery chaos (e.g., 51:9-10), with the depictions of Yhwh stretching out the heavens as a tent to dwell in (e.g., 40:22), and with the vision of Yhwh leading the people through the desert as a flock (e.g., 40:11; 49:9-11). In contrast to these miraculous and visionary expressions of the mighty power of Yhwh to deliver, Cyrus is a specific human historical figure, a member of the ruling elite of a foreign nation.[21] In contrast to the typically anonymous references to such figures as "rulers" (e.g., 40:23; 41:25; 49:7; 52:5), "judges of the earth" (e.g., 40:23), "my servant" (e.g., 41:8, 9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1, 2; 45:4; 49:3, 6; 52:13; 53:11), and the one "whom I chose" (e.g., 41:8; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21), Cyrus is particularly called by name. In contrast to other historical references such as "a short moment" (54:7) to refer to the period of the exile, Cyrus introduces "elements of a realistic record of events" into an otherwise "lyrical artistic system."[22] He is not as frequently mentioned in the text as the recurrences that constitute thematic threads.[23] Yet, his appearance is striking, for he forces the reader to question his presence in the text and to sort out his relationship to the more cosmic elements, thus slowing the reading and opening the poetry to fragmentation.[24] This fragmentation is produced not only by Cyrus' contrast with the typical Second Isaian mode of referring to such figures

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different types of conclusions from this disjunction – conclusions, rightly or wrongly – that were more historical than poetic.

[21] Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 24, observes this tension between the mythic and historical in Second Isaiah more broadly noting that Second Isaiah "raise[ed] the dialectic tension between vision and reality to a high tension."

[22] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 11. See further the discussion of "a short moment" as historical reference in ch. 5.

[23] Cyrus' name occurs three times in Second Isaiah (44:28; 45:1; 45:13). In contrast, references to knowledge and understanding occur 45 times, and water imagery occurs 43 times. See Appendix 1 for more examples of frequent repetitions in Second Isaiah.

[24] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 9, refers to the centrifugal implications of figurative language. These elements slow reading and create space for fragmentation.

more ambiguously. He also stands in some degree of tension with Second Isaiah's depictions of Yhwh effecting deliverance directly. If Second Isaiah proclaims coming comfort, then Cyrus introduces a conflict into the poetry's description of the mode of that comfort. Will Yhwh act in cosmic fashion to release the exiles or will Yhwh act through the historical figure of Cyrus? Will Yhwh's servant carry out their deliverance, and if so is Cyrus the same as or distinct from that figure? The centrifugal force produced by the Cyrus references is minimal. Alone they would not be enough to fragment the sequence. However, to the extent that they contribute tension around Second Isaiah's central themes, the Cyrus references should be viewed as making some centrifugal impact, however slight.

2.3. Lack of Terminal Closure

Finally, Second Isaiah's lack of terminal closure exerts a centrifugal force. As Barbara Herrnstein Smith comments, "closure – the sense of finality, stability, and integrity – is an effect that depends primarily upon the reader's experience of the structure of the entire poem."[25] However, as her insightful analysis of various poems indicates, a corollary to this statement is also true: the perception of poetic structure is dependent upon both the possibility and apprehension of a coming closure. As she notes "we tend to impose closure on what is known, independently, to be the terminal point of a sequence."[26]

Though critical scholarship has long held as a near consensus a structural and historic division of some sort between Isaiah 39 and 40, the break between chapters 55

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[25] Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, viii.
[26] Ibid., 41.

and 56 has been debated almost from the time Duhm proposed it.[27] This level of open debate is not without just cause. In point of fact, the final poem (55:1-13) fails to provide a clear sense of closure for the work.[28] Not only does Second Isaiah's overall structure present particular problems for the task of producing closure, the final poem does not depart significantly from the pattern of the whole sequence in such a way as to produce closure.

As Herrnstein Smith has articulated, the particular forces of closure that will be effective for a given text emerge organically out of that text's particular structure. She writes:

> at some point the state of expectation must be modified so that we are prepared not for continuation but for cessation. Closure, then, may be regarded as a modification of structure that makes *stasis*, or the absence of further continuation, the most probable succeeding event. Closure allows the reader to be satisfied by the failure of continuation or, put another way, it creates in the reader the expectation of nothing.[29]

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[27] Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998) is a recent resister of the traditional division between 55 and 56. He cites Yehezkel Kaufmann and Menahem Haran as "offer[ing] the most important arguments in favor of" single authorship of 40-66 (ibid., 188). Sommer argues that throughout chs. 40-66 distinctive poetic techniques are employed which point towards unitary authorship (ibid., 189). However, he notes that unitary authorship cannot be proven with absolute certainty and similarities between the two bodies of text may result from imitation. Sommer concludes that there is sufficient evidence to support reading 40-66 as one literary corpus. I would not disagree. Yet, there are divergences between these bodies of text which Sommer acknowledges – likely geographical divergence, shift in prevailing tone, possible genre shifts (ibid., 188). Among other things, I submit that it is also possible to read Second and Third Isaiah as distinct literary corpora, leaving the question of authorship open. Perhaps one might consider 40-55 and 56-66 groupings of poems from slightly different times in the life of the same poet. Thus each might be interpreted separately as well as in light of one another.

[28] The break between poems is signaled by a change in addressee and subject matter and is supported by a *setuma* in MT. This unit is admittedly tentative in accordance with my conclusion discussed below that any attempt to definitively break Second Isaiah into its constituent poems is hypothetical. Cf. John Goldingay and David Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; 2 vols., New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 2:361, who read with 1QIsa[a] and thus include 54:17b as the first verse of the final poem. Thematically, the 54:17b really could fall within either poem and thus serves as a sort of bridge between them. See further below.

[29] Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 33-34. Also relevant are her comments that "the poet ends his work at … a point of stability that is either determined by or accommodates the poem's formal and thematic principles of structure" (*Poetic Closure*, 35). Biblical examples of the modification of structure to produce closure include Lamentations 5's abandonment of the acrostic. See Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 140, for discussion of the abandonment of the acrostic as a "terminal modification" that

However, in Second Isaiah, as noted above, the sequence as a whole exhibits a paratactic structure, a structure that Herrnstein Smith notes "present[s] special closural problems."[30] Not least of these problems is the inability of such poems or sequences to "wind [themselves] up" because they depend upon the theoretically infinitely extendable principle of repetition. Thus, it is not surprising that Second Isaiah as a whole exhibits a minimal sense of terminal closure.

A certain lack of terminal closure would seem to be characteristic of much biblical Hebrew poetry. Indeed, many biblical Hebrew poems end abruptly and without significant indications of closure.[31] However, in the case of biblical Hebrew poetic sequences the situation is somewhat different. Discernible closural devices may be observed at the conclusion of two works that are analogous with lyric sequences – the Psalter, and Lamentations.[32] The Psalter ends with a climactic repetition of its own internal closural device. Each of the books of the Psalter closes with a doxology.[33] This use of the doxology throughout the Psalter in closural situations marks the doxology as a Psalter level closural device. As the Psalter draws to a close, the doxology is repeated

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helps to produce closure. Also relevant are Psalm 118's return to its opening refrain in the final line, and the shift from exclusive dependence upon bicola to the use of a tricolon in the final line of Psalm 133.

[30] Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 128.

[31] To cite but a few examples of biblical Hebrew poems that end abruptly, see Isa 5; Psa 123; 126. A few notable closural devices used frequently in biblical Hebrew poems are the concluding prayer of blessing (e.g., Psa 29:11; 19:14; 25:22; 28:9; 29:11), the inclusio (e.g., Psa 8; 147; 148; 149), and the concluding call to praise (e.g., Deut 32:43; Psa 13:6; 18:49-50; 21:13; 32:11).

[32] See ch. 2, pg. 49.

[33] This use of doxologies at the close of the five books of the Psalter has been widely noted. See, e.g., James Luther Mays, *Psalms* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 15; J. Clinton McCann, Jr., "The Book of Psalms" in *The First Book of Maccabees, The Second Book of Maccabees, Introduction to Hebrew Poetry, The Book of Job, The Book of Psalms* (*NIB*; 12 vols.; ed., Leander E. Keck, et al; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 4:658; and Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 100.

and intensified appearing in 146-150.[34] The final poem itself is nothing but doxology. Thus the climax of doxologies helps to signal and emphasize the conclusion of the Psalter. It satisfies the reader's expectation of continuation through climax and thus creates in the reader the "expectation of nothing" through its building and repetitive signals of coming closure.

In a different way, Lamentations signals its coming conclusion not by the repetition and intensification of its own structuring device, but through the abandonment of that device. While the first four poems deploy the acrostic pattern in various ways, the final poem in Lamentations abandons the acrostic entirely. This shift away from the form also shifts the reader's expectations and helps to create the "expectation of nothing."[35]

In contrast to these biblical sequences, Second Isaiah neither intensifies an already employed structural marker, nor makes an obvious shift in its structure. The final poem continues the imagery, voicing, and paratactic structure that has characterized the sequence throughout its progression. In short, the final poem exhibits a paratactic structure, and incorporates thematic threads familiar from the whole of the sequence. These features contribute to the sense that Second Isaiah may finish, but it does not conclude, at least not in an obvious or discernable way.

Like other individual units in Second Isaiah and the sequence as a whole, the final poem moves and holds together paratactically and associatively. This last poem moves and shifts in ways that, though abrupt, will seem familiar to the reader of Second Isaiah

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[34] Mays, *Psalms*, 429, notes that "five Hallelujah psalms ... conclude the Psalter." Mays also comments regarding Psa 150: "[i]ts vigorous and enthusiastic repetition of the call to praise forms and inspiring and instructive conclusion to the sequence of hymns and to the book" (ibid., 449).

[35] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 140, notes the closural force produced by ch. 5's lack of acrostic structuring. He cites Herrnstein Smith's concept of terminal modification to produce the "expectation of nothing" in support of this reading of the abandonment of the acrostic.

upon reaching the end of the sequence. The opening pair of bicola address figures who should likely be identified with the audience, but who have not been addressed in these terms up to this point in the sequence - “all (who are) thirsty” and “whomever does not have silver” (55:1). These figures were not mentioned in the conclusion of the preceding poem, and the poem creates no specific connection for the reader between that poem’s concluding promise of a “portion” for the “servants of Yhwh” and the invitation to the waters. Indeed that concluding promise could equally well refer to the statement in 54:17a that “every vessel fashioned against you will not prosper” as to the invitation to the waters. As it progresses, the closing poem moves by association, moving from the opening invitation to the waters to an elaboration of that image calling for attention to the divine speaker. Without obvious logical connection the poem progresses from exhortations to listen to the speaker, to a description of the covenant with David (55:3-4). Two lines introduced by הן are immediately juxtaposed to one another (55:4-5). Yet, despite their mirrored beginnings, these lines call for the audience to observe two disparate phenomena, with no logical or thematic connection drawn between them. First they are exhorted to observe that Yhwh made David a leader (55:4), and second that unknown nations will run to them (55:5). Without explanation or connection, this exhortation to observe the coming of unknown nations shifts to a command to “seek Yhwh while he may be found” (55:6). A few lines elaborate this commandment to seek Yhwh in terms of repentance from unrighteous living (55:7) before the poetry shifts again.

A series of verses introduced by כי softens the paratactic impact of the shift from calls for repentance to cosmic descriptors for the thoughts of Yhwh (55:8-10). The

connector "for" does not entirely mitigate the sense that the poem has again moved on to something new, yet it supplies at least some rationale behind the shift. The wicked are to forsake their evil ways because of the transcendent majesty of Yhwh. The chain of "for" clauses continues through v.12, producing a listing effect right up until the final verse's imagery of the trees of the field clapping their hands at the people's upcoming departure.

The paratactic and abrupt movement of the final poem has not gone unnoticed by commentators. For example, Goldingay and Payne comment that, "[w]hile the language and imagery of vv. 1-3a and 3b-5 are internally unified, there are no such links between these two subsections, and they might be of separate origin."[36] Likewise, they note that vv. 1-3a "look truncated," and that vv 3b-5 "begin abruptly."[37] Though they do not use the term, it seems that what Goldingay and Payne are observing here is parataxis. Likewise, Blenkinsopp notes, "the lack of an obvious link between 6-7 and 8-11 has misled some commentators to strike 7."[38] And, while Korpel focuses on demonstrating the structural integrity of Isaiah 55 as a poetic unit,[39] even she admits that the poem exhibits "occasional appearances of incoherence."[40] Further, in Korpel's discussion of the way in which the sub-units hold together, the language she uses to describe this cohesion is telling. She writes, "[t]he imagery of water is taken up again in sub-canto C [v. 10-13]. The enormous difference between divine and human thought is compared to the distance between heaven and earth in B.ii.2 [v.9]. This comparison triggers a breathless elaboration of the theme of God's goodness."[41] This sort of "triggered"

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[36] Goldingay and Payne , *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:364.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 371.
[39] Korpel, "Metaphors in Isaiah LV," 43-55.
[40] Ibid., 28.
[41] Ibid., 50.

movement from one theme to another is precisely the sort of paratactic cohesion that I have observed.

Thus, both my examination of the poetic flow of Isa 55:1-13, and scholarly discussions of the poem have demonstrated that the form of this poem does not depart significantly from the form of those that preceded it. The final poem, that is, like the rest of Second Isaiah's poems is paratactically structured, and in form does nothing to prepare the reader for cessation. Neither does it create the "expectation of nothing." Its repetitive form of cohesion is, in principle, theoretically continually expandable. For this reason, a significant change would have to be made to signal the coming conclusion.[42]

No such significant change is apparent in Second Isaiah's final poem. To the contrary, the final poem includes a number of the thematic threads found elsewhere in Second Isaiah and does so in the same manner as preceding poems. The final poem is apparently spoken in the divine voice – a voice that has spoken the vast majority of Second Isaiah's poems. Additionally, it engages themes and images that are by now

[42] This difficulty of producing a substantial enough change to prepare for cessation is, as Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 128, notes, a particularly common one for paratactically structured poems, and (one might add) sequences. Thus, it is not surprising that lyric poetry in general has a difficult time in concluding. As an example of lyric poetry that does succeed in creating change to produce closure, one might cite the technique of repetitively structured hymns that reject the repeated form in their final verse. For example, Joseph Hart, "Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy," in *The United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 340, begins each verse prior to the last with "[c]ome ye," addressed to the ones invited by the poem. However, the final verse begins, "[l]et not conscience make you linger" a dramatically different form from that which has preceded. The theme and message are the same, but the pattern of repetition has been broken. Similarly, "Where He Leads Me," *United Methodist Hymnal*, 338, is written entirely in the first person up until the final verse, which switches entirely over to the third person requiring alterations even to the repetitive line "I'll go with him, with him all the way," which leads into the refrain. Numerous additional examples of such structures could be adduced. Likewise, one might note the common practice of organists in dramatically altering the instrumentation of the final verse of repetitively organized hymns to signal the hymn's coming conclusion. A biblical example of a repetitively structured hymn appears in Psalm 136 with its repetitive refrain (כי לעולם חסדו). This psalm produces closure by a form of *inclusio* turning back to exhorting the hearer to join in praise after the body of the psalm has focused upon describing Yhwh, though both modes are punctuated by the refrain. Similarly, Psalm 150 which is repetitively and paratactically structured includes the refrain הלל יה "praise Yah" in every line. However, the repetition of this refrain in the final line breaks with the form of the preceding lines, and helps to produce closure.

familiar to the reader of Second Isaiah. Isaiah 55 participates in the water imagery that is quite common. Additionally, references to the word of Yhwh, and to plant life participate in Second Isaian thematic threads.[43]

Several scholars have argued that chs. 40 and 55 form an *inclusio* based on the recurrence of reference to Yhwh's word. They claim that this inclusio structures the whole of Second Isaiah. Goldingay and Payne, write, "Yhwh's lasting commitment ([55].3) contrasts with the passing nature of human commitment (40.6), while the closing comment on the effectiveness of Yhwh's word ([55].10-11) forms an *inclusio* with 40.3-5."[44] They see this *inclusio* as one indication that ch. 55 provides closure for Isaiah 40-55.[45] While an *inclusio* would, in fact, provide a level of closure to the work, the recurrences of the word motif indicate that these two occurrences do not constitute a compelling *inclusio* structure. Other occurrences of the "word" motif include 41:28, in which it is an apparent reference to the speaking of human advisors; 44:26, in which Yhwh announces an intention to establish the word of Yhwh's servant; 45:23, a usage which nearly mirrors the usage in this final poem stating that a word went out from Yhwh and it will not turn back; 50:2, in which the word of Yhwh dried up rivers; 50:4, in which the servant talks about instructing the weary with a word; and 51:16, in which Yhwh will put a word in the hearers' mouths. As with the other recurrent language in Second Isaiah that I have catalogued, recurrence of Yhwh's word is varied and includes instances that seem to neatly parallel the usage in the final poem and several that refer to something

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[43] See Appendix 1 for a full listing of these.
[44] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:366.
[45] Ibid., 365.

wholly other.[46] Rather than structuring the final poem into a neat *inclusio* that gives shape to the whole of the work, the "word"-recurrence participates in the tendencies of Second Isaiah to share and reuse terminology throughout its length for both cohesive and disjunctive ends. Thus, the "word"-recurrence on its own does not provide a sufficient closural device for the work.

Thus Isaiah 55:1-13 participates in the sequence in a way that is primarily continuous with, not discontinuous from, the whole. One small change of note is that the final poem has a somewhat lower concentration of recurrent thematic threads than the poems that immediately preceded it in the sequence.[47] This lower concentration, while offering some change in the progress of the sequence, is not dramatic enough to prepare the reader for the conclusion of the sequence. Other poems in the sequence also exhibit low concentrations of thematic elements (e.g., 42:21-25; 50:4-11), and so the reader is just as likely to expect a similar continuation as the one seen after those poems as to expect cessation after 55:13.

Thus, Second Isaiah ends as paratactically, loosely, and disjunctively as it has progressed. The desire for firm closure is not satisfied and the reader is left without the global grasp of the sequence's structure produced by definitive closure. In light of Second Isaiah's overall paratactic structure, it is not particularly surprising that the

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[46] See further the discussion of the centripetal and centrifugal forces produced by recurrences later in this ch.

[47] 55:1-13 participates in the following recurrences: water imagery (55:1, 10); knowledge (55:4); abandonment (55:7); mountains/valleys (55:12); incomparability of Yhwh (55:8-9); ringing cry (55:12); peace (55:12); trees/herbage (55:10, 13); and word (55:11). In contrast 54:1-17 participates in the following recurrences: idolator/idols depictions (54:16); water (54:8-9); memory/former things (54:4); mother/fertility (54:1-4, 13); comfort (54:11); knowledge/understanding (54:13); abandonment (54:6); "do not fear" (54:4); mountains/valleys (54:10); ringing cry (54:1); fashioner/former/creator (54:16-17); precious things (54:11-12); peace (54:13); tents (54:2); trees/herbage (54:3); fire/burning (54:16); humiliation/shame (54:4); and called/chosen (54:5). Also relevant is the mirrored relationship between 49 and 54 which creates the impression that 54 is particularly tightly knit thematically to the sequence. Discussion of the impact of this trait is undertaken below.

sequence encounters difficulties in concluding. The lack of terminal closure in Second Isaiah is one strong element in its accumulation of centrifugal forces, and is to a certain extent a result of another centrifugal force - parataxis. Since, as chapter three argued, one of the primary emphases of Second Isaiah is an insistence on the presence of Yhwh, via the uttering voice, this refusal to create the "expectation of nothing," is not only appropriate, but a structural way of reinforcing its point. The sequence, the utterance of Yhwh, the indication of the divine presence and continuation of relationship with Zion, cannot come to a conclusion, cannot end, if Second Isaiah's insistence on the necessary continuation of the Yhwh-Zion/Israel relationship is to be believed. Not surprisingly then, the sequence not only fails to reach a point of closure, but has eventually had an additional series of poems appended to it.[48] The voice, the relationship, and the poetry, go on and *must* go on.[49]

3. Ambivalent Forces in Second Isaiah

While Grossberg's schema employs the paired categories of centripetal and centrifugal forces, he often refers to forces that find a balance within themselves, or that make no

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[48] I am not arguing that Second Isaiah never circulated independently, but rather, that the nature of its ending without obvious signs of closure could help to explain the later addition of chs. 56-66. Cf. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:6, who write "chapters 40-55 turn out not to be a final word, but one could not guess this from 55.12-13." As my analysis has demonstrated, it is indeed appropriate to the way 40-55 concludes that additional poems have been appended to it, and this addition is but a further signal of the lack of clear terminal closure that Second Isaiah exhibits. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 369, goes so far as to suggest that ch. 55, "was created as a transition between sections 40-54 and 56-66," thus implicitly indicating his sense that ch. 55 does not provide significant terminal closure.

[49] The claim that Isa 56-66 is a lyric sequence, and that the combination of the lyric sequences Second and Third Isaiah into a paratactically bound whole comprises an additional, larger sequence is the work of another project and is well beyond the scope of this investigation. However, it is sufficient to note that the ability of the sequence Second Isaiah to be continued in such a manner is evidence of the lack of a strong sense of closure.

particular contribution in either a centripetal or centrifugal manner.[50] Within Second Isaiah there are two elements that seem at first to contribute centripetally. However, further examination of these forces shows that they undermine their own centripetality and are part of the structural fabric of Second Isaiah but do not tip the scales in either a centripetal or centrifugal direction. These elements are (1) the lack of clear boundary markers (see section 3.1.) and (2) the use of lexical and thematic recurrence (see section 3.2.).

3.1. Second Isaiah's Lack of Clear Boundary Markers

Second Isaiah is typified by an almost complete eschewal of clear demarcations of individual poems. Any attempt to focus attention particularly closely on Second Isaiah's constituent poems is immediately frustrated by the immense difficulty this poetry produces in determining where its individual poems begin and end. Evidence of the lack of demarcation appears in the difficulty that generations of scholars have had dividing Second Isaiah into its component parts.[51] Korpel and de Moor observe that "it would be an enormous step forward if one could agree at least on the proper delimitation of

[50] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 11, describes several particular features as potentially "ambivalent." He includes among these extratextual references, historicity, and shifts of perspective.

[51] I have had some occasion to comment on this peculiarity of Second Isaiah's history of interpretation already in this project. See especially pg. 64 of ch. 2 and n. 66 in particular. As John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 381, notes, "there is no consensus on the actual delimitation and number of these [Second Isaiah's] poems." Similarly, Childs, *Isaiah*, 331, notes that "one of the continuing problems in interpreting Second Isaiah lies in determining the nature of the present literary composition, its units and coherence." Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 61, is particularly cautious in his discussion of delineation given the history of scholarship on the issue. He writes, "this represents *one* way of reading the text. In general, sense or subject matter trumps purely formal features." In the introduction to her survey of the field of Second Isaiah scholarship Carroll Stuhlmueller, "Deutero-Isaiah: Major Transitions in the Prophet's Theology and in Contemporary Scholarship," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 1, lists the division of units and their relationship to one another as open questions.

pericopes, since it does make a difference whether one may legitimately invoke the 'immediate context' – whatever is meant by 'immediate.'"[52]

Not only does Second Isaiah lack the clear boundary markers familiar from the Psalter (e.g., superscriptions, editorial notations, obvious shifts of speaker and subject), the prophets (e.g., formulaic indications of oracles, "the word of Yhwh came to me," "oracle of Yhwh," etc.), and Lamentations (e.g., restarting of the acrostic), even those boundary markers that one might hypothesize for Second Isaiah are either absent or are frustrated by the text.[53] However, as we will see, this ambiguity about Second Isaiah's poetic units seems to be an essential element of its character. The ambiguity impacts Second Isaiah's meaning by enabling possible and "legitimate" readings both in relationship to surrounding passages and poems (centripetally-oriented readings) and those that focus on individual fragments of text (centrifugally-oriented readings).

In the absence of clear, formulaic boundary markers, Second Isaiah's overwhelming parataxis is a primary cause of the difficulty in determining unit breaks. One might wish to depend on "distant parallelism and thematic unity."[54] However, in light of Second Isaiah's particularly paratactic flow, which I have already had occasion to discuss both within poems and across them, it becomes virtually undecidable whether a sudden shift in thought indicates a break between poems, a break between units within a poem, or no break at all.[55] Indeed, as analysis of individual poems in chapter two of this

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[52] Marjo C. A. Korpel and Johannes C. de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry: Isaiah 40-55* (Oudtestamentische Studiën; Boston: Brill, 1998), 2.

[53] As Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:19, note, "Isaiah 40-55 is not a structured whole in the manner of a work such as Lamentations where we can distinguish between five separate poems, and trace concrete markers of structure such as the use of an acrostic form."

[54] Korpel and de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 16.

[55] For a discussion of Second Isaiah's parataxis on both the individual poem level and between poetic units, see pp. 141-52.

study indicated, parataxis at times operates on the level of the line (see, e.g, 41:1a) or between bicola (e.g., 48:22). Shifts occur with such frequency that Second Isaiah would be atomized into "poems" the length of a line or two in many places if each paratactic shift was considered a reliable indicator of a poem break.[56] Additionally, such an approach to text division ignores the nature of lyric poems and lyric sequences. To declare each new thought its own poem is to misunderstand the way lyric poems move and shift. As "lyric poems writ large," texts analogous to lyric sequences hold together in the same way, further complicating the issue at hand.[57] In the absence of explicit indicators, Second Isaiah virtually demands to be read associatively (centripetally) across all its various paratactic breaks whether they may originally have been between poems, or between units within poems, or merely between thoughts.

In light of Second Isaiah's explicit and repeated reference to voices, and the notion that lyric poetry presents itself as the "utterance of a voice,"[58] one possibility is to approach the question of dividing Second Isaiah into units based on the shift of its speaking voices.[59] An obvious early indicator of the poetry's explicit interest in voices is

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[56] It is this level of atomization to which Clifford objects. He argues that "the view that Isaiah 40-55 is made up of brief and fragmentary pieces has the inevitable corollary that the author is a lyric poet rather than a national orator" (*Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 4). However, in light of my claim that lyric poetry is characterized by an internal parataxis, it appears that Clifford's correlation of lyric poetry with a necessary atomization of the text is based on a misunderstanding of lyric poetry. In actuality, the critics at whom Clifford directs his atomization critique are form critics rather than poetic critics, as evidenced in his history of scholarship (ibid., 34). Muilenburg, perhaps the most vocal recent defender of Second Isaiah as "lyric poet," though certainly not with the specificity regarding that genre category which I am employing, is applauded by Clifford for his move towards longer units (ibid., 35-36).

[57] F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Psalms and Lyric Verse," in *The Evolution of Rationality: Interdisciplinary Essays in Honor of J. Wetzel van Huyssteen* (ed. F. LeRon Shuts; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 365.

[58] Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 75.

[59] Korpel, "Metaphors in Isaiah LV," 46, employs a similar observation on a smaller scale in her observation of the change of person of address at the point that she has divided Isaiah 55 into sub-units. Simone Paganini, "Who Speaks in Isaiah 55.1? Notes on the Communicative Structure in Isaiah 55," *JSOT* 30 (2005): 84, despite employing a dramatic model that the present study rejects is correct in writing that "in prophetical and poetical texts, the perception of the speaker and the receiver is fundamental in order to

the opening poem's chain of un-named voices calling (40:3), crying (40:6), and saying (40:6). In addition, there are frequent references to a herald (40:9, 52:7-8), cited speech of both Jacob (40:27) and Zion (49:14), and an overwhelming number of explicit indicators of divine speech (among these one would include the frequent recurrence of the messenger formula כה אמר יהוה [42:5; 43:1, 14, 16; 44:2, 6, 24; 45:1, 11, 14, 18; 48:17; 49:7, 22, 25; 50:1; 51:22; 52:3], in addition to other modes of indicating the speaking of the deity). Additionally, there is the motif of the word (41:28, 44:26, 51:16, 55:11). Even the repetition of the "ringing cry" (both the noun רנה and the verbal form רנן) (42:11, 43:14, 44:23, 48:20, 51:11, 52:8-9 [2x], 54:1 [2x], 55:12) should be considered a participation in the sequence's obsession with voicing. Such an approach would lead to the hypothesis that within Second Isaiah a unified utterance will emerge from a single voice, and that a change of voice may help to signal a new poem – a new utterance.[60] However, the most clearly demarcate-able units in Second Isaiah violate this expectation. An example may be found in 52:13-53:12, the so-called fourth servant song. There is near critical consensus about the limits of this passage.[61] The unit includes as its

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arrange and correctly evaluate the different statements." Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 61, lists "a change either in speaker or the person addressed," as one formal feature which he will consider in decisions about unit delimitation.

[60] I am certainly not suggesting that all poems should be divided based on a shift in voicing. Rather, this seems to be a trait of Second Isaiah's poetry that I have observed and that may therefore contribute to a certain extent to delimiting the boundaries of Second Isaiah's component poems. Several poems within Second Isaiah stand in obvious tension with this observation including 51:9-16 and 52:13-53:12. Yet the presence of these poems does not diminish the sense that in most of Second Isaiah's poems a single speaker is present throughout.

[61] Scholars who concur about the delimitation of this unit include, Richard Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 175; Muilenburg, *IB* 5:417; Korpel and de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry*, viii; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 253; Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, xiii; Seitz, *NIB* 6:325; and Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 34. As Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 175, notes, "that the passage is a complete discourse is doubted by very few, so definitely is it marked off from what precedes and what follows by its focus on the suffering servant." This agreement about the delimitation of this unit is despite these scholars' otherwise wide-ranging opinions about the delimitation of other units. Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 39, has 17 total units while Muilenburg, *IB* 5:415-17, has 21; Korpel and de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry*, v-ix, have only 14; and Westermann, *Isaiah 40-55*, vii-ix, divides Second Isaiah into 52 interpretable units. The

central portion the only instance of an extended "we"-speech in the whole of Second Isaiah, framed by opening and closing comments in the divine voice. Yet, the unit seems to hold together with a greater internal cohesion than any tying it to the poems surrounding it in spite of a certain amount of internal parataxis.

Despite the shift in speaker, the entire poem focuses thematically on a very particular description of the servant, one that dominates this poem and stands in tension with itself and with many other depictions of the servant in Second Isaiah.[62] Both the opening description in the divine voice, and the confession of the "we" regarding the servant emphasize elements of suffering and disfigurement. The opening description includes a notice that the servant's appearance (מראה) is "disfigured"(משחת, 52:14b),[63] that people were appalled (שמם) by him (52:14a), and that kings closed their mouths because of him (52:15a). This same theme of suffering is much more thoroughly elaborated in the description provided by the "we." They, too, take note of the servant's appearance (מראה, 53:2), call him a man of sufferings (איש מכאבות, 53:3), stricken (מכה, 53:4) and smitten (מענה, 53:4). Yet each voice's description of the servant juxtaposes these images of suffering with images of exaltation. The poem opens (52:13) with the divine voice proclaiming that the servant will rise up (ירום), be lifted up (נשא), and be very high (גבה מאד). Similarly, the "we" after describing humiliation, death, and burial

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agreement of Korpel and de Moor with the "consensus" position regarding 52:13-53:12 is striking for it is one of very few violations of their general agreement with the traditional ch. divisions as units. Norman Whybray, *Thanksgiving for a Liberated Prophet: An Interpretation of Isaiah Chapter 53* (JSOTSupp 4; Sheffield: JSOT, 1978), 163, departs from what he refers to as the "usual view" about the limits of this unit, utilizing the choice of speaker as a more rigid criterion and beginning the unit with the initial lines of "we"-speech.

[62] Throughout Second Isaiah, the servant is depicted in largely triumphant terms (e.g., 41:8-10; 42:1-4; 43:10; and 44:1) Exceptions to this trend include 49:1-7 and 50:4-11. The first passage alludes to some weariness on the part of the servant. The second makes reference to humiliation, but insists that Yhwh has helped the servant so that the servant was not disgraced.

[63] I am reading the hapax with BDB, 1008.

for the servant proclaim that he will “lengthen his days” (יאריך ימים, 53:10), and see offspring (יראה זרע, 53:10). This latter image stands in ironic tension with the poem’s earlier uses of the same verbal root (ראה) to describe the servant’s disfigurement. The end of the poem returns to where it began with the divine voice promising a portion for the servant among the great (אחלק־לו ברבים, 53:12). This inclusio of divine speech about the exaltation of the otherwise suffering servant encloses the poem and reinforces its essential unity.

Indeed, Second Isaiah frequently undermines even the relatively controllable expectation that shifts of speaker will serve as possible unit demarcators. The determination of what voice is speaking is an ongoing problem in several portions of Second Isaiah. To be sure, this problem of an indeterminate speaker is characteristic of prophetic texts presented as messenger speech. As Westermann writes, “[i]n view of this massive tendency to identify the speech of the prophet as the word of God, the fact appears still more clearly that the first question concerning the author of the prophetic speech does not permit a division into two groups – (*a*) the word of God, (*b*) the word of the prophet.”[64] Moreover, beyond the usual difficulties produced by messenger speech, the Isaian corpus’s tendency to engage in what Christopher R. Seitz has called the “retraction of the prophetic persona,” complicates the delineation of speakers.[65] The

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[64] Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. Hugh Clayton White; foreword Gene M. Tucker; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 94-95.

[65] Christopher R. Seitz, “Isaiah 1-66: Making Sense of the Whole,” in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah* (ed. Christopher R. Seitz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 121. Mark E. Biddle, *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature: Rereading Jeremiah 7-20* (Studies in Old Testament Interpretation Series 2; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996), 120-21, cites Seitz’s description of Isaiah as dominated by the divine voice as an appropriate characterization of Jeremiah. Biddle writes, “the final form of Jeremiah (MT) tends toward a depiction of the entire book as YHWH speech in a manner which produces a relative ‘absence’ of the prophet” (ibid., 120). If this is true of Jeremiah it is even more

traits of prophetic anonymity in Second Isaiah and the tendency of exilic and post-exilic prophetic texts to use the "messenger formula" more fluidly than in pre-exilic prophetic texts[66] further muddy the determination of transitions between speakers in Second Isaiah.[67] There are passages whose speaker is virtually un-decidable. Other passages give the impression of being spoken by either the prophetic poet or "the servant" only to evince a glimmer of double voicing by the deity.

Several examples of double-voicing may be cited. The phenomenon occurs at 47:1-4 in which Yhwh is referred to as "our redeemer" making the pronouncement likely that of the prophetic poet. However, 47:3 claims "I will take vengeance" adding an element of ambiguity to the attribution of this passage.[68] In context, this vengeance apparently refers to the overthrow of Babylon, and thus should likely be seen as the vengeance of the deity rather than the individual accomplishment of the prophetic poet. Additionally, "the servant's" speech in 51:1-8 begins with the claim "listen to me pursuers of righteousness, the ones seeking Yhwh," and repeatedly refers to Yhwh in the

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the case with Second Isaiah in which the prophet is not only relatively absent, but goes unnamed, and largely uncharacterized.

[66] On the "almost … random" use of the "messenger formula" in late prophetic texts see John Barton, "Prophecy (Postexilic Hebrew)" in *ABD* (6 vols.; ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 5:494, who notes that in this period prophetic oracle formulas "have lost their original character of marking the beginnings and endings of distinct oracles." Similarly, Muilenburg, *IB* 5:391, considers Second Isaiah an exemplar of a transformation in prophetic forms occurring in the post-Assyrian period.

[67] Beyond the commonplace observation that the prophet of the exile is not mentioned by name anywhere in Isaiah 40-55 we may add the observation of A. Graeme Auld, "Poetry, Prophecy, Hermeneutic: Recent Studies in Isaiah," *SJT* 33 (1980): 567-81, that these chs. do not even use the term prophet נבא.

[68] Against Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:97, who write: "while words such as those in vv. 1-3a would be capable of being uttered by Jacob-Israel or Zion-Jerusalem, there has been no indication that the speaker has changed since chapter 46, and it is Yhwh who is the usual subject of the expressions 'punish/exact punishment.'" There is, in fact, an indication of change of speaker. While ch. 46 is explicitly spoken in the divine voice (e.g., 46:9b "I am God and there is no other, God and there is nothing like me"), the reference to Yhwh as "our redeemer" (47:4) argues against seeing the whole of ch. 47 as clearly in the divine voice. There is thus, at the very least, some ambiguity about the attribution of this passage. As Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 272, notes, "the divine speaker is still talking in v. 3a, but certainly not in v. 4."

third person. However, 51:2 mentions Abraham as one that "I called and I blessed" which must certainly be seen as an activity of the deity.[69] Concerning this phenomenon Peter D. Quinn-Miscall comments that "the frequent difficulty or impossibility of deciding whether the Lord or the prophet is speaking is a significant part of Isaiah's understanding of what a prophet is, of what prophecy is." By this statement Quinn-Miscall appears to mean that in the Isaian corpus prophets so fully speak on behalf of the deity that a clear line between the two speakers cannot be distinguished.[70] While Quinn-Miscall may be correct about the implications of this insight for Second Isaiah's view of prophecy, there are obvious literary implications as well. Second Isaiah's refusal to allow consistent delineation of its units which results from this double voicing has a strong centripetal impact. The reader cannot read the individual poems as individual poems divorced entirely from the sequence as a whole. Rather, the reader must continually engage with the whole of the sequence with all its shifts of theme, mood, topic, and voicing – a dizzying and disorienting prospect. The sequence itself calls for being read as a "lyric poem writ large" and often the tightest association that a line or group of lines has is with lines that fall in what I have deemed the next poem, or a poem several poems away.[71]

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[69] Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 344, lists the question of who is speaking as one of the "disputed questions" that result in the "commentaries [being] … largely at one in seeing this as a difficult text." Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:221, see the whole passage as divine speech with Yhwh referring to the deity's self in the third person. However, they note that "the LXX tidies the sequence by having Yhwh address Zion in v. 3" thus demonstrating ancient difficulties with assigning a single speaker to this passage.

[70] Peter D. Quinn-Miscall, *Reading Isaiah: Poetry and Vision* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 126. While Quinn-Miscall's work deals with the whole of the Isaian corpus, his observations are particularly pertinent to discussion of Second Isaiah. See also Quinn-Miscall's general comments about differentiating divine and human voices in Second Isaiah (ibid., 119).

[71] Dennis Pardee, *Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetic Parallelism: A Trial Cut ('nt I and Proverbs 2)* (VTSup 39; New York: Brill, 1988), 66-67, treats parallelism as being capable of binding units across a considerable distance.

Despite the notable resistance to division that the sequence exhibits, it is most probable that Second Isaiah originally existed as multiple individual poems.[72] As Dobbs-Allsopp has noted about the Song of Songs, a single lyric poem of such great length "is difficult to imagine outside of the most literate of cultures."[73] Though it seems most probable that Second Isaiah was compiled from several shorter lyric texts, the final presentation of the sequence privileges the whole over the parts. The parts are subsumed within the structure of the sequence and cannot be convincingly recovered with certainty. Indeed, Melugin goes so far as to suggest that, "in its final form the collection has deliberately eradicated any indicators of the process of growth. It is as if we were intended to see only the final pattern of arrangement."[74] Thus, my own division of Second Isaiah into individual poems is necessarily tentative, recognizing that the character of the sequence itself resists such divisions and that this resistance is a meaningful part of its self-presentation. Again, the wide divergence of scholars on unit division is further proof of the point. It will, at times however, become necessary to discuss portions of Second Isaiah without immediate recourse to the whole. This is true both for the pragmatic purposes of scholarship and in light of the nature of lyric sequencing as exhibiting both part and whole orientations. Wherever possible, I will treat texts as moments within the over-arching flow of Second Isaiah. When necessary, I will deal with individual poems. In each discussion of a group of lines as a "poem" I will

[72] See further ch. 1, pp. 34-36.

[73] F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Song of Songs," in *NIDB* (5 vols; ed. Katharine Sakenfeld; Nashville: Abingdon, forthcoming) 5:19 (mss pagination). See further my discussion of the probable compilation of Second Isaiah from originally distinct poems in ch. 1.

[74] Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-66* (BZAW; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 175.

justify my poem breaks via engagement with biblical scholarship and the application of the following elements in combination with one another:

1. Shifts of speaker;

2. Shifts of addressee;

3. Notable shifts of subject matter;

4. Arguments from the paragraphing evidence of ancient manuscripts;[75]

5. Apparently greater cohesion within a group of lines than with those surrounding them; and

6. Shifts in "lyric tonality."[76]

It is certainly the case that the determination of units is a messy and inherently subjective process. The elements I have identified are guidelines, used in combination with my own sense of the poetry. On the basis of these factors, I would suggest that Second Isaiah can be read as a collection of 30 individual lyric poems of varying length. These are: 40:1-31, 41:1-7, 41:8-20, 41:21-29, 41:1-4, 42:5-9, 42:10-13, 42:14-20, 42:21-25, 43:1-21, 43:22-28, 44:1-5, 44:6-22, 44:23, 44:24-28, 45:1-8, 45:9-25, 46:1-13, 47:1-15, 48:1-11, 48:12-22, 49:1-13, 49:14-50:3, 50:4-11, 51:1-8, 51:9-16, 51:17-52:12, 52:13-53:12, 54:1-17, 55:1-13. Specific argumentation for each of these poem breaks will be undertaken wherever the individual poems are introduced for examination. However, I would stress that these poem breaks are tentative, and I hold to them loosely.

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[75] See, e. g. Korpel and de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry*, and Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, for the use of manuscript evidence as a guide in unit delimitation.

[76] Definition of the term "lyric tonality" was included in ch. 2, and a full discussion of Second Isaiah's tonalities is the main task of ch. 5. I am not alone in pointing to tonal shifts as an element of the change between units. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, xxxiii, writes, "the mood and tone change, at times rather sharply, from one poem to another."

As we have seen, because of Second Isaiah's lack of internal closural devices and clear unit demarcation, the reader cannot "independently" recognize "the terminal point," and thereby impose closure and structure.[77] On the one hand, this trait orients the reader towards the sequence as a whole. The text forbids the reader to focus on individual poems, for the limits of the individual poems are virtually indeterminable. Thus, attention is directed strongly at the paratactic whole. However, paradoxically, this refusal of the text to demarcate its units has a centrifugal impulse as well. Without clear units the reader is overwhelmed in the flood of the text. Unmoored without anchoring points at which to rest or to assess a developing pattern, the reader cannot begin to "grasp the poem globally" by arranging it into tidy bundles of text or by stepping away from the immediacy of the utterance to view the scope of the whole.[78] Rather, the reader is thrust into the texts' ever-changing, rarely pausing flow and must experience it rather than summarizing or organizing it. Thus, the lack of clear unit demarcation functions centrifugally both to heighten engagement with the particularities of Second Isaiah's details and to resist readerly attempts at summary and organization.

The disorientation[79] produced by Second Isaiah's refusal to demarcate its component units is similar to the disorientation that Brent A. Strawn describes as a result of Deuteronomy's use of repetition.[80] He refers to this disorientation as the sense that

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[77] Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 41.

[78] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 11.

[79] The idea that the lack of clear boundary markers would have a disorienting effect is implied in Grossberg's comments. He describes the ability to see a poetic text's "limits" as making the poem "more easily grasped" (Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 9).

[80] Brent A. Strawn, "Keep/Observe/Do – Carefully – Today!: The Rhetoric of Repetition in Deuteronomy," in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller* (eds., Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 235. If, indeed, as I suggested as plausible in ch. 1, the elimination of any marks of Second Isaiah's process of compilation from separate poems was deliberately undertaken at some point, then the disorientation that results may be

one is “Lost in Deuteronomy.” Strawn argues that the result of the “Lost in Deuteronomy” feeling is that the reader/hearer is impelled to read and re-read Deuteronomy until no longer lost, by which time Deuteronomy’s repeated commands regarding obedience will have become second nature and Deuteronomy will have accomplished its rhetorical goal.[81] Similarly, the lack of clear unit boundaries creates the impression that one is “Lost in Second Isaiah.” However, as the discussion of Second Isaiah’s dominant centripetal forces below will illustrate, what one encounters while “Lost in Second Isaiah” is not a consistently repeated demand but the overwhelming presence of the speaking deity. If being “Lost in Second Isaiah” impels continued engagement, what it encourages is the readerly experience of the divine presence via the speaking persona of Yhwh.[82] Thus the contribution of this structurally ambivalent trait is in harmony with Second Isaiah’s noted engagement with the question(s) of divine presence, abandonment, and comfort. The lack of clear boundary markers orients the reader to the sequence as a whole, simultaneously creates disorientation within the sequence itself, impels engagement with the moment by moment particularities of the poetry, and confronts the reader with the speaking presence of Yhwh.

3.2. Second Isaiah’s Lexical Recurrences and Thematic Threads

A second apparent source of lyric centripetality in Second Isaiah is its employment of recurrent themes. Various thematic threads crisscross and weave through Second Isaiah. The sequence as a whole gives the impression of being a closely tied web of recurrent

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seen as an effect experienced by the ancient audience, as well as more contemporary ones. See Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 175.

[81] Strawn, “Keep/Observe/Do,” 238.

[82] See n. 114 later in this ch. for a definitional discussion of the term “persona” as it is employed in the present study.

motifs.[83] Almost every verse of Second Isaiah is impacted by the presence of these recurrences. There is virtually no passage in Second Isaiah that is not in some way a reiteration of familiar language. As Grossberg points out regarding the centripetal force of repetition generally, "the corresponding words form networks of meaning and patterns of sequential relations that run through the text. These networks and patterns constitute a significant centripetal tendency."[84] Among the most frequent repetitions are the command "Do not fear" (אל־תירא) (41:10, 13; 41:14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 8 [אל־תפחדו, אל־תרהו]; 51:7; 54:4), the references to forming, and creating (ברא ,יצר) (40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 10, 15, 21; 44:2,10, 12, 21, 24; 45:7, 8, 9, 11, 18; 46:11; 48:7; 49:5; 54:16-7), references to knowledge and understanding – usually paired (בין ,ידע) (40:14 [3x], 21 [2x], 28; 41:22, 23, 26; 42:16 [2x], 25; 43:10 [2x], 18; 44:7, 8, 9, 18 [3x], 19 [2x], 25; 45:3, 4, 5, 6, 20; 47:10, 11 [2x]; 48:4, 6, 7, 8; 49:23; 50:4; 51:7; 52:15; 53:11; 55:5 [2x]), servant references (עבד) (41:8, 9; 42:1, 19 [2x]; 43:10, 23, 24; 44:1, 2, 21 [2x], 26; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3, 5, 6, 7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11; 54:17), a "ringing cry" (both the noun רנה and the verbal form רנן) (42:11, 43:14, 44:23 [2x], 48:20, 51:11, 52:8-9 [2x], 54:1 [2x], 55:12), desert imagery (מדבר, ערבה, ישימון) (40:3; 41:18,19; 42:11; 43:5, 19, 20; 51:3), mountain imagery (הר, גבעה) (40:4 [2x], 9, 12 [2x]; 41:15 [2x], 18; 42:11, 15 [2x]; 44:23; 45:2; 49:11; 52:7; 54:10 [2x]; 55:12 [2x]), and images birthing and bearing

[83] Second Isaiah's predilection for repetitive use of language and imagery has been widely commented upon. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:389, calls the stylistic feature of repetition "one of first importance for an understanding and appreciation of the poems" and includes a catalog of types of repetition in the introduction to his commentary. Among other scholars who note Second Isaiah's use of repetition one may list: Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 63; McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, xxxii; and R.N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1975), 26. On the discussion of repetition as structuring device see further ch. 1, pp. 3-4, especially ns. 5-7.

[84] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 9.

children (41:8; 42:14; 43:5-6, 27; 44:2, 3-4, 24; 45:10, 11, 19, 25; 46:3; 47:8, 9; 48:1, 8, 18; 49:1, 5, 15-21, 23; 50:1; 51:2, 12, 18, 52:14, 53:10; 54:1-3, 13).[85]

Some of the most apparent thematic threads in Second Isaiah are what might be termed "consonances."[86] These motifs and passages repeat almost verbatim, or with the same meaning at various points in the series of poems. Examples of such motifs would include the odd phrase "put it to heart" (שים על לב) (42:25; 47:7) which appears to carry the same meaning – to take something seriously – in each of its occurrences. Also within this category are the repetitions of rhetorical questions about the finding of an appropriate comparison partner for Yhwh (40:18, 25; 44:7; 46:5), references to knowledge and

[85] Several of these motifs have received thematic study. Discussion of the "fear not" recurrence as part of the salvation oracle form include: Philip B. Harner, "Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah," *JBL* 88 (1969): 418-34; and Claus Westermann, "Das Heilswort bei Deuterojesaja," *EvT* 24 (1964): 355-73. Studies that address the creation motifs include: Gerald J. Janzen, "On the Moral Nature of God's Power: Yahweh and the Sea in Job and Deutero-Isaiah," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 458-78; Theodore M. Ludwig, "Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah," *JBL* 92 (1973): 345-57; Norman C. Habel, "He Who Stretches Out the Heavens," *CBQ* 34 (1972): 417; and Philip B. Harner, "Creation Faith in Deutero-Isaiah," *VT* 17 (1967): 298-306. Discussions of the servant motif largely focus around the identity of the servant and the relationship of the servant songs to the remainder of Second Isaiah. Detailed studies of these issues include: Leland Edward Wilshire, "The Servant City: A New Interpretation of the 'Servant of the Lord' in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah," *JBL* 94 (1975): 356-67; Robert R. Ellis, "The Remarkable Suffering Servant of Isaiah 40-55," *SwJT* 34 (1991): 20-30; Antti Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40-55* (ConBot 35; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1992); and Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (*Scripta Minora* 3; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1983). Studies of the desert imagery in Second Isaiah include: Horacio Simian-Yofre, "Exodo en Deuteroisaias," *Bib* 61 (1980): 530-53; and Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, *Breaking Through the Wilderness: References to Desert in Exilic Prophecy* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1984). Treatment of the images of birthing and bearing children are included in Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: Study in Comparative Midrash* (SBLDS 91; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); and Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (JSOTSup 398; New York: T & T Clark, 2004).

[86] I am here employing a musical metaphor in my terminology in recognition of lyric's "musical" nature. Within music theory "consonance" refers to the "sounding together of two or more notes, that is, with an 'absence of roughness,' 'relief of tonal tension' or the like." Claude V. Palisca and Natasha Spender, "Consonance," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (20 vols.; New York: Grove Dictionaries of Music, Inc., 1995), 4:668. Likewise, I am employing "consonance" here to refer to those recurrences of themes, terms, and motifs in which there is no significant "tonal tension." That is, these occurrences are essentially or nearly repetitions. Pardee, *Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetic Parallelism*, 66-67, refers to this same idea under the name "repetitive parallelism" and notes its ability to knit cohesion both within small units and among passages separated by some distance.

understanding, and references to Yhwh as former/fashioner/creator.[87] Several longer blocks of text are mirrors of one another and they will be discussed further below.[88] These consonant repetitions produce a significant centripetal thrust and are a strong force for the ultimate cohesion of Second Isaiah as a sequence.

However, further examination reveals that not all of Second Isaiah's repetitions contribute to producing cohesion. Several repetitions take the form of what might be termed "dissonances."[89] These are occurrences of motifs that overturn, reverse, or challenge earlier uses of the same language.

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[87] Appendix 1 lists occurrences of each of these repetitions.

[88] Several recurrences are tied only lexically, not thematically. They thus constitute lexical repetition and produce a minimal centripetal force. The occurrences of these lexemes often represent vastly divergent ideas in the poetry, yet they are linked via the repetition of terms. Thus the prophet plays with these words, exploiting their multiple meanings to provide a lexical cohesiveness that is flexible and embraces new meanings. Examples of this tendency include the repeated reference to chaff (קש) which at times is an image of human frailty (40:24; 47:14), at other times of multiplicity (41:2), and at still other times is purely agricultural (41:15). The occasional references to a "rock" (צור) also fall into this category of recurrence. The rock ranges in meaning from a descriptor for the singularity of Yhwh ("there is no rock, I know not one; 44:8) to the rock broken open for water in the wilderness wanderings traditions (48:21). Additionally, Israel's ancestral heritage is referred to as "the rock you were hewn from" (51:1). The language of garments (בגד) likewise plays a varied role in Second Isaiah. Both humans (51:8) and the heavens (51:6) are said to wear out like a garment, yet Jerusalem is told to put on the garments of her joy (52:1). Similarly, the metaphor of Yhwh pitching the heavens like a tent (40:22;אהל) bears little more than a lexical relationship with the expanded image of Zion being forced to enlarge her tent for the abundance of her children (54:2).

[89] The term "dissonance," is again an employment of music theory terminology. A dissonance is "a discord, or any sound which, in the context of the prevailing harmonic system, is unstable and must therefore be resolved to a consonance." Sadie Stanley, ed., "Dissonance," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5:496. Dissonances are characterized by the "tonal tension" that was explicitly absent in consonances. The term is used here to refer to those recurrences that present such "tonal tension." It is significant for their definition that this tension occurs "in the context of the prevailing harmonic system," or within the deployment of the metaphor – in light of the context. That is, these particular deployments of themes and images are not in and of themselves, dissonant. It is the employment of these motifs in ways that contrast with each other and with the prevailing context that makes them dissonant. Poetic dissonance does not require resolution in the way that music dissonance traditionally does. As Daniel C. Melnick, *Fullness of Dissonance: Modern Fiction and the Aesthetics of Music* (Toronto: Associated University Press, 1994), 8, notes, "dissonance gives form to a declaration of ongoing process and tension, to the refusal to resolve, to the denial of the sense of conventional ending in harmony." Likewise, the dissonances in Second Isaiah highlight its "ongoing process and tension" through their "refusal to resolve."

A striking example of dissonant reiteration of language is the repeated trope of irrigation of the desert. The first occurrence of this motif comes up early in the sequence in Isa 41:17-20:

[17] The poor and afflicted are seeking water,
and … nothing.[90] Their tongue is dry with thirst.
I am Yhwh, I will answer them,
the God of Israel, I will not abandon them.
[18] I will break open rivers upon the heights,
and in the midst of the valleys, springs.
I transform the desert to a troubled pool,
and the land of drought, to a spring of water.
[19] I will give in the wilderness cedar, acacia, myrtle, and olive tree.[91]
I will put in the desert cypress, elm, and box together.
[20] So that they will see and know,
and put (it to heart), and have insight together,
that the hand of Yhwh did this
and the Holy One of Israel created it.

This description of Yhwh turning the desert into a pool of water for the thirsty is a striking image on its own and this little stanza holds together nicely.[92] The stanza is unified by its consistent speaker and focus throughout on the provision of water to the thirsty. The thirsty are first described. Then Yhwh's abundant provision for them is depicted in both water and arboreal imagery. Finally, a reason is given to justify this

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[90] The abrupt translation "nothing" is chosen to reflect the stark one-word expression in the Hebrew. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:179, assess the poetic diction similarly, writing "the line is brought up short by the forlorn but brisk one word 'but there is none.'"

[91] This last species is literally עץ שמן "tree of oil." I have translated "olive tree" in recognition of the likelihood that "oil" here refers to olive oil since the olive tree was a particularly important source of oil in the ancient Mediterranean. The choice of "oil" here rather than the more direct זית "olive," likely highlights the abundance of the arboreal imagery, as oil and fat are images of luxury in the Hebrew Bible. BDB, 1032. See, e.g., Deut 32:13; 33:24; Ezek 16:13; Prov 21:17. See further below.

[92] Isa 41:17-20 is a stanza within the larger poetic unit Isa 41:8-20. The poetic unit as a whole is demarcated by a shift to direct address and change of subject. The stanza is marked off from what precedes by a momentary shift away from direct address and by the use of the refrain "the Holy One of Israel" to conclude both the preceding stanza and the stanza at hand. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40*-55, 1:176, cite "change of imagery, tone, and form," along with divisions in both 1QIsa[a] and 1QIsa[b] manuscripts in support of the same sub-unit division. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 107, treats Isa 41:17-20 as an independent unit. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 79, also considers 41:17-20 a separate utterance on form-critical grounds. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 31, agrees with my delineation of the poem as Isa 41:8-20 but makes no sub-divisions within the poem and gives no justification for the boundaries he employs. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:458, considers Isa 41:17-20 a "strophe" within the larger poem.

divine provision. Considered independently, the stanza presents a depiction of divine provision for the needy through the transformation of the desert into an oasis full of exotic trees, and concludes that the purpose of this action is that people will see (יראו) and know that Yhwh is the creator.[93] The structure of the stanza and its poetic devices highlight the centrality of the poem's interest in Yhwh's ability to provide for the thirsty people. Following the opening tricolon's description of the thirsty ones, a bicolon emphatically draws attention to the divine speaker and to that speaker's role in alleviating the suffering described in the opening line. The bicolon is neatly and parallelistically structured. The opening formula אני יהוה "I am Yhwh," in the first colon pairs with the title אלהי ישראל "the God of Israel" in the second colon. The verbs for the activities of this emphatically identified divine speaker draw even more attention to the neat pairing of the line. In the first colon Yhwh says אענם "I will answer them." In the second colon the same speaker claims לא אעזבם "I will not abandon them." Thus the alliteration and assonance highlight the contrast between potential abandonment and the promised divine response. Paired with the neat structural parallelism of the line, and the use of one of Second Isaiah's favorite formulas for referring to the deity, the repetition of similar sounds in the bicolon's two verbs makes the line particularly prominent in the flow of the poetry. This line and the concluding justification (v. 20) frame the description of divine provision (v. 18-19) and focus the poem's central theme on the glory of the divine speaker. Within the envelope of references to the divine speaker, the poetry grows richly imagistic. The שפיים heights and בקעות valleys (v. 18a) form a merismus indicating a

[93] Commentators who make similar claims about the basic message of these verses include: Seitz, *NIB* 6:356; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 80-81; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 66-67; Childs, *Isaiah*, 320; and Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 110-11.

comprehensiveness and abundance in Yhwh’s provision of water. The image of Yhwh “breaking open” (אפתח) the waters to release them upon the heights and the valleys, perhaps implies the imagery of cracking winter ice that then flows from the “heights” to the “valleys.” One can almost hear the sound of the waters “breaking open” in the onomonopoetic sounds of the root פתח and echoed in the bicolon’s alliteration of word end *taws* and *kaps* (נהרות ובתוך בקעות מעינות). In the following bicolon neatly paired images of aridity, מדבר “desert” and ארץ ציה “land of drought,” contrast sharply with the saturation images of the לאגם־מים “troubled pool” and למוצאי מים “spring of water.” Each colon thus presents a sharp reversal which is emphasized through the grammatical and thematic parallelistic repetition of the line. Finally, the abundance of Yhwh’s provision of water is explored through imagery exploring the lushness of the transformed desert regions. Not only is the water represented as sufficient for the thirsty to drink, a wide range of species of trees can be sustained by its flow. The specificity of the species emphasizes and highlights this abundance. Indeed, the choice of the phrase עץ שמן “tree of oil” as a likely reference to the olive tree highlights this particular species’ connection with luxury given that oil is used as an image of luxury and abundance in the Hebrew Bible.[94] Finally, the stanza concludes, as noted above, by returning to its emphasis upon the divine provider of the water just described. Thus the stanza considered independently richly describes Yhwh’s provision of water and emphasizes both its abundance and its source through its poetic devices.

[94] See n. 91 in this ch.

However, it is virtually impossible for the reader of Second Isaiah to consider this set of lines independently. The "heights," "valleys," "desert," and "wilderness" virtually cry out to be read in concert Isaiah 40:3-5:[95]

[3] A voice cries: "in the wasteland clear the way of Yhwh,
level in the desert a highway for our God.[96]
[4] Each valley will be exalted,
and each mountain and hill will be humbled.
And the slick will be smooth,
and the rutted, a valley.
[5] And the glory of Yhwh will be revealed,
and all flesh will see together,
for the mouth of Yhwh has spoken."[97] (40:3-5)

Indeed here, too, the result, if not the purpose of this transformation of the desert is that Yhwh will be "seen" (וראו).[98] Yet, this initial transformation of the desert, however similar, is dry. There is no mention of floods of water here. Rather, the transformation involves a leveling and a roadway.

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[95] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:459, notes that the language of this unit "especially water and trees – is characteristic of the poet" though he makes no explicit connection to Isaiah 40. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 203, likewise notes the commonality of the transformation of the desert motif in the Isaianic corpus. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 66, references Isaiah 40 in his discussion of Isa. 41:17-20. Bradley J. Spencer, "The 'New Deal' for Post-Exilic Judah in Isaiah 41,17-20," *ZAW* 112 (2000): 583-97, notes that "many scholars have ignored the lack of 'travel imagery'" in this passage. Two factors likely contributed to the tendency Spencer observes: (1) the tendency of scholarship to read Second Isaiah through the lens of return to Judah, and (2) the resonances of 41:17-20 with the language and imagery of Isaiah 40 (a passage that has been heavily associated with the return to Jerusalem theme). Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:177, make a similar assessment as Spencer's, "it is misleading simply to identify vv. 17-20 as a 'new exodus' passage."

[96] The opening statement "a voice cries" stands outside the parallelism of this line. It seems best to regard it as falling within the first colon rather than as producing a tricolon. Even with the inclusion of these words in the first colon the line is a relatively balanced 5-4.

[97] The stanza break is supported by a *vacat* in 1QIsa[a]. There is obvious cohesion between this stanza and the one preceding based upon the recurrent reference to "a voice." Muilenburg, *IB* 5:426; Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 53; Herbert, *Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 18; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 3; Seitz, *NIB* 6: 334; and Korpel and de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 17-18, make this same sub-unit division.

[98] Seitz, *NIB* 6:356, agrees that 41:17-20 echoes the opening poem. He notes that the promise to see, "recollects the promise of 40:5, enlarging the new comprehension to include those beyond Israel's circle."

In addition to bearing a striking relationship to the opening poem of the sequence, 41:17-20 creates interesting resonances with the final poem of the sequence (55:1-13).[99] There the invitation to all who are thirsty is "come to the waters" (55:1). These thirsty people are further described as those without bread, wine, and milk. It is not difficult to hear a connection between Isaiah 41:17's description of the thirsty as "poor" and "afflicted" and these ones who lack bread, wine, and milk. Other occurrences of the "rivers in the desert" motif occur in 43:16-21 and 44:2b-4, each of which depict Yhwh transforming the desert with irrigation and betray strong resonances with various other Second Isaian images, especially those of Isaiah 40 but also the recurrence of "former things" and parenting imagery.[100]

However, the use of the "rivers in the desert" imagery is not entirely consistent throughout Second Isaiah. Not only is Yhwh depicted as irrigator of the desert, Yhwh is also represented as desiccator.[101] An example of this other side of the water motif appears in 42:14-17:

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[99] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:459, includes 55:13 in his list of verses that participate in Second Isaiah's "characteristic imagery" of water and trees noted in reference to 41:17-20. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-66*, 203, notes the familiarity of the imagery of water in the wilderness in Second Isaiah, but does not connect 41:17-20 specifically with either the opening or closing poem of the sequence. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:177-8, point to both Isaiah 40 and 55 as points of contrast with the lack of roadway imagery in combination with the irrigation imagery of 41:17-20. Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, 317, also makes explicit connection between 41:17 and ch. 55.

[100] William Henry Propp, *Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and Its Mythological Background* (HSM 40; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 101, discusses 43:16-21 along with 41:17-20 as exemplars of Second Isaiah's use of the water in the wilderness motif. Other scholars who pick up on this motif with one or more of these passages include Herbert, *Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 55; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 89; Antoon Schoors, *I Am God your Saviour: A Form-Critical Study of the Main Genres in Is. XL-LV* (VTSup 24; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 96; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:179; Karl Elliger, *Deuterojesaja* (BKAR 11/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 357; and Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, 341.

[101] Spencer, "New Deal," 590-12, deals with the desiccation images under the name "negative reversal imagery." He interprets these as unequivocally referring to the economic destruction of Babylon, which is contrasted with the emergence of prosperity for Judah. While this may be a solution for this particular set of dissonant images, as is evident in the translation below, Babylon is not explicitly mentioned and the poem leaves open the possibility that the blind (likely to be identified with the audience) are to be driven into this parched landscape. Thus, it is not altogether clear, especially given the alternation

[14] I had hushed since forever.
I was silent, I restrained myself.
Like a laboring woman I will groan,
I will pant and gasp together.
[15] I will demolish mountains and hills,
and all their herbage I will parch.
And I will turn rivers into islands,
and a troubled pool I will parch.
[16] And I will drive the blind in a way they do not know,
and in paths they do not know I will march them.
I will make the darkness before them light,
and the rutted, smooth.
These are the things I will do for them,
and I will not abandon them.
[17] They are backsliders and will surely be ashamed,[102] the ones relying on the idol,
the ones saying to the molten image, "you are our god."[103]

The disjunction between this passage and the initially examined "rivers in the desert" passage (41:17-20) is obvious.[104] The parching of the "troubled pool" (אגם) especially signals a close tie, for that is precisely what 41:18 claimed Yhwh would make of the desert. Here also, the language recalls that of Isaiah 40. There is a clear resonance

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of moods in the divine speaker to be discussed in ch. 5, that the Babylonians are the only ones threatened with parching. In contrast, Propp, *Water in the Wilderness*, 99-106, makes no mention of parching imagery in his discussion of Second Isaiah's involvement in the motif.

[102] The ambiguity of this line regarding the identity of the "they" and the delay of the further description "the ones relying on the idol," is an instance of a sudden shift in the disposition of the deity which seems intentionally to leave open the identity of those being chastised. This trait is particularly relevant in the context of the mixture of desiccation and deliverance images in 42:14-17.

[103] The apparent extreme length of this line is due mostly to the translation into English. In Hebrew the line is only a 6-4. This delineation of the verse into a bicolon follows MT's markings and depends upon the parallelism between the cola.

[104] Though the dissonance between this passage and the irrigation passages is relatively conspicuous, it has been passed over in silence by numerous commentators. Among these are Seitz, *NIB* 6:369; George A.F. Knight, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Theological Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), 81; Baltzer, *Isaiah 40-55*, 145-6; and Muilenburg, *IB* 5:474-5. Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 95, attempts to harmonize the dissonant theme with his creation typology. He writes, "contrary to the picture conveyed by many translations…Yahweh does not sear the hills with a burning wind. Rather the picture is exactly that of Ps 104:6-9.…Yahweh frees the mountains and hills from the salt waters. They are the first part of the fertile earth to appear in some accounts of creation." While creation is certainly an element of Second Isaiah's depiction of Yhwh and may be at work in this passage, this observation does not mitigate the dissonance between irrigation and desiccation of the desert and the close verbal parallels between units carrying this theme. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 106, rightly observes the correlation between 44:14-17 and 41:18-20, calling it "a curious correspondence." He explains the tight relationship between these passages by seeing them as "two sides of the selfsame divine act" (ibid., 107), that is, as irrigation for Israel and desiccation for Israel's enemies. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 203, notes the conflict between 42:15 and 41:17-20, but draws no conclusions from this observation.

between the imagery of 42:14-15 and that of 40:7. In 42:14-15 Yhwh's panting parches the landscape and plants. In contrast 40:7 insists that the plants, with whom the people there are being compared, wither away when the breath of Yhwh blows upon them. Additionally, in 42:16 there are references to traveling on a path and the transformation of the rutted to the smooth that also share in the imagery of that earlier poem. The "way" imagery of the poem at hand is consonant with the earlier poem, while the water imagery is dissonant with that same poem's imagery. The use of conflicting forms of repetition of Isaiah 40's imagery in Isaiah 42 highlights and intensifies the dissonance of the parching imagery. This shocking overturning of the beautiful imagery of Yhwh as irrigator of the desert stands out as an example of Second Isaiah's (re-)use of recurrent themes in a dissonant manner.

In light of what we have seen, recurrent thematic threads play an ambiguous but important structural role. Each poem, though it may be dominated by a concentration or focus on one of these images, inevitably contains several others tying it closely with other poems and thus, more broadly, with the whole. Second Isaiah gives the impression of being largely knit from the same cloth. The recurrent use of repetitive language gives the sense that each line is somehow bound to other lines in the sequence. Sometimes however, the association between these lines is strongly disjunctive, calling into question the sense of cohesion produced by more consonant uses of imagery. Dissonance, that is, is every bit as palpable as consonance. Indeed the former lives, to some degree at least, at the expense of the latter. In all cases the motifs bear a particular meaning in their immediate context, but they do not mean only in isolation; they are always haunted by the echoes of their other usages and the other themes with which they are elsewhere paired.

As we have seen, the use of recurrent imagery has the potential to bind Second Isaiah centripetally and to orient the reader toward the work as a whole. However, in light of the dissonant deployments of lexical and thematic recurrences, Second Isaiah undermines the centripetal impact of repetition, leaving the sequence open to fracture.

4. Centripetal Forces and Cohesion in Second Isaiah

Two primary forces successfully work together to balance Second Isaiah's centrifugal forces and exert a cohesive and thrust. These successful centripetal forces in Second Isaiah are mirrored passages (see section 4.1) and the dominance of the divine voice (see section 4.2).

4.1. Mirrored Passages

A strong centripetality is created when consonant repetition occurs on a grand scale in those passages that mirror one another closely over the course of several verses. As Grossberg observes, in such scenarios "the reiterated unit is recalled and *ipso facto* related."[105] In Second Isaiah, two groups of repeated poetic units demand attention. Neither constitutes perfect repetition; these are not identical units.[106] However, their resonances are near enough to create the perception of verbatim repetition and the differences between them are not initially glaring and thus do not provide a significant centrifugal thrust.

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[105] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 9.

[106] Strawn, "Keep/Observe/Do," 218, comments on the preference of biblical scholars for examination of differences in their discussion of repetition. He argues that this preference is an apparent reflection of our attitudes toward repetition and a misunderstanding of the distinction between repetition and repetitiousness (ibid, 221). My discussion of these mirrored passages will take account of the distinctions between them, not out of a desire to point away from strict repetition, but because of the details of the Second Isaian text that includes both similarity and difference in its use of repetition.

The first group of mirrored passages is the collection of passages describing the creation of an idol.[107] Groups of verses illustrating details of the idol-making process occur in 40:19-20; 41:7; and 44:9-20.[108] In each instance, materials are described, and various sorts of craftspeople are implicated. The large number of lexical recurrences shared by these passages produces their centripetal thrust. Terms common to these passages include: the craftsman (חרש, 40:19, 20; 41:7; 44:11, 12, 13), the smelter (צרף, 40:19; 41:7), to be shaken (מוט, 40:20; 41:7), idol (פסל, 40:19, 20; 41:7; 44:9, 10, 15, 17), to pour out (נסך, 40:19; 44:10), and tree (עץ, 40:20; 44:13, 14, 19). In each of the first two passages, the emphasis falls on the creation of an image that will not be destroyed. In 40:19-20, the selection of materials is aimed at this goal, while in 44:7 the quality of the workmanship is described as producing a lasting product. In contrast, the longest passage, which takes up both the themes of the materials and the worker, plays upon the transitoriness of the idol in its parody. Though the idol-maker takes all the care (and

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[107] As Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 146, points out, commentators have widely considered the idol passages additions to Second Isaiah. However, the thematic repetition of these passages as well as their use of other thematic threads integral to Second Isaiah (e.g., precious metals [40:19], species of trees [40:20]) makes them at the very least fully integrated parts of the sequence as a whole. Morgan Lee Phillips, *The Significance of the Divine Self-Predication Formula for the Structure and Content of the Thought of Deutero-Isaiah* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1969), 201, notes both sides of this issue. He refers to 40:19 and 44:9-10 both as "intrusive in their contexts" and as having "no stylistic or formal indications that these passages come from a hand other than that of Deutero-Isaiah." He determines, "the issue [of the idol passages' authorship] cannot be decided with certainty" (ibid., 201-202). Based on the thematic ties to the sequence of the whole noted above, the present project considers these passages to be integral elements of the sequence.

[108] Knight, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 51, comments on the parallels between 40:19-20 and 41:7 and refutes the proposition that 41:7 is a gloss gleaned from ch. 40 noting Second Isaiah's "genius in returning to the theme he has already raised." Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 66-67, treats 40:19-20 and 41:6-7 together as one unit noting their relationship to 44:9-20. While I would disagree with his rearrangement of the text in order to group thematic occurrences into units, his observation of the relatedness of these passages is correct. In a similar vein to Westermann, Michael B. Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (ed., Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 20-21, treats the two passages as "a single descriptive parody" which has been "split." Dick does note, however, that the passages are now "thoroughly integrated into their present context." Thus, Dick's treatment of the passages is thematic and does not call for re-arrangement of the Isaian text. He also treats Isa 44: 9-22 calling it "the most extensive parody on the manufacturing of a cult image in the Hebrew Bible" (ibid., 24).

more) described by the previous passages, the carefully chosen wood of the previous passage is now the leftover fuel from the idol-maker's meal. The idol-maker, earlier the competent workman who produced a lasting product, is now "hungry" and "faint" (44:12). Certainly, the initial short explorations of the idol-making theme obtain sarcastic tonalities from the surrounding passages and their claims that the makers of idols are nothing and an abomination. However, these sarcastic tonalities are intensified and made more directly a part of the description of idol making in the parody passage. No longer does the production of such a tonality develop through resonances with surrounding passages. Rather the poem itself highlights the futility and absurdity of the idol-maker's task.[109] Thus the idol maker series is a group of three passages that shares significant vocabulary, themes, and emphases over the extent of several verses. No significant dissonance appears within this group. As a group then, the idol-maker passages produce a centripetal impact.

The second group of repeated passages likewise builds in intensity and length. The passages about mother Zion and her children (43:5-6; 49:14-23; and 54:1-14) develop from cryptic promises to "bring your seed" from far away (43:5), to full blown descriptions of mother Zion's reaction to the overwhelming return of children whom she does not recall bearing (49:21). The pair of long passages (49:14-23 and 54:1-14) constitutes the most explicit extended repetition of motifs in the book.[110] In each of these

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[109] Philips, *Self-Predication Formula*, 201, characterizes the idol polemic similarly. He writes that the passage is "negative in tone and mocks what it opposes."

[110] Numerous commentators have noted the close thematic relationship between these two passages. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:340, note that ch. 54 "takes up the themes of 49.14-50.3 and 51.17-52.10." Likewise, Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 360, comments regarding 54:1-17 that "the theme of the present passage is anticipated in 49:14-26." Others who note a connection between these two passages include: Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: the Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (SBLDS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 231-239; Childs, *Isaiah*, 426; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 184; McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 140; Muilenburg, *IB* 5: 633; Seitz, *NIB* 6: 476; Henri Blocher,

passages Zion is described as barren (49:21; 54:1), overwhelmed with children (49:17; 54:1), having a living space crowded because of the influx of children (49:20; 54:2-3), and as overcoming shame (49:23; 54:4). The scenes are so nearly parallel in both intensity and sets of images that they seem almost to be the same passage. The poems thus intersect and overlap in the reader's mind. Indeed, the reader who is not careful will have difficulty keeping these poems distinct. Such difficulties arise from the similarity in the imagery of the mirrored passages. For example, in one of the poems the children complain about a cramped space (49:20) while in the other Zion enlarges her tent (54:2). In one passage Yhwh claims Zion is engraved on the palms of Yhwh's hands (49:16) and in the other Yhwh promises to wipe out the memory of Zion's widowhood (54:4). In one passage Zion is said to bind her children on like a bride (49:18) and in the other the parts of the city are to be laid out with precious stones and cosmetics (54:11-12). These images bleed into one another and develop one another. Where does the multitude of children come from in chapter 54? Second Isaiah doesn't say, but the power of the resonance with chapter 49 suggests that Yhwh has brought them from far off on the shoulders of kings.

Each of these extended repetitions constitutes a significant thematic thrust in the sequence as a whole. The readers' sense that a passage has been read before, created by the close resemblances of these passages to one another highlights their importance and secures their prominence in the overall impact of the sequence. In particular, the pair of long and neatly paired mother Zion passages, produce a strong thematic thrust through

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"Glorious Zion, Our Mother: Readings in Isaiah (conspectus or abridged)" *EuroJTh* 11 (2002): 7; and Pothin Wete, "Israel's Heritage of Hope: Biblical Reflection on Isaiah 54:1-17" *Pacific Journal of Theology* 5 (1991): 51.

their placement in relative proximity to one another, their clear resonance and overlap, and their location near the end of the sequence.[111]

4.2. Dominance of the Divine Voice

Finally, the primary significant source of centripetal force in Second Isaiah is the overwhelming presence of the same speaking voice. Biddle's comment about Jeremiah that, "the regularity with which the text asserts that YHWH speaks these units represents an intentional literary strategy" just as easily applies to Second Isaiah.[112] While Second Isaiah incorporates several voices, it is dominated throughout by the voice of the deity.[113] This high-level of consistent voicing creates the sense that the various poems of the sequence are part of an organic whole, controlled by the same literary persona.[114] Thus, the dominance of a single voice constitutes the most significant centripetal force across the sequence as a whole.

The sheer number of verses attributed to the divine voice, or apparently spoken by it, initially signals the dominance of the divine voice in Second Isaiah. While precise reckoning is virtually impossible, due to the repeated blending of the voices of Yhwh and

[111] While the overwhelming impression created by the pair of mother Zion passages is one of consonance and repetition, the passages are not identical and there are some minor elements of dissonance between them. Detailed exegetical discussion of each passage in its individuality is undertaken in ch. 5.

[112] Biddle, *Polyphony and Symphony*, 121.

[113] Quinn-Miscall, *Reading Isaiah*, 121. Quinn-Miscall observes that "God and the prophet are the most frequent speakers in the book," and further notes the difficulty in distinguishing the divine and prophetic voices in the book (ibid., 119).

[114] In literary terms, "p[ersona] is sometimes used to refer to a speaker who, though obviously not the poet, is a spokesman for the poet. The poet either creates a fictional character … or, more commonly, selects a historical or mythological figure … and presents the experiences and utterances of this person in such a manner that the reader is led to assume a high degree of identification between that person's attitudes and those of the poet." Fabian Gudas, "Persona" in *NPEPP*, 901. Mary Oliver, *A Poetry Handbook* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 76, defines the term similarly. The dominance of a central voice is a trait shared by other biblical poems. Grossberg notes that this characteristic "tightens the text of Psalms and much of Lamentations," but is missing from the much more dialogic Song of Songs (Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 59). Similarly, Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 49, highlights the centrality of the figure of Zion as a unifying feature of Lamentations 1.

the prophetic poet or servant, a modest reckoning of the verses attributable to the deity in Second Isaiah numbers 189, encompassing 60% of the whole.[115] In addition to the frequent recurrence of the messenger formula כה אמר יהוה, followed by the "message" spoken in the divine voice (42:5; 43:1, 14, 16; 44:2, 6, 24; 45:1, 11, 14, 18; 48:17; 49:7, 22, 25; 50:1; 51:22; 52:3), the deity also repeatedly insists, אני יהוה "I am Yhwh" (41:4, 13, 17; 42:6, 8; 43:3, 11, 15; 44:24; 45:3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 19; 48:17; 49:23, 26; 51:15). The phrase turns the deity's self reference into a veritable refrain that adamantly identifies the speaking voice as Yhwh's.[116] But this refrain is not simply a recurrent identification of the speaker as Walther Zimmerli has shown.

Zimmerli goes beyond recognizing the self-referential character of this claim "I am Yhwh" arguing that the use of this phrase in the prophets originated in a liturgical form "whose real intention is no longer merely to announce an event, but rather to refer *through* this announcement to Yahweh's historical self-manifestation in his action, a manifestation human beings are to recognize and acknowledge."[117] Zimmerli refers to the phrase "I am Yhwh" as a "proof-saying" that offers itself as evidence of the historical

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[115] Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of the verses attributed to various voices, percentages of the whole, and a graph of the relative representations of Second Isaiah's voices. About the difficulty of distinguishing the poet's voice from that of the deity in Second Isaiah, see the section that focuses upon the delineation of units earlier in this ch. An example of the broader discussion of this phenomenon may be seen in the work of Quinn-Miscall, *Reading Isaiah*, 126, who notes "the Lord's and the prophet's declarations blend into each other and … it is often difficult, if not impossible, to say exactly where each begins or ends."

[116] Phillips, *Self-Predication Formula*, ii, notes that this formula occurs 38 times in Second Isaiah and that this number constitutes "by far the largest number of times that [it] … occurs in any one book of the Old Testament." Also relevant is Morgan L. Phillips, "Divine Self-Predication in Deutero-Isaiah," *Biblical Research* 16 (1971): 32-51. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 52, notes the recurrence of the "I am Yhwh" formula as a point of connection between Second Isaiah and Deuteronomy. Likewise, Philip B. Harner, *Grace and Law in Second Isaiah: 'I am the Lord'* (Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 2; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 67, calls the recurrence of statements beginning "I am," "one of the most distinctive features" of Second Isaiah.

[117] Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh* (trans., Douglas W. Stott; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 103.

truth of the prophetic and liturgical claims.[118] These claims appear to be that the divine speaker is present in the moment of speaking. As Phillips notes, this statement "is the presence of the god who affirms his help in crisis and in whose name the relationship is grounded."[119]

The divine voice also repeatedly engages in other modes of self-description including the self-referential אני הוא "I am He" (41:4; 43:13, 25; 48:12; 51:12; 52:6), "I am the first and the last," (41:4, 44:6; 48:12),[120] and a variety of extended participial self descriptions.[121] Frequently, participial self-descriptions extol Yhwh for creative and cosmic activities. An extended example of this mode of divine discourse in Second Isaiah occurs at 44:24b-28: [122]

[24b] "I am Yhwh, maker of all
the one who stretched out the heavens by myself
the one who spread the earth, who was with me?
[25] Frustrator of signs of liars,
and fools he makes of diviners,
the one who turns wise ones around,
and their knowledge he makes a mockery.
[26] The one who establishes the word of his servant
and the advice of his messengers he makes complete
The one saying to Jerusalem, "She will be inhabited"
and to the cities of Judah "you will be built."

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[118] Ibid., 105.

[119] Phillips, *Self-Predication Formula*, 197. Phillips critiques Zimmerli, but his analysis bears significant similarities with this earlier work. Like Zimmerli, Phillips proposes that the formula emerges from a specific S*itz im Leben*. In Phillip's case, the setting is a combination of the *rîb* and covenant renewal ceremony.

[120] This form of the self attribution takes a variety of forms in Second Isaiah. Always the words אני, ראשון, and אחרון appear together though they are at times interrupted by modifiers.

[121] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:391, observes Second Isaiah's tendency to employ "extended participial phrases," and comments that "[t]hese contexts are especially important because they contain the great titles and names associated with God. Indeed, it is not too much to say that they contain the very essence and substance of the prophet's view of God." Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 14, likewise notes the frequent use of extensions of the self-predication formula to offer "praise of God … in the guise of self-predications." Ludwig, "Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth," 346, refers to "parallel formulae with hymnic participles" as "characteristic."

[122] Other instances of participial self-description spoken in the divine voice in Second Isaiah include: 41:13-14; 43:3, 14, 25; 45:7, 19; 48:17; 49:26; and 51:12-15.

and to the villages, "I will establish them."
27 The one saying to the ocean deep, "be desolate."
and to the depths "I will dry your rivers."
28 The one saying to Cyrus, "my shepherd."
and "all my plans he will complete."
to say to Jerusalem "be built."[123]
and to the temple "be founded."

All of these self-references, among other things, serve to highlight Second Isaiah's insistence on Yhwh as its primary speaker and help to produce cohesion by binding the work as a whole as primarily the expression of a single poetic voice.

While several other voices speak in Second Isaiah, the overwhelming sense is that the divine voice speaks the majority of the sequence and gives the sequence its shape. The voices of both the prophetic poet and the servant direct readerly attention back to the divine voice in various ways. The prophetic poet points the reader towards the divine speaker by both introducing direct divine speech and extolling Yhwh's virtues. The phrases "says your God" (40:1), "says the Holy One" (40:25), "says Yhwh" (41:21), and "says the king of Jacob" (41:21), typify the speeches in Second Isaiah that can be certainly attributed to the poet's voice. On other occasions the poetic voice mimics the deity's tendency to link together participial chains of attributes to modify and extol the divine voice (e.g., 42:5) or exhorts the audience to praise Yhwh (e.g., 44:23; 49:13). In each of these modes the prophetic poet points the reader's attention away from itself towards the speaking deity thus highlighting and reinforcing the dominance of the divine speaking voice in Second Isaiah. In a different way, the servant's speech orients the reader towards the divine voice by topicalizing the virtue of listening to the divine voice (e.g., 49:1, 3, 6). Through this attention to the issue of listening to Yhwh's speaking

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[123] The verbal form shifts in v. 28b from participial forms to infinitives of purpose. It is unclear, likely intentionally so, whether the actor behind the infinitive "to say" is to be understood as Cyrus or Yhwh.

voice, the servant's self-referential speech, rather than detracting from the dominant divine voice, actually reinforces it. The few and scattered verses spoken by other figures (Babylon, Zion, the idol makers) are subsumed within the speech of the deity as embedded quotations. Their speech is reported by the divine voice itself and their presence in the poetry is dependent upon the divine speaker. Thus, the way in which these other voices are present in Second Isaiah reinforces the sense that Yhwh's voice gives the sequence its dominant persona.[124]

5. Second Isaiah's Balance Point and the Significance of the Divine Speaking Voice

Second Isaiah reaches a point of equilibrium that is neither extremely centrifugal nor neatly centripetal. Rather, Second Isaiah preserves the sense of fragmentation and disorientation produced by its centrifugal forces. At the same time, however, Second Isaiah manages to hold together as a work by virtue of its centripetal forces. Second Isaiah maintains a delicate balance between the forces of unity and disjunction. Since the aim of this study is an examination of the meaning of the whole, the question of Second Isaiah's central centripetal forces is of prime importance. The fragmentary impulses should not be minimized and, as we have seen, they contribute to Second Isaiah's means of interacting with its central driving question. However, the forces that bind the work together as a whole are those to which the remainder of the study will primarily orient itself in its attempt to describe the aims of the sequence as a whole.[125]

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[124] See Appendix 2 for a full delineation of the various speaking voices of Second Isaiah.

[125] It is not the case that Second Isaiah's centripetal impulses are so overwhelmingly dominant as to make less wholistic readings any less viable. Rather, I am making a readerly decision to focus on the forces that contribute to Second Isaiah's overarching cohesion in light of this study's stated interest in interpreting the message of Second Isaiah as a whole (see further ch. 1). This is, of course, but one way to proceed. A reading that attends primarily to Second Isaiah's fragmentary impulses would be an equally

The dominance of the divine voice is the primary means by which Second Isaiah overcomes its fragmentary drives to the point that one may speak about a whole sequence. While the mirrored passages also contribute to the coherence of the whole, it is noteworthy that these passages are also spoken in the dominant voice and thus participate in the unifying presence of the primary speaker.

The impact of this dominance of the divine voice is not merely structurally centripetal but thematically meaningful. As Grossberg notes about centripetal forces more generally, "when the configuration reflects the theme and content, a potent centripetality is apparent."[126] As chapter three argued, the perceived absence and silence of Yhwh in the face of the exile seems to be a significant aspect of the situation to which Second Isaiah responds. Second Isaiah overwhelmingly responds that the deity is present. The structural use of the dominant divine voice as the sequence's most potent and consistent centripetal force emphatically supports this response. Thus, the dominance of the divine voice structurally underpins the thematic claim of the sequence that the deity is present, and that Yhwh therefore has not forgotten, and will not ultimately reject Israel.

6. Cohesion in Prior Scholarship

The understandable readerly desire for cohesion and a unified thrust has produced a number of interpretations of Second Isaiah's overall aim or meaning.[127] Many of these approaches make helpful observations and are based on thematic threads that are present

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appropriate approach. However, my focus on the centripetal forces in Second Isaiah does not imply that the reading produced will be entirely cohesive. As ch. 5 will demonstrate, Second Isaiah's centrifugal forces continue to make their presence felt even in the discussion of its centripetal elements.

[126] Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal*, 9.

[127] See ch. 1 pp. 3-24 for a survey of the recent history of scholarship on this question.

in Second Isaiah. Frequently however, they also resort to narrativizing or polemicizing strategies in order to knit cohesion where dissonance exists, thereby reducing Second Isaiah's potential levels of meaning by failing to attend to many of its themes and tonalities. As I have already had occasion to point out, Brueggemann and Clifford both argue in varying ways that the aim of Second Isaiah is to urge homecoming, and each engages in narrativizing that theme in order to construct coherence around it. While journey and return motifs are present in Second Isaiah, the present chapter has claimed that there is both unity and tension within the series of poems; hence, the extent to which homecoming may (or should) be read as a dominant theme that controls the entire composition should be questioned.[128]

In a similarly harmonizing vein, Claus Westermann insists that "the unique feature of the prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah is this, the hour summoned him to the task of proclaiming salvation, and nothing but salvation, to his people."[129] "Proclaiming salvation" is sufficiently broad to encompass any number of particulars and has the virtue of being rooted in the language of Second Isaiah itself. However, in light of the foregoing discussion of Second Isaiah's poetic fragmentation via dissonant motifs, Westermann's claim that Second Isaiah preaches "nothing but salvation" is suspect. Though Second Isaiah certainly has a strong hopeful tonality and exudes joy with great frequency, there is a smattering of more ominous passages that Westermann's claim

[128] See the more thorough rebuttal of the details of both Clifford's position (ch. 1, pp. 10-23) and Brueggmann's position (ch. 3, pp. 103-6).

[129] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 9.

ignores and that in turn undercut his thesis.[130] A primary example of a such a passage is 42:21-25:

[21] Yhwh delighted on account of his righteousness,
he magnified the torah and he glorified it.
[22] But this is a people plundered and pillaged.
He imprisons all of them in pits,
and in prison houses they hide.
They have become plunder, there is no deliverer,
pillaged loot, and there is no one saying "Return!"
[23] Who of you heard this?
He (that one) will pay attention and will hear the things to come.
[24] Who made Jacob pillaged loot and Israel plunder?
Was it not Yhwh whom we sinned against?
and (they were) not willing to walk in his way,
and did not hear his torah?
[25] And upon him (Jacob) he (Yhwh) poured out the rage of his nose,
and mighty was the battle.
And it blazed upon him (Jacob) all around and he did not know,
and it burned him and he did not put it to heart.

Additional ominous and indicting passages occur in 43:22-28 and 48:1-11. While the positive, salvation-oriented elements of Second Isaiah are certainly more frequent, they by no means eliminate the negative tonality of such attributions as "worm Jacob" (41:14), blind and deaf (42:18-20), "backsliders" who "will surely be ashamed" (42:17), and "transgressors from the womb" (48:8).[131] Indeed, the contrast between Second Isaiah's comforting and indicting elements makes the presence of each more apparent through contrast.

Westermann anticipates this objection. He argues, "the disputations with Israel and the trial speeches against her are also, if less directly, words of salvation, for they

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[130] Ibid., 12, notes that "the second leading characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah's gospel … [is] joy," which he sees as intimately connected to its overriding concern with proclaiming salvation.

[131] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 201, notes that "Israel as a worm and maggot is not more complimentary than the nations as grasshoppers (40:22) – in fact less so …. The combination of the two words suggests death and decay." Further examination of the tonality of various passages within Second Isaiah is undertaken in ch. 5. The attribution "transgressors from the womb" is examined in that context.

join issue with the mental attitude of weariness or despair that set itself against the message of salvation."[132] Certainly the indictments of Israel do in some sense argue for acceptance of the promise of comfort, as chapter three argued. Yet, as chapter five will show, the indictments also betray a restiveness in the divine voice over Israel's apparent unwillingness to accept this proclamation. It is not necessary to make the poems agree, as Westermann's claim about the whole message of Second Isaiah being salvation requires. Rather, as we have seen, the sequence flaunts its own unwillingness to be entirely consistent. This inconsistency is part and parcel of the dissonance and centrifugality that marks lyric poems and lyric sequences.

One important example of Second Isaiah's refusal to be consistent is embedded within the very thematic thread Westermann highlights as the theme of the whole. Indeed, the prominence of the comfort motif would seem to be an argument in favor of Westermann's reading of Second Isaiah as oriented towards salvation. However, as this study has repeatedly noted, the very voice that calls for this comfort also speaks indictment and makes threats of violence. Westermann is correct in highlighting the centrality of this thematic thread. However, in light of the dissonant tonalities surrounding this motif within Second Isaiah, the comfort motif should be seen as producing a significant tension of the sequence rather than straightforward cohesion.

An additional example of the failure of Westermann's schema to account for the entirety of Second Isaiah appears in his treatment of the servant passages (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). These units have caused much debate in the history of scholarship because of their multiple depictions of the servant, and the difficulty they pose for any

[132] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 10.

attempt to produce a unified picture of the servant on their basis.[133] In addition, they are frequently considered alien to the thought and language of Second Isaiah.[134] Westermann states his agreement with Duhm's excision of these passages from the whole commenting, "all attempts to account for them by reference to their immediate context fail; Duhm's view is therefore still the most acceptable."[135] However, as the preceding examination has revealed, the passages regarding the servant are not the only portions of Second Isaiah that have a certain discontinuity about them. Rather, disunity is a trait that illustrates the (somewhat ironical) congruence of these passages with Second Isaiah taken as a whole. Additionally, the servant texts may be considered part of the lyric sequence as a whole in light of their participation in several of the thematic threads of the sequence. These passages, though perhaps less tightly woven than others with these thematic threads, still exhibit prominent recurrences of some of Second Isaiah's most dominant themes. References to knowledge, for example, are particularly dominant in the servant texts (see 50:4, 52:15: 53:3, 9, 11; cf. 40:14, 21, 28; 41:20, 22-23, 28; 42:16, 25; 43:10, 19; 44:8-9, 18-20, 25-26; 45:3-6, 21; 47:8-12; 48:4-8, 18; 49:23; 51:7; 54:13; 55:4), as are references to the islands and the ends of the earth (see 42:4; 49:1, 6; cf.

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[133] As Muilenburg, *IB* 5:406, notes, "a problem is raised that has exercised the minds of scholars perhaps more than any other single Old Testament question …. in one series of passages the servant is clearly identified with Israel … in a second series … there is only a single reference to Israel (49:3)," the depiction being of an individual figure. Wilshire, "Servant-City," 356, notes that "an ever-growing number of scholars … declare that the problem is insoluble." Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 407, refers to the "identity of the 'Servant of Yahweh' [as] … the most ancient and controversial problem in the interpretation of Deutero-Isaiah." Albertz's redaction-critical solution is to attribute the collective and individual presentations of the servant to different redactional layers. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 78, likewise makes reference to the "complex" "editorial history" of Second Isaiah in his discussion of the problem of the servant.

[134] Duhm's argument for deletion depends in part upon this claim. He notes that the style and calm language of the songs are among the distinguishing characteristics of this group of texts. D. Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), 284. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 77, writes of Duhm's stylistic assessment, "it would be safe to say that none of these conclusions would pass unchallenged today."

[135] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 20.

40:15, 22, 28; 41:1, 2, 5, 9, 25; 42:10, 12, 15; 43:5-6; 45:6, 22; 46:11; 48:20; 51:5). Isa 49:1-6 is especially closely knit with several other poems through its use of the islands trope as well as womb/fertility imagery (see 49:1, 5; cf. 41:8; 42:14; 43:5-6, 27; 44:2-4, 24; 45:10-11, 25; 46:3; 47:8-9; 48:8, 19; 49:15, 17, 20-23; 50:1; 51:2, 12, 18; 52:14, 53:10; 54:1-4, 13), and references to memory/the former things (see 49:1; cf. 41:4, 22; 42:9; 43:9, 18, 25-26; 44:21-22; 46:8-9; 47:7; 48:1, 3; 49:14-15; 51:13; 54:4). Likewise, 50:4-11 participates in the garment motif that clusters in the poems that surround it (see 50:9; cf. 49:18; 50:3; 51:6, 8, 9; 52:1). In sum, then, in these ways and by these means, these poems show themselves to actually be typical of Second Isaian levels of consistency as well as part of the interwoven thematic threads of the sequence. Therefore, the examination of Second Isaiah's dissonances and resonances helps to advance an argument for the integral position of the servant songs in the sequence as a whole. It is certainly harder to excise them, in a lyric perspective, than in other approaches.

Finally, Westermann argues that the Cyrus passage (44:24-45:7) is the pivot of Second Isaiah. He writes, "the oracle concerning Cyrus, which is the pivot on which all that is said in the book turns, is integrally related to the message of salvation."[136] However, this claim of a pivotal role for the Cyrus passage finds no immediate support in Westermann's own argument; he merely presents the claim as self-evident. That Cyrus plays such a large role has certainly been argued by many, but it is by no means an obvious point.[137] In his detailed examination of the Cyrus passage in his commentary,

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[136] Ibid., 10.

[137] In addition to Westermann, one might list Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 92, and Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 46-47. Blenkinsopp notes that "the historic mission of Cyrus is the theme in the central panel of Isa 40-48 (44:24-45:17), in which his name is used twice …. He is also the focus of attention elsewhere

Westermann rests his claim for the passage's pivotal role largely on its location in the mid-point of Deutero-Isaiah's oracles, which he delimits to 41-51.[138] Leaving aside the apparent arbitrariness of such a delimitation, the claim that a passage should be taken as pivotal primarily (or exclusively) because of its location at the center of the sequence demands further evidence – for example, that a consistent shift in theme accompanies the movement from the passages that precede to those that follow.[139] This is, in fact, not the case. As we have seen, Second Isaiah's thematic unity is not of the sort that allows for the articulation of a linear progression or a consistent shift that revolves around a central pivot.[140] Rather, as Goldingay and Payne comment, "there is a movement through the chapters, though it has a spiral as much as a linear character. It might be more appropriately compared with a symphony or a suite than with a piece of Aristotelian rhetoric."[141] Their comparison to a symphony is particularly appropriate in light of the tight association between lyric and music. I would argue that what they are observing is Second Isaiah's lyric flow. Westermann's claim for the primacy of Cyrus seems built upon two factors: (1) the assumption of the importance of the historical context in governing the meaning of the whole, and (2) the attention that the infrequent Cyrus references draw to themselves by their shocking historical specificity. A historical specificity that, as I have noted, is out of sync with the remainder of Second Isaiah.[142]

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even when his name does not appear" (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 92). On this issue see further n. 20 earlier in this ch. Among those who discount the importance of Cyrus one might list Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, 38-43, who considers the Cyrus references to be glosses.

[138] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 154.

[139] Westermann's delineation of Second Isaiah as chs. 41-51 is in opposition to the relative scholarly consensus that chs. 40-55 are a unity (see ch. 1, n. 9) and that they divide into two main sub-units (40-48, 49-55) (see ch. 3, n. 41).

[140] Much more will be said about the general flow of Second Isaiah in ch. 5 which examines Second Isaiah's flow of "lyric tonalities."

[141] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:19.

[142] See the discussion of the historical specificity of Cyrus as a centrifugal trait above.

That said, Westermann has allowed a centrifugal element – one that draws attention to a part rather than the whole – to govern his understanding of the meaning of the entirety of Second Isaiah.

In sum, Westermann's claim that Second Isaiah's proclaims "salvation and nothing but salvation" is too simple because it neglects Second Isaiah's more negative elements, fails to account for the whole of Second Isaiah, and overlooks the complexity of Second Isaiah's imagery especially regarding the question of Zion's comfort.[143] As this study has repeatedly emphasized, Second Isaiah is not unified by such a straightforward cohesiveness. Rather, its proclamation of salvation, like its unity more generally is more conflicted and complex than Westermann's statement would allow. The lyric approach endorsed by the present study offers a way of reading Second Isaiah that allows for these inconsistencies through the recognition of the importance of centrifugal features.

7. Voice as "Unstable" Unity

As this chapter has argued, Second Isaiah contains features that highlight both the parts and the whole. Hence, legitimate interpretation may and should focus on both the parts and the ways in which they interact to form an organic whole. However, as the discussion of Westermann's interpretation has illustrated, readers must not confuse attention to those features that fragment the poetry with interpretation of the sequence as a whole. Rather, the disjunctive features of the sequence highlight and make possible interpretations of individual units on their own account. On the other hand, the

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[143] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 9.

interpretation of the sequence as a whole must pay primary attention to those features through which the sequence attempts to overcome the fragmentary drives of lyric structure and come to its own form of cohesion. Thus, any attempt to interpret the whole of Second Isaiah ought to pay primary attention to the particular means by which Second Isaiah expresses itself as a whole. Most notable here are the dominance of the divine voice, and several forms of recurrence including extended mirrored passages.

As I have argued, the dominance of the divine voice should be considered the primary source of the overarching unity of Second Isaiah for two primary reasons. First, the central role of voicing in lyric understood as utterance highlights the importance of the poetry's central voice.[144] Second, there is a close correspondence between the dominance of the divine voice as a structural phenomenon and the thematic interests of Second Isaiah in the question of the divine presence. This close relationship between the centripetal force of the unified voice and the thematic interest in divine presence strengthens the structural significance of the divine voice. However, the voice's utterances depict a complicated persona. As this study has already had numerous occasions to note, the divine voice in Second Isaiah contradicts itself, gives conflicting commands, and engages in paradoxical speech. Lyric's typical episodicity may contribute to this complex depiction of the divine speaker. The moment by moment engagement with the divine voice that this poetry offers highlights the characteristics of the speaking voice in each of those moments illustrated by the poetry. The speech of one moment may indeed stand is significant tension with the speech of another. Contradictions such as these may be read suspiciously, resulting in a verdict of divergent

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[144] See ch. 2, pp. 83-85 for a discussion of theoretical approaches to the centrality of conceptions of voice for interpreting lyric poetry.

authorship and an excision of glosses. Alternatively, such contradictions may be read generously in light of the assumption that poetic voices may (and often *must*) embrace divergent perspectives without nullifying the strength of their character and may (and often *must*), in fact, recognize and express paradox.[145] This study takes the latter approach. Indeed, the latter approach is in harmony with this study's lyric approach.

It is natural, on one level, to long for cohesion and coherence.[146] Yet Second Isaiah, with its play of dissonance and consonance, and its centrifugality and centripetality will not allow us to take it as a whole on any terms other than its own. As primarily the utterance of the divine voice, it appropriately insists, with Whitman, "I am large, I contain multitudes." It is to the expression of that divine voice, its flow of lyric tonalities, and the complexities of the persona to which the voice testifies that the next chapter turns.

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[145] Christopher Seitz, *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 126. In our examination of the ethos of the divine voice, we are "*under the obligation of seeking the same comprehensive and synthetic sense of the whole that one seeks when encountering, over time, any individual person*. One may hear many different things, but if understanding is desired and the person speaking is trustworthy, insuring the trustworthiness and coherence of what is communicated, one will seek to make connections and efforts at synthesis rather than render a preemptive judgment of self-contradiction or schizophrenia" (emphasis original). While Seitz is describing the sort of unity that his canonical approach searches for in light of traditional assertions of unity, in this case of the Pentateuchal literature, his insights about the nature of coherence one should expect from a single voice are instructive. Carl Dennis, *Poetry as Persuasion* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001) highlights the importance of the character of the central voice for the overall persuasiveness of a poem. His expectation of "inclusiveness" (ibid., 17), while drawn from modern Western cultural assumptions, amply illustrates that a speaker may both represent varying perspectives and, at the same time, present a compelling unity of persona.

[146] This readerly drive is aptly described by J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary*, (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 42, in her work on the Song of Songs. See ch. 1, n. 4. Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 37, also refers the reader's role in plot construction calling plot "an activity, a structuring operation elicited in the reader."

Chapter Five

Tonal Tension and Resolution in the Divine Speaking Voice

"[P]oetry, in itself and by itself, sketches a 'tensional' conception of truth for thought."[1]

As chapter four argued, the dominance of the divine voice is one of the strongest contributors to the sense that Second Isaiah is a unified work despite its numerous centrifugal impulses. Thus, attention to the nature of this voice's utterance should produce helpful results for the project of determining what unified message Second Isaiah's various poems express as a whole. However, as was the case with the several cohesive forces examined in chapter four, the divine voice in Second Isaiah does not speak with unmodulated consistency. Rather, its vacillations, contradictions, and shifts of tonality are vital to the way Yhwh's voice is present in Second Isaiah. These shifts must be accounted for in any attempt to articulate a wholistic meaning.

In this chapter I will examine the way in which the divine voice is present in Second Isaiah and discuss the contributions of the conflicts in the speaking presence of the divine voice for the message of Second Isaiah. I will argue that Second Isaiah presents the poetic verbalization of an internal conflict within the persona of Yhwh – a conflict between burning anger presented as justified that leads to threats of judgment and gentle wooing and promises of comfort that create expectations of reunion and blessing. As chapter three argued, this internal vacillation likely represents the divine voice's response to the implied audience's resistance to the proclamation of coming comfort. The central and intractable problem taken up by the divine voice is thus the open question

[1] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (trans. Robert Czerny; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 313.

of whether or not reconciliation will be accomplished, whether the audience will accept the offer of comfort, and whether or not Yhwh will withdraw the offer in exasperation. This chapter will claim that this driving question plays itself out in the alternation between the main tonalities of the divine voice (comfort and indignation), and eventually resolves in the climax of the comfort tonality (Isa 54:1-17).[2] Thus, despite Second Isaiah's well known, and largely deserved, reputation as the "book of comfort," its comforting resolution is hard-fought. The wrestling and delay of resolution that characterize Yhwh's tonality in Second Isaiah are an indication both of the difficulty of reconciliation between deity and people and the likely reluctance of the implied audience to accept proclaimed comfort.[3] Through the alternation between two diametrically opposed attitudes of the divine speaker towards the audience, Second Isaiah opens up two divergent imaginative worlds for its audience.[4] They are offered the opportunity to imagine both the results of divine wrath and the results of divine compassion. The alternation between these two imaginative worlds makes the world of divine compassion more appealing through contrast and progressively wears down any potential audience incredulity at or resistance to the promise of divine-human reconciliation. Attention to the tonalities of the divine speaking voice is an element of the lyric approach outlined in chapter two. The application of this approach proves to offer a new perspective on Second Isaiah's overarching meaningful arrangement.

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[2] As I will argue below, this poem serves as the "climax" of Second Isaiah's poetic structure. In this poem the tensions of the sequence reach both their tipping point and their resolution. As I pointed out in the discussion of 55:1-13 in ch. 4, Second Isaiah's final poem thwarts the forces of closure. Therefore, it is not altogether surprising that this final poem does not play a final climactic role and that the sequence's climax occurs in its penultimate poem.

[3] See ch. 3, n. 84 on Second Isaiah as the "Book of Consolation."

[4] Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 92, supplies this language claiming that "meaning is the projection of a possible and inhabitable world."

1. Determining the Tonalities of the Divine Voice in Second Isaiah

In chapter two I indicated that for the purposes of this study, "tone" or "tonality" would be understood as a reflection of the attitude of a poem's speaker towards the subject or audience of the poem. That chapter also highlighted the importance of these attitudes for the characterization of a poem's speaker and the interpretation of the meaning of the work.[5] In that context I pointed to two primary factors that literary critics have employed as pointers towards tonality. These are: (1) the use of emotion terminology,[6] and (2) attention to the shades of meaning that words and phrases acquire from their contexts, both immediate literary and cultural.[7] In the paragraphs that follow, I will make some general statements characterizing each of the tonalities of the divine voice in Second Isaiah that I have identified, and will delineate the various indicators of the presence of each of these tonalities using the factors of emotional terminology, immediate context, and cultural context to support the inclusion of each of these features as tonal indicators.[8]

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[5] See ch. 2, pp. 83-94.

[6] In ch. 2 I defined "emotion terms" as those words that are taken lexically to refer to or describe human emotions and other words closely associated with them. See further ch. 2.

[7] Reuben Arthur Brower, *The Fields of Light: An Experiment in Critical Reading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 23, has articulated the relevant range of contextual factors in this way: "we can point out an allusion or show how a phrase in the immediate context recalls some larger context and with it certain conventions of speech; we can quote comparable expressions from other pieces of literature or from any realm of discourse whatsoever."

[8] In the consideration of context I will employ references to the cumulative case produced by the presence in close proximity of several features that seem throughout Second Isaiah to pair up with emotional terminology. I will also consider the use of such terms in the Hebrew Bible as a whole as evidence of the cultural-level of context for the shades of emotion in these terms. Particularly significant in this regard will be the use of the insights of form-criticism. If particular words or phrases carry associations with such forms as prophetic indictments or oracles of salvation, they should be considered indicators of tonality based upon the associations they have with these highly emotionally charged forms. Indictment oracles may be understood as emotionally charged through their close association with references to emotional terminology such as "anger," "fear" and the like. Similarly, the exhortation "fear not" which opens the salvation oracle form also casts the form within the realm of associations with varieties of human emotion.

1.1. Major Stream 1: Compassionate Comfort[9]

From its opening lines through its conclusion, Second Isaiah frequently presents Yhwh speaking as a "lover," "husband," and friend.[10] In this tonality Yhwh speaks gently and frequently employs the metaphor of marriage, pastoral imagery, words of assurance, exhortations not to fear, promises of provision, and passionate appeals. This tonality occurs throughout the sequence of poems forming it into a tonal stream that both opens and closes the work. This tonality appears at both 40:1-2 and 54:1-17.[11]

1.1.1. Indicators of the Presence of the Comfort Tonality

The following elements will be considered indicators of a comforting tonality:

1. "Fear Not" – The exhortation "fear not" (אל־תירא) occurs with great frequency in Second Isaiah.[12] It carries cultural level associations with a social and cultic context

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[9] I use the term "tonal stream" to refer to tonalities that occur repeatedly in Second Isaiah and thus "flow" through the work as a whole. Certainly, each poem that may be classified as participating in the tonality has its own particular shades that are distinctive and merit individual attention. However, the presence of repeated occurrences of poems within a general emotional category – such as rage, or comfort – justifies discussion of this larger "stream" of tonality.

[10] I have identified the following passages as participating in this tonal stream: 40:1-2, 11, 29-31; 41:8-20; 43:1-9, 16-21; 44:1-5, 21-22; 48:18-19; 49:8-12, 14-23; 51:1-8; 54:1-17; 55:12-13. See the discussion of elements of the argument for inclusion below as well as Appendix 3 which charts the presence of tonal indicators in these passages.

[11] James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction, and Exegesis" in *Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, and Jeremiah* (*IB*; Ed. George Arthur Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5:423, says of the opening poem, "[s]tyle and mood conform to contents," and elsewhere notes this poem's "emphasis upon comfort" (ibid., 424). Regarding the opening pair of imperatives John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; 2 vols.; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 1:63, write "these are … words that effectively bring the people out of their distress …. The verb [נחם] thus indissolubly interweaves the twin factors of decision/effect and emotion/affect." On the gentleness of tone in Isa 54:1-17 see Henri Blocher, "Glorious Zion, Our Mother: Readings in Isaiah (Conspectus, or Abridged)" in *EuroJTh* 11 (2002): 7. Further discussion of the particularities of the tonality of each of these passages is undertaken in the exegetical section below.

[12] The prevalence of this phrase in Second Isaiah has not gone unnoticed by scholars. In addition to discussions in the commentaries of Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (OTL; trans. by David M.G. Stalker; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 11; Muilenburg, *IB* 5:389; and Joachim Begrich, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *ZAW* 52 (1934): 81-92; Joachim Begrich (*Studien zu Deuterojesaja* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963) one might also point to specialized studies of the form such as Philip B. Harner, "The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah," *JBL* 88 (1969):418-434; idem, *Grace and Law in Second Isaiah:*

that lend the phrase decisively comforting tonal implications. As Westermann has amply demonstrated, Second Isaiah's use of this phrase is closely linked with the cultic salvation oracle.[13] Joachim Begrich argued that the salvation oracle was a priestly response to a complaint and was formally introduced by the phrase "do not fear."[14] The salvation oracle offers "assurance of divine protection and care, health, welfare, victory over enemies."[15] Thus the use of this phrase carries strong associations with this cultic and comforting setting and carries those elements of tonality from its larger cultural context into the Second Isaian passages in which it is present.[16]

2. Promises of Provision – The promise of provision is likewise an element that shares associations with the salvation oracle form, and thus carries connotations of comforting resolution of situations of distress.[17] In content as well, the promise of provision offers imagery of the alleviation of distress and thus carries implicit emotional freight.

'I Am the Lord,' (Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 2; Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988; and Edgar W. Conrad, "The 'Fear Not' Oracles in Second Isaiah," *VT* 34 (1984):129-152. John W. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms* (BZAW 352; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 44-45, also discusses Second Isaiah's use of this form and its comparability with Assyrian prophecy.

[13] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 11.

[14] Begrich, *Studien zu Deuterojesaja*, 15.

[15] Harner, "The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah," 418.

[16] I am in agreement with Muilenburg, *IB* 5:390, who recognizes elements of Begrich's salvation oracle form in Second Isaiah, but is not convinced that the Second Isaian passages are strict adherents to the form. He writes, "[i]n the great majority of instances the poet's style may have been influenced by this liturgical form …. But it is impossible to conceive all of these as separate literary units." In a similar vein, I see the use of the phrase as indicating an association of the poem in which it is embedded with the priestly salvation oracle. However, I do not expect that all such poems are salvation oracles. Yet, the association with the form has an impact upon the tonality of these poems through cultural allusion without any necessary implications that these Second Isaian passages originally had such a cultic setting. Conrad's argument that not all of the passages containing "fear not" follow the formula articulated by Westermann is helpful in this regard ("The 'Fear Not' Oracles in Second Isaiah," 129-152).

[17] Harner, "The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah," 149, discusses the form of the salvation oracle, seeking to augment Begrich's classic study with the use of extra-biblical parallels. Regarding the form of these other ancient Near Eastern salvation oracles he observes, "[i]n its essential structure the pattern consists of the following four elements: 1) the direct address to the recipient; 2) the reassurance, 'fear not'; 3) the divine self-predication, in which the goddess identifies herself to the recipient; and 4) the message of salvation, assuring the recipient of protection, welfare, victory. With minor exceptions, this pattern is typical of all five of the oracles under consideration."

3. Passionate Appeals with Vocative - As this study has repeatedly noted, the use of the vocative is highly characteristic of Second Isaiah's style.[18] Since the vocative sets the audience of the utterance explicitly onto the surface of the poetic discourse, this form highlights and emphasizes the tonality with which the speaker addresses that audience.[19] Since the vocative highlights the nature of the utterance as direct, even urgent address, its specific emotional freight is conditioned by its immediate context. Frequently in Second Isaiah, Yhwh employs the vocative to address Zion or Israel as friend (44:2), spouse (54:5), or some other relational and familiar designation typically employing the possessive suffix "your" (e.g., "your God," [40:1; 41:10, 13; 43:3; 48:17; 51:15, 20, 22; 52:7; 54:6; 55:5] "your redeemer," [41:14; 43:1, 14; 44:24; 48:17; 49:26; 54:5, 8]). In these cases, the vocative intensifies the comforting tonality of those passages. However, when it is used in other tonal contexts, the vocative may be employed to intensify those tonalities as well.

4. "Comfort" language – "Comfort" (נחם) is an emotion term and should be considered a reliable tonal indicator on this basis. Though the root has a wide range of potential meanings, each meaning has a strong emotional component, and this link to emotion seems to provide the link between these disparate meanings.[20] In many contexts the root means to "comfort" or "be comforted." This use of the root often occurs in

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[18] See ch. 1 and n. 75 in particular. Among commentators who note this trait one might list Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 12; and Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah* (Hermeneia; trans. Margaret Kohl; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 6.

[19] As Alexander Smith, "The Philosophy of Poetry," *Blackwoods* 38 (1835): 830, notes regarding another poetic text, "the interjection 'oh', and the repetition of 'my son' have the effect of making words which are otherwise but the intimation of a fact, the expression of an emotion of exceeding depth and interest."

[20] See BDB, 636-7; and *HALOT*, 2:688-9. Ch. 3 also includes a discussion the various meanings of נחם and the ambiguity these meanings produce within Second Isaiah's poetry within its examination of Isa 40:1-2. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:63, observe that in Isa 40:1נחם "indissolubly interweaves the twin factors of decision/effect and emotion/affect."

situations of bereavement or great distress and indicates an alleviation of such distress. For example, Jacob refuses to be comforted after the apparent death of Joseph (Gen 37:35); Judah comforts himself after the death of his wife (Gen 38:12); and Isaac is comforted after the death of his mother (Gen 24:67). In other cases the root can mean a change of mind, and often occurs with the sense of regret. In these cases also, the sense is of an alleviation of emotional distress caused by sorrow over consequences of impending or past action. The change of mind, or in some cases repentance, signaled by this verb thus also indicates a shift from emotional distress to emotional relief. Examples of this use of the verb may be seen in Yhwh's regret over creating humanity (Gen 6:6), and in Moses' plea that Yhwh relent from annihilating the Israelites (Exod 32:12). Finally, a more ominous shift of emotion, though no less concerned with alleviation and relief, is evident in those texts which use נחם to convey a sense of easing oneself by taking vengeance. This meaning occurs in Esau's response to Jacob's stealing of his blessing (Gen 27:42), and in Ezekiel where Yhwh expresses the intention to vent the divine fury against Jerusalem (Ezek 5:13). While these instances seem less about comfort, they nonetheless imply elements of emotional relief, though the contexts differ. In Second Isaiah emotional relief directed at the audience falls largely within the category of "comfort." Its occurrences should be considered indicators of the comforting tonality. The nuances of the verb and its immediate literary context will be attended to as necessary throughout this study.

5. Marriage/Familial Metaphor – The motifs of marriage, fertility, and domestic reunion in Second Isaiah gain their ability to indicate the comfort tonality largely through

the manner of their deployment in the immediate context of Second Isaiah itself.[21] These images are familiar ones within prophetic texts and they gain a strong connection to human emotion through their various deployments in this body of literature. This imagery appears in the prophets in passages ranging from stinging and violent indictments (e.g., Ezekiel 6), to expressions of passionate reconciliation (e.g., Hos 2:14-23).[22] Thus, the image has connections to human emotion, but the immediate context itself determines to what sort of human emotion the image alludes. In Second Isaiah, the deployment of the marriage metaphor is largely, though not exclusively, used in connection with depictions of restoration, provision, fertility, and abundance (e.g., 43:4-6; 44:3; 49:20-25; 54:1-13). The bride is described as decked in jewels (48:18), and the wife forgets her shame (54:4), and cries out with joy (54:1). These contextual clues, combined with the strong sense produced by its deployment elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible that the image carries some relationship to concepts of human emotion, make the use of marriage/fertility imagery an indicator of the comfort tonality in Second Isaiah.

1.2. Major Stream 2: Righteous Indignation with Accusation and Disputation

Though scholarship has repeatedly referred to Second Isaiah as the "book of comfort" and has highlighted its salvation-oriented aspects, the tonality that depicts Yhwh as exasperated, irritated, and justifiably angry is by no means a minor one within the work. This tonality forms a tonal stream that alternates with and competes for dominance with

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[21] Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 34, observes that, "[t]he sociomorpheme husband-wife is used by DtIsa for Yahweh's relationship to Zion/Jerusalem," and comments on the relationship between this metaphor and the realm of "everyday experience."

[22] I do not cite these examples to argue necessarily that Second Isaiah knew or alluded to these particular texts. Rather, they highlight the implicit emotional charge in the marriage metaphor and the various ways that Israelite prophets deployed the metaphor in emotionally charged contexts.

the compassionate stream throughout chapters 40-55.[23] The indictment tonality is frequently strident, and is characterized by legal language and imagery, rhetorical questions, assertions of the incomparability of Yhwh, accusations, invitations to argument, and military metaphors and images. While the comfort tonality resides entirely in speech directed to or concerning Jacob/Israel and Zion, the indignation tonality in contrast is directed at a diverse group that includes these same recipients of the comfort message but also includes Babylon, unnamed idol makers, and distant lands and geographic entities.[24] The tonality competes for dominance throughout the majority of the book with a pattern of virtual alternation with the comfort tonal stream in the work's early chapters. It begins to fade in prominence as the comfort stream climaxes leading up to chapter 54. The last major concentration of this tonality occurs at 51:12-16 and even there it is beginning to mingle with the comfort tonality. Poems spoken in this emotional

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[23] Form critics have noticed the presence of these passages and have referred to them as disputations, or trial speeches. Such discussion occurs in Antoon Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour: A Form Critical Study of the Main Genres in Is. XL-LV* (VTSup 24; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 176-294, and Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (BZAW; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 28-63. While the form critics are certainly correct that some of these passages utilize legal language, what interests me in this investigation is the emotional tonality produced by the presence of these passages and the ways in which it contrasts with and interacts with the comfort tonality, rather than its oral prehistory or the source of its imagery.

[24] Passages that direct the indictment tonality at recipients to be identified with the audience (Jacob/Israel and Zion) are the primary deployments of this tonality and include: 40:12-28; 42:14-20, 43:9-10, 22-28; 44:6-9; 44:24-25; 45:9-25; 46:5-13; 48:1-11; 49:14-15, 24; 50:1-2; 51:12-15. The indictment tonality is directed at Babylon only in one passage: 47:1-15 The idols or idol makers are recipients of the indictment in 41:21-26 and 44:18-20. Only in 41:1-7 is the indictment tonality directed at distant lands or geographic features. While the disparate audiences change the impact and meaning of the tonality, I do not consider these different tonal streams. Rather, the same attitude within the divine voice is directed at several different recipients. Certainly this shift of addressee changes the impact of the tonality for the historical audience, i.e. indictments addressed to Israel's enemies should be seen as working in Israel's favor. See further my discussion of the rhetorical impact of addresses to figures not to be identified with the audience in ch. 3. However, this distinction does not diminish the essential continuity in the characterization of the divine voice produce by this stream. In some ways, the continuity of attitude toward both Israelite and non-Israelite figures may help to further characterize the attitude being expressed towards Israel, i.e., it is the attitude that Yhwh takes toward idol makers and Babylon. See further ch. 3 on the close correlation between the addressee and Zion and their shared distinction from these addressees. See Appendix 3 for a visual representation of these occurrences.

stream include 44:22-28 and 48:1-11. The muting of this stream in and following 51:12-16 also bears examination.

1.2.1. Indicators of the Presence of the Indictment Tonality

The following elements will be considered indicators of an angry tonality:

1. Disputation Images – Just as the comfort tonality can be discerned by the presence of elements that call to mind the cultic salvation oracle, Second Isaiah's indictment tonality traffics in the language of prophetic invectives. Disputation terminology (e.g., lawsuit ריב [41:11, 21; 49:25; 50:8; 51:22], witness עד [43:9, 10, 12; 44:8, 9; 55:4]) is, as Westermann has shown, a strong element in the form of prophetic indictment.[25] The prophetic indictment is widely considered to evince an attitude of anger and judgment towards the audience on behalf of the speaker. Thus, legal language

[25] I use the term "disputational" in light of the cogent comments of Michael De Roche, "Yahweh's *RÎB* Against Israel: A Reassessment of the So-Called 'Prophetic Lawsuit' in the Preexilic Prophets," *JBL* 102 (1983): 564, who points out that the typical references scholars make to "legal" terminology constitutes problematic "loose application of modern technical terminology to the OT." De Roche characterizes these disputational situations as "designed to solve situations that disrupt the harmony of society," (ibid.). However, the connection that scholars have repeatedly drawn between these terms and situations of dispute are pertinent. Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. Hugh Clayton White; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 136, argues that "the origin of the prophetic judgment speech *generally* is to be sought in the regular legal procedure." Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Hermeneia; trans. Gary Stansell; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), xxiii, notes the correlation between the use of ריב and the legal context in his discussion of Hosea. Likewise Begrich, *Studien zu Deuterojesaja*, 37, refers to ריב as a technical legal term. James Limburg, "The Root ריב and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *JBL* 88 (1969): 291, makes the connection between this legal term and the prophetic lawsuit oracles even more explicit, calling ריב, "the thematic vocable running through" them. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:389, notes the frequency with which Second Isaiah employs the language of a "judicial proceeding (41:1-42:4; 43:8-13; 45:20-24; 48:15-16; 50:8-9)" and Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 16, notes the frequency of "scenes in a court of law" in Second Isaiah. It is also noteworthy that the calling of "witnesses" is part of the form of a prophetic indictment as G. Ernest Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (eds. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 47, argues.

that alludes to or carries cultural connotations of indictment oracles should be seen as an indicator of an attitude of anger, judgment, and indictment.[26]

2. Rhetorical Questions – Second Isaiah's frequent use of rhetorical questions has been pointed to as an element of the poet's style. As Muilenburg notes, "[t]here is an abundance of interrogative pronouns .... Often the questions appear in extended series."[27] As J. Kenneth Kuntz notes about rhetorical questions generally, they "are not stingy in telling us something about the speaker."[28] In the terms of this study, rhetorical questions are strong elements in the characterization of a speaker's tonality, or attitude toward the audience. In Second Isaiah, these questions often appear in collocation with elements of the indictment tonality. As Kuntz notes, "[e]xplicitly or implicitly, rhetorical questions often host a strong negative component."[29] Frequently in Second Isaiah rhetorical questions appear as invitations to argument (e.g., 43:9; 45:21; 49:8-9) or within legal contexts (e.g., 44:7-8; 50:1). More often than not, Second Isaiah's rhetorical questions express content that challenges the addressee to justify him- or herself (e.g., 41:26; 42:23) or that extols the superiority of the questioner (e.g., 40:25-28; 41:2-4; 43:13; 45:9-10;

[26] Limburg, "The Root ריב and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," 301, argues that the primary meaning of ריב is "complaint" and that frequently it is used in the sense "complaint against." This understanding of the meaning certainly captures an element of speaker's attitude towards the audience. Thus ריב signals an element of indignation or irritation on the part of the speaker. The exception to this understanding proves the rule. Of Isa 3:13-15 which Limburg lifts up as "the exception" he writes, "Yahweh is not making an accusation against 'his people' at all, but rather is acting as their advocate" (ibid., 303). That an understanding of Yhwh taking the side of the addressee would be a divergence from the normal meaning of ריב indicates that the typical attitude connoted by the term is one of confrontation or contestation. Kirsten Nielsen, *Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge* (JSOTSup 9; JSOT: Sheffield, 1978), 25, likewise captures the aspects of the speaker's attitude in her characterization of prophetic lawsuit oracles as consisting of elements which "belong naturally to every sort of quarrel in which one party feels himself let down by another."

[27] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:388.

[28] J. Kenneth Kuntz, "The Form, Location, and Function of Rhetorical Questions in Deutero-Isaiah," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (VTSup 70; eds. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; New York: Brill, 1997), 1:123.

[29] Ibid.

46:5).[30] Contextually then, through their associations with exaltation of the questioner and implied devaluation of the addressee, and with legal and accusation images, Second Isaiah's rhetorical questions should be seen as indicators of an attitude of anger, disdain, or indictment on the part of the speaker towards the subject or addressee of the utterance.[31]

3. Military/Violent Images – Language expressing military destruction, annihilation, wrath, and rage carries apparent emotional content. In the cases of wrath/rage (חמה) (e.g., 42:25; 51:13, 17, 20, 22), anger (אף) (e.g., 42:25; 48:9), and fury (קצף) (e.g., 54:8), the connection between the terminology itself and emotion is clear.[32] These terms express a boiling over of negative emotions. They are often paired with images of burning, heat, and fire. The association between these terms and burning images arise apparently out of the destructiveness of each of these images and may be seen as indications of the intensity of their emotional charge.[33] While military imagery

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[30] C.J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (Pretoria Oriental Series 5; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 23, notes that, "[r]hetorical questions are frequently used in the Old Testament to express the absolute power, uniqueness, singularity and incomparability of a person."

[31] Kuntz, "Form, Location, and Function," 126, notes a decrease in the frequency of rhetorical questions as one moves through Second Isaiah that parallels the diminishment of the indictment tonality in Second Isaiah as I have described it above on pg. 214. This is interesting in that a feature I have identified as a tonal indicator noticeably decreases in frequency in locations I have highlighted as containing fewer examples of that same tonality. Kuntz's comment thus serves as a form of independent confirmation of my observation.

[32] Based on cognate evidence *TDOT* 4:463, argues that חמה "originally ... lent expression to the hot inward excitement accompanying anger." *HALOT*, 1:326, lists "rage" and "wrath" as meanings for חמה. BDB, 893, lists among possible meanings for קצף "provoke to wrath," or "put oneself in a rage," each of which carries strong emotional connotations.

[33] Gary A. Herion, "Wrath of God (OT)," *ABD*, 6:990, notes that the Hebrew Bible "portrays Israel's god Yahweh in blatantly 'anthropopathic' terms (i.e., possessing human emotions)" in his discussion of the frequency of references to Yhwh's anger. Herion further notes the "incendiary character" of depictions of God's wrath in the Hebrew Bible (ibid.). As Zoltán Kövecses, *Emotion Concepts* (New York: Springer, 1990), 51, observes: "[t]he physiological effects of anger are increased body heat, increased internal pressure (blood pressure, muscular pressure), agitation, and interference with accurate perception." This biological connection between the human emotion of anger and the physiological response of increased body heat may help to explain, in part, the cross-cultural nature of the connection between heat and rage.

could be dispassionate and tactical, in Second Isaiah the language of military conquest is typically deployed in conjunction with images of anger, destruction, and burning and appears to gain the emotional charge of these terms. Thus, language and imagery of war, military implements, destruction, and burning should be considered indicators of an attitude of violent rage on the part of the speaker.

4. Accusations/Invitations to Argument – Like legal imagery, accusations and invitations to argument may be seen as drawing upon the cultural associations of prophetic invectives. For example, Gunkel characterizes the question that frequently accompanies the command to hear in these situations as "indignant."[34] The situation of an invitation to argument contributes a context that implies the speaker's self-assurance of superiority and willingness to engage the addressee in a confrontational and argumentative manner. In light of these associations, the accusations and invitations to argument in Second Isaiah should be seen as clear indicators of a confrontational, indignant, and indicting tonality.

1.2.2. Minor Stream: Sarcasm

The sarcastic tonality of the divine voice should be considered a sub-category of the indignant indictment tonality. The divine voice's strident tonality occasionally intensifies into a hard-edged and ironic sarcasm typified by parodying of the speech and activities of the indicted figure(s), and assertions of ignorance or lack of knowledge on their part.[35]

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[34] Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (completed by Joachim Begrich; trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 227.

[35] McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 68, comments regarding 44:9-20, "[t]he tone throughout is one of sarcasm and ridicule." Muilenburg, *IB* 5:513, refers to the author of this same passage as "the satirist." Elsewhere he describes the speaker attitude as "scorn mingled with laughter at the whole business" (ibid,

The most obvious extended example of this tonality is in the parody of the idol maker (44:9-20) and it makes an additional appearance in the indictment of Babylon (47:1-15 especially vv. 10-13).

1.3. Major Stream 3: Majestically Supreme Confidence

An exuberant confidence pervades the speech of the divine voice in Second Isaiah both within the comforting and indicting tonalities and outside of them. Occasionally the divine voice engages in speech that is dominated solely by this air of self-assurance without the additional tonalities of either comfort or justified aggravation; the voice simply glories in itself.[36] Confidence is expressed via hymnic language extolling the voice's own characteristics and past activities, participial epithet chains, and magnanimous promises.

The overwhelming presence of this tonality both within and without the other major tonalities of the divine voice is in sharp contrast to the tonalities of the other voices within Second Isaiah, which are frequently anything but confident.[37] In contrast to the pervasive self-assurance of the divine voice, the tonality of the human voices of Zion and

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5:514). These comments illustrate the sense in which the parody of the idol maker is sarcastic. Sarcasm may be defined as "a caustic and bitter expression of strong disapproval. Sarcasm in personal, jeering, intended to hurt" ("Sarcasm" in *A Handbook to Literature* [10th ed., Ed. William Harmon; Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2006]: 464). The definition in *The Harper Handbook to Literature* (2d ed., Ed., Northrop Frye, et al.; New York: Longman, 1997): 413, is similar highlighting the "cutting" and "personal" nature of a sarcastic remark. Both handbooks link sarcasm strongly with irony. Thus, indicators for the presence of sarcasm include a sharp and biting tonality, some personal nature to the remark, and the possible presence of irony. The poem concerning the idol maker shows all three of these elements. The poem is biting in its strong criticism of the idol maker as ignorant and in the extensive space it devotes to a thorough and cutting description of that ignorance. The poem is personal in its description of an idol maker as opposed to some less well characterized figure. Finally, the poem is ironic in its exposure of the correlation between the idol makers fuel and object of worship.

[36] Occurrences of the confidence tonality without overtones of either of the other two major tonalities of the divine voice include: 42:5-9, 21; 43:10-15; 44:24, 26-28; 45:1-8; 48:12-17, 20-22; 49:25-26; 55:1, 4-11.

[37] See further the discussion of other voices in ch. 4.

Israel is an overwhelming despair with hints of accusation. The voices speak for themselves rarely and are typically embedded within divine speech as cited quotations which complain of abandonment or neglect (e.g., 40:27; 49:14). Thus, they highlight the situation of distrust and desolation to which this poetry addresses itself. An additional human speaking tonality that likely should be understood as a speaking on behalf of the audience is the confessional tonality. This tonal stream is characterized by speech in the first person plural, admission of guilt, and humility. Though a brief glimpse of this tonality appears at 42:24, its only extended occurrence is 53:1-11.

The speech of the servant of Yhwh has its own progression of tonalities whose development merits discussion. The servant first speaks in 49:1-6, a speech that, though ostensibly addressed to the "islands," details the servant's own understanding of his special calling from Yhwh. The movement of the poem intersperses indications of confidence (military imagery, assertions of the memorability of the servant's name) with expressions of despair mirroring that of the people ("of vanity I am weary," 49:4a) and progresses towards a confident tonality from which the servant is willing to speak on behalf of the deity. The other significant speech of the servant progresses from the confident tonality to an echo of the strident tonality of the divine voice. In 50:4-11 the servant takes up the rhetorical questions, legal language, and condemnations typical of the indictment tonality of the divine voice. Thus the servant's tonalities mirror two of the significant divine tonalities and relate them to one another via a progression.

The aura of self-assurance that surrounds the dominant divine voice, in contrast to the other voices, reinforces and solidifies Yhwh's authority as speaker in the text,

whether speaking comfort or indictment.[38] This attitude of the divine voice that reflects its own sense of self-superiority to Second Isaiah's other speakers and audience reinforces the sense created by its dominant presence that in the world of the text the divine voice is the one to be believed. The confidence tonality grants the divine voice a particular authority in Second Isaiah. This authority creates the impression that the primary tension within this single dominant voice is the primary tension of the work as a whole. The other voices are not only structurally subsumed by their relative paucity and frequent embeddedness within the speech of the divine voice, they are devalued by the dominant voice's expression of its own superiority to them through its pervasive aura of self-glorification.[39] In light of this stream's extensive deployment within the other two major tonal streams of the divine voice, a single poem that exemplifies this tonal stream will suffice for examination: 42:5-9.

1.3.1. Indicators of the Presence of the Confidence Tonality

The following elements will be considered indicators of a confident tonality:

1. Participial Chains/Self-Predications – Second Isaiah's use of self-glorifying chains of descriptors for the deity has been widely commented upon.[40] Westermann notes of this trait, "[t]o the best of our knowledge, Deutero-Isaiah was the first in Israel to

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[38] See ch. 2, pp. 83-85 on the role of the central speaker in shaping and authorizing the central message of the poetry. Of special relevance to this discussion is the high level of identification between the speaker and the author forged through the prophetic medium.

[39] See ch. 4 on the dominance of the divine voice and the embedded nature of the other voices.

[40] Among scholars who take note of these features one might list Muilenburg, *IB* 5:390; Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 30; Harner, *Grace and Law in Second Isaiah*; Morgan Lee Philips, *The Significance of the Divine Self-Predication Formula For the Structure and Content of the Thought of Deutero-Isaiah* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1971); and Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh* (trans. by Douglas W. Stott; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 18.

show God glorifying himself in this way."[41] These chains of descriptors, particularly in their participial forms, sound somewhat like hymns, and thus gain connotations of majesty and superiority through this connection.[42] These implications of majesty and self-glorification should be seen as indications of a speaker's attitude of superiority towards the subject and addressee of the utterance, and as indications of an attitude of self-assured confidence.

2. Magnanimous Promises – Promises of astounding feats in the future provide a projection into the future of the confidence presumed in the participial references to the past. The contextual relationship of these promises to descriptions of the speaker's past activities shows their connection with the aura of self-assuredness that surrounds this speaker. The ability to promise astounding things grows out of such confidence and gains credibility through its association with the success of such promises in the past. Thus, magnanimous promises may be considered indicators of a confident, self-assured speaker especially when they occur in conjunction with participial glorification of past activities.

3. Descriptions of Past Activities – Like participial chains and self-predications, descriptions of momentous past-activities such as creation of the earth (e.g., Isa 40:28; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 51:13) and deliverance from Egypt (e.g., 43:16-17), participate in characteristic hymnic tropes and provide a sense of the self-assuredness and confidence of the speaker. Especially in their frequent combination with participial chains and self-

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[41] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 26.

[42] Gunkel describes expansions of the hymn form as "the introduction of *bywords praising* the name of God in the form of the *apposition*," and notes the use of this form in "the introduction of the prophetic oracle" citing exclusively Second Isaian texts (Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 30). Gunkel also refers to these participles as "a characteristic piece of the hymn" (ibid). The important point here is that the appositional use of descriptors appears commonly in hymnic forms in the Psalter.

predications, these references to past glorious actions portray a speaker who is not threatened by current circumstances, but who approaches the present situation, audience, and subject of the utterance with a confidence built upon past successes. Thus, descriptions of past activities contribute to a portrayal of a confident, self-assured speaker.

1.4. Juxtaposition as Tonal Indicator Throughout Second Isaiah

While the indicators discussed above will be used to justify my claims that particular poems are exemplars of the major tonal streams in Second Isaiah, it will be important to attend carefully to the nuances of these tonalities within the poems themselves. As Rueben Arthur Brower notes, "[o]ur whole aim in analysis of tone is to delineate the exact speaking voice in every poem we read, but we can succeed only by attending to the special, often minute language signs by which the poet fixes the tone for us."[43] Brower also cautions against "enjoying a stock experience instead of the one offered by the poem before us."[44] In light of these cautions it will be important not to confuse the examination of a poem's tonality with the simple assignment of that poem to one of the general categories I have identified within Second Isaiah. While the assignment to a general category is an important first step in the discussion of a poem's tonality, the details of the poems themselves must of necessity add nuance and clarify the precise tonality of each individual poem. I am in agreement with Brower's caution against the assumption that "the delineation of tone can be reduced to a single formula to be applied on any and all

[43] Brower, *Fields of Light*, 29.
[44] Ibid., 33.

occasions. The application and choice of methods must be at least as flexible as the poet's manipulation of tone."[45]

Within the broader tonality, subtle shades of attitude may be discerned in individual expressions. Often particular features that are not present elsewhere impact the tonality of a particular poem. In all cases, the elements that impact the tonality will be discerned through close and careful reading of the poem itself, its use of emotional language, its setting within the context, and its employment of and deviation from expectations raised by a poem's form.[46] In many cases the paratactic relationship between poems serves as a tonal signal. Through juxtaposition a poem of one tonality may be placed in immediate sequence with a poem that carries elements of another tonality. The disjunction between them and the lack of explicit connections between the poems and their tonalities calls attention to the contrasting tonalities and enables comparison and clarification of each poem's individual tonality.[47] Examination of the clues that signal such shifts will be important to the discussion of these poems.

Detailed discussion of the attitudes of each and every utterance of the divine voice in Second Isaiah is beyond the scope of this chapter.[48] Rather, in the section that follows, I trace the shifts in tonality through several exemplary instances of the major tonalities of

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[45] Ibid., 24.

[46] As I noted in ch. 2, I will be employing Brower's concept that, "[o]ur recognition of a manner always depends on a silent reference to a known way of speaking and on our perceiving variations from it" (ibid., 23). I also will employ the categories of form criticism alongside individual cases of allusion in light of his claim that, "[w]e can point out an allusion or show how a phrase in the immediate context recalls some larger context and with it certain conventions of speech; we can quote comparable expressions from other pieces of literature or from any realm of discourse whatsoever. Once a norm has been indicated, the cruder variations are evident, but to define subtle variations from a literary manner is certainly a less simple assignment" (ibid., 23-24).

[47] This reliance on the paratactic flow of Second Isaiah in order to elucidate the details of particular poems' tonalities highlights the sense in which my discussion of tonality is dependent upon, and part of, my argument that the use of lyric tools provides a useful mode of interpretation for Second Isaiah.

[48] A summary of Second Isaiah's tonal flow with cursory treatment of all the poems in the fifteen chs. is included at the beginning of this ch.

the divine voice. Tonal indicators occur throughout Second Isaiah as Appendix 3 illustrates. However, in some places, significant concentrations of tonal indicators occur over a series of several verses or constitute a dominant tonality for a poem taken as a whole. These cases are what I am calling "tonal centers," or "lyric centers," which in chapter two were defined as places where the affect becomes most intense.[49] The concentration of these tonal indicators and the ability of the poem to sustain the tonality over an extended group of lines justifies the sense that these are places where the affect is intense. In light of the intensity of these passages, and the concentration of emotional language, these "lyric centers" are the passages chosen for detailed examination in the study of Second Isaiah's tonalities that follows.

1.5. The Interplay of Tonal Streams in the Divine Voice

The alternation and mingling of the primary tonalities of the divine voice extends beyond the macro level of alternation between poems characterized by one tonality or the other. In a few striking examples, the opposed tonalities of indictment and comfort mingle within the same poem producing a confluence, and conflict, of tonal streams. Isa 51:12-16, as noted above, presents a mingling that mutes indictment in favor of comfort. Moving in the opposite direction, Isa 49:14-50:3 merges comfort and indictment with a closing emphasis on indictment. These "mixed-affect poems" reveal the extent to which the conflict between tonalities is integral to the nature of the divine speaking voice in Second Isaiah.

[49] See ch. 2, p. 88-89 for a definitional discussion of "lyric centers" or "tonal centers." In each instance that I introduce a "tonal center" for consideration I will justify this attribution by reference to the concentration of tonal indicators and through demonstration that this concentration persists over several verses.

2. Tracing the Flow of Tonalities in the Divine Voice

Given chapter four's discussion of Second Isaiah's persistent tension and the employment of the divine voice as its primary cohesive device, it is not surprising that the divine voice exhibits significant tension between its dominant tonal streams. The primary conflict in Second Isaiah is not produced by plot, for there is no such "plot."[50] Rather, the conflict resides in the tension between Yhwh speaking in a tonality of compassionate comfort and in one of justified indignation, yet with occasional mingling and blending. As the following analysis will show, this alternation and interaction produce the central tension. This tension reveals the extent to which the question of the possibility of Zion's comfort constitutes Second Isaiah's "intractable problem." Examination of this tension will proceed by detailed discussion of the individual poems that I have identified as tonal centers in the major tonalities of the divine voice. Prior to this detailed examination, a brief survey of the tonal flow of the whole sequence will give context to the detailed discussions to follow.

2.1. Survey of Second Isaiah's Tonal Flow

Rather than a narrative plot or discursive argumentation, Second Isaiah progresses through dramatically juxtaposed paratactic shifts in the attitude of the divine speaker towards the audience. The opening stanza (40:1-2) proclaims coming comfort, but is immediately juxtaposed with the remainder of the opening poem (Isa 40:3-31) expressing despair (40:6-7) along with exultation (40:9), comfort (40:10), and indignation. The juxtaposition of these tonalities proceeds by alternation. A fully indicting poem

[50] See ch. 2.

addressed to the coastlands (41:1-7) is immediately followed by a comforting poem addressed to Jacob/Israel (41:8-20). The indicting tonality returns again as the divine voice engages in condemnation of the "gods" and expresses disappointment over Zion's lack of response (41:21-29). The string of neat alternations is broken by a poem expressing divine excitement in its description of the servant (41:1-4). The poem that follows expresses the confidence of the divine speaker (42:5-9) and is reinforced by a lyrical interlude in the voice of the prophetic poet (42:10-13). Following the interlude, there is an indictment in the divine voice (42:14-20) and a poem moving in the direction of despair spoken by the prophetic poet (43:21-25). The alternation in the divine voice then directs its full attention to the addressee Jacob/Israel as it returns with a comfort poem in the divine voice (43:1-21), an indictment poem in the divine voice (43:22-28), a comforting poem in the divine voice (44:1-5), and a disputational poem in the divine voice (44:6-22). The alternation is once again punctuated by the prophetic poet's calls to praise (44:23). Following a majestically confident poem in the divine voice (44:24-28), the sequence of poems progresses through a series of largely indicting poems. The juxtaposition in this portion of the sequence is between a variety of addressees: Cyrus, who incidentally is not indicted (45:1-8), Jacob/Israel (45:9-25 and 46:1-13), Babylon (47:1-15), and Jacob/Israel again (48:1-11).

Comfort poems begin to edge out the indictment poems in a series of poems whose speaker alternates between the divine voice (48:12-22; 49:14-50:3; 51:1-8) and the servant (49:1-13; 50:4-11), though at least one of these poems exhibits a particularly mixed tonality (e.g., 49:14-50:3) sharing indictment and comfort elements. The indictment tonality makes its last gasp in a mixed affect poem directed at the audience

(51:9-16) which begins with disputation and is, in the end, muted by claims of provision and relationship. The following poem (51:17-52:12) echoes this mixed affect in the voice of the prophetic poet. A descriptive poem about the servant in the divine voice (52:13-53:12) fills the sequence's final moments before the climax of the comfort tonality (54:1-17). Finally, the sequence winds down following the climax with a confident tonality (55:1-13).[51]

2.2. An Opening Announcement of Comfort – Isaiah 40:1-2[52]

As chapter three argued, Second Isaiah's first poem opens with a stanza that proclaims coming comfort. This brief introductory passage is an obvious participant in the comfort tonality as it utilizes the language of comfort, alludes to the marriage metaphor, and employs promises of provision. The coming comfort proclaimed in this poem is for Zion. As chapter three argued, comfort addressed to Zion should be seen as expressing promises of reconciliation and restoration to the audience in Babylonian exile through their close affiliation with the figure of Zion. While the stanza proclaims coming comfort, any simplistic expectation that this promise will play out in a straightforward manner is ultimately undermined by the alternation of tonalities in the divine voice that emerges soon after this introduction, as the remainder of this chapter will show.

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[51] See Appendix 4 for a more detailed description of the each of Second Isaiah's component poems.

[52] This stanza, its translation, and interpretation are discussed in detail in ch. 3.

2.3. The Confidence of the Creator – Isaiah 42:5-9

Isaiah 42:5-9 exhibits the supremely majestic confidence tonality of the divine voice.[53] Following closely upon the preceding poem's description of the servant, this poem's tonality focuses upon glorifying the divine speaker. The employment of creation imagery, poetic patterning, use of verbs, and manner of attention to the audience demonstrate that the voice speaking this poem is primarily concerned with the representation of the voice's self and magnification of that self's significance rather than with the specific actions and activities of the addressee, or any other figure for that matter.[54] The audience is present via references to them, but is not the prime focus of the poem. Thus the tonality is revealed in the voice's attitude towards its subject matter rather than its audience. That subject matter is itself, the nature of the speaker's own self, foregrounded by the repeated formulaic introductions of the poem's stanzas.[55]

<u>Stanza 1</u>
[5] Thus says the God Yhwh:
the One who created the heavens and spreads them out,
the Extender of the earth and its yield,
the One who gives breath to the people upon it,
and wind to those going about in it:

<u>Stanza 2</u>
[6] "I am Yhwh, I called you in righteousness,
and I will strengthen your hand.
And I will guard you and I will set you,
as a covenant people, to be a light for nations;[56]

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[53] The passage meets the guidelines described above for consideration as a "lyric center" in the confidence tonal stream. It exhibits a significant concentration of participles (4 participles describe Yhwh's activities in the opening verse) and other glorifications of the deity (e.g., vv. 6-8) , creation references (v. 5), and claims of past successes (v. 9). This concentration of tonal indicators persists throughout the poem, contributing a dominant poem-level tonality. Thus, Isa 42:5-9 is a "lyric center" in the confidence tonal stream and merits closer exegetical attention as a representative element of Second Isaiah as a whole.

[54] The focus on poetic imagery and poetic patterning in the analysis that follows again points to the centrality of lyric analysis to the task of examination of tonality at hand.

[55] See ch. 2, n. 43 for a defense of the use of the term "stanza" to refer to poetic sub-units.

[56] The two parallel construct chains (לברית עם and לאור גוים) take different nuances. The first is an attributive use of the genitive. The second is a genitive of purpose bringing it in line with the construct

[7] To open blind eyes,
to release the oppressed from prison,
darkness's dwellers from the house of bondage."

Stanza 3
[8] "I am Yhwh,
that is my name.
And I will not give my glory to another,
or my praise to the idols.
[9] The former things, Look!, they came,
and new things I am declaring.
Before it springs up
I will announce (it) to you."[57]

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chains in v. 7. Both of these uses of the genitive are discussed by E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (2d English Ed.; Rev. by A. E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 417. The first reading, "as a covenant people" is the most contestable. My reading is contrary to that of Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:228, who, despite acknowledging that "the construct phrase [לברית עם] could be understood appositionally to mean 'covenant people'," argue for the reading "a covenant with people." However, the use of the *lamed* preposition on the accusative following נתן is in line with the definition "assign, designate" given by BDB, 680. Mark S. Smith, ""Berît 'am / Berît 'ôlām: A New Proposal for the Crux of Isa 42:6," *JBL* 100 (1981): 242, notes an interesting word play: "The obvious phonetic resemblance between *bĕrît ʻôlām* and *bĕrît ʻam* suggests that Second Isaiah is playing on the memory of the Davidic covenant theology" (ibid., 242). Smith argues that the new Second Isaian phrase "recreates Israel in the image of a new kingship" (ibid., 243). While Smith does not clearly state his proposed translation in light of this solution, he seems to be arguing that Israel itself becomes a "covenant" for peoples (see, e.g., ibid., 243). However, his description of the use of the phrase would seem also able to support my reading since in either case the people become the covenant. It is also possible to argue that if word play is intended with the phrase ברית עולם , the order of the phrase being alluded to provides the explanation for the unusual word order of the phrase לברית עם. This inverted word order is a factor that both Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:228, and Smith, "Berît 'am," 241, cite as significant factors in their rejection of the translation I have proposed. Thus, the translation "as a covenant people" makes sense grammatically in light of the use of the *lamed* following נתן, and the word order presents no significant obstacle to my translation. On the translation of the infinitives of purpose in v. 7, see n. 61 below.

[57] Despite the claim of Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 98, that "there is general agreement today that 42.5-9 form a unit," there is a significant level of debate in the secondary literature over whether the unit is part of a much larger poem. Westermann is particularly confident that 42:5-9 can be separated from the "servant song" that precedes it not only as an interpretable unit but as a unit dating from a different time. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (AB19A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 211, on the other end of the spectrum, sees Isa 42:1-4 and 5-9 as "a *literary* unit that does not correspond directly to any particular institutional form." While I do not follow Westermann's conclusion that the poem stems from a different or later hand, I concur with his assessment that the unit is clearly demarcated. The poem is marked by a change of addressee and subject matter despite the continuation of the divine voice as speaker. Additionally, the MT's markings indicate that the Masoretic tradition saw 42:5-9 as a unit. *Petuchas* both precede v. 5 and follow v. 9. Also of the opinion that this is a separate unit is Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 130, who writes, "there is certainly a break here; a new divine speech begins." Baltzer's assessment fits my stated elements of determining poem breaks. I am persuaded by numerous scholars' arguments (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 211; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 99) that the addressee is more likely the collective people Israel rather than the individual servant. However, see the comments below on the ambiguity of the addressee in n. 59. This very shift to ambiguity qualifies as a shift in addressee from the much more explicitly servant directed speech of 42:1-4. The end of the unit at 42:9 is marked by a change in speaker.

As noted above, the tonality of Isa 42:5-9 is not primarily determined by the speaker's attitude towards the addressee. While strong forms of address such as vocatives and repetition of pronominal forms direct attention towards the addressee in many of Second Isaiah's poems, this poem differs in that the addressee, though present, is not the central concern of this poem.[58] There is no opening vocative and the addressee is never referenced by name in the poem. Indeed, the poem's level of inattention to the addressee causes significant ambiguity about whom the divine voice addresses in this poem.[59] Additionally, references to the speaker (through first-person verbs, independent pronouns, and pronominal forms) outnumber such references to the addressee 11 to 5. Thus, rather than the addressee, the divine voice focuses on its subject matter – itself. It is the attitude that the speaking voice takes towards its own representation of itself that gives this poem its confident tonality. Indeed, so great is the poem's focus on the description of the deity that, even when the audience is referenced, it is present only as a means to further describe the nature and purposes of Yhwh's actions.

The opening and closing stanzas focus almost exclusively on the deity's self and the deity's activities. The stanzas are dominated by participles deployed as descriptors of

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[58] The distinctiveness of this relatively minimal attention to the addressee will emerge more clearly as other poems are discussed below.

[59] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 98, characterizes the passage in this way: "it is one of the pericopes in the book which so far no one has succeeded in really explaining .… Only this much is plain – the speaker is Yahweh, in v. 6 he utters what seems like a call, and v. 7 states the purpose which this is to serve. But who it is that Yahweh calls, on whom the person is called to act, and the nature of his task, are obscure." Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40*-55, 1:226, also note that the addressee is not identified. Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 98, comments, "it is probable that the language is deliberately ambiguous, as is characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah from the very beginning." Other scholars who acknowledge the difficulty of determining the addressee in this poem include: Christopher R. North, *The Second Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 110; and John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark), 163.

Yhwh.[60] The only second person reference, and thus the only reference to the audience at all, in either of these framing stanzas is the final word of the poem – a second person object suffix attached to the direct object marker. This single reference to the audience in these framing stanzas identifies them as the recipient of Yhwh's action. Thus, even this one reference to the audience is focused not on the audience but on the deity as actor.

The central stanza (vv. 6-7) despite containing the heaviest concentration of references to the audience in the poem, is also intensely focused on Yhwh and Yhwh's activities. All four instances of second person language are second person suffixes indicating the audience as the object of Yhwh's activity. The verbs referring to divine activity are finite verbs with a clear subject and object. V. 7, however, shifts the verbal pattern to a string of infinitive purpose clauses. These lines subordinate the implied activities of the audience to Yhwh's purposes.[61] The poetry subtly blends the infinitive constructs into v. 6b's description of Yhwh's activities, suggesting that they should be

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[60] The opening stanza (v. 5) is dominated by its five active participles, the first four of which refer to characteristic activities of the deity. The final participle is a reference to a result of the preceding divine activities. North, *The Second Isaiah*, 111, calls "[t]he 'hymnic' introduction with its participial clauses … characteristic of" Second Isaiah. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 117, also notes the frequency of participles in this verse. The closing stanza (vv. 8-9) is similar. The finite verbs אתן "I will give," and אשמיע "I will make you hear" combine with the verbal use of the participle אני מגיד "I am declaring" to focus the stanza strongly on Yhwh's actions.

[61] It is initially unclear whether these infinitives express the purpose of Yhwh's action in making the audience into a "covenant people" and "a light for nations" or the purpose of whatever activities the audience is supposed to undertake in those roles. Westermann notes, "the subject of the infinitives in v.7 could equally be Yahweh or the one addressed in v.6 …. This indetermination is characteristic of the author of 42.5-9" (*Isaiah 40-66*, 100). While Westermann is undoubtedly correct that the author of this poem revels in indeterminacy, it is more likely that the subject of the infinitives is Yhwh rather than the addressee. Throughout this poem attention has been nearly entirely directed towards Yhwh and the activity has been undertaken entirely by Yhwh. Additionally, a purposive sense of the infinitive construct should rightly modify a verb rather than a noun (GKC, 348). In this context, the audience has not been the subject of any prior verbs, making it unlikely that the infinitive constructs should modify a verb that is at best only implied by the text, as in Westermann's perspective. It is far better to relate these infinitives to Yhwh's prior verbal acts. My position in this regard is in contrast to North, *The Second Isaiah*, 112, who considers the infinitives to refer "most naturally" to the servant's actions on behalf of the exiles. His reading depends upon his understanding of the poem as addressed to the servant, which, as demonstrated above, is debatable (see n. 59 above).

read as modifiers of these verbal forms. The first colon of v. 6b contains two neatly paired verbs ואצרך "I will guard you" and ואתנך "I will give you." These verbs are weighed against equally paired indirect objects, each marked with a *lamed* preposition לברית עם ("as a covenant people") and לאור גוים ("to be a light for nations").[62] Since the first two cola of v. 7 immediately follow the pair of indirect objects in v. 6b, their introductory *lamed* prepositions appear to continue the string of *lameds*. By virtue of the repetition of the *lamed* preposition, the description of what Yhwh is forming the audience into blends seamlessly into the description of the purposes of that forming. Thus it seems best to read the infinitives as descriptions of Yhwh's purposes for Yhwh's actions, which make the audience into a "covenant people" and a "light for the nations." The verbs highlight Yhwh's intentions and elide any reference to the audience as active agents. Further subordinating these implied activities of the audience to the purposes and grandeur of the divine speaker are the resonances between these activities and those of Yhwh's servant described in the preceding poem. The servant (עבדי) there described in the singular is to execute "justice" (משפט, 42:1), and is described employing imagery of light and dark ("a dim wick he will not quench," 43:3; "he will not grow "dim," 43:4). Here the purposes for which Yhwh is forming the addressees include "releas[ing] the oppressed from prison" and "darkness's dwellers from the house of bondage" (43:7). Again the imagery combines themes of justice with images of light and dark. This similarity in description along with the close juxtaposition of these passages may perhaps imply that the group now addressed should be understood as those who "serve" (עבד) Yhwh. This implication would further indicate that the activities the poem suggests the

[62] The line is a beautifully balanced bicolon. Both halves of the line have two stressed syllables each.

addressees will engage in serve Yhwh's purposes, rather than their own. Thus the imagery further highlights and characterizes the divine speaker as the one who intends justice. Thus, the poem focuses heavily on Yhwh and Yhwh's activities as descriptors of the confident speaker. Even the references to the audience that are present are, as this discussion has argued, pointers toward and descriptors of the confident speaking subject.

Second, the poem focuses attention on its speaker, and creates a pervasive sense of majesty and confidence structurally. Formulaic references to the deity's self are certainly not unusual in Second Isaiah. However, in this poem, they play a structuring role that reinforces the poem's focus on the glorification of the divine speaker. The opening formula, "Thus says the God Yhwh," is the only use of the phrase האל יהוה in Second Isaiah. It appears only once elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.[63] While "thus says Yhwh" would have been sufficient, the addition of the modifier "the God" signals the poem's focus on the divinity of Yhwh as well as reinforcing its use of creation language, about which more will be said shortly.[64] The other remaining stanzas are marked by the opening refrain אני יהוה. Thus, the structural markers that highlight the poem's stanza divisions reiterate the poem's primary subject matter and make its focus on the deity's self explicit.

[63] The other occurrence is in Ps 85:9, a communal lament that employs several Second Isaian themes. Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 161, cites the rarity of the combination of both האל and יהוה and notes that it "suggests absoluteness and mightiness." Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 131, also notes the rarity of the phrase. The construction האל is not, however, unique. BDB, 42, lists several occurrences for this form and glosses its meaning as "the God, the true God."

[64] As Yehoshua Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion: A Study of Isaiah 40-48* (Bonn: Linguistica Biblica, 1981), 129, notes, "[t]his rare structure focusing the attention on Yahweh demonstrates an attempt to affirm his *authority*: God, Yahweh, speaks." Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 131, argues that, "[b]ehind the link between 'the God' and 'Yahweh' is the hermeneutical decision to put together the names used for God in Genesis 1 and 2."

Creation imagery is heavily present in the poem and functions to further the glorification of the divine speaker.[65] The opening stanza is exclusively devoted to introducing divine speech by describing Yhwh with participial epithets resonant with the creation accounts of Genesis.[66] The first bicolon of the stanza traffics in the language and images of the priestly account of Genesis 1.[67] Here God is בורא "creator" of the heavens and רקע "extender" of the earth. These epithets recall the first words of the Hebrew Bible בראשית ברא אלוהים, "in the beginning God created," as well as the recurrent references in that first creation account to the רקיע, "firmament" (Gen 1:6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20).[68] The second bicolon describes Yhwh as giver of נשמה, "breath," the very thing that Yhwh

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[65] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 98, notes that v. 5 exhibits the "diction … of those Psalms which extol God as creator." Terence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 181-198, examines the creation motif in Second Isaiah in detail noting its importance to the expression of a message from God to the people in exile in Babylon.

[66] Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 161, regards vv. 6-7 as "parallel" to Genesis 1-2. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 131, comments that "[t]he cardinal catchwords in Genesis 1 can be recognized." In my argument here that Second Isaiah alludes to Genesis 1 and 2, I am necessarily assuming that at least early and traditional forms of these narratives existed by the time Second Isaiah was composed. This is not an improbable assumption. Second Isaiah gives obvious evidence of familiarity with Genesis traditions at several points, most notably in its mention of Abraham and Sarah by name (Isa 51:2). Scholars who also assume that Second Isaiah knew and trafficked in the language and imagery of Genesis include Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 131; and Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 140-1.

[67] Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 162, notes of these participles, "[o]nce again they suggest the dynamic, exalted, sovereign, self-sufficient authority of Yhwh's relationship with the whole world in which Yhwh assumes the freedom to operate."

[68] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:467, notes the presence of the nominal form in Genesis 1. See also Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 131. Norman C. Habel, "He Who Stretches Out the Heavens" *CBQ* 34 (1972): 417, notes, "[t]he idiom 'stretching out the heavens' appears seven times in Deutero-Isaiah. This idiom is repeatedly connected with characterization formulae or titles that serve far more than an artistic literary function. These ascriptions are designed to identify and magnify Yahweh as the unique living God of the entire earth who is in the process of revealing his magnificence." Brent A. Strawn and Joel M. LeMon, "'Everything That Has Breath': Animal praise in Psalm 150:6 in the light of ancient Near Eastern iconography," in *Bilder als Quellen Images as Sources: Studies on ancient Near Eastern artefacts and the Bible inspired by the work of Othmar Keel* (OBO; Eds. Susanne Bickel, et al.; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007), 458, note that "[t]he creation theme is explicitly evoked by the use of the term רקיע" in Psalm 150.

breathed into the nose of Adam in the second creation account (Gen 2:7) in order for him to become a "living creature."[69]

The participial descriptions are majestic. They allude to a tradition that depicts Yhwh in transcendent and glorified imagery.[70] Even the lines that allude more to the Yahwist's creation account than to the Priestly source's do not engage in anthropomorphism, but retain a transcendent distance.[71] While in Genesis 2, Yhwh breathes the breath of life into the human, here Yhwh is the "giver of breath," and the term for Yhwh's sculpting (יצר) of the human being out of clay, typically a favorite participial attribution in Second Isaiah, is omitted, though its sound is echoed faintly in v. 6 by the claim ואצרך, "I will guard you."[72] Thus the phrase "I will guard you" is an instance of word play that exploits with the reader's expectation of the occurrence of one

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[69] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:468, also notes this connection between Second Isaiah and Genesis 2 as does Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 131.

[70] Brower, *Fields of Light*, 23, points out the tonal impact of allusion in that the alluding text draws upon or creates a contrast with the tonal impressions of the text to which it alludes. E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB1; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), xxv, describes the Priestly account of creation in Genesis 1 as "majestic," and comments regarding the Priestly source as a whole, "history is predetermined in every detail, [and] personalities recede into the background, while the formal relations between God and society become the central theme." In contrast, Speiser writes of the Yahwist, "his earth is peopled with actors so natural and candid that even their relations with Yahweh are reduced to human scale, so that God himself becomes anthropomorphic" (ibid., xxvii). Similarly, Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (rev. ed.; trans. John H. Marks; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 26: "the Yahwistic narrative is full of the boldest anthropomorphisms." The contrast between the Yahwist's use of anthropomorphisms and the formality of the Priestly account highlight the sense in which the Priestly account is majestic.

[71] Seán McEvenue, *Interpreting the Pentateuch* (OTS 4; Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 66, describes the Yahwist's style with reference to the creation account in Genesis 2 commenting that "anthropomorphism appears to be all pervasive." Elsewhere McEvenue refers to the Genesis 2-3 "image of God [as] … very far removed from that of the Priestly Writer" (ibid., 67). Muilenburg, *IB* 5:382, comments regarding Isaiah 40-55 as a whole, "[t]he thought and theological perspective of the Yahwist is grasped and interpreted in a fashion unmatched by any other biblical book."

[72] The root יצר occurs with particular frequency in Second Isaiah and carries creation overtones often with reference to crafting, molding, forming, or fashioning in context. Occurrences of the root include: Isa 41:25; 43:1, 7, 10, 21; 44:2, 9, 10, 12, 21, 24; 45:7, 9, 11, 18; 46:11; 49:5; 54:17. In three instances the root is explicitly parallel to ברא "create:" Isa 43:7; 45:7; and 45:18. While it would be possible to repoint ואצרך to derive it from יצר, I am in agreement with North, *The Second Isaiah*, 110, that, despite the greater frequency of יצר in Second Isaiah, the context paired with "strengthen your hand," argues in favor of נצר in this instance. Similarly Muilenburg, *IB* 5:468, notes that the repointing "violates the sequence of the verbs and should therefore be rejected." Also in agreement are: Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:227; and Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 209.

of Second Isaiah's favorite creation terms. The term for "sculpting" the human being is replaced by the more transcendent promise of divine protection.

Creation imagery in the remainder of the poem is more subtle. The contrast between Yhwh making the audience into a "light" and the apparent purpose of this creation for releasing "darkness's dwellers" (v. 7) recalls the division of light and darkness in the Priestly creation account (Gen 1:4). Likewise the reference to new things תצמחנה, "springing up," echoes the description of Yhwh's creation of the herbage in Gen 2:7-9 (ויצמח). Moreover, in both contexts, the verb is modified by the qualifier "before" (טרם). The dominance of the creation imagery and its transcendent mode of presence in the poetry presents the divine speaker's self-description in cosmic and majestic terms.[73] This speaker exudes a certainty of its own abilities through its willingness to cite past activities of monumental proportions.[74]

The majesty and confidence exuded by the divine voice in its self-description are not limited to the use of creation imagery. The reiterated finite first-person verbs (v. 6, ואצרך ואתנך) signal a confidence and willingness to name both past and future activities. Additionally, the voice's reference to "my glory" (v. 8) and "my praise" (v. 8) project a strong, powerful, and confident speaker.[75] The closing assurance of Yhwh's ability to declare the future, a repeated trope of divine confidence in Second Isaiah (see e.g., 42:9; 43:9-12; 46:10; 48:3), concludes the poem on a confident, majestic note.

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[73] Habel, "He Who Stretches Out the Heavens" 418, notes the possibility of a connection between the phrase "stretches out the heavens," and the *Chaoskampf* tradition, though he concludes that the "*Chaoskampf* motif itself is not the primary element in the meaning of this formula" (ibid., 430). Nevertheless, the possible resonances with cosmic images contribute to the majestic tonality of the passage.

[74] As Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:224, comment: "Yhwh's activity as creator is again grounds for seeing Yhwh as sovereign in current affairs."

[75] Harner, *Grace and Law in Second Isaiah*, 85, comments regarding v. 8, "[h]ere the formula of divine self-predication is combined with the motifs of exclusiveness and self-praise."

The structured poetic balance of the poem in its pattern of bicola and tricolon, tidy division into three clear stanzas, relatively even line lengths, and even grammatical and semantic parallelisms mirror the tonality of the poem.[76] In its poetic structure the poem points to a speaker who is controlled, poised, majestic. There is no flood of passion in this poem that would, for instance, throw the line lengths out of balance.[77] Both anthropomorphisms and either angry or comforting emotional images, elsewhere common in Second Isaiah, are largely absent in this poem.[78] Neither is there an emotional elaboration that violates the evenness of the stanzas and cola. Thus, the poem reflects a majestic speaker whose emotional tonality is one of calm. The speaker of this poem is emotionally controlled and balanced, and this emotion is reflected in the balance of the poetry itself.

The poem's tonality is notable for particular absences as well. There is a notable absence of military imagery, of accusation, of vocatives, of descriptors (either favorable or unfavorable) of the addressee, and of legal imagery. Any elements that might darken

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[76] The terminology of "grammatical" and "semantic" types of parallelism is employed by Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 31, 64. If one counts accented syllables, the poem consists of a mix of several perfectly balanced 2-2 lines (vv. 6b, 8a, 9b) one 3-3 (v. 5a), a 2-2-2 tricolon (v. 6a), and several 4-3 and 2-3/3-2 lines (vv. 5b, 8b, 9a). This evenness, as noted above, reflects and reinforces the confidence and display of emotional control by the divine speaker.

[77] On several occasions extremely long lines occur in moments of emotional intensity within Second Isaiah (e.g., 43:25; 54:6, 8). I suspect that line length may correlate stylistically with peaks in tonal intensity. However, definitive demonstration of this suspicion lies outside the present project. A comparable tendency is noted by Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 366, in his discussion of Norman Mailer in which Booth claims that Mailer engages in a "jumbling of metaphors at the moment of greatest passion." This sense of an overwhelming flood of emotion from a speaker that breaks the boundaries of stylistic expectations, is similar to the use of extremely long lines in poetic expressions of heightened emotion. If accurate, this suspicion would cast further doubt on the already widely discredited practice of emending long lines *metri causa*.

[78] Cf., Isa 49:14-16, in which the divine speaker draws an explicit self-comparison with the compassion of a human mother. On the heavily emotional tonality of this image see further the discussion of Isa 49 below. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:388, notes the range of images Second Isaiah employs for the deity. Many of the depictions included in this list are explicitly anthropomorphic.

the tonality and convey anger are missing in Isa 42:5-9. Thus, this poem of supreme confidence conveys the power and majesty of the divine speaker, but does so without the tinges and overt signals of anger, irritation, and indignation that characterize poems within the indictment tonality.

The imaginative world[79] that Isa 42:5-9 presents to its audience is one in which Yhwh is confident, capable, transcendent, and controlled. The audience is invited to imagine a world in which Yhwh accomplishes what Yhwh sets out to do without limitations or restrictions. Perhaps more significantly for the audience of exiles, the activities ascribed to them are presented as the purposes of this supremely capable divine speaker. Their formation (ואצרך and ואתנך) into light (אור) and those who set free the ones dwelling in darkness (חשך) are to be accomplished by the God who formed (יצר) humanity (Gen 2:7) and separated light (אור) from darkness (חשך, Gen 1:4). Such a mission certainly entails their own deliverance from bondage (מסגר, Isa 42:7) and is presented not as a task they must struggle to achieve. Rather, this deliverance and formation are the certain activities of "the God Yhwh," the majestic creator of the world. They are reminded to view the speaker who addresses them now in light of that speaker's role in the creation of the inhabited world. Thus, Isa 42:5-9 and the confident stream of which it is a part reinforces the sense that the divine speaker who both promises comfort and expresses rage in Second Isaiah's other major tonal streams, is fully able to act upon those emotions. In this way, the confidence tonality reinforces the urgency of the tonal

[79] On the use of this phrase see n. 4 above in this ch.

alternation of the comfort and indictment tonalities.[80] Whatever resolution this voice reaches regarding the intention to comfort and its frustration with the audience is one that the speaker is fully capable of carrying out.

2.4. Sinners in the Hands of an Obliterating God – Isaiah 43:22-28[81]

The indignant indictment tonality makes a vivid appearance in Isa 43:22-28.[82] Indeed, John Goldingay has called this passage "one of the classic prophetic indictments of the worship of Yhwh's people."[83] The poem addresses the exilic audience, referring to its addressee by the parallel names Jacob and Israel. The appearance of this stinging indictment is exacerbated by its juxtaposition with the preceding poem. Just a breath ago the divine voice promised to do a new thing and to make a way in the wilderness (43:19). Four key features of this poetic unit help to create its angry tonality, and the tonality itself calls into question the promise of coming comfort articulated by Second Isaiah's opening lines (Isa 40:1-2) and by the immediately preceding promises of deliverance. The

[80] The present examination of representative passages of each tonality in detail and in the order in which they occur in Second Isaiah illustrates this alternation. See further the summary of the sequence's tonal flow at the beginning of this ch. which illustrates this alternation more concisely.

[81] While the poem does not exhibit change of speaker or change of addressee, it does show a sharp tonal shift and a strong shift in subject matter. Additionally, its clear poetic structuring argues for its cohesion as a poem. The poem can be easily divided into two stanzas: one marked by the recurrent negative particle and the other framed by opening and closing tricola. The repetitive final tricolon indicates the conclusion of the unit. Thus, I am treating it as an independent poetic unit. The MT's use of paragraphing marks also appear to concur with my assessment. There are *setumas* following vv. 21 and 28. My assessment is in agreement with Thijs Booij, "Negation in Isaiah 43 22-24," *ZAW* 94 (1982): 390, who writes, "V. 22-24 are part of a larger unit, v. 22-28, which by its content is clearly set off from its surroundings and is formally marked by the inclusion [Jacob-Israel] (v. 22.28)." Likewise, Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 176, states regarding these verses, "the text is a relatively independent unit, clearly distinguished from its context in both form and content."

[82] The passage meets the elements described above for being counted as a lyric center in the indictment tonality. It has a significant concentration of tonal indicators for the indictment tonality including the use of legal imagery and terminology (e.g., v. 26), the employment of military language (e.g., v. 28), and the use of accusation (e.g., vv. 22-24). Additionally, these tonal indicators continue throughout the six verses and constitute the dominant tonal elements of the poetic unit as a whole. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 60, acknowledges that at 43:22 "there is a reversal of tone; from promise the discourse turns to recall Israel's iniquitous past."

[83] John Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22-28" *ZAW* 110 (1998): 173-91.

indictment tonality presented by the poem at hand projects a possible world for the audience to imagine in which the deity strikes out at them in rage and pent up fury.[84] This fury is perhaps even motivated by the audience's implied unwillingness to not "remember the former things" (43:18) and embrace Yhwh's new deliverance described by the preceding poem. Within the poem the tonality is created through structural and repetitive highlighting of the tensive contrast between the text's I and you, the recurrence of the negative particle, the employment of the courtroom motif, and a particularly ominous conclusion invoking images from Israel's conquest of Canaan.

Stanza 1
[22] But No! *Me* you did not meet,[85] O Jacob,
Indeed, you wearied of me, O Israel.
[23] No! You did not bring me a sheep of your burnt offering,
and with your sacrifices you did not honor me.
No! I did not enslave you with gifts,
and I did not weary you with frankincense.
[24] No! You did not acquire for me a stalk with silver,
and with the fat of your sacrifices you did not please me.
Instead you have enslaved me with your sins,
and have wearied me with your abominations.[86]

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[84] As Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 76-77, helpfully comments regarding this passage, "[t]he epithet 'prophet of comfort' that is often used for Second Isaiah, although capturing a central theme of his prophecy, is misleading if it suggests that the theme of divine judgment in response to human sin is neglected in this prophet's proclamation."

[85] I have here translated קראת "meet." The term itself is a particular favorite of Second Isaiah's and there has already been reason to comment on its ambiguity in Isa 40:1-2. While it frequently means "call" in Second Isaiah, "it is not at once clear in what sense *qara'ta* is used here" (Booij, "Negation," 391). I am utilizing the second definition for this homonymic root in light of the sense of the line. That is, the indictment appears to be towards idolatrous practice that includes verbal expressions towards other deities along with other activities. I have placed the emphatic "no!" at the beginning of the line in my translation to reflect the repetitive structure of these lines. In vv. 22 and 23 this construction requires the addition of a second negative to make sense in English. However, in all cases there is only one לא in the Hebrew.

[86] The stanza is marked by the end of the repetitive לא statements and the use of אך to signal and prepare for that break. See Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 33-34, for a discussion of the way in which shifts in repetition mark structural breaks in poetry. Additionally, the double use of the first person pronoun as in v. 25 has signaled a new stanza elsewhere in Second Isaiah (Isa 43:11; 51:12). I disagree with Goldingay, "Isaiah 43, 22-28," 184, who writes, "if there is a subsection break to be made within vv. 22-28, then, it comes not after v. 24 … but after v. 25." Goldingay is certainly correct that v. 25 "does not link well with vv. 26-28" ("Isaiah 43, 22-28," 183). However, this observation indicates more the extent to which v. 25

Stanza 2
[25] I, I am he,
who obliterates your transgressions for my sake,
and your sins I will not remember.
[26] Make me remember. Let us be judged together.
Recount yourself in order that you may be pronounced righteous.
[27] Your first father sinned,
and your interpreters rebelled against me.
[28] So I will pierce the holy princes,
and I will give Jacob to the ban,
and Israel to revilings.

First, the poem exhibits an overall structural tension between "I" and "you," i.e., between the divine speaking voice and the implied audience that creates a pervasive sense of the speaker's angry attitude toward the audience.[87] Beginning with its emphatic opening words (ולא־אתי), the poem highlights the relationship between the I and you as its source of conflict. As numerous commentators point out, this word order is emphatic.[88] The poem begins with the direct object of the verb, an unusual opening even given the loose word order of poetry.[89] This emphasis highlights the relational nature of the complaint embodied in the line by fronting the deity as the offended party of the

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stands alone and is disjoined from its context entirely, rather than that it belongs in the first stanza. The first stanza exhibits significant formal unity ending after v. 24.

[87] As Muilenburg, *IB* 5:499, notes, "The pronouns stress the relationship between Yahweh and Israel …. The strophe begins with an emphatic **me** and this stress is continued throughout … by prepositions …, by pronominal suffixes …, or by shift in subject" (emphasis original).

[88] Booij, "Negation," 395; Muilenburg, *IB* 5:498; and Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 177.

[89] As Goldingay points out, an object suffix on the verb would have been sufficient to express the primary idea (Goldingay, "Isaiah 43, 22-28," 176). Given Biblical Hebrew poetry's preference for terseness and the elimination of prose particles including the definite direct object marker (see e.g., S.E. Gillingham, *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible* [Oxford Bible Series; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 23), its use and location in this verse where neither are necessary justifies the conclusion that the line emphasizes its object. While it is widely acknowledged that biblical Hebrew poetry exhibits significantly less rigid word order than Biblical Hebrew prose (e.g., Wilfred G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* [New York: T&T Clark, 2001], 49; Gillingham, *Poems and Psalms*, 24), this fluidity should not be taken to imply the meaninglessness of word-order in Biblical Hebrew poetry. Indeed, Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 236, notes that "where there was a choice of vocabulary or word-order, the poet would opt for the one which suited his purposes. Likewise, Robert Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 45 and 168, treats word order as meaningful in the particular poems he examines, despite the lack of strict regularity of word order in Biblical Hebrew poetry.

audience's past in-actions. As Goldingay puts it, Isa 43:22a "suggests that the problem lies not with the subject of the verb but in its object."[90] It is not so much a problem that Israel has not encountered, but that Israel has not encountered Yhwh. This way of phrasing the opening complaint at least opens up the possibility that the problem is idolatry, that Jacob has been meeting with other gods.[91] This suspicion is reinforced by the paratactic juxtaposition between the preceding poem and this one. In that poem, just before declaring that a "new thing" and deliverance were imminent (Isa 43:14-21), Yhwh refutes the ability of other gods to do such things (43:8-13). By juxtaposing this poem's complaint against the audience to that sequence of refutation and proclamation of deliverance, the poetry implies that a cause of Israel's unwillingness to believe the proclamation of comfort has been the allure of other deities. Thus the structural tension between the speaker of the poem and its addressee highlights the breach of relationship and suggests at the outset one cause of the audience's resistance to reconciliation. This structural tension reveals and highlights the emotional tension between Yhwh and Israel in this poem. This utterance, to be sure, captures a highly "dramatic moment" that reveals the "essence of [the speaker and audience's] relationship," at least in this instant.[92] Goldingay and Payne comment that, "the I-you confrontation in the verses is a

[90] Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22-28," 176.

[91] This is the position taken by Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 177. In contrast to Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22-28," 176, the second colon does not negate the possibility that devotion to other gods is chastised here. Jacob can just as easily be read as turning elsewhere out of weariness as ceasing from religious activities altogether out of weariness.

[92] W. R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 3.

strong feature."[93] Each of the two stanzas showcase the confrontation between the poem's "I" and its "you" in both the subjects of their verbs and in their use of pronouns.[94]

The first stanza is dominated by in-activities of the addressee for which they stand accused. The two exceptions to this uniform focus on the addressee as a non-agent highlight the contrast and conflict between speaker and addressee. In the central bicolon, Yhwh's in-activities are described and these are immediately juxtaposed in the lines that follow with the lone actions of the addressee in the stanza.[95] The contrast is not in Jacob/Israel's favor. While the central lines claim that Yhwh did not enslave (העבדתיך) or weary (הוגעתיך) Israel, v. 24b charges that Israel has enslaved (העבדתני) and wearied (הוגעתני) Yhwh. Westermann has compellingly argued that the verbal contrast in this line constitutes a shocking theological reversal. He comments that "if God is made into an *'ebed*, if he is made to serve, he has his divinity taken from him …. Here in 43.24 … [is a] reversal of the natural relationship between God and man, in which God is lord and man is God's servant."[96] Indeed, the very next poem's return to the promise of coming deliverance will explicitly correct this reversal. There Jacob is addressed by Yhwh as "my servant" (עבדי, 44:1).

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93 Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:306.

94 Baltzer observes, "the suffixes of the first and second person masculine singular … alternate throughout" (*Deutero-Isaiah*, 180). However, they do not so much alternate as shape the poem, especially in the first stanza.

95 Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:306, note, "the first person verb makes the middle bi-colon stand out." This "stand[ing] out" of v. 23b is not incidental and highlights the meaning of the first stanza.

96 Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 131. Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22-28," 183, cites Westermann approvingly and comments in light of Westermann's interpretation that "this indictment of the people's worship by Isaiah of the exile is not merely in continuity with the ministry of the eighth-century prophets. It is more terrible than theirs."

The second stanza (vv. 25-28) inverts the subject patterning. Here, the divine actor dominates the verbs.[97] Not only is the structure of the subject-verb relationships reversed in this second stanza, the negation is removed. The shift from a predominance of in-actions by Jacob/Israel to a majority of divine activities is reinforced by this structure. While Israel has been inactive (vv. 22-24a), Yhwh has and will be active (vv. 25, 28). The contrast itself is enough to point out the tension between the "I" and "you" in this poem and thus reinforce the indictment tonality. However, the nature of Yhwh's activities, as I will argue below, compounds the ominous sense of this passage.

In light of the tension between "I" and "you" throughout this poem, we may agree with Goldingay that "v. 25 may be more confrontational and less purely comforting than it is often read."[98] The emphatic interest of v. 25 is clearly upon the divine "I." The line begins, "I, I am he, who obliterates your transgressions for my sake" (Isa 43:25a). As Goldingay notes, "[l]onger than any other line so far, v. 25 has some emphasis."[99] All but one of the tricolon's five pronouns occur in the first two cola. The tricolon's imbalance reflects the imbalance in the relationship between "I" and "you." Jacob/Israel has been thoroughly described as the one who does not live up to its end of the covenant (43:22-24). Now, the emphasis upon divine forgiveness may be read as accusatory through the sharp contrast between the "I" and "you." While the "you" is the transgressor, the "I" is the one who wipes out transgressions. Yhwh is one characterized

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[97] Verbs with the divine speaker as their subject both open and close the stanza (vv. 25, 28). Enclosed within this envelope structure are an imperative bicolon calling for action from the audience (v. 26) and a bicolon recounting activities of persons associated with the audience (v. 27).

[98] Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22-28," 175.

[99] Ibid., 183. I am reading the line, along with Goldingay, as a tricolon (ibid.). This division of the line makes it a balanced 3-3-3. This rendering of the line length is based upon a count of accented syllables.

by the activity of forgiving. In contrast, Israel's sins, transgressions, and omissions are all that characterize the people's activity.

The poem's final tricolon (v. 28) is noteworthy for the absence of pronominal forms. In a poem that has been cluttered with such forms, this absence is striking and contributes to the starkness of the final line pair. Here, Yhwh promises to "pierce" and to "devote to the ban." The object of this action is no longer the personal "you" but a simple "Jacob" and "Israel." As Goldingay and Payne note of the occurrence of these forms in v. 22, "the confrontational nature of the line is emphasized by the bare address 'Jacob-Israel'. There are no friendly epithets such as 'my servant'/'my chosen' here."[100] These epithets will return in 44:1 whose juxtaposition with this poem's conclusion will return the sequence to its more comforting deliverance orientation. Thus the poem structurally returns to its opening starkness, exacerbated by the violent images unaccompanied by the relational, if confrontational, pronouns.[101]

Second, in addition to the confrontational structure produced by the pronominal patterns of the poem, the dominance of the negative particle (לֹא) in the first stanza cannot but contribute to the ominous and indignant tonality of the poem. Seven times in four bicola the particle appears, in all but two of these instances opening the colon.[102] In this hammering, insistent negativity "the succession of negatives reinforce each other and

[100] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:308.

[101] It is noteworthy that the absence of pronominal forms may be seen as an exemplar of terminal modification. As discussed above, terminal modification is one way in which poetic texts produce closure.

[102] Each of these exceptions occur in the bicola whose pronominal structure is chiastic (vv. 23a and 24b), reinforcing the sense that these two bicola mirror one another and that in the second instance a second person pronoun is missing. This deviation, as I have already noted, prepares for the dramatic thematic reversal of Isaiah 43:24b. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:305, also comment on the recurrence of negative particles. They note that a "series of seven occurrences of [w^{e}]*lōʾ* … runs through [43:22-24] … marking Yhwh's accusation … and self-defence."

help to give effect to the final *lakh*."[103] The resultant concentration of negatives highlights still further the climactic import of this line in which Yhwh speaks the deity's own inactivity in this confrontation, inactivity that will be sharply overturned in v. 25, precisely the line set off from the others by the sudden absence of the negative particle.

Third, the second stanza employs a courtroom motif that exacerbates the already contentious tonality of the poem.[104] Westermann notes that the "trial speech proper … only begins at v. 26,"[105] though one might agree with Baltzer's determination regarding the poem as a whole that it is "comparable to a judicial hearing."[106] The court metaphor appears most strongly in the parallel verbal forms "be judged" (נשפטה) and "be pronounced righteous" (תצדק). In light of its juxtaposition with this pair of judicial terms in parallel, it seems probable that the bicolon's opening imperative "make me remember" (הזכירני) should be read as "a technical term for bringing a matter to the attention of a court."[107]

The invitation to "make me remember" echoes the preceding poem's command not to remember the former things (43:18). Such a juxtaposition may imply that if the audience insists upon dwelling on the past, Yhwh is willing to give them the trial, and

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[103] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:498. Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22-28," 175, also comments on this phenomenon writing, "after the seven negatives, the 'on the other hand' (אך) which opens v. 24b provides a contrasting introduction to Yhwh's positive accusation."

[104] Legal terminology was listed above as one of the primary tonal indicators of the indictment tonality.

[105] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 131.

[106] Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 177. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:497, also notes the legal imagery of the passage. It is not necessary to posit a particular historical setting for this legal imagery. The language is poetic and allusive, yet it clearly integrates the language of a legal proceeding. Whether the reference to the "first father" draws the imagery back into probable proceedings at the city gate in pre-monarchic times, or whether the audience's more contemporary experiences with monarchic rulings and the Babylonian legal system are in view, the resonances of the legal terms produce similar implications. The experience of being on trial, of being judged, and of (possibly) presenting one's case transcend particularities and apply to each of these scenarios.

[107] Goldingay, "Isaiah 43, 22-28," 187.

perhaps the punishment their past actions deserve. Within the poem at hand, this explicit employment of the court metaphor retrospectively re-casts all that has preceded. Whether or not the complaints about Israel and the contrasting depiction of Yhwh were initially presented as "evidence," once the court is obviously in session it is clear they have been entered as such.[108] Though the court metaphor implies images of justice and equity, it is clear that justice is not in Israel's favor. Their past actions have been brought against them, and the poetry depicts them about to be judged again. Despite Muilenburg's contention that the invitation to Jacob-Israel to present its case is an "opportunity … [to make a case for] some ground for vindication," it is overwhelmingly clear that the invitation is not altogether friendly and that vindication is not imminent. Rather, as Goldingay claims, Jacob/Israel "is invited to draw matters to the attention of Yhwh and the court; but the resonances of the verb 'remind me' hint that it is tying a noose for its own neck."[109] The return to indictment in v. 27 constitutes the court's verdict. Not only is Jacob/Israel guilty, it has been guilty all along, as far back as its "first father," certainly to be identified with Jacob, Israel's eponymous ancestor.[110]

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[108] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:498, articulates the scholarly dilemma about these charges writing, "Israel could hardly be censured for not offering sacrifices in a foreign land, for they were doubtless forbidden." A potential solution is that the critique concerns the past, the neglect of sacrifices prior to the exile. However, as Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-66*, 1:309, point out, "lengthy concern with the activities of the pre-exilic community is not obviously in place in the exilic Isaiah's prophetic ministry." However, it should be noted that this poem makes reference to the sin of Israel's "first father," (v. 27) an obvious concern with the failings of the past. As Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 133, notes, "the purport of v. 27 is that, in God's sight, the whole of Israel's history has been mistaken." In light of the poem's concluding return to sacrificial imagery with its language of the "ban" it seems that the poem is interested in both Israel's past and its future. While the cultic neglect here critiqued may fall in the past, this seems rather to highlight the extent of Israel's reversal of divine-human relations than to provide an alibi for the present generation.

[109] Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22-28," 187.

[110] Just who this "first father" is has occasioned significant debate among commentators. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-66*, 232, states the problem thus: "Jacob is *the* ancestor for the author of Isaiah 40-48, the one whose name the community addressed carries. But we know of no sin committed by Jacob, and contrary to an opinion often expressed, none is mentioned in the fragmentary tradition about Jacob preserved in Hos. 12:3-4, 12." Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:305; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 133;

Indeed, the condemnatory decision of the court is given chilling confirmation in what may be read as the sentencing phase (43:28).

Certainly the pronounced sentence that follows deals, at least in part, with the sins of the past. Both the sin of the "first father" and the "rebellion" of the "interpreters" (43:27) are expressed via perfect aspect verbs (חטא and פשעו), and clearly refer to activities that are over and done with. Even the lengthy list of charges at the outset of the poem (43:22-24) were of past sins of omission. Yet in the speaking moment of the poem, as I have already noted, at least part of Yhwh's rage seems motivated by the present resistance to the proclamation of salvation in the preceding poem and an unwillingness to let go of the "former things" (43:18). In light of this apparent unwillingness, Yhwh now reminds the audience of some of what the former things include – with a heavy emphasis on Israel's failings and reaching as far back as their "first father" (43:27).

In stark contrast to, and immediate juxtaposition with, all this reference to the past, the expressions of Yhwh's response to these rebellions are presented via imperfect aspect verbal forms (אחלל and אתנה).[111] While the imperfect aspect need not indicate future activity, it at least implies that the punishment may not be entirely complete. Given the poem's setting between two announcements of salvation (43:14-21 and 44:1-5), the ongoing nature of the threat may only obtain if the audience persists in resisting

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and McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 59, are among the supporters of the position Blenkinsopp here critiques. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 181-82, takes the claim somewhat further, reading Isa 43:22-24 in tandem with Jacob's interactions with Laban in Genesis and noting multiple verbal parallels. Baltzer's view of Jacob's sin in that context seems to be that Jacob served himself rather than Yhwh, though no negative assessment of Jacob's service of Yhwh is articulated in Genesis. I am in agreement with scholars who see Jacob referenced here in light of Hosea's assessment. The Hosean text securely pre-dates Second Isaiah. However, for this argument it is not necessary for Second Isaiah to know the Hosean text. Rather, Second Isaiah only need be familiar with a tradition regarding Jacob with which Hosea was also familiar. The use of legal language (ריב) and the notion of recompensing Jacob's deeds (Hos 12:3) clearly constitute a negative assessment of Jacob in the Hosean passage despite Blenkinsopp's claims.

[111] See further n. 116.

such promises of deliverance. This is especially the case if such resistance involves dwelling on the "former things," things this poem has thoroughly characterized as highlighting Israel's failings. Absent from this poem's depiction of the past is the audience's own expressed sense of the past – i.e. that Yhwh abandoned them. The focus in this poem seems to be on justifying Yhwh's treatment of the audience in the past rather than upon dealing directly with their complaint.

Finally, the second stanza concludes with an alarming tricolon (v. 28) whose starkness has already been noted in light of the absence of pronominal forms. This apparent cutting-off of the relationship embodied in the removal of relational language both confirms the expressed fears of the audience of Second Isaiah, and reinforces the meaning of the closing lines themselves.[112] The ban (חרם) connotes both extreme violence and entails an understanding of Israel as enemy of Yhwh. The ban was a total destruction carried out against Israel's enemies on divine orders and as a form of sacrifice to Yhwh.[113] As Goldingay and Payne note, the term חרם "suggests the removal of something from the realm of the profane into Yhwh's realm, and the recognition of that by its destruction in the manner of a sacrifice that is thus given over to Yhwh."[114] This notion of the ban as a sacrificial annihilation resonates with the opening stanza's

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[112] See ch. 3 on the concerns of the audience over the possibility of divine abandonment expressed in their embedded speeches.

[113] *HALOT* 1:354, lists two meanings for this root "devote to destruction" and "dedicate something to Y[hwh] by the ban." Lev 27:28-29 unites these meanings, calling that which has been devoted to the ban "holy to Yhwh" as well as noting that any person devoted to the ban may not be redeemed but must be killed. Deut 2:34 describes the execution of the ban as leaving no survivors. In Deuteronomy and particularly in Joshua, the ban is consistently deployed against Israel's enemies during its conquest of Canaan. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 61, notes, "[t]he concluding line speaks of Yahweh's judgment as the 'ban' …; this means total and irremediable destruction." At the outset of his study of the root and its ancient Near Eastern parallels, Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical ¥erem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (BJS 211; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 16, describes the semantic range of the root חרם in within the Bible as "consecration to destruction."

[114] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 1:318.

insistence that Israel has neglected the sacrifices, and may suggest that the sacrifice that Yhwh is now willing to accept for Israel's past neglect of sacrifices instead is Israel's own destruction – their *self*-sacrifice.[115]

Alongside the reference to the ban, the intention to "pierce" (ואחלל) holy leaders constitutes a menacing double entendre.[116] While חלל can mean either "to pierce" (חלל I) or "to profane" (חלל III), and its juxtaposition with "holy" suggests the latter, the violence of the ban suggests the meaning "pierce."[117] Through the juxtaposition of both "holy" and the "ban" the word seems to carry a menacing double meaning. It implies both piercing and profanation, neither of which is particularly comforting. The depiction is one of divine resolve for total destruction, an annihilating sacrifice that will replace the neglected sacrifices for which Israel has been indicted. This concluding set of images echoes back upon the earlier depiction of Yhwh as "obliterator" of transgressions (43:25).

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[115] Stern, *The Biblical ¥erem*, 196, comments that the use of "three semantically interrelated roots: חלל, קדש and חרם," indicates that "those students of the text who appreciate that the use of חרם here [Isa 43:28] cannot be simply to indicate destruction are therefore correct."

[116] I am reading the imperfect verb ואחלל as the pronounced sentence of the court, and thus a future, or at the very least incomplete, activity. The form as pointed in the MT is clearly an imperfect rather than a *waw* consecutive. While it is true that the א of the first person imperfect prefix rejects the doubling required by the form of the *waw* consecutive, א typically produces compensatory lengthening which has not occurred in this form. Rather, the *patakh* under the *waw* should be understood as a reflection of the rule of *sheva*, having become the short a-vowel because it precedes a *khatef patakh*. Additionally, the existence of the audience itself testifies that all Israel has not yet been devoted to the ban, and thus the ongoing nature of the verb is significant as well as threatening. I see no reason to follow Goldingay's suggestion of reading the verb "to refer vividly to a single past event *as if in progress* and thus vividly" (Goldingay, "Isaiah 43, 22-28," 190). In the world of the poem there is no reason for the audience to yet be certain that punishment is fully in the past. The poetry continues to leave this question open, and the use of the imperfect here confirms and exacerbates that tension. Among modern translations, ASV, NASV, NIV, and NKJV translate these verbs in the English future tense. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 58, acknowledges the difficulty. He justifies his English past tense translation with the footnoted comment, "[p]ast tense by conjectural emendation; Heb. future." Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 176, likewise renders the verbs in the English past tense and notes that this is "contrary to MT."

[117] These definitions and the assignment of the meanings I, II, and III are from BDB, 319-20. The second meaning of the root "play the pipe" is not relevant in this context. Stern, *The Biblical ¥erem*, 195, notes the irony of this double entendre. He writes, "[o]ne should note an ironic twist in the prophet's language. The notion of Israel as a holy people was of course this prophet's bread and butter. Given the sacral connotation of the word חרם, Deutero-Isaiah was also referring to God's having made Israel a people apart and holy even as he spoke of God's condemnation and the enemy's mockery."

In light of the annihilatory fashion in which Yhwh is prepared to accept atonement, "obliterator" appears not so much generous as portentous. Thus the poem concludes with the audience's worst fears presented for their imaginations. Yhwh has resolved not only to abandon relational ties with Israel, but to accept repayment for Jacob's misdeeds through destruction. This intention contrasts sharply with the intention to comfort articulated by the sequence's opening lines (40:1-2) and reveals the extent to which the divine voice in Second Isaiah moves between two decidedly conflicted tonalities.

Thus, Isa 43:22-28 presents an ominous, indicting, angry tonality from the divine speaker who just a few poems ago called for tender speaking (40:2). Indeed, in the immediately preceding poem the same speaker promised deliverance (43:14-21). The poem invites the audience to imagine a world in which they are Yhwh's adversaries. As the resonances with the preceding poem suggest, this adversarial relationship may result from the audience's unwillingness to let go of the past. The adversarial tension between the poem's "I" and "you" and the legal imagery of the poem create the potential for envisioning the relationship in these terms. The poem then carries the audience's imagination further, leading them to contemplate the verdict and punishment to be carried out upon Yhwh's adversaries. This violent resolution to devote Israel to the ban is a far cry from "O comfort, comfort my people," (40:1) and stands in stark tension with those lines. The expectation of coming comfort is thus undermined, producing tonal tension which continues in the alternation of tonalities that follows. Given the poem's location between two poems promising deliverance, this poem's description of the punishment that the audience's past deserves seems designed to overcome their resistance to the proclamation of the preceding poem and to ready the audience to accept this

proclamation when it is offered again in the poem that follows (44:1-5). The poem works to overcome this resistance in two ways. First, it presents Yhwh's past punishments as justified by highlighting Israel's long history of sin and rebellion. Second, by presenting an image of punishment reserved for Yhwh's adversaries (i.e., חרם) it encourages the audience to abandon their adversarial resistance to Yhwh's proclamation of deliverance and comfort, lest they suffer it again. Thus this indictment poem stands juxtaposed between two announcements of deliverance and works to reinforce their message. This alternation and juxtaposition of comfort and indictment tonalities functions paratactically. The attitude of the divine speaker shifts in jarring ways without explanation or explicit connection. Rather, the reader is confronted by the two contrasting possible worlds opened up by these divergent attitudes and is forced to reckon with their contrast and conflict.

2.5. Your Name is Transgressor – Isaiah 48:1-11[118]

Again in Isa 48:1-11, a lyric center in the indignant indictment tonality, the reader encounters the divine voice speaking in barely controlled rage.[119] Again the addressee

[118] I am reading 48:1-11 as a self-contained poetic unit. The beginning of the poem is clearly marked by the shift in addressee from Babylon to Jacob/Israel. The formulaic "Hear this" (48:1) that opens the poem is mirrored in the "Listen to me" (48:12) that opens the poem that follows. In agreement are: Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 282; and Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 195. A substantive break at v. 11 is widely recognized whether as a subunit or as a poem break. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 286, comments that "there seems to be general agreement that a major break occurs after v. 11, where the *Isaiah Scroll* has a half-line gap." Additionally, the MT testifies to breaks at the points I am suggesting. There are *setumas* both prior to 48:1 and following 48:11. The MT's testimony is mixed, however, since it also includes a *setuma* following 48:2 which I have counted as a stanza break rather than a division between poems. This unit division is in contrast to Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:115; and Muilenburg, *IB* 5:553, who read this unit as a subunit within the larger poem 48:1-22.

[119] Isaiah 48:1-11 shows the elements of a lyric center. It exhibits a significant concentration of tonal indicators including violent imagery (vv. 10-11), legal language (v. 1), and indictment (vv. 1-2, 4-5, 6, 8). These three tonal indicators together span the poetic unit and contribute a dominant tonality throughout the unit.

should be identified with the audience themselves. The addressee is named here as Jacob and Israel. Thus the divine voice in this poem confronts the audience's resistance to the message of comfort directly. Immediately following, as it does, a sharp condemnation of Babylon spoken by the divine voice, the indictment stands in sharp contrast to expectation. Rather than contrasting the audience with their enemy, the divine voice charges them with idolatry (48:5) much as the preceding poem depicted Babylon as being misled by her sorcerers (47:12-13). Here in 48:1-11, Yhwh expresses anger over Israel's past stubbornness and inappropriate naming of events and figures. The poem highlights its angry tonality via the trope of naming, employs a pair of striking metaphors to illustrate stubbornness, and culminates in a menacing furnace image.[120]

<u>Stanza 1</u>
[1] "Hear this! O, House of Jacob,
the ones calling themselves by the name Israel,
but who went out from me,[121] O Judah,

[120] Again, this heavy reliance on imagery and metaphor in the examination of the poem's tonality is illustration of my argument that the lyricism of Second Isaiah's poetry necessarily impacts the mode of its interpretation.

[121] The MT has וממי "from the waters" as does 1QIsa[a]. The "waters of Judah" is an unusual collocation and, as Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:122, note, it "does not occur elsewhere." A number of suggestions have been made for emendations including the proposal of וממעי "from the loins of Judah" by D. Winton Thomas, *BHS*, 750. However, the loss of a medial *ayin* seems unlikely. Baltzer, *Isaiah 40-55*, 281, suggests emending to וממצי "from the womb of Judah." This suggestion fails to smooth the unlikely connection between the two elements of the construct chain since Judah is a male figure in Israelite literature and therefore wombless. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40*-55, 285, advocates reading the MT with the idea that "waters" may serve as a "euphemism for sperm." However, the only support for such a euphemism cited by Blenkinsopp is the use of עין "fountain" in Deut 33:28. In that context with its references to agricultural produce and dew, it is hardly clear that a euphemism for sperm is intended or implied and, in any case, the noun differs from the one present in Isa 48:1. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:122, note that "*mimmê* might be a poetic variant for *min*." Here Goldingay and Payne cite Chris Franke, *Isaiah 46, 47, and 48: A New Literary-Critical Reading* (Biblical and Judaic Studies 3; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 171. Franke herself presents this poetic variant as one possibility for the form in the MT, but determines simply to read with the LXX and notes the various poetic possibilities for other readings. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:122, note that the LXX's reading "hardly constitutes evidence that the LXX understood the word thus rather than that it was translating loosely." However, reading וממי as a form of מן does seem the most plausible option. The expected form would be ממני and would thus require the loss of a *nun*. The *nun* could plausibly have been lost haplography. Support for this reading may be found in the poetic structure. In the pair of bicola in which this form appears, the second lines of each bicolon are clearly parallel with their parallel passive verbs for naming and explicit statement of a name. The opening line is a disputational address followed by a vocative. Reading ממני allows one to

the ones sworn by the name Yhwh ,
but (who) testify against the God of Israel,[122]
not truly[123] and not righteously.
[2] Though they call themselves (ones) from the holy city,[124]
upon the God of Israel they leaned,
Yhwh of armies is his name.[125]

Stanza 2
[3] The former things I declared from of old,
and from my mouth they went out and I announced them,
suddenly I acted and they arose.
[4] Since I know that you are hard,
and iron sinews are your neck,
and your brow is copper.
[5] I declared to you from of old,
before it came I announced to you.
Lest you say my toil made them,
and my idol and my molten image commanded them.[126]

Stanza 3
[6] You have heard, See![127] All of it.
But you, will you not declare it?
I hereby[128] announce to you new things henceforth,

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read "Judah" as a vocative in parallel with "house of Jacob." The description of Judah as "from me" also contrasts sharply with the later charge that they call themselves "from the holy city."

[122] BDB, 270, suggests "mention" as translation for this particular instance of the *hiphil* of זכר, noting the parallel of "sworn by" above. *HALOT*, 1:270, lists "take to court" as the first meaning of זכר in the *hiphil*. In light of the similar tonality between this passage and the courtroom scene of 43:22-28 which also employs זכר in the *hiphil*, I have chosen "testify" to reflect the legal implications of this form. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:115, note the overtones of a court scene in this passage. Likewise Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 282, treats the unit as a court scene.

[123] The adverbial accusative is a potential sense for the noun אמת (*HALOT*, 1:69). Since the objection is clearly to the manner in which the addressees have performed the activity of testifying, this seems the most helpful translation in this instance.

[124] I am reading the *niphal* as reflexive. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40*-55, 2:121, also read the *niphal* in this manner. This verse is a further explication of the preceding verse. They remember Yhwh not truthfully, that is they place their trust in the city while all the while they have been supported not by the city but by the deity. The concessive translation of כי "though" is supported by Christopher R. Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40-66" in *Introduction to the Prophetic Literature, The Book of Isaiah, The Book of Jeremiah, The Book of Baruch, The Letter of Jeremiah, The Book of Lamentations, The Book of Ezekiel* (12 vols.; *NIB*; Eds. Leander E. Keck, et al.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 6:417.

[125] The stanza break is marked by a slight change of subject while the speaker and addressee remain the same and is supported by a small *vacat* within the line in 1QIsa[a].

[126] The stanza break is indicated by the parallel openings of vv. 1 and 6.

[127] The Qal imperative of חזה sounds very similar to הזה "this" with definite article – you heard "this." Thus through sound play this line echoes the poem's opening line שמע־זאת.

[128] If the idiom of "from now" is "henceforth" (following BDB, 774), then the verb should be considered an example of the "performative perfect," which Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 489, describe as a

and guarded things you do not know.
[7] Now they are created and not from of old nor before today,
but you did not hear them lest you say "Look! I knew."
[8] You neither heard, nor knew,
nor did you open your ears from of old.
For I knew you would surely deal treacherously,
and you are named 'transgressor since the womb.'

Stanza 4[129]
[9] For the sake of my name I will restrain my anger,
and for my glory I will muzzle[130] myself for you lest I cut you off.
[10] Look, I smelt[131] you but not with silver.
I test[132] you in a furnace of affliction.
[11] For my sake, for my sake I will do it,
for why should I[133] be profaned?
and my glory to another I will not give."

The opening "Hear this!" announces the passage as confrontational from the outset.[134] As Goldingay and Payne note, this call to attention connotes a "prophetic

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"subtype" of the instantaneous perfect "in which not only are speaking and acting simultaneous, they are identical."

[129] The stanza break is marked by a shift in subject while speaker and addressee remain the same. The break is also supported by a small *vacat* within the line in 1QIsa[a].

[130] חטם is a hapax legomenon. See the discussion of this term below.

[131] The verbs in this verse are perfect aspect. They are framed by imperfect verbs that describe Yhwh's impending action and are immediately followed by the explicit notice, "I will do it." For this reason there is some ambiguity about how fully completed these actions are. See further below.

[132] 1QIsa[a] has בחן as the root. The apparent meaning is "tested." BDB, 104, reads the MT's בחר as meaning "tested" as well, though this verse is the only biblical attestation given for this meaning. The context seems to demand a meaning other than "chosen" here. The unusual word choice is likely motivated by the resultant sound play with "in a furnace" (בכור).

[133] There is an obvious textual corruption here. Either the referent of "it" has dropped out due to haplography or the person of the verb has been altered. 1QIsa[a] has the verb as first-person singular, i.e., the deity is asking "why should I be profaned." This reading offers clear syntax and the possible suggestion that MT's reading results from a pious emendation to avoid the possibility of claiming that the deity would be profaned. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 286, uses a similar argument to defend his claim that שמי "my name" has been dropped from MT "to avoid juxtaposing the Name of God with the verb *ḥll*, 'profane.'" Blenkinsopp's reading agrees with LXX, which makes the subject of the verb "to profane" τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ("my name"). However, there are no particularly telling triggers for haplography of שמי in this context. Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 265, concurs, writing, "there is no obvious explanation for how such an omission could have occurred." While that does not exclude the possibility of a scribal error of this sort, it does make the 1QIsa[a] reading more likely and suggest the possibility that LXX was attempting to make sense of a text like the extant MT with its supply of a subject familiar from the context. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 282, also reads the verb as first person following 1QIsa[a].

[134] Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, 123, notes that the form of the opening address "echoes the address to Mistress Babylon in verse 8 of the previous chapter." Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville:

invective" which then "ricochet[s] into something more like a disputation or court scene."[135] Despite the relative neutrality of the series of designations "Jacob," "Israel," and "Judah," this opening imperative signals the confrontational direction to which the poem will quickly turn.

The poem is shaped and structured by its recurrent reference to names.[136] Through this recurrent motif, Isa 48:1-11 both indicts Israel and hints at a shocking transformation of its relationship with Yhwh through the rescinding of the ancestor Jacob's name change to Israel hinted at in the implicit and explicit echoes of the story of Jacob at the Jabbok. The poem's interest in appropriate naming appears immediately in its opening lines' lengthy forms of address.[137] Twice in the opening stanza the addressees are identified by their own self-designation, "the ones calling themselves by the name Israel," (v. 1) and those who call themselves "from the holy city" (v. 2). Additionally, the term "name" שֵׁם occurs three times in this opening stanza, once in reference to the name of the addressee, twice in reference to Yhwh's name. The second and fourth cola of the opening stanza (vv. 1-2) clearly parallel each other. Each identifies the audience in terms of their use of a name. The second colon identifies the audience by the name they call themselves – "Israel." The fourth colon refers to the audience as those who swear by the name of Yhwh. Each of these designations could certainly be

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Westminster John Knox, 2001), 373, likewise notes that the "imperative 'Hear,' … sets the tone for the chapter."

[135] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:115.

[136] Ibid., note that "the five occurrences of 'name' in one ch. (vv. 1a, 1b , 2, 9, 19) is exceeded in the Prophets only by Malachi 1."

[137] Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 142-3, points out that "the customarily brief designation of the addressees, Jacob and Israel, has been expanded several-fold in vv. 1-2. Israel is addressed precisely as the people whose worship of Yahweh (instanced by their swearing by the name and their invocation of God, v. 1de) is seriously flawed." Likewise, Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:122-3, note that "the string of participial clauses in v. 1 … is the most substantial such sequence used to describe audience rather than speaker."

interpreted positively, yet each is contravened by the colon that follows. The third colon of the stanza seems to indicate that despite the way they refer to themselves, the people calling themselves Israel are not actually faithful to Yhwh. The fifth colon accuses them of misusing the name of Yhwh in their testimony, and the subsequent colon heaps the charge of falsehood upon this indictment.[138] The final reference to the audience's self-designation indicates that they see themselves as natives of the holy city (v. 2). However, the divine voice apparently sees this designation too as unsatisfactory for it neglects the residents' need to depend on Yhwh. The stanza problematizes each of the audience's self-designations by highlighting the inappropriateness of their use of both their own name and Yhwh's. However, no such uncertainty is expressed about the deity's own name. The stanza closes with a climactic nominal clause "Yhwh of armies is his name" (v. 2). The military implications of the title "Yhwh of armies" (יהוה צבאות), despite being one of Second Isaiah's favorite designations for the deity, are not incidental here.[139] The further use of militaristic imagery throughout the poem will further tilt the tonality created by the strong indictment of this opening stanza towards violence.

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[138] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 288, claims that "the reservation about the disingenuous invoking of Yahveh's name … has been inserted by a disillusioned scribe reflecting a later and less-promising situation." However, Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, 123, is correct in noting that, "[t]he words of accusation are carefully woven into the fabric of what proves to be a carefully nuanced message …. The ebb and flow of this chapter skillfully reflect the prophet's realistic awareness of the convolution of the human response to divine initiative. Any attempt to sort out pure promise from pure judgment tears apart a skillfully balanced message."

[139] *HALOT*, 3:996, discusses the epithet צבאת for Yhwh and lists a reference to military troops as the first among the most plausible suggestions for its meaning. The epithet is apparently a specialized use of the noun צבא the first two meanings of which are "military service" and "military men, troops" (*HALOT*, 3:995). The traditional translation of this phrase "Lord of Hosts" (e.g., NRSV, KJV, NASV), reflects an English meaning of the word "hosts" meaning armies ("Host," in *Oxford English Dictionary* [2nd ed.; 20 vols.; eds., J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991], 7:416, defines host as "an armed company or multitude of men, an army," and notes that this meaning is now archaic and poetic). Thus, Yhwh of the armies is a reflection of this traditional understanding in more contemporary idiom. Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 261, translates the phrase "the Lord of Hosts," and further describes this figure as "the Almighty God who has all the armies of heaven at his command."

The interest in names reappears in vv. 8 and 9. Now Yhwh names the addressee "transgressor since the womb" (v. 8) in an overturning of the renaming that gave Israel the name they claim according to v. 1. The passage alludes to Gen 32:29-30, the end of Jacob's wrestling match with the divine being at the fords of the Jabbok.[140] In that scene, Jacob is told that his name will no longer be Jacob but Israel, "for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed" (Gen 32:29). Following the change of Jacob's name to Israel, Jacob asks the wrestler for his name and is refused (Gen 32:29). Instead the figure blesses Jacob. In Isa 48:1-11 the situation is reversed. The self-appropriated name Israel is questioned by the deity who instead pronounces Yhwh's own name. Now the name pronounced over those who would prefer to be called Israel conjures up the situation of Jacob's original naming. Jacob receives his original name after his apparent struggles in the womb with his brother (Gen 25:22-26) and Esau interprets this naming to be negative in connotation – that is, the supplanter (Gen 27:36). Thus, while the addressees would like to see themselves as those who strive with God and prevail, the name that Yhwh sees as appropriate to them reverses the renaming. They are not the prevailers, but rather the rebels, the supplanters, the transgressors.

Finally, the name of Yhwh provides the reason for Yhwh's decision not to cut the people off entirely. While there are positive elements in the determination not to exterminate the people, and to contain the deity's rage (v. 9), this is by no means completely comforting. Yhwh does not imply that there is anything about Israel that merits restraining the deity's self. Rather, Yhwh will hold back purely for Yhwh's own

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[140] As Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 285, points out the use of the rare term גיד is evidence that Isa 48:1-11 both knows and alludes to Gen 32. He notes, "[i]n view of DtIsa's pleasure in complex levels of meaning, we cannot exclude the possibility that there is a reminiscence of Jacob's beginnings here" (286).

sake, for the honor of Yhwh's name.[141] Thus, the rage will not result in total extermination, which, as we will see, is not the same as an offer of comfort. A limit prohibiting total extermination does not indicate that the divine rage will not be violent nor that its impact will be minimal. Rather Yhwh's restraint is depicted in terms of muzzling and the image of a burning furnace. These, as we will see, are far from comforting images.

The divine speaker's negative and indicting attitude towards the audience is clearly highlighted in the pair of striking metaphors employed to accuse them in the poem's second stanza (vv. 3-5). The context of the pair of metaphors highlights their defensive tonality. In a self-justifying series of lines, Yhwh indicates that these characterizations of Israel constitute just cause for Yhwh's past actions. Yhwh announced and did the things that have occurred in the past because Israel is "hard" (v. 4). The claim that Israel is "hard" is supported by a pair of metaphorical descriptions of Israel: "iron sinews are your neck" and "your brow is copper" (v. 4).

The description of Israel as being 'hard of neck" is certainly not uncommon in the Hebrew Bible. However, as Baltzer points out, the poet here "splits up the formula 'hard

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[141] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 290, summarizes "the main point of the final strophe (vv 9-11) is that now, as in the past, Israel deserves to be destroyed totally, but Yahveh refrains from obliterating them not out of concern for Israel but for his own honor and reputation." Though Blenkinsopp sees this main point as grounds for treating the strophe as from a secondary hand, stating, "this idea is difficult if not impossible to reconcile with the outlook, the tone, and even the religious vocabulary of the 'prophet of consolation'" (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 290), this redactional move is surely unnecessary. The entire poem contains ominous and threatening tonalities, as does a good portion of Second Isaiah. Many scholars attempt to delineate Isaiah 48 into portions attributable to Second Isaiah and those inappropriate for the prophet of comfort. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40*-55, 2:121, note that attempts to treat the confrontational portions of this passage as glosses date as far back as the work of Duhm. This tendency is followed by scholars such as Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 290, and Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 196. Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 143, appropriately refutes this tendency writing: "some scholars deny these and other rebuking passages to Second Isaiah on the grounds he was a prophet of weal and not of woe. This judgment is based upon an impossibly rigid preconception that prophets are classed as [either] weal or woe prophets." Similarly, Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 267, notes that "the tone of frustration in the prophet's words is clearly increasing, even before this chapter …. The strong words of challenge here fit very well in this sequence."

as to their necks,'"[142] and Goldingay and Payne note that the pair of metaphors "seem to represent the prophet's own reworking of the 'stiff-necked' cliché."[143] This reworking is vividly imagistic and adds precision to the standard description of Israel as stiff-necked. Copper, like iron, is a metal used for making armaments (e.g., 2 Sam 22:35; Psa 18:34; and Job 20:24), and the two are frequently paired as images of strength and rigidity (e.g., Isa 26:19; Job 40:18; 41:27; Micah 4:13; Isa 45:2). In the first metaphor, the flexible muscles of movement are displaced by material valuable precisely for its inflexibility.[144] The sense of rigidity is intensified by the use of the metallic descriptor. While sinews are the long supple strands that make up muscles, a length of iron implies rods. The ligaments of Israel's neck are not merely tight, but are depicted as a bundle of iron rods. The second metaphor, "your brow is copper" (v. 4), neatly parallels the first, associating a body part with a metal. The associations of Israel's neck with the people's will is familiar and a similar connotation seems implied in the forehead reference.[145] Copper laying over the forehead conjures up the image of a military helmet protecting the forehead. The employment of the fixed pair of copper and iron intensifies the militaristic overtones of the metaphors and reinforces the sense that the people are being described as inflexible and immovable. Thus, the pair of metaphors presents an image of Israel's stubbornness – its will cannot be broken any more than a bundle of iron rods, and its

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[142] Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 285. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:126, also note this phenomenon.

[143] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:126.

[144] As Baltzer points out, the word for sinew (גיד) in the Isaian passage is the same term used by Gen 32:33 to refer to the muscle of the hip on which Jacob was struck lame after wrestling with the divine being (*Deutero-Isaiah*, 285). The parallel with the Jacob story is illuminating for it illustrates the connotations of the term sinew. A blow to Jacob's sinew renders him lame; the sinew is that which enables movement.

[145] The forehead is used metaphorically by Ezekiel to refer to a stubbornness of will. Ezekiel is told that Yhwh has strengthened the prophet's own forehead, so he must not be afraid of the rebellious people (Ezek 3:7-9).

refusal to hear will not bend any more than a copper helmet. The military imagery implied in these metaphors also impacts the tonality of the imagery. As noted in the delineation of tonal indicators in Second Isaiah above, military references typically accompany the indictment tonality, and their presence in these metaphors reinforce the sense that the deity is not describing Israel's neck and forehead in positive, affirming, or comforting terms.

The final stanza (vv. 9-11) contains yet another metaphor. This time the metaphor characterizes not the people with whom the deity is angry, but Yhwh's anger itself.[146] For the first time in this poem, the divine anger is topicalized (v. 9). This description of Yhwh's anger takes up familiar imagery for the divine wrath, but mixes it with unique images as well. The verbal form אאריך is not typically used with anger as its object and causes some difficulties.[147] The most obvious meaning of the term is "to extend" or "lengthen" which would carry implications that Yhwh intends to allow the divine wrath to grow and to be prolonged. However, the much more familiar phrase ארך אפים employing an adjectival form of the root is typically translated "slow to anger"[148] and appears first in Exod 34:6 as Yhwh's own self-description to Moses following the people's apostasy concerning the golden calf. In that context the attribution

[146] Pilkington, *Poetic Effects*, 157, discusses the metaphor, "He was burning with anger," by noting that, "[t]he feeling of burning is used to communicate the feeling of anger. There is something that it is like to burn, which is similar to what it is like to be angry" (ibid., 157).

[147] In Num 9:19, 22 the cloud of the divine presence is described as lingering or remaining over the tabernacle using a *hiphil* infinitive construct of this same root. However, the more standard, and apparently related, meaning of the *hiphil* is "to prolong" as in the numerous promises, warnings, and commandments about prolonging one's days in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 4:40; 5:16, 33; 6:2; 11:9; 17:20; 25:15; 30:18; 32:47). Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:132, note that it is used in this way to mean "delay" only in Prov 19:11.

[148] The phrase appears in Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17, Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Prov 14:29; 16:32, Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; and Nah 1:3. With the exception of the Proverbs passages, each of these instances describes Yhwh. In each of the cases involving the deity the major English translations (KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV) use the phrase "slow to anger" with the exception of the occasional translation "longsuffering" by the KJV.

"slow to anger" is paired with "compassionate and gracious" (רחום וחנון) and "abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (ורב־חסד אמת), confirming the idea that this attribution "slow to anger" is a positive description, the idiomatic equivalent of "patient."[149] However, the description in the Exodus passage continues by promising not to clear the guilty, but to punish transgressions to the third and fourth generation (Exod 34:7).[150] The tension between the forgiving, compassionate nature of Yhwh and the just punishment of the guilty is resident in the Exodus tradition whose language Isa 48:9-11 employs.

This tension is certainly not foreign to Second Isaiah which, as we have observed, seems to be working out the tension between Yhwh's compassion and anger over the course of the poetic sequence. This tension is present in vv. 9-11 explicitly. Here Yhwh promises to "extend" the divine wrath, exacerbating the ambiguity of the phrase by making it verbal and active. Immediately following the attribution "transgressor from the womb" (v. 8) the verb may carry more of the sense of not clearing the guilty (Exod 34:7) than of being compassionate and gracious (Exod 34:6). Indeed in this context it is almost immediately followed by the imagery of the furnace – almost, but not quite. There is a brief further notice of restraint, "I will muzzle myself for you lest I cut you off" (v. 9), which provides a momentary reprieve from the rage of the indictment. Apparently, whatever "extending" Yhwh's anger means, it will not result in total annihilation of Israel, and, given the parallelism, connotes some measure of restraint. However, this apparent limit on the results of the divine wrath does not diminish the intensity of the

[149] "Patient" is the translation the NIV employs for the phrase when used of humans in Proverbs. The frequent biblical use of the phrase to describe the deity seems to be intentional reuse of the Exodus tradition. In the vast majority of these cases (Neh 9:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; and Jonah 4:2) the phrase is paired with the other positive attributions from the Exodus tradition. Thus, these uses seem to emphasize the patience of the deity with human failings.

[150] This emphasis on the refusal to ignore sin completely is evident in two instances of the phrase: Num 14:18 and Nah 1:3.

portrayal. The depiction of divine self-muzzling depicts a rage that must be forcibly restrained. If it were not held back, it would presumably wipe the people out.[151]

The image of the muzzle develops the anger imagery by further exploring the implications of its association with the nose.[152] Indeed the phrase is literally "I will extend my nose [אפי]" (v. 9). Here the poem seems to play on the almost universal association in Hebrew between heat, rage, and the nose.[153] The muzzle, placed over the nose, prevents an angry animal from using its mouth in attack.[154] The imagery of muzzling the deity hints at a metaphorical association between Yhwh's rage and that of an angry animal. An additional possible metaphorical implication of this form of restraint of the deity's anger/nose, is the concentration of the heat commonly associated with the nose in biblical idiom. To restrain is to hold back, to stop up, not to alleviate. Rage, when bottled up, can grow as often as it can diminish. In a similar way, the image of a muzzle may imply a bottling up without alleviation.[155] A restraint, particularly a

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[151] A total annihilation seems to be implied in the term "cut you off" when it is used of people or people groups. This is the recurrent threatened punishment in Leviticus (e.g., Lev 7:20, 21, 25, 27; 17:4, 9, 10, 14; 18:29; 19:8; 20:3, 5, 6, 17, 18; 22:3; 23:29). The verb is also used to describe the total destruction of people groups in Josh 7:9 and 11:21.

[152] חטם "to muzzle" is a hapax legomenon. Contextually, it clearly means to hold back in some manner since it is further substantiated by the phrase "lest I cut you off." The meaning "muzzle" is derived from its use in cognate languages including Akkadian *¡aÿāmu* and Arabic *¡aÿama* (*HALOT*, 1:307) where it refers to restraints or bridles for animals' mouths. Such a connection is implied in the passage at hand by the use of אף "nose" to mean "anger" in this context. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:133, conclude that "[t]here are … enough likely clues from usage that could also have been familiar in the audience's day, to make it possible for the audience to infer that the verb denotes 'muzzle' and thus 'restrain one's anger.'" One such example is the use of the non-cognate root from the same semantic field in the *'nt* poem from Ugarit. There the sea monster is "muzzled" as an emblem of defeat and restraint (KTU 1.3, 37). Regarding the hapax in Isa 48:9, Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 376, determines that, "[t]he verb meant 'to bridle,' as the corresponding verb is used in Arabic, in both the literal and the tropical senses." Presumably Torrey's reference to literal and tropical senses refers to uses that have to do with horsemanship and those that do not, respectively.

[153] *HALOT* 1:77; and BDB, 60, list both "nose" and "anger" as meanings for אף and one might also note the frequency with which this noun is used with verbs of burning or raging.

[154] As in the "muzzling" of the sea monster, see the reference from *'nt* cited above.

[155] The Akkadian cognate *¡aÿāmu* occurs in the Era Epic IV, 122. In that context it refers to the stopping up of a spring (see Stephanie Dalley, "Erra and Ishum (1.113)," in *The Context of Scripture* [3

solid one, placed over the nose would likely have the effect of concentrating the heat that comes out of the nose. Hence, here Yhwh is portrayed as placing the muzzle on God's own nose, both restraining the full effects of the wrath and perhaps concentrating its heat and intensity. Thus, it is not particularly comforting that Yhwh must restrain the anger, rather it highlights the strong urgency behind that anger.

The heat imagery already lurking in the use of "nose" (אף), becomes more explicit in the deployment of the furnace metaphor. In v. 10, the poet depicts Israel's past punishment as a metallurgical process of smelting. In the concentrated heat of Yhwh's rage, Israel was melted, was scorched, and was presumably purified. The intention to purify is explicit elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible's use of the smelting as punishment image (see, e.g., Mal 3:3). Perhaps the image is simply one of punishment that builds upon the already present connotations of the heat of the divine anger. However, given the presence of metalworking themes earlier in the poem as descriptors of the objects of Yhwh's wrath, it is possible that the image has to do with a refashioning of the people, a melting down of their iron and copper stubbornness. While this reading allows a form of positive outcome that is not out of harmony with the phrase "lest I cut you off" (v. 9), it is by no means one that depicts the deity as compassionate and comforting. Indeed, the immediately following notice "I will do it" (48:11) raises the possibility that the audience's current stubborn resistance to the proclamation of comfort may necessitate further smelting. Rather, the poem closes with the divine wrath raging, a painful process of punishment and reformation described, and a "comforter" nowhere apparent. Though

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vols.; ed. William W. Hallo; New York: Brill, 1997], 1:414). Dalley's translation of the line is, "I shall block springs, so that small channels cannot bring the waters of fertility." Unlike the drying up of a spring, stopping up a spring places the blockage at the place of outpouring rather than at the source. In the case of a spring, this leaves the possibility open that the blockage builds up pressure behind it. Similarly, one might imagine a blocking up of anger resulting in such pressure and building.

the very next poem will call the same addressee to listen and promise restoration, at this moment at least Yhwh is speaking angrily. The smelting process may be implied as necessary to melt the audience's stubbornness and enable them to hear the promise of deliverance in the following poem. Indeed, the very next poem calls upon the audience of exiles to respond to the proclamation of comfort and reconciliation in a way that their copper headed stubbornness would not allow. The image of the furnace to melt down this stubbornness and the ominous overtones of the phrase "I will do it" showcase Yhwh's frustration with the audience's inability or unwillingness to hear.

Isaiah 48:1-11 again leads the audience to imagine a world in which Yhwh's fury at them dominates the divine-human relationship. They again stand accused. Imagistic metaphors characterize both the people themselves (as supplanters, and stubborn metals) and the deity (as a raging fire, and as one who burns the people in a furnace). The audience is guided to view their own stubbornness as that of hard metals, and again images of punishment through divine rage are set before them. The ending images of a God so angry that the rage must be forcibly restrained via the image of a muzzle, and of a furnace burning the people combine to pose a fearsome prospect. The poem leaves a live threat in the world the audience is led to imagine. Perhaps Yhwh will abandon restraint, throw off the muzzle, and allow rage to consume them. Perhaps further punishment will be required to melt down their stubborn resistance to the proclamation of comfort.

2.6. Indelibly Engraved – Isaiah 49:14 – 50:3[156]

Isaiah 49:14-50:3 raises and then dashes expectations that Yhwh will conclusively answer the audience's resistance and confirm the opening announcement of comfort. The poem initially appears to be a center within the comforting tonal stream through the family metaphors and tender imagery the divine voice employs to describe the permanence of Yhwh's relationship with Zion.[157] However, even in this deployment of typically comforting metaphors, the divine speaker hints at a darker tonality. The poem progresses from allusive hints at an indignant tonality to a full fledged indictment culminating in the deity's violently powerful self-description.

Stanza 1
[14] Zion said "Yhwh forsook me,
and my Lord forgot me."
[15] "Can a woman forget her nursing newborn,
A new mother[158] the baby[159] of her belly?
Even these may forget,
but I will not forget you.
[16] Look, upon both palms I have carved you.
Your walls are before me continually.
[17] Your children[160] hasten.

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[156] The poem is set off from the preceding poem by a change of subject matter, change of tonality, MT *setuma*, and change of addressee. While the current poem is spoken in the divine voice, to Zion, about her complaints and Yhwh's faithfulness, the preceding poem has an ambiguous speaker who may be either Yhwh or the servant but who speaks triumphantly, concluding with an exhortation to geographic features to rejoice. The endpoint of the poem is marked by a change of speaker and subject matter. The following poem is spoken in the voice of the servant describing his troubles. The end of the poem is also supported by a *setuma* in the MT. While a number of scholars agree that a new unit begins at 49:14 (Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 218; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 307; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:180; Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 148), there is considerable divergence of opinion over where the passage ends. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:180, divide the unit as I do.

[157] The initial expectation of a designation as lyric center in the comfort tonality is raised by the familial imagery extending over several verses (vv. 15-23). However, as the analysis of this passage will suggest, the poem exhibits a mixed tonality.

[158] I am reading the *piel* participle here along with *HALOT* 3:1217, as a reference to the mother in parallel with the woman in the preceding colon.

[159] The Hebrew here is בן and while the reference is probably more generally children, I have employed the term "baby" in order to reflect the alliteration of the phrase בן־בטנה.

[160] 1QIsa[a] has "builders," and while Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 106, considers that reading to be preferable "beyond any doubt according to the concordant testimony of 1QIsa[a], LXX, Theodotion, Aquila, Targum and Vulgate," I am not convinced. "Builders" is the easier reading in the immediate

Your destroyers and your desiccators go out from you.
[18] Lift up your eyes all around and look!
All of them are gathered. They come to you."
"As I live," declares Yhwh, "All of them like adornments you will don,
and you will bind them on like the bride.
[19] Surely your desiccated, your desolated, and your destroyed land,
Surely now it will be cramped as a dwelling place,
and the ones who swallowed you up will be far off.
[20] Again the children of your sorrow will say in your ears,
'The place is too cramped for me,
make room for me that I may dwell.'
[21] And you will say in your heart 'Who bore these for me,
I was bereaved and barren,
an exile and turned aside.
And these, who raised them?
Look *I* was left alone,
and these, where were they?[161]'"

Stanza 2
[22] Thus says my Lord Yhwh, "Look I will lift my hand to nations,
and to peoples I will raise my standard.
And I will bring your sons in a bosom,
and your daughters upon shoulders will be carried.
[23] And kings will be your keepers,
and princesses your nursemaids.
Noses (to) earth they will bow to you,
and the dust of your feet they will lick.
And you will know that I am Yhwh,
Whoever waits for me will not be shamed."[162]

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context, as Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 323, points out, and may be explained as an interpretive emendation to harmonize more closely with the parallel "destroyers" in the line by an early scribal hand. However, as ibid., also notes, "MT's reading accords better with the wider context, which has to do with 'sons' or 'descendants'." I am in agreement with Baltzer and with Islwyn Blythin, "Note on Isaiah 49:16-17," *VT* 16 (1966): 229-30, each of whom propose sound play in the poet's use of "sons." Blythin notes the sound play between Zion's adornment in ch. 49 (your sons, בניך) and her jewels in ch. 54 (your stones, אבניך). Blythin comments, "'your builders', the suggested emendation, understood in its prosaic sense, is clearly an awkward insertion The sons *are* also the builders and the stones, but they are living stones." Similarly, North, *The Second Isaiah*, 193, writes, "there is surely a *double entendre* here."

[161] The stanza break is marked by the messenger formula. The speaker, addressee, and subject remains constant. The break is supported by a *vacat* in 1QIsa[a], and a *petucha* in the MT. The messenger formula seems to function within this poem as a reliable indicator of the beginning of stanzas. It functions this way again at 50:1.

[162] The stanza break is marked by a shift in the subject, from particulars to supporting generalities. The speaker and addressee remain the same. Additionally, as Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40*-55, 2:180, note, the messenger formula in v. 25 is clearly embedded in a verse that "takes up v. 24 rather than being itself the beginning of a subsection." The break is supported by a *vacat* within the line and a paragraph mark in 1QIsa[a].

Stanza 3
24 "Can spoils be stolen from the strong,
or do the captives of a tyrant[163] escape?"
25 For thus says Yhwh,
"Even captives of the strong are stolen,
and the spoils of the tyrant escape.[164]
And with your contenders I will contend,
and your children I myself will save.
26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh,
And they will drink their own blood like new wine.
And all flesh will know,
that I am Yhwh, your savior,
and your redeemer, the Bull of Jacob."[165]

Stanza 4
50:1 Thus says Yhwh,
"Where is this divorce scroll of your mother's which I sent her,
or who is my lender to whom I sold you?
Indeed for your iniquities you were sold,
and for your transgressions your mother was sent out.
2 Why did I come and there was no one,
I called and no one answered.
Is my hand too short to ransom?
Or is there not in me strength to snatch away?
Behold with my rebuke I dried Sea.
I made Rivers a desert,
their fish stink from lack of water,
and die of thirst.
3 I made the heavens wear black,
and turned their clothing to sackcloth."

The poem's opening stanza (49:14-21) begins with some of the most dramatically emotive language in the sequence.[166] The formal constraints of the response to a lament,

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[163] I am reading עריץ with 1QIsa[a], Syriac, and Vulgate. LXX (ἀδίκως) "unjustly" seems to follow this reading. In agreement are: McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 111; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 314; Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 388; and Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 218. However, see my comments below regarding the ambiguity created by the MT.

[164] Against 1QIsa[a] there is no break here. 1QIsa[a] appears to want to read the remark about the oppressors eating their flesh in v. 26 as tightly bound to this comment about saving the sons of Zion. However, a stanza break in the middle of a pair of lines bound by parallelism seems extreme; common sense and poetic structure override 1QIsa[a] in this instance.

[165] The break should only be understood as a stanza break rather than a break between poems. The imagery of the marriage metaphor carries over across the stanzas as do the subject matter and the speaker. The addressee shifts slightly from Zion to her children, but the cohesion across this break is stronger than the disunity. The break is supported by a *vacat* and paragraph mark in 1QIsa[a] and a *setuma* in MT.

the stanza's employment of familial metaphors for both Yhwh and Zion, and the striking image of Zion graven on the deity's palms raise the initial expectation that what follows will be intensely comforting language spoken to the sequence's addressee.

The poem initially addresses Zion, rather than the audience directly. Yet they are present throughout the poem, in the image of Zion's children and through the close parallel between Zion's complaint (49:14) and their own (40:27). Thus, while for the majority of the poem the exilic audience overhears the refutation of someone else's complaint, implicitly they hear the refutation of their own complaint.

The divine speaker begins the poem by quoting Zion's complaint, a frequent formal indication of a forthcoming salvation oracle.[167] However, as several form critics who have drawn attention to the expectation raised by the form have commented, the lines spoken by the divine voice both fulfill and frustrate the salvation oracle form.[168] Goldingay and Payne describe the "pervasive and underlying tone of 49.14-50.3 [as] … that of a lament and of response in the form of a promise of deliverance, even where the language is confrontational."[169] Likewise Schoors notes that Zion's complaint is "contested in the following verses. But the refutation is made with a proclamation of

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[166] V. 15 leads Muilenburg, *IB* 5:574, to comment, "God's love for his people comes to superb expression. It is deeper than the deepest human love, beyond all the bonds of nature." Gillingham, *Poems and Psalms*, 110, cites Isa 49:14-18 as a prophetic adaptation of a "love song." Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 381, writes, "Zion the beloved of Yahwè – is introduced, in a passage of singular pathos."

[167] As Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:184, note, "there is some ambiguity over who reports Zion's words. The continuity from v. 13 would imply the prophet, the continuity in v. 15 would imply Yhwh." In light of the clear continuation of the poem in the divine voice, it seems best to read the quoted speech as embedded within the speech of the deity. Additionally, the mixture of indicting and comforting tonalities within the response to this quoted lament implies that the responding voice raises the issue in order to refute it.

[168] Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 106, classes Isa 49:14-26 as a proclamation of salvation yet notes that, "[a] certain affinity to the disputation is undeniable." Similarly, D.F. Murray, "The Rhetoric of Disputation: Re-examination of a Prophetic Genre" JSOT 38 (1987):105, argues that the passage is both disputation and salvation oracle.

[169] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:181. Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 151, refers to 49:15-21 as a "disputational pronouncement of salvation."

salvation."[170] Yhwh's reiteration of Zion's complaint comes as a sharp contrast to the immediately preceding exhortations to the audience to sing Yhwh's praise (49:13). The apparent reason for the singing of Yhwh's praise in that context was the description of restoration in the preceding poem (49:8-12). Thus, despite the expectations of consolation implied in the salvation oracle form, it is not altogether surprising that Yhwh's response to Zion's complaint is tinged with aggravation. The presence of the complaint (49:14) indicates a continued resistance by the audience to the proclamation of comfort, in direct defiance, it might be added, of the preceding exhortations to praise (49:13). As noted then, it is not altogether surprising that Yhwh's response to Zion's complaint mixes some of the most tender imagery for the divine-human relationship anywhere in scripture with a damning critique made all the sharper by its allusive nature and embeddedness in the tender imagery that surrounds it.

Zion has complained of being forgotten and abandoned by the deity (v. 14). The divine response enters the realm of familial imagery, explicitly comparing the faithful attentiveness of the deity to that of a nursing mother.[171] Much has been made, and rightly so, of this strong and tender comparison. Yhwh, who elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible is almost universally described via masculine images, explicitly takes up a specifically feminine partner for comparison.[172] As noted above in the delineation of tonal indicators, familial imagery is an element of the comfort tonality in which the metaphor of marriage

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[170] Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 106.

[171] As Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:185, note, the noun for child "suggests a suckling, which heightens the force of the question."

[172] Mayer I. Gruber, "The Motherhood of God in Second Isaiah" *RB* 90 3 (1983): 351-359, has argued that via an implied third rhetorical question Yhwh employs a self-description as the mother of Zion (356). While I concur with Gruber and with John J. Schmidt, "The Motherhood of God and Zion as Mother" *RB* 92 4 (1985): 557-569, that in this instance Second Isaiah employs feminine imagery to describe Yhwh, I am not convinced that the passage actually makes a claim that Yhwh is Zion's mother. Rather, the deployment of the image is metaphorical and the comparison is between Yhwh's love for Zion and the love that a mother (such as Zion) has for her children.

between Yhwh and Zion and of abundant offspring dominates. The aim of the metaphorical description in 49:15 is clearly to highlight the strength of the bond between Yhwh and Zion through articulation of the strong bond between mother and child. As Kathryn L. Roberts notes, "the bond between a mother and her infant is not only an emotionally strong one; nursing mothers are physically compelled to attentiveness and nurture. These physical and emotional ties create needs for both mother and child that are almost impossible to ignore."[173]

The biological necessity of active remembrance is certainly one aspect of the "love like a nursing mother" metaphor. However, the parallelistic deployment of this image also highlights an element of tenderness.[174] Each of the references to the child has a third person feminine possessive suffix appended to it. The way in which the metaphorical woman's children are present in the text is grammatically tied to her. There is no speaking of them without her. They are explicitly and emphatically hers, a point that reinforces the sense that she would not forget them and highlights the bond between mother and child. Additionally, while the mother is initially referred to simply as "a woman" (אשה), the parallel reference to her plays with the similarity of sound between "comfort" (נחם), "have compassion" (רחם), and "womb" (רֶחֶם). All three of these terms seem to be in play in the deployment of מרחם, which ties together descriptions of the woman as both "wombed" and "compassionate" in its sound.[175]

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[173] Kathryn L. Roberts, "Isaiah 49:14-18" *Int* 57 (2003): 59.

[174] The importance of both metaphor and parallelism to this description highlight the centrality of lyric and poetic tools to my exegetical work in this section.

[175] Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 33, discusses the metaphor implied in the lexical connection between "womb" and "compassion." She writes: "our metaphor lies in the semantic movement from a physical organ of the female body to a psychic mode of being. It journeys from the concrete to the abstract. 'Womb' is the vehicle; 'compassion' the tenor. To

While the metaphorical depiction of Yhwh's love as the love of a nursing mother towards her child with its connotations of biological necessity, inseparable bond, and extreme compassionate tenderness certainly raises expectations of a tender and comforting tonality from one so described, the second bicolon of v. 15 begins to subvert that tonality. The metaphor is deployed in a pair of rhetorical questions to which the implied answer is "certainly not" - surely a loving, compassionate mother like the one just described would not forget her child.[176] However, the divine voice overturns this implied answer with the claim "even these may forget." The shocking claim comes as a slap in the face following the image of the mother and her child. This claim is even more shocking given the exilic audience's mode of presence in the poem. They are figured as Zion's children, ones the deity's claim now implies might be forgettable. Though the audience has expressed its own sense of abandonment through identifying with Zion's complaint, Yhwh's claim begins to potentially undermine the security of their relationship with Zion their mother. Perhaps the city whose destruction is so emblematic of their own alienation from Yhwh no longer identifies as strongly with them as they suppose.

The second colon of the bicolon, "but I will not forget you," contrasts sharply with the claim that "even these may forget," both through its antithesis in content and the syntactical shift between the two cola. In the former the attention is placed upon the subject of the verb, while the object of forgetting is elided. Certainly, the unnamed forgotten one is the child so prominently tied to the mother by the relational suffix in the

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the responsive imagination, this metaphor suggests the meaning of love as selfless participation in life." Word play was noted in ch. 2 as an element in lyric poetry's typical tropological density.

[176] Herbert Grether, "Translating the Questions in Isaiah 50" *The Bible Translator* 24 2 (1973): 241, has noted that, "[t]he rhetorical questions are a vivid way of denying the implied complaint of God's people that he was mainly responsible for their plight."

preceding bicolon. This omitted reference to the forgotten child does to that child what the speaker claims a mother could possibly do. By omitting mention of the woman's nursling, the text "forgets" that child just as it claims the mother might do. In contrast, the second colon does not elide the object of its remembering. In claiming that "I will not forget you" Yhwh juxtaposes the deity's own remembrance of Zion with the preceding colon's claims of the potential forgetfulness of human mothers. The object of memory is present and named with a relational "you" while the object of the mother's forgetfulness is omitted and textually forgotten.

It is in this second bicolon of v. 15 that the tension between the fit and non-fit of the description Yhwh as mother begins to become significant.[177] In choosing the metaphor of motherhood, the divine speaker has drawn from language more typically tied to the addressee than the deity.[178] John J. Schmidt has argued, "Second Isaiah had a deep sense of the motherhood of Zion," and it is from this association that the comparison between Yhwh and a mother is drawn.[179] If Schmidt is correct, then the sharp contrast that the divine voice suddenly draws in the second bicolon of v. 15 between its own memory and the potential of human mothers implies a certain level of indictment of Zion herself as a forgetful mother, and foreshadows Zion's own self-indictment later in the poem. Indeed, the poem will go on to deploy the motherhood imagery directly onto Zion with recurrent references to her sons (vv. 17, 20, and 22) and daughters (v. 22),

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[177] Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 248, discusses metaphorical language as exhibiting a tension between the "is" and the "is not" of the relationship between descriptors. In light of Ricoeur's insights metaphoric meaning may be discussed both in terms of the way metaphorical descriptors fit and do not fit the entities they describe.

[178] As Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962), 44, points out, "[t]he metaphor works by applying to the principal subject a system of 'associated implications' characteristic of the subsidiary subject." In this case, typical "associated implications" of Zion (i.e. womanhood, motherhood) are applied to Yhwh.

[179] Schmidt, "The Motherhood of God," 563.

demonstrating that the metaphor of Zion as mother is one thoroughly embedded in the language and imagery of this poem, and certainly of interest to the audience of Zion's "children" listening in.

Thus, Zion herself is likely implied in the rhetorical questions about the possibility of a woman forgetting her newborn, and the object of the critique "even these may forget" and its contrast with the deity's claim "*I* will not forget *you*."[180] Certainly, the next citation of Zion's speech in the poem confirms such a suspicion. In v. 21 Yhwh cites Zion saying, "who bore these for me [i.e. Zion]," "these, who raised them," and "I [Zion] was left alone, and these, where were they?"[181] In v. 15 Yhwh insists "even these" (גם אלה) are potentially guilty of the charge that has been leveled against the deity. Zion's words in v. 21 are peppered with a strong recurrence of the demonstrative pronoun "these" (אלה). The demonstrative pronoun occurs three times in this verse, linking it strongly with the deity's rhetorical question. Surely in context, as noted above, the implied answer to the question "can a woman forget her nursing newborn?" (v. 15) must be absolutely not. Yet here (v. 21), Zion is presented as forgetful of her children, a charge made even more strenuous by the poem's earlier dependence upon the idea that such a thing would never happen. Mother Zion's incredulity at the number of her offspring alongside the hyperbolic claim that it could be possible for mothers to forget constitutes a self-condemnation. Zion virtually confesses to having forgotten her

[180] Though "these" is plural, the reference to mothers in general presumably addresses the larger category of which Zion is the target example.

[181] The deity's use of "these" employs a plural pronoun while the referent in context is presumably to the singular case of Zion. While this is likely a case of the indictment of a general category as a means of critiquing a specific member of that larger group, the lexical connection between Zion's words and Yhwh's via the repeated use of "these" may constitute an additional explanation for the use of this more indirect indictment. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:576, notes the recurrence of "these" in the series of questions.

children, and not remembering, or not knowing, either who fathered them or who raised them (v. 21).[182]

The depiction of Yhwh as faithful rememberer in explicit rejection of Zion's complaint extends to the very expression of that complaint. Isa 49:14 presents Zion's complaint as an embedded quotation in the utterance of the deity. Not only does the divine voice refute this complaint with lavish imagery of the divine memory, as just discussed, the poetry presents Yhwh's voice as reciting the details of Zion's complaint. The divine response to Zion's complaint not only engages the details of her complaint, it reiterates it. In the act of quoting Zion's complaint that Yhwh has forgotten her, the divine voice turns the tables on her. The ability to cite the past speech of the supposedly forgotten one is irrefutable evidence of Yhwh's memory. Thus the poetry works to undermine the exilic audience's identification with Zion's complaint. The divine speaker works to realign the audience's loyalties by affirming Yhwh's own commitment to both their mother and to them while implying that Zion's commitment may not be strong

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[182] The masculine form of ילד (3ms) in v. 21 is significant. The feminine form of this verb is more common. BDB, 408, lists "bear, bring forth," the feminine meaning of the verb, as the first meaning. Of the second meaning, "beget," BDB notes that it occurs "less often." In light of this shift in the verb's gender it seems that a critique of the mother as forgetful is implied, and the use of a masculine rather than feminine verbal form for the procreative act subtly implies potential promiscuity, or forgetfulness of her mate, as well. I am in agreement with Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:193, who write, "the feminine *yālᵉdāh*, which the prophet has avoided, is the more common form, so it seems more likely that the masculine is significant and that the question relates to who begot these children." My position is therefore opposed to that of Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 312 who writes, "she is presumably not wondering whether she could have had them all herself and no longer recalled with whom …. But we do not need to salvage the good name of this mother. The language is caught between the figurative and the referential. She is simply asking, in hyperbolic fashion, how can I have given birth to so many children?" Blenkinsopp's defense of the forgetful mother neglects the context of Zion's accusation that Yhwh has forgotten her and Yhwh's firmly reversing response. And, while it is true that the language is figurative and even hyperbolic, it does seem to imply some forgetfulness on Zion's part given the context. Indeed, it may take a bit more hyperbole to claim that a mother would forget bearing her children, than to treat the image as Blenkinsopp does. Several scholar's translations agree with my reading. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 110, concurs, translating, "Who begot these for me?" Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 321, translates the line, "Who has borne/begotten me these?" and takes the masculine form as bearing a "double meaning … [which] could be intentional" (ibid., 326). North, *The Second Isaiah*, 195, acknowledges that the form is masculine but thinks "the masculine [is] being used for the feminine."

enough to merit continued resistance on her behalf. The audience is not merely urged to imagine Yhwh as the more faithful rememberer in the breach between Yhwh and Zion. They are guided to view their own restoration as the means by which Yhwh will accomplish Zion's comfort. They are the children whose presence will overwhelm mother Zion (v. 21), whose abundance will overcrowd Zion (v. 20), and who will require royal nursemaids (v. 23). The audience is urged to re-envision what identification with Zion's complaint might look like. Rather than maintain resistance to Yhwh in honor of Zion's complaint of abandonment, they can envision their own role as overcoming Zion's grief by fully participating in Yhwh's plan to comfort Zion, by being her returned children.

Thus, the motherhood metaphor overturns Zion's accusation. Not only is Yhwh's love strong, tender, and compassionate, but Zion is the indicted, inattentive, and forgetful mother. The indictment of mother Zion in this matter is subtle, and she visits most of it upon herself in the citations of her words embedded within the divine speech. The subtlety does not, however, diminish the impact of the indictment on the tonality of the poem. In stark contrast to the gentle, comforting imagery used to deploy the indictment, the charge that Zion is an unfaithful, forgetful mother packs a poignant punch. In turn, the audience's complaint against the deity echoed in Zion's words is refuted.

Like the motherhood metaphor, the image of Zion inscribed on the palms of Yhwh's hands (v. 16) presents an intense and largely comforting image.[183] Numerous suggestions have been made about the nature of this image including describing it as a form of tattooing, as phylacteries, or a comparison between the city's blueprint and the

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[183] This imagery is yet another example of this poem's tropological density and provides support for the claim that lyric tools such as attention to tonality, imagery, and metaphor should be deployed in its interpretation.

natural lines of the hand.[184] The image is a poetic metaphor and I am in agreement with C. C. Torrey's quip: "the exegesis which turns poetry into prose is nowhere better exemplified than in the comments on this clause which would infer from it Second Isaiah's attitude toward the Levitical law [regarding tattooing],"[185] though perhaps better examples of the approach Torrey objects to have emerged in the past 80 years. Rather than attempt an association with some literal referent, it is far better to consider the metaphorical implications of the various descriptors that make the image of Yhwh's memory as an inscription on the hands so arresting.

The opening presentation of this image with the attention drawing exclamation הן marks the scene as particularly vivid. It is as though Yhwh is holding out the divine hands and inviting Zion to have a look at them. Here it is not Yhwh's hands (ידים) that are referenced but rather Yhwh's two palms (כפים).[186] Thus, the inscription that represents Yhwh's memory of Zion is described as an etching on the tender fleshy part of

[184] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:187, imply that they read the engraving as a tattoo with their observation that "the back of the hand might be a more natural place for a tattoo or an aide-mémoire." Muilenburg, *IB* 5:547; McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 113; and North, *The Second Isaiah*, 195; also read the engraving as tattooing. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 386, seems to be responding to a tattooing suggestion in his quip cited below. Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 155, associates this image with phylacteries. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 323, suggests that the natural lines of the palm of the hand are meant and are to correspond to a map of the city. This suggestion, however, neglects the active verb, "I have carved you" (חקתיך). Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 311, claims that the reference to the walls of the city are an indication of a "blueprint" whose existence implies the certainty of rebuilding. However, Blenkinsopp's suggestion does not make clear why this blueprint would need to be "inscribed" on the deity's hands.

[185] Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 386. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 323, names the legal problem that Torrey alludes to stating, "the objection is that Lev 19:28, for example, explicitly forbids tattooing."

[186] The divine hands are a common anthropomorphism in the Hebrew Bible. The phrase "the hand of Yhwh" (יד יהוה), is used throughout the Hebrew Bible, Second Isaiah included, as an image of strength, power, and military might (e.g., Isa 40:2, 41:20, 45:11, 49:22, and 51:17). As opposed to יד, כף denotes the palms. כף is often used for hands that are outstretched (e.g., Exod 9:29, 33; 1 Kgs 8:28), that hold a handful of something (e.g., 1 Kgs 17:12), or that clap (e.g., 2 Kgs 11:12; Ps 47:2; Isa 55:12). See BDB, 496. As Goldingay and Payne point out, "perhaps the distinctiveness of *kap* lies more in its lacking the connotation of power and violence that attaches to *yad*" (Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:187).

the hand. This vulnerable and visible portion of the body is imagined as the writing surface, but the writing method is that employed for etching into solid stone.[187]

Ironically, the hard surface in this image is not the site of inscription but its subject matter. Zion herself is described as having "walls" (v. 16b). While description of Zion and her walls is certainly a common enough mingling of the "Zion as city" and "Zion as woman metaphors" in Second Isaiah, its use in this instance for the subject rather than medium of engraving impacts the image's characterization of both Yhwh and Zion. While the anthropomorphism of writing on the hands "humanizes" the deity, Zion herself is dehumanized in this image. She is composed of stone, a suitable medium for etching and cutting. However, it is not tough, stony Zion that is etched in the poetic image. Rather, the soft palms of Yhwh's hands are engraved as a reminder of this stony one.[188]

The tension between the softer side of Yhwh's hand and a method of inscription for hard surfaces produces an image that evokes implications of considerable pain. Zion is cut into Yhwh's palms, an act of apparent self-injury presented as an indication of Yhwh's commitment to her. The divine voice fleshes out this image with a claim of the perpetual nature of the reminder "your walls are before me continually" (Isa 49:16); the etching is one that will not fade.[189] The scars will not heal over and allow Zion to disappear from Yhwh's memory. Rather, she is indelibly engraved upon the divine palms. Both the pain implied in placing such a memory aid on the palms, and the

[187] The verbal root חקק is used for cutting into stone (Isa 22:16), inscribing on tablets (Isa 30:8), writing upon walls (Ezek 23:14), and engraving upon bricks (Ezek 4:1). See BDB, 349.

[188] While it is true that even the palms of agricultural workers in the ancient Near East were significantly harder than those of the modern academic, the contrast between flesh and stone still highlights the less than completely immutable nature of the hand, particularly the palm.

[189] Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 387, sees this permanence implied in the verb חקק.

motivating love connoted by the image's connection with the previous mothering image captures the nature of the divine commitment to Zion in Second Isaiah. As we have seen, Yhwh vacillates throughout the sequence between reaction to the pain and anger produced by Jacob/Israel's resistance to the promises to Zion, and the love that motivates reconciliation. In this image the exilic audience is guided to see their divine restorer as not impervious to Zion's pain, but rather as suffering to effect her comfort.

While the first stanza (vv. 14-21) and the metaphors that continue from it into the second stanza (vv. 22-23) are, as the preceding analysis has illustrated, primarily a stream of divine comfort with some subtle indications of divine pain embedded therein, the final two stanzas of the poem progressively increase the level of divine restiveness and culminate in an ominously threatening tonality.

The third stanza (vv. 24-26) begins with a rhetorical question spoken by the divine voice. Rhetorical questions are frequent indicators of the indictment tonality.[190] In this case it is initially unclear whether the divine voice is speaking comfort or indictment. The ambiguity results from the sudden paratactic introduction of the tyrant (עריץ) and his prey.[191] The context does not clarify with certainty whether the audience is to be understood as prey and if so whether Yhwh who is often called a "strong one," is the predator, or some outside oppressor is. Alternatively, the outside oppressor, previously unnamed, could be understood as Yhwh's spoils. Either way, it is possible that the one who does not allow escapees, described as a terrifier or tyrant, is to be understood as the divine speaker. Goldingay and Payne observe that "the great terrifier

[190] See the list of tonal indicators above.

[191] I am reading with 1QIsa[a] here. See pg. 269 and especially n. 163 for more discussion of this translation.

[עריץ] in Isaiah is Yhwh."[192] The reading of the MT appears to support such an interpretation. Rather than "tyrant" (עריץ) in v. 24 (so 1QIsa[a], Syr, Vulg), MT reads "righteous one" (צדיק).[193] Also in this stanza the focus begins to shift more explicitly towards the audience. They are still Zion's children, but the focus is entirely upon their release, rather than upon the impact that will have on Zion.

Despite the initial ambiguity, the rejoinder following the messenger formula in v. 25 clarifies Yhwh's distinction from the oppressor. Not only is the power of the seemingly insuperable tyrant limited, but Yhwh will overcome him. Thus v. 25 clarifies the ambiguity, alleviating fears that Yhwh could be the tyrant envisioned. The divine response to the claim of the might of the oppressor is structured in parallel fashion to the example of the mother and her child in vv. 14-15.[194] Just as in that case the implied answer to the rhetorical question was "no," here the implied answer is the same: no, the captives cannot be released. However, just as in the case of the apparent faithfulness of human mothers, the divine voice utilizes a phrase introduced with גם to overturn the expectations raised, and illustrate the supreme ability of Yhwh to overcome human circumstances.[195]

Legal language appears in this stanza (vv. 24-26) with the introduction of Yhwh's intention to "contend" (ריב) (v. 25).[196] The high level of alliteration in the verse

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[192] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:197. They cite numerous First Isaian passages along with Isa 47:12.

[193] Ibid., the MT's reading is likely an attempt to eliminate an inappropriate epithet for Yhwh.

[194] This type of broad scale parallelistic repetition is, as I have argued previously, an element of Second Isaiah's non-narrative, paratactic, and repetitively driven poetic flow.

[195] Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 115, also notices the similar construction of these rhetorical questions and the divine response.

[196] Legal language is one of the tonal indicators for the indictment tonality. See the discussion of tonal indicators above. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 224, describes 50:1-3 as a trial speech and comments, "the opening leads straight into the middle of a legal process."

highlights its importance in the passage.[197] At this moment, in Yhwh's expression of the intention to save Zion's children, Yhwh's role as adversary of Zion's adversaries and therefore her ally becomes clear. The implication in earlier stanzas that the exilic audience of Zion's children may successfully be Zion's allies is here reinforced. Yhwh is Zion's ally and the audience is as well. The poetry seems to suggest the question, "why should the audience not join in the divine mission to comfort Zion?" Even the certainty of the audience's captivity is not insuperable for Yhwh. The stanza's concluding violent imagery is clearly directed at Israel's enemies. The imagery of these unfortunate ones eating their own flesh and drinking their own blood (v. 26) ironically has the aim of spreading knowledge of Yhwh's might to "all flesh" (v. 26). Indeed, the imagery explicitly introduces the specter of cannibalism.[198] These final lines' grotesque violence appears even in the midst of its obvious orientation toward deliverance, and highlights the lengths to which Yhwh is willing to go both to effect Zion's deliverance and to convince her (and her children listening in) of it.[199]

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[197] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:198, comment regarding v. 25b, "the alliteration in the line is noteworthy. Every word either begins ß or contains *k* or both." The sudden presence of alliteration calls attention to this line, raising its level of prominence in the poem, and thereby increasing its level of contribution to the meaning of the poem. Pilkington, *Poetic Effects*, 139-40, describes the way in which alliteration may call attention to the pair of alliterated words and may in particular increase the speed of cognitive access to the second term allowing "more time to explore its encyclopaedic entry more extensively." Attention to alliteration is yet another indication of the way in which my examination of these poems' tonalities is heavily dependent upon, and part of, the argument that lyric elements are a significant and meaningful part of Second Isaiah's poetic movement.

[198] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 155, sees this allusion to cannibalism as drawn from the realm of ancient Near Eastern covenant curses and the context of siege warfare. The objection by Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 315, that this reference "cannot refer literally to cannibalism … since people in such straits would presumably not eat their own flesh," misses the poetic nature of the image. By deploying cannibalism as "self-cannibalism," the poet intensifies the violence of the image of siege-induced cannibalism.

[199] Violent language and imagery are enumerated as tonal indicators of the indictment tonality in the discussion of tonal indicators above. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 222, in an apparent objection to the violent and angry tonality of this line writes, "we can assume that, while Deutero-Isaiah might make use of a traditional ferocious oracle of destruction such as 49.26a, the things just mentioned do not represent what interested him personally."

Finally, the concluding stanza (50:1-3) returns to a harsher tonality progressing into outright indictment.[200] Here the audience who has been represented throughout the poem is addressed directly as Yhwh speaks to Zion's children. The breach between Zion and Yhwh is explicitly named as "divorce" (כריתות) and despite the fact that Yhwh appears to be contesting the legality of the divorce, this legal imagery's presence makes obvious the marital discord implied in the otherwise comforting image of Yhwh as Zion's husband. Strongly indignant rhetorical questions punctuate the stanza (vv. 1b, 1c, 2a, 2c, 2d). Yhwh opens by inquiring about the writ of divorce or the presence of a lender and immediately refutes these as even possibilities. The audience's "iniquities" and "transgressions," suffixed with an accusatory "your," are named as the source of the marital rupture and break-up of the household (Isa 50:1).[201] Yhwh places blame for the situation that Zion lamented in 49:14 squarely in the laps of the audience.[202] They may not fault the deity. Rather, they are themselves at fault. Further questions accuse the audience of abandonment – "why did I come and there was no one?" (50:2). Abandonment was the very thing that Zion accused Yhwh of in her opening complaint. Zion's charges have been turned back upon the people.[203] Yhwh here confirms the intent to overcome the audience's captivity and rejects their resistance. The shift in the poem from address to Zion to direct and more obviously strident address to the audience likely reflects yet another response to potential audience resistance. Despite Yhwh's use of imagery and strong appeals to acquire the audience's loyalty and to urge them to see restoration as a way to participate in overcoming Zion's complaint, the need for further

[200] North, *The Second Isaiah*, 199, refers to the "style," of Isa 50:1 as "disputation."

[201] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:199, note that "there may be a stress on the suffixes, 'their *own* flesh/blood.'"

[202] Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 334, agrees that the poem assigns the fault to the children.

[203] See ch. 3.

urging apparently arises. This need seems to provoke the turn directly toward the audience and the more irritated tone.

A final pair of rhetorical questions challenges the audience's potential perception that Yhwh lacks might, invoking the idiom of the divine hand יד. In response to this potential perception of divine weakness, Yhwh launches into a self-description with threatening overtones. Yhwh describes the divine self as the one who rebuked the Sea, and killed the sea creatures. The chaos and creation motifs evident in this description connote both divine strength and violence.[204] At the same time, these images hint strongly at the exodus from Egypt, also an event in which divine deliverance deployed terrifying violence. Finally, the heavens are put into mourning garb. Yhwh claims the ability to cause the heavens to wear black and to make their clothing sackcloth (Isa 50:3).[205] A darkening of the skies is portentous as it threatens the violence from the heavens associated with storms.[206] The choice of the heavens themselves is likewise ominous. Elsewhere in Second Isaiah the heavens rejoice over Israel's deliverance (Isa 49:13). Thus, the image of the celestial bodies engaging in mourning rituals is doubly menacing. It both threatens violence and grief on a massive, cosmic scale, and implies that the mourning might extend to those who rejoice over Israel's good fortune, hinting at

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[204] Cf. the creation images utilized in Isa 42:5-9 discussed above. Among scholars who recognize the cosmic imagery of this passage are: Muilenburg, *IB* 5:581; and McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 112; c.f. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 391, who thinks such allusion unlikely.

[205] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:582, sees the heavens' black garments as indicators of mourning.

[206] Violence as a metaphorical entailment of storms is apparently widely known in the ancient Near East. The potential for destruction is inherent in the nature of storms and would likely have been perceived in the ancient world. The association between the storm god Baʿal and violence is evident in the Baʿal cycle from Ugarit with its depiction of the storm god destroying cities (*KTU* 1.4 vii 7-12), and battling with other deities (*KTU* 1.6 vi). See also the comments of Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion?: Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (OBO 212; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 207, who notes the close association between storms, lions, and war in Mesopotamian texts. The association between storms and war pointed to by Strawn illustrates the connection between storms and violence in the ancient Near East.

negative consequences for Israel. As it follows a scathing critique of the audience in which they are faulted for their sins and indeed their abandonment of Yhwh, this mourning of the heavens ends the poem with a threatening tonality.[207]

Thus this poem, which began with some of the most tender language in all of the Hebrew Bible, which depicted Yhwh as more devoted than a nursing mother and as one who would go so far as to cut Zion into Yhwh's own hands to preserve her memory, concludes with a threat of violence. The fault for the estrangement between speaker and audience has been solidly assigned to the audience. The association is made subtly at first, through the manipulation of the metaphor of motherhood and the implication that Zion is a forgetful mother who has no right to accuse Yhwh of forgetting, since Yhwh's memory of her is good enough to quote her directly. However, the concluding stanza makes the fault of the estrangement explicit, describing the audience's sins as the cause of the marital and familial breach. Thus the poem opens onto both of the possible worlds imagined by the Second Isaiah's tonalities. The vivid images of the nursing mother and the engraved hands present a world in which Yhwh's love for Israel overwhelms the divine anger that is a consequence of Israel's past unfaithfulness, and continued resistance to the announcement of deliverance. Yet the legal imagery, subtle indictment of Zion as mother, and powerful self-description hint at another possible world – the world the audience was led to imagine through previous poems' references to Yhwh's rage requiring muzzling (48:9), and God's intention to devote Israel to "the ban" (43:28).

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[207] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:203, concur writing, "verse 3 thus constitutes a solemn ending to 49.1-50.3." My reference to the threatening tonality of this poem is an attempt to characterize the unique tonality of this particular moment in this poem. Threat should be considered a particularization of the indictment stream. It is not an indication of a separate tone from that larger stream.

2.7. A Rebuking Consolation – Isaiah 51:12-16[208]

The two dominant streams within the divine voice, consolation and indignation, enter into open conflict in Isa 51:12-16. The poem alternates between these tonal streams and thus may be called a "rebuking consolation."[209] The tonality of the passage is striking because it violates its own conventions and internal allusions. The poem's form, a consolation oracle, leads to an expectation of comfort and this expectation is reinforced by the explicit "comforter" reference and other allusions to Isa 40:1-2. However, the poem's violation of formal constraints, use of indictment language, and employment of rhetorical questions highlight instead the anger of the deity and undermine any promise of comfort, reopening the sequence's central tension – the problem of Zion's comfort. Though the divine voice speaks only 51:12-16, the whole poem consists of 51:9-16.[210]

Stanza 1
[9] "Arise, arise, wear strength, O Arm of Yhwh.
Arise as in ancient days, everlasting generations.
Are you not it (the arm),
the hewer of Rahab, the piercer of the sea monster?
[10] Are you not it (the arm),

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[208] Though the entire poem consists of 51:9-16, my discussion of the tonality of the divine voice will be limited to that portion of the poem which Yhwh speaks, namely 51:12-16. For justification of the delimitation of the whole poem see n. 209 below.

[209] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 170, uses this phrase to refer to Isa 51:12-16.

[210] It is clear that 51:9-16 forms a poetic unit. A change of speaker, tonality, addressee, and subject matter marks the break between vv. 8 and 9. In addition, the MT has *setumas* following both 51:8 and 51:16. What precedes is apparently an address by the "servant" to the people to listen to his teaching. At v. 9 a lament in the voice of the people directed at Yhwh begins. A clear break is signaled at v. 17 by the return to reiterated imperatives. The pattern of repeated imperatives returns again at 52:1 causing some scholars to list three units beginning at 51:9, 17; and 52:1. This is the position taken by Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 113, who refers to the sequence of units as a "triptych." Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 239, treats 51:9-52:2 as "a single consciously designed unit" remarking that "the start of each of the three parts of it (51.9,17; 52.1) is very clearly marked." While this structure is certainly a possibility, it is equally probable that the three units form three separate poems with a strong centripetal link between them forged by the mirrored paired imperatives. I am in agreement with Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 122, that "in any case, the sections which open with the quoted verses, are relatively independent." This analysis will take this latter view allowing for closer detailed focus on vv. 9-16. Since the purpose of this investigation is an examination of the tonality of the divine voice, the treatment will focus on the verses spoken by that voice (vv. 12-16) but will consider them in light of the context created by the preceding communal lament.

the parcher of Sea, the great deep waters,
the one (the arm) who made the depths of the sea a road
for the redeemed to pass over?
[11] Yhwh's ransomed ones will return,
and they come to Zion with a ringing cry,
and everlasting elation will be on their head.
Exultation and elation will overtake,
and grief and groaning will flee."[211]

Stanza 2
[12] "I, I am he your comforter.
Who are you? You fear a man, he will die,
and the son of a human, to grass he will be given.
[13] But you forget Yhwh your maker, the stretcher out of the heavens,
and the founder of the earth, you tremble continually all the day,
from before the anger of the oppressor,
since he establishes in order to cause destruction,
but where is the anger of the oppressor?
[14] The fettered one hurries to be freed,
and he will not die in the pit,
and he will not lack his bread.[212]

Stanza 3
[15] But I am Yhwh your God,
stirrer of the sea and its waves growl,"
Yhwh of armies is his name!
[16] "And I will put my word in your mouth,
and with the shadow of my hand I will cover you,
to plant the heavens,
and to found the earth,
and to say to Zion, 'you are my people.'"

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[211] The stanza break is supported by the change in speaker and is supported by a *setuma* in MT. In the dialogic flow of this particular poem, the deity appears to answer the speaker's question. The authenticity of v. 11 is debated because it is identical to Isa 35:10 with a few spelling differences. Already in 1914, Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1914), 356, attributed it to a "third hand." I am in favor of retaining the verse in its present context. As Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 124, points out, Isaiah 35 "seems to depend on Dt.-Is. in other points." I am in agreement with his assessment that v. 11 is integral to Isaiah 51 and should be retained. Other scholars in favor of retaining v. 11 include William C. Martin, "An Exegesis of Isaiah 51:9-11" *ResQ* 9 (1966): 151-59; Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 400; and Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 243, though Westermann contends despite putative Second Isaian authorship of the verse that "this is not its original position."

[212] The stanza break is supported by a return to the divine self-predication which began the preceding stanza, a shift in subject matter, and a shift in tonality. The speaker remains the same.

The individual poem under examination is the first in a series of three poems knit tightly by their recurrent use of opening pairs of exhortations. The remaining poems of this short series call upon Zion to get up (49:17), to "awake" (52:1), and depart Babylon (52:11). The strident tone of the first poem seems designed to add urgency to those exhortations that follow. Thus they together urge the audience to accept the promise of comfort to Zion offered in the sequence's similarly phrased opening imperatives (40:1). In this case the acceptance of that comfort is described through one particular mode of experiencing Yhwh's comfort – departure from Babylon. As we have seen, the notion that the audience of exiles could participate in Yhwh's activity of comforting Zion was already suggested in 49:14-50:3's depiction of them as Zion's returning children.

Formally, the poem under consideration (51:9-16) consists of two main parts, a communal lament spoken in the voice of the people (vv. 9-11), and a consolation oracle (vv. 12-16) spoken in the divine voice in apparent response to the lament.[213] This formal structure leads to an expectation of the comfort tonality. Indeed, in calling the divine response a "fear not" or "salvation" oracle, scholars highlight the expectation raised by the deity's response to the people's lament.[214] However, the expectations raised by the

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[213] See n. 214 for support for this designation.

[214] Scholars who refer to vv. 9-11 as a lament and vv. 12-16 as "salvation" or "fear not" oracle include Jeremy M. Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9-11 and the Rhetorical Appropriation and Subversion of Hostile Theologies" *JBL* 126 (2007): 297; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-66*, 2:234-5; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 240; Muilenburg, *IB* 5:589; and Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 160. Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction* (trans. Thomas M. Horner; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 14, notes that "in the prophetic literatures a Community Lament is customarily divided into two parts: (a) a passionate appeal, and (b) the divine response." The speaker of the complaint or lament is not made explicit by the text itself. Gunkel observes that typically in the prophetic literature the divine response to the communal lament includes "wonderful previews of the future" (Gunkel, *The Psalms*, 38). Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 37, in his discussion of communal laments followed by divine oracle in the prophetic books notes "the oracle does not always contain a promise of salvation …. But this presents no real difficulty. When the oracle of doom is pronounced precisely where an oracle of salvation is expected, the effect is striking: Yahweh refuses to hear the prayer." Possibilities for the speaker of the communal lament include the "servant," the prophetic poet, and the people. However, the nature of the response clarifies the speaker considerably. Nowhere in Second Isaiah is such harsh language directed at either the "servant" or the

lament form and apparent response to lament that vv. 12-16 embody are disappointed. As Goldingay and Payne note, the divine response "has a more rebuking cast than these usually have, and thus also recalls the form of a disputation."[215]

Not only does the immediate context of the divine response raise expectations of a consoling response, the language of the text itself initially confirms the assignment of the poem to such categories as "salvation oracle." The deity pronounces "I, I am he, your comforter." Patricia Willey is not unjustified in noting that "of all the affirmations of this theme, the emphatic announcement in Isa 51:12 … is the most dramatic in terms of its speaker, its placement, and its syntax."[216] Indeed, here, in response to the communal lament, the sequence appears to have arrived at a point of resolution about the open question of Zion's comfort. Not once, but twice, in an emphatically repetitive self-reference Yhwh claims the role of Zion's comforter (מנחמכם). This designation of Yhwh's role echoes both the opening lines of the sequence (Isa 40:1) and also Lamentations' complaint of Zion's lack of a comforter to which those opening lines referred.[217] Willey observes, "the masculine singular piel participle of נחם which is used here is nearly unique to Lamentations 1 and this verse" and it should be noted that Second Isaiah's opening imperatives are *piels* of this same root.[218] The divine self-designation as "comforter" alongside the return of the "humans-as-grass" (חציר)

prophetic poet. Thus, I am in agreement with Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9-11," 298; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 332; and Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 124, all of whom agree that the lament is spoken in the voice of the people. Despite the contention of Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-66*, 2:235, that 51:9-11 may be read as self-directed divine speech in light of the parallels with similar self-address to awake in Judg 5:12, it is better not to take the opening stanza as spoken in the divine voice. While the parallel to Judges is pertinent, it does not mitigate the difficulty of Yhwh's rebuking response.

[215] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-66*, 2:234-5.

[216] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 156.

[217] This interpretation of Isa 40:1-2 is defended in ch. 3.

[218] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 156.

metaphor (Isa 51:12; cf., 40:6-8) creates a strong echo of the sequence's opening lines in vv. 12-16. These links with the opening lines' promise of Zion's comfort further confirm the correlation between Zion's comfort and that of the audience. In 51:12 when Yhwh claims the role of comforter – it is the audience's comforter – "your comforter" (מנחמכם). Through the echoes of ch. 40, this claim to be the audience's comforter further supports the earlier poems' implication that the audience's reconciliation with Yhwh and Zion's comfort are one and the same.

However, all expectations that this poem would express an unmitigated comfort tonality are called into question almost immediately by the actual content of the "fear not" oracle delivered by the divine "comforter." Immediately following the clear announcement of coming comfort the divine voice launches into an indictment in a harsh tonality that calls into question the validity of its answer. A hint of this impending reversal appears in the deity's explicit and emphatic use of the masculine singular personal pronoun in the divine self-attribution. In contrast to the people's address to the feminine arm of Yhwh, the shift to the masculine pronoun is sharp. In response to the people's repeated question הלוא את־היא "are you not it" (Isa 51:9b-10a), the divine voice insists אנכי אנכי הוא "I, I am he" (Isa 51:12). Read in the light of the indictment that follows, Yhwh's claim to be Zion's comforter may occur within a chastisement of their confusion about how to address the deity indicated by the obvious shift of pronouns.[219]

[219] Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9-11," 300, draws attention to the extent to which the allusion to the chaos myth in Isaiah 51 is alone among biblical exemplars of such allusion in retaining the feminine agent which originally would have been ʻAnat or ʻAštart in the Ugaritic version of the myth. Hutton argues that "Deutero-Isaiah chastens the communal disbelief indirectly by alluding to the Canaanite hymn …. Even if firmly entrenched in a monotheistic context in which the divine consort is conceived only as the feminine 'arm of Yahweh,' the people's apostasy (manifested here simply as disbelief) is nonetheless tantamount to the worship of foreign gods, the prophet suggests." It seems unlikely that a female Canaanite deity is implied here, despite Hutton's suggestion. The arm of Yhwh, mentioned in context is sufficient to account

Beginning in v. 12b the attitude of the divine speaker towards the audience becomes more clearly not the compassionately motivated one expected following the lament form and pronouncement of the "your comforter" title. Rather the deity chastises the people with the rhetorical question "who are you?" (Isa 51:12).[220] Immediately following the emphatic self-reference "I, I am he, your comforter," this questioning of the people's identity highlights the sharp contrast between the deity's lofty position of self-designated comforter and the people's lowly state. The implication is that the people are "nobodies," and even less than that – they are people who are afraid of mere people. Clifford has helpfully suggested that the rhetorical question "who are you" echoes the rhetorical questions of the lament (51:9b-10a) "are you not it?" Thus, the question "rebukes" these earlier charges with their cry to Yhwh to wake "implying that it is rather Israel who sleeps."[221]

The indictment continues by accusing the lamenters of fearing human beings who are destined for the grass, another echo of Isaiah 40, and charging them with forgetting Yhwh (51:12b-13a). The expanded description of the "oppressor" with its rhetorical question "where is the anger of the oppressor?" while on one level downplaying the might of the "oppressor" in contrast to Yhwh, on another level places the object of the

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for the feminine forms without further reference to mythology. However, the poetry makes explicit and repeated reference to the arm of Yhwh in the feminine both through feminine pronouns and participles. These clearly feminine references contrast with the claim in the divine voice "I am he" (v. 12). Likewise, Theodor Seidl, "Jahwe der Krieger – Jahwe der Tröster Kritik und Neuinterpretation der Schöpfungsvorstellungen in Jesaja 51, 9-16" *BN* 21 (1983): 130, highlights the "lexical contrast" between the lament's description of Yhwh in vv. 9-10 and the divine self-predication in v. 12a noting that this contrast supports an interpretation of v.12a as "attack and critique."

[220] My reading is in contrast to that of Muilenburg, *IB* 5:599. Despite Muilenburg's attempt to tone down the sarcastic tonality of these words writing that the question is "not contemptuous meaning nothing more than 'Why?' or 'How is it that?'" it seems clear that "who are you" is meant to characterize the audience in a negative manner. It is difficult to imagine the deity calmly asking such a curious question and immediately following it up with charges of fear and forgetfulness. I am thus in agreement with Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 243, who cites this line as demonstration of his characterization of the passage as "disputation and reproof."

[221] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 171.

people's fear before their eyes. Twice in this description the "anger" of the oppressor is topicalized, reiterating the source of the people's fear. The paired references to the "anger of the oppressor" (חמת המציק) frame the short tricolon in which they appear, and the alliteration of this phrase turns the "anger of the oppressor" into a taunting refrain throwing the source of the people's fear repeatedly in their faces.[222]

The stanza immediately overturns the references to the object of the audience's fear by returning implicitly to the supreme might of Yhwh in contrast to this oppressor. The rhetorical question "where is the anger of the oppressor" (v. 13), is paratactically juxtaposed with the claim that the fettered one will quickly be freed (v. 14). Though not explicit in the poetry, the implication is that Yhwh, whose might is superior to the one the people fear will quickly effect their release.

The final stanza (vv. 15-16) returns to the expected comfort stream. The participial divine self-descriptions that open the stanza both contrast with the oppressor, implying a superior might resident in the people's defender, and take up the imagery of the people's complaint. Yhwh is the powerful stirrer of the sea, the vanquisher of chaos, and the master of armies.[223] These mythical combat and military motifs recall the violent imagery of the indictment deploying them on Israel's enemy. These images thus function to solidify the promises of deliverance which progress into the final lines (v. 16). In this way the tension between indictment and comfort in the poem's tonality finally resolves in

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[222] Again, the importance of alliteration to the expression of this verse is another indication of the centrality of the lyric element of tropological density to Second Isaiah's poetry and its interpretation.

[223] Regarding 51:9-10, to which v. 15 clearly alludes, Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 356, notes that "a whole series of investigations, some as early as the nineteenth century, have shown that the terminology and concepts here reflect an encounter with the surrounding world of the ancient Near East." Indeed, among scholars who note a connection with Ugaritic or Babylonian creation myths are Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9-11," 271-303; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah*, 2:220-221; Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 123; Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 399; Childs, *Isaiah*, 403; and Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 341.

the claims of protective provision and covenantal language that the opening formal elements lead the reader to expect.

Thus, the divine speech in Isaiah 51:12-16 is structured like a salvation oracle in tension with itself. It reveals the ongoing struggle within the divine voice between the sequence's two major tonal streams. Its eventual resolution and choice of an appropriately comforting response to the lament foreshadows the final resolution of the sequence of poems as a whole. However, Isaiah 51:12-16 itself does not resolve the sequence's tension. Reconciliation and comfort may yet be on the horizon, but the angry outburst over the people's fear indicates that the message of comfort continues to meet with audience resistance. Indeed, the divine indignation over this resistance continues, leaving the question of the success of the intention to comfort very much in doubt. An urgency is thus created at the outset of the group of poems of which 51:9-16 is the start. The audience is encouraged to choose to embrace the coming exhortations to accept reconciliation thus ensuring that this powerful stirrer of the sea vents the divine fury on their enemies, rather than on them. Thus the world imagined by this poem is, like that of 49:14-50:3 a world in which Yhwh is presented as expressing tension within the divine self. Both worlds, that sketched by the promise to comfort, and that presented by the threat of violence as a response to audience resistance are offered up as distinct possibilities. Either outcome could emerge, and continuing to live within this conflict is a possibility in itself that the audience is invited to imagine, though not for long. As the immediately following poems illustrate, they are urged to quickly choose the more desirable option. The presence of and paratactic juxtaposition of both distinct tonalities together in this poem highlights and foregrounds the tension between them. Rage is

made all the more fearsome by its occurrence in a context and form that lead to expectations of comfort. The imagery of comfort is all the more potent in direct juxtaposition to the divine aggravation. In this poem the tension between these attitudes that elsewhere in the sequence appears in the shifts between poems is palpable and present in the very fabric of the poem. Even the ability to cope with the tension by categorizing a poem as either indicting or comforting is stripped away. The tension confronts the audience directly.

2.8. The Climax of Comfort – Isaiah 54:1-17[224]

This study has already noted the resonances and dissonances between Isa 49:14-50:3 and 54:1-17.[225] Chapter four observed that the pair produces a powerful centripetal force through its similarity and relative proximity. However, as this chapter's examination of the mingling of tonalities in 49:14-50:3 illustrates, the tonal progression between the two poems highlights the climactic import of 54:1-17. Here, all vestiges of the indictment disappear.[226] Yhwh no longer responds to Zion's accusations, nor attempts to justify God-self. No longer are "foster" parents required for Zion's family to expand, nor is there any implication of infidelity in the abundance of Zion's children. Now, Zion

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[224] The poem is clearly marked off from the preceding "fourth servant song" and there is a virtual consensus that a new poem begins with 54:1 (e.g., Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:337; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 357; Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 182; Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 429; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 269). The end of the poem is more difficult to determine with precision. MT's markings are in agreement; there is a *setuma* following 53:12. V. 17b could seemingly serve either as a heading to the final poem or as the conclusion of 54:1-17. I have followed this second option, reading in agreement with the markings of the MT. Cf., Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:363, who make 17b the beginning of the following poem, citing 1QIsa[a] as evidence.

[225] Scholars who recognize such a connection include: Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 360; McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 139; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:340; Muilenburg, *IB* 5:633; Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 185; John E. Goldingay, *Isaiah* (NIBCOT 13; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 310; Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40*-55, 523; and Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 423.

[226] Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 523, observes this progression. He writes that the speech to Zion in 49:14-50:3 "included some implicit and explicit critique of her. Here there is no such critique."

herself may rejoice in her fertility as her husband returns to her. Even more significantly in terms of the governing tension of the sequence, in 54:1-17 Yhwh finally announces the firm intention to reunite with woman Zion, and offers an explanation of divine past absence. Rather than arguing for future divine fidelity discursively, the poem supports it with the elaborate metaphor of the remarriage of Yhwh and Zion with its metaphorical implications of fertility, security, and luxury.[227] Westermann has rightly observed that "what gives the utterance its brilliant tone is the perfect unity achieved between poetry and proclamation."[228] Indeed, as the following analysis will detail, the use of vivid metaphor, the employment of parallelism, and rich sound play convey the poem's message beautifully and effectively.[229] In these ways, Isa 54:1-17 is the climax of the sequence's tonal flow.[230] Isaiah 54:1-17a signals its role as the climax of the sequence's tonal flow through its high concentration of Second Isaian thematic threads and motifs, through its accumulation and overturning of multiple metaphorical expressions of the sequence's central problem, and through its direct response to the audience's expressed doubts that produced the sequence's central tension and intractable problem.

It is true that this climax does not occur at the end of the sequence. This is not altogether surprising for, as chapter four noted, the final poem of the sequence does not present a particularly strong form of closure for the sequence as a whole. As has been noted throughout this study, the structure of a poetic sequence need not correlate

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[227] Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 434, proposes "chap. 54 has to do with wedding and marriage."

[228] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 270.

[229] The centrality of these poetic and lyric elements to the production and analysis of this poem's tone is yet another indication of the extent to which this analysis is part of my argument that the employment of lyric tools is a useful approach to Second Isaiah.

[230] Muilenburg, *IB* 5:633, writes, "[t]he literary imagination and theological penetration which were responsible for the poems in their present order are apparent in ch. 54. The variety of mood, the richness of allusion, the literary structure, and the numerous devices of literary emphasis all suggest that the poet is seeking to reproduce in words the deep feelings which surge through his soul and the thoughts which stir him as he approaches the end."

necessarily with the structure of a narrative. The climax of a poetic sequence is the point at which its tonal tension reaches resolution, rather than a predetermined location in the series of poems, such as the actual, literary end. As Rosenthal and Gall note, "[t]o strike an idiosyncratic balance among competing moods and sensations is the overriding aim of lyrical structure."[231] If lyric structure is governed by this sense of striving towards a balance of moods, then the point at which that balance is reached may be described as the climax regardless of where it occurs in the sequence. As I will argue below, in 54:7 the ongoing tension over Yhwh's wrath and compassion receive definitive answer, explanation, and resolution. This moment thus constitutes the "climax" of the sequence despite its being not quite at the end.[232]

<u>Stanza 1</u>
[54:1] "Ring out a cry, O barren one who has not borne.
Break out a ringing cry, call aloud, O one who has not labored.
For the deserted one[233] has more children than the husbanded," says Yhwh.

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[231] M.L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall, *The Modern Poetic Sequence: The Genius of Modern Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 29.

[232] In addition, one might note that typically narrative plots continue into a denouement following the narrative climax. "Denouement," *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* (ed. Kathleen Kuiper; Springfield, Mass.: Merriam Webster, 1995), 316, defines denouement as, "[t]he events following the climax of the plot. The final outcome, result, or unraveling of the main dramatic complication in a play or other work of literature." Christina Ruse and Marilyn Hopton, *The Cassell Dictionary of Literary and Language Terms* (London: Cassell, 1992), 84, are similar, also emphasizing that denouement occurs after the climax. The continuation of the sequence into Isaiah 55 is in some ways parallel to the denouement of a narrative plot. Since poetic sequences do not have "plot," but to reach an emotional equilibrium it seems particularly appropriate that some final "unraveling" might follow the emotional high point of the "climax." However, see the comments above and in ch. 4 about the paradoxical mode of final unraveling that Second Isaiah exhibits.

[233] שמם typically refers to geographic places that are destroyed and/or uninhabited. Here the deployment is obviously metaphorical. The contrast is between the woman in this condition and the one who has a husband. Given the rest of the poem's acknowledgement of Zion's abandonment this parallel seems to suggest that this root should be taken to refer to marital rupture, thus "deserted." My position on this translation runs counter to the argument of Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash* (SBLDS 91; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986). Callaway claims that in light of the "only pre-exilic use" of the term (2 Sam 13:20), שׁוממה must be understood as a "*terminus technicus* which referred to her status in the community. A woman was marriageable only as a virgin; therefore, a man who raped a virgin was required by Israelite law to marry her. Amnon's rape of Tamar destroyed her virginity, that for which the bride-price was paid, yet as her half-brother, he could not marry her. She was therefore defiled, not marriageable, and would live out her days in solitude, without husband or children" (ibid., 68). While Callaway's explanation certainly takes account of the contrast being drawn between שׁוממה and

[2] "Widen your tent place,
and spread out the curtains of your dwelling.
Do not hold back!
Lengthen your cords.
Strengthen your pins.
[3] For to the right and left you will break out,
And your seed will possess nations,
and deserted cities they will inhabit.

Stanza 2
[4] Fear not, for you will not be ashamed.
And do not feel humiliated for you will not be disgraced.
Indeed the shame of your youth you will forget,
and the reproach of your widowhood you will not remember again.
[5] For your master is your maker,
Yhwh of the armies is his name.
And your redeemer is the holy one of Israel,
The God of all the earth he is called.

Stanza 3
[6] Indeed like an abandoned wife, and (one) aggrieved of spirit Yhwh called you.
And "the wife of youth when she is rejected," said your God.[234]
[7] "In a brief instant I abandoned you,
but with great care I will gather you.
[8] In a flood of fury I hid my face for an instant from you,[235]

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married, it fails to account for the depiction of the same woman elsewhere in Isaiah 54 as an abandoned wife. Additionally, the single occurrence that Callaway cites does not provide compelling evidence that שוממה must refer to a woman who has been ruined for marriage by the loss of her virginity. Indeed, Callaway's description of the situation is inaccurate. Amnon is not unable to marry Tamar. Rather, Tamar herself indicates that David would be inclined to allow the two to marry (2 Sam 13:13). George B. Caird, "Second Samuel: Exegesis," in *The Book of Leviticus, The Book of Numbers, The Book of Deuteronomy, The Book of Joshua, The Book of Judges, The Book of Ruth, The Books of First and Second Samuel* (*IB*; 12 vols.; eds. George Arthur Buttrick, et al.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), 2:1111, concurs writing, "Absalom's quarrel with his brother was not that such a union was illicit but that Amnon was in too much of a hurry to wait for marriage, and having had his will of Tamar then refused to marry her." Instead, what makes Tamar desolate seems to be Amnon's abandonment of her, described in terms of revulsion (2 Sam 13:15). P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB 9; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 323-4, explores the various possibilities for the meaning of Tamar's claim that David would have allowed the two to marry concluding that it is in line with David's character as presented in 2 Samuel to have overlooked Levitical legislation (if such were extant and in force) in order to indulge his children. My interpretation of שוממה as abandoned/deserted thus fits both the context in 2 Samuel 13 and in Isaiah 54. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 137, also translates "abandoned one."

[234] The division of this verse into a single bicolon is based upon the clear parallelism between the cola. Each colon characterizes the Zion in terms of a rejected wife and concludes with the notice that these attributions are spoken by Yhwh. This division of cola agrees with the MT's division with the *atnach*. Admittedly this is a relatively long line, a 5-5. However, this length is within the range of line lengths that Second Isaiah exhibits. Any other delineation of the line disrupts the parallelism of the cola.

[235] I am in agreement with numerous commentators including North, *The Second Isaiah*, 247; Muilenburg, *IB* 5:636; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:349; and Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 424,

But with eternal fidelity I will care for you," says your redeemer Yhwh.[236]
[9] "For this is the waters of Noah to me,[237]
For as much as[238] I am sworn from passing the waters of Noah again upon the earth,
so have I sworn myself against being furious with you, and from rebuking you.
[10] Indeed the mountains may retreat and the hills may reel,[239]
But my fidelity will not retreat from you.
And the covenant of my peace will not reel,"
Says your caring one, Yhwh.

Stanza 4
[11] "O afflicted one, stormed and not comforted,
Look, I am laying your stones with garnets,[240]
and your foundations with sapphires.
[12] And I have placed rubies as your pinnacles,
and sparkling stones for your gates,
and all your borders are turned to precious stones.
[13] All your children will be disciples of Yhwh,
and great will be the peace of your children.

Stanza 5
[14] In righteousness you will be established by me.
Dissociate yourself from the oppressor,[241] for you will not fear,
And from terror, for it will not come near you.
[15] If anyone agitates against you, it is not from me.
Whoever agitates you will fall over you.

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who read the hapax שצף here as a form of שטף assimilated to its alliterative mate קצף. North, *The Second Isaiah*, 247, is correct that the parallel with the flood of Noah in v. 9 is illuminating.

[236] The verse appears to be a single long bicolon. The relationship between the cola is obviously parallel with the second colon overturning the idea of the first. The attribution "says your redeemer Yhwh" stands outside the parallelism of this line. However, the inclusion of a similar attribution in the immediate context (v. 6) indicates that it is at least plausible to include such an attribution within a colon in this poem.

[237] The awkwardness of the translation reflects the abrupt nature of the use of this metaphor in the Hebrew text.

[238] The relative particle אשר may be translated with a causal force (see BDB, 83). It is taken in this sense here because of its evident relationship with the following clause introduced by הן.

[239] "Retreat" and "reel" seem to be an intentional pair.

[240] פוך, here translated "garnet," is frequently taken to refer to a coal-like black make-up typically used as eyeliner (*HALOT*, 3:918). However, here it is unclear what about this cosmetic made it an appealing metaphorical image in correlation with the city's structures. The NRSV's translation "antimony" refers to a black chemical substance but does nothing to advance the meaning of the passage for the English reader. I am in agreement with NJPS which reads "carbuncles," following Rashi in taking פוך as a biform of נפך. *HALOT*, 3:918, also lists this biform as a possibility. Carbuncles are coal-like semi-precious stones either black or red of which rubies and garnets are subspecies. נפך is a semi-precious stone, such as garnet (*HALOT*, 2:709). This reading makes sense of the context as well as the parallel with sapphires. As Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 425, comments, "[t]he one thing certain about the word פוך in this passage is that the poet intended here a precious stone."

[241] There is a similarity of sounds between "dissociate" and "oppressor" produced by their common final letter ק.

[16] Look, I created the craftsman,
The one who blows on fiery coals,
And the one who brings out a vessel for his work,
and I created the one who brings to ruin.
[17] Any vessel fashioned against you will not flourish,
and any tongue raised against you for judgment you will condemn.
This is the portion of the servants of Yhwh,
and their righteousness from me," declares Yhwh.

Again in this poem, as in 49:14-50:3, Yhwh addresses Zion directly through at least the first four stanzas. Again the audience is represented by the motif of Zion's children. In the fifth stanza the divine voice continues to address Zion as "you" (feminine singular), but the last line's reference to Yhwh's servants (עבדי יהוה) and their righteousness (וצדקתם) employs masculine plural forms, perhaps again indicating the audience. This concluding shift may mirror the shift seen in 50:1-3 towards direct attention to the audience. If so, it further confirms the sense that audience resistance has now been definitively overcome. In contrast to the earlier shift to address the audience at the end of a Zion poem (50:1-3), this concluding line contains not a direct address of indictment, but promises of righteousness and the title "servants."

First, as chapter four claimed, Second Isaiah's units are bound to one another by the recurrent deployment of thematic threads and motifs. Some units are more tightly bound to the whole than others. Isaiah 54:1-17 embraces Second Isaiah's use of recurrent themes on a massive scale.[242] It exhibits a greater concentration of recurrent threads than virtually any other passage in the sequence as a whole, and there is little in 54:1-17 that is

[242] Willey, *Remember the Former Things,* 232, notes that, "[t]his chapter, nearly at the end of Second Isaiah, returns to themes and motifs from throughout the book, including many that previously occurred primarily in the first half." More to the point, Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 270, observes, "to appreciate it [Isa 54:1-10] fully, we must be familiar with the whole of Deutero-Isaiah. A whole range of motifs is here fused into something quite new."

not in some way connected with some other passage from the sequence.[243] Isa 54:1-17 employs the sequence level recurrences of a ringing cry (54:1); mother/fertility (54:1-4, 13); tents (54:2); trees/herbage (54:3); memory/former things (54:4); "do not fear" (54:4); humiliation/shame (54:4); called/chosen (54:5); abandonment (54:6); water (54:8-9); mountains/valleys (54:10); comfort (54:11); precious things (54:11-12); peace (54:13); knowledge/understanding (54:13); idolater/idols depictions (54:16); fire/burning (54:16); and fashioner/former/creator (54:16-17). Thus, throughout the passage, language from elsewhere in the sequence appears and points back to its prior appearances. This high concentration of sequence level thematic motifs produces an intensity in Isa 54:1-17, and signals its importance to the sequence as a whole. The sense that Isa 54:1-17 is particularly tightly tied to the whole of the sequence's language, imagery, concerns, and tensions helps to produce the expectation that it will address the driving tension in a conclusive and climactic manner. In this poem the recurrent threads of the whole sequence coalesce. Their heavy recurrence in this poem helps to point to Isa 54:1-17's climactic role in the sequence as a whole.

Second, Isa 54:1-17 is exuberant in its depiction of woman Zion's distress and the overturning of that distress. The poem does not present a single consistent metaphor for Zion's anguish. Rather, multiple metaphors for feminine shame are paratactically juxtaposed and piled upon one another.[244] The accumulation of these metaphors presents a voice passionate about depicting, through any and all images available, the reversal of the straits of which the audience has complained. Much like the confluence of metaphors

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[243] See ch. 4, n. 47 for an explicit comparison of 54:1-17 with the poem that follows it in terms of their relative participation in the thematic threads of the sequence.

[244] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 231, notes that the metaphors used for Zion shift in Isaiah 54. Goldingay, *Isaiah*, 310, also notes the use of several different images for Zion in Isaiah 54.

that Wayne C. Booth observes in his discussion of Norman Mailer, Second Isaiah engages in a "jumbling of metaphors at the moment of greatest passion."[245] Thus, the juxtaposition of metaphors highlights the climax of tonal intensity in the sequence as a whole, and the progression within the metaphors themselves leads directly to the resolution of the sequence's tension within Isa 54:1-17's poetic flow.

The metaphors Isa 54:1-17 deploys for imagining the reversal of Zion's fortunes are the barren woman, the widowed woman, and the abandoned woman.[246] As the poem progresses from the overturning of woman Zion's infertility, to the relegating of widowhood into the forgotten past, to the explicit reversal of abandonment, it moves ever nearer to Zion's own expressed sense of the situation (49:14) and the closely linked complaint of the exilic audience. As it progresses towards this expression of Zion's own understanding of her shame, the poem presents a veritable tour-de-force of biblical images for female humiliation.[247]

The opening shame image for Zion wholly identifies her with the condition of infertility.[248] Zion, personified as a woman, is presumably addressed, but her name is

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[245] Booth, *The Company We Keep*, 366.

[246] Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 522, observes the several metaphors for Zion and their intrinsic relationship to the situation of the addressees. He writes: "To fail to bear children is … a cause for grief, shame and fear. To lose children is a cause for grief and fear. To lose one's husband is a cause for grief and fear."

[247] While widowhood might not automatically correspond to "shame" imagery, it is evidently used in this way in Isa 54:4. Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 82, considers widowhood "a shame in itself." Notably absent from this list are the images of Zion as raped (c.f., Lam 1:8-10, see ch. 3, n. 85), and adulteress (cf., Hos 2:1-13; Ezek 16:16-17). Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 360, points out that, "[t]he potential metaphoric field of matrimonial vicissitudes is well illustrated in Hos 1-3." Similarly, Muilenburg, *IB* 5:633, refers to the imagery of 54:1-3 as "the favorite figure of Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel." In light of Second Isaiah's evident familiarity with Lamentations, the omission of the image of Zion as raped may reinforce Isa 54:1-17's rejection of violent images. Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 29, notes the direct correlation between the prophets' use of the marriage metaphor and the notion of shame.

[248] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 361, well illustrates the biblical evidence that barrenness connoted shame in ancient Israel citing the stories of the matriarchs and Hannah.

withheld.[249] Rather, in place of her name her whole being is wrapped up in the attribution "barren one." Indeed, a pair of attributions names her. She is called "barren one, who has not borne" (עקרה לא ילדה) and "one who has not labored" (לא־חלה).[250] The poem opens paradoxically by inviting its "barren" addressee to cry out (רנה).[251] רנה is typically a triumphant cry, and the command should probably be read in this context as a call to rejoice.[252] However, the command's juxtaposition with the attribution עקרה opens up poetic possibilities for reading this commanded joyful cry. רנה would seem most naturally to refer to the once barren woman's shouts of joy heralding the birth of her child. These shouts of joy would stand in contrast to the painful shouts of labor through which the barren woman would have passed in the overturning of her infertility. These joyful shouts welcoming the new child would be especially triumphant in the case of the barren woman.[253]

The images for the woman's shame begin to blend in the third colon. Here the infertile woman is still obviously in view, given the reference to numbers of children, but

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[249] As Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:337, note, "we should read chapter 54 in the light of 49.14-52.12 and infer that Yhwh again speaks to Madam Zion. Yet the point is never explicit." Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One*, 64, concurs writing, "the barren one in Isaiah 54 is not named though it is clearly Zion."

[250] A similar elision of the woman's name in favor of the designation "barren one," appears in the address to Samson's mother (Judg 13:3). Throughout the story, Samson's mother never receives a name, though the condition which prompted the transformation of her name to "barren one" is reversed early in the narrative.

[251] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 272, observes, "[t]o those who heard it, the summons, 'Sing, O barren one', must have sounded extremely paradoxical …. How could a barren woman be summoned to sing? This was both meaningless and pitiless."

[252] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 231, notes that the woman's "delight, it is quickly discovered, is not over her renewed spiritual state, but over her body's fertility."

[253] The opening verse (v. 1), a tricolon, progressively builds the intensity of its repetitive focus on rejoicing. The first two cola consist of three attributions of childlessness and three exhortations to rejoice. The first colon contains one exhortation to "ring out a cry" and two attributions of childlessness, while the second colon inverts this situation, twice urging rejoicing and only once making reference to barrenness. Thus, the form of the verse firmly balances the condition (infertility) and the command (ecstatic rejoicing) through an even number of occurrences of each, while the line tips slightly toward rejoicing, giving that motif more prominence as the verse continues. Additionally, the recurrent term for ecstatic exuberance (רנה) is repeated twice in this opening line, intensifying its focus on rejoicing.

a new contrast is introduced. The claim is made that the deserted one (שׁוממה) will have more sons than the one who has a husband. Apparently, the "barren one who has not borne" and the "deserted one" designate the same figure. This is the only sense in which such a promise substantiates the call to rejoice in a way that justifies the use of כי. However, if the "barren one" and the "deserted one" are to be understood as the same woman, then the compounding of images has exacerbated her shame. The enigmatic contrast between the deserted woman and the married woman not only fails to explain how the woman will come to have these abundant children, but leaves open the question of whether she is barren because of the rejection (and resultant absence) of her husband, or rejected by her husband because of her infertility.[254] The poem does not clarify, but leaves the ominous declaration that the woman was rejected as a compounding factor in the accumulation of her shame. Given the earlier expressions of concern over divine abandonment (Isa 40:27; 49:14), this hint at spousal rejection, whatever the cause, begins to intersect more closely with the audience's primary expressed concerns.

The second stanza (vv. 4-5) explicitly topicalizes the concern over Zion's shame, and introduces a new image for feminine humiliation to overturn. The stanza begins in an imperative mode of address that explicitly forbids the emotional reaction implied in the images the poem has been presenting and will continue to build upon (do not fear, do not feel humiliated, v. 4). These commands mirror the content of the stanza itself which for the first time announces that there is a temporal progression between the conditions of

[254] Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 525, suggests that in "a traditional context" infertility "imperils a woman's marriage and puts a question mark by her status as a woman in her community."

the woman described and thus an overturning of her humiliated condition.[255] In this context, the poetry introduces the paired images of widowhood and the "shame of youth." Synonyms for shame are paired in construct relationship with terms for phases in the life of a woman. "Youth" (עלומיך) and "widowhood" (אלמנותיך) are derived from homonymic roots (עלם and אלם).[256] Thus, the sound of the line reinforces the expectation that the pattern is to be repeated and highlights the emphasis on the woman as shamed.[257] In line with the poem's thoroughgoing emphasis on the overturning of each of the images of Zion's shame, the woman is told she will "forget" these phases of her life, and "not remember [them] again" (v. 4b).

V. 5 presents the apparent reason for the woman's ability to forget her shame, and the apparent reason for her new-found fertility. The poetic pattern of this line draws attention to the figure who causes Zion to forget her shame. The woman's husband is now explicitly named: "Yhwh of the armies is his name." The line follows a series of bicola (v. 4) that are neatly paired in both grammatical structure and semantic content. The shift in poetic pattern places significant emphasis on the iteration of the husband's name. After four lines of neat and tidy repetitive parallelism, the reader expects "your master is your maker" to be followed by "your … is your …." Thus, the shift to "Yhwh of the armies is his name" is jarring and intense. The term for "husband" in this line

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[255] Also significant for the claim that this poem signals the climax of the comfort tonality, is the fact that the poem begins to be discernibly tender at this point. As Blocher has noted, "beginning in verse 4 (Is 54), the Lord speaks the language of emotion, both burning and tender, to assure Zion that she will never suffer again rejection" (Blocher, "Glorious Zion, Our Mother," 7).

[256] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:345, observe that "'your youth' and 'your widowhood' rhyme." However, the aural similarity between these two terms goes beyond simple end-rhyming; they are virtually entirely homophonous. Antoon Schoors, "Two Notes on Isaiah" in *VT* 21 (1971):504, reads with comparative evidence to render עלומיך "your servitude." However, this translation ignores the reference to the wife of youth later in the poem.

[257] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:339, note that "her plight is underlined by the multiplication of near-synonyms: shame, humiliate, disgrace." Similarly, Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 273, highlights the repetition of references to shame in this verse.

(בעליך) resonates with the term used earlier in the poem for "husbanded" (בעולה, 54:2). She has been deserted, but will be deserted no more. Now she is to become "husbanded" as the poem goes on to detail. This sense of the woman as not "husbanded" draws very near to the charge of abandonment that Zion has leveled against the deity. However, that depiction has not been fully offered in this poem, at least not yet.

The climactic female shame image of the poem is the one that has been circulating in the language and imagery of the sequence as a whole. In v. 6 Zion is described as an abandoned and rejected wife. V. 6a opens the climactic stanza highlighting the pathos of the rejected wife through the alliteration of the adjectives used to describe her – abandoned (עזובה) and aggrieved (עצובת). The seconding of the parallel line compounds the pathos adding the attribution "wife of youths" (ואשת נעורים). The sound of the dismal attributions "abandoned" and "aggrieved" finds a faint echo in the assonance of the repeated long u-vowel of נעורים (youth) and the alliteration of its preceding *ʿayin*. The alliteration ties these forms together as a closely bound group. The "wife of youths" is the one who is both abandoned and aggrieved. The construct chain "wife of a youths" carries tender connotations. The "youth" would seem to hint at the husband, for נעורים is masculine. Yet the use of the plural ambiguates this designation somewhat. How can the woman addressed have been the wife of "youths"? The image itself is somewhat unclear. However, this ambiguity does not diminish the phrase's tenderness. Rather, images of the passion of young love, the youthful and enthusiastic bridegroom, and adolescent innocence are metaphorical associations of the "wife of youths." This one, the youthful object of the bridegroom's young devotion, is rejected – a stark contrast to the tender associations of a "wife of youths." This image – the rejected

bride of a man's young infatuation – takes the poem to the limit of its description of Zion's shame.[258] Now, and only now, has the voice readied itself for the deity's confession (v. 7-8). The prior images that carried the element of shame, but did not respond directly to Zion's complaint have built up the expectation of this direct response. In the overturning of the precise image with which Zion has self-identified, Isa 54:7-8 will respond to the tensions of the sequence as a whole.[259]

The poem, and the sequence, reach their climax in the third stanza (vv. 6-10). Here the issue of Yhwh's abandonment of Zion, the neglect that the audience has charged Yhwh with, comes directly to the fore. This unit explicitly engages the charge of divine abandonment, and emphasizes the permanence of the reunion by explaining the breach and placing it in the past.[260] Thickly patterned alliteration highlights the intensity of the passage, as does the employment of such emotionally-charged images as spousal rejection, and a flood of fury. As Westermann observes:

> frequent reading of 54:1-10 shows that the rhythm itself marks off vv. 7f as the poem's climax. Here we have the heart of the matter, the basic factor in Deutero-Isaiah's proclamation – with God himself and in God himself the change has

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[258] Marjo C.A. Korpel, "The Female Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 54," in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes* (Biblical Interpretation Series 18; eds. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra; New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 157, defends the intriguing suggestion that the line should be translated "but the wife of youth -- how can she be rejected? says your God." Her analysis depends upon reading כי as conditional. However, while כי is at times used in this manner, it most frequently occurs in either legal contexts (e.g. Exod 21:2: "if you buy a Hebrew servant …") or is employed in a concessive manner (e.g. Ps 37:24: "though he stumble, he will not fall"). Neither of these senses approximate Korpel's translation of a categorical denial utilizing a rhetorical question with implied negative answer. Additionally, her translation neglects the parallelism the line exhibits with its immediate predecessor. V. 6a claims that Yhwh has called the woman abandoned and aggrieved. The description of a "wife of youth" seems rather to further this description than to provide an exception to it.

[259] Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 521, notes that it is important not to "look past [the metaphor] to its presumed referent …. But neither must it read the poem as simply a story about a woman. Metaphor and referent(s) are equally important."

[260] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 233, also sees the direct response to Zion's complaint in this passage as conclusive. She writes, "[t]his undoing of Zion's complaints asserts strenuously that the city's condition as 'not comforted' is now past." Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:338, also observe the correlation between the deity's confession of abandonment and Zion's charge in 49:14.

> already taken place, and therefore everything must alter. A change has come over God. He ceases from wrath, and again shows Israel mercy …. This is clearly a re-echoing of the words of the prologue.[261]

V. 7 is the climax of the poem, and indeed the sequence. However, contra Westermann, it is not merely an echo of the opening call to comfort. Rather, as we have seen, the movement of the sequence between the opening lines and this point leaves the question open about whether or not reconciliation between Yhwh and Zion will occur. Indeed, as the indictments of Zion's past misdeeds and the audience's present reluctance has illustrated, whether or not Yhwh will continue to offer this comfort has been placed in doubt. Thus, this is the climactic verse. Here Yhwh admits to a momentary rejection and resolves to turn forever away from that rejection. In this moment Yhwh embraces the audience's complaint and places it firmly in the past. This admission constitutes the central moment of crisis in the sequence and responds emphatically and directly to the tension opened up by the sequence's alternation between comfort and indictment. I concur with Henri Blocher who writes "what guarantees the promise 'never more' is the force of the Lord's conjugal passion. Two words are repeated for emphasis in verses 7-10 … *rhm*, vv. 7, 8, 10 … and *hesed*, vv. 8, 10 …. God is moved – he is deeply involved in the relationship – and he remains immovable in his love."[262]

The climactic moment comes as a confession that insists on the brevity of the abandonment. Yhwh responds to the audience's charge and the sequence's central tension, and confesses: "In a brief instant I abandoned you" (Isa 54:7a). As Walter Brueggemann has pointed out, "the break in abandonment and anger is "for a brief

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[261] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 274.

[262] Blocher, "Glorious Zion, Our Mother," 8. Muilenburg, *IB* 5:637, agrees writing, "[o]bserve how the stress also falls on the divine compassion in vss. 7*b*, 8*c* and reaches its culmination superbly in vs. 10*e*."

moment (*regaʿ*; vv. 7-8) …. The word suggests that while the abandonment by God was total and without qualification, it was only for an instant. Or we may reverse the proposition: the abandonment was only for an instant, but long enough for it to be massive, total, and decisive."[263] The word "instant" (רגע) is repeated twice in the passage, emphatically drawing attention to the time span of the deity's rejection. This insistence on brevity is reinforced by the structure of the poetry. The surrounding verses are particularly long bicola. Indeed, v.6 is a 5-5 line and v.8 is a 5-6 line. However, v. 7 does not mince accents in its expression of Yhwh's momentary rejection. Framed between two such long bicola,, v. 7's 3-3 line is almost staccato. As Brueggemann recognizes, this "momentariness" of the rejection may on one level mitigate the severity of the rejection, yet it emphasizes its reality. Surely to the audience overhearing this confession, the "moment" of rejection must refer to Jerusalem's destruction in 587 BCE and the continued absence of her "children" – i.e., the audience. By admitting to this rejection and placing it in the past, Yhwh firmly proclaims an impending end to those circumstances. That is, Yhwh will comfort Zion and bring her children home. Just a few poems ago Yhwh passionately replied to Zion's claim, "Yhwh abandoned me" (עזבני; 49:14) with emphatic assertions that though mothers might forget their children, "I will not forget you," (Isa 49:15); and solidified this claim with the compelling image of the

[263] Walter Brueggemann, "A Shattered Transcendence? Exile and Restoration," in *Biblical Theology: Problems and Perspectives* (eds. Steven J. Kraftchick, Charles D. Myers, Jr., and Ben C. Ollenburger; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 176. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 140, calls this image "an anthropopathism reminiscent of Hosea, the prophet describes Yahweh as yielding to a fit of anger."

city engraved on Yhwh's palms (Isa 49:16). Now Yhwh suddenly admits to having "abandoned" (עזבתיך) his wife (Isa 54:7).[264]

In the moment between the end of this colon (v. 7a) and the beginning of its parallel colon (v. 7b), the tensions of the whole sequence boil over. Yhwh admits to the rejection that the audience had feared and had charged Yhwh with. The "instant" is indefinite in length. It is not a day, a year, or a generation, but an "instant." The emphasis, however, is obviously on its brevity given the adjective "short" (קטן). Though the moment surely refers to the years between 587 BCE and 540 BCE, that span is relativized by the phrase "a short moment" (רגע קטן). The totality of the abandonment in v.7a prepares for the starkness of its antithesis in 7b. Now the rejection is past. The transition from the rejection of the past, and its completion is emphasized in the verb forms of the bicolon. The perfect verb of rejection is overturned by the imperfect verb "I will gather." Again, mirrored sounds reinforce and highlight the sudden change. From the abandonment (עזבתיך) of the past, Yhwh will gather (אקבצך) his wife.[265]

The poem's resolution of this tension is not accomplished all at once, however. Neither will the tensive poem allow compassion to so overwhelm the rage as to eliminate anger from the text entirely. The alliteration returns, highlighting the deity's anger that provoked the rejection that is now in the past. The "flood of fury" (בשׁצף קצף) both draws attention to the divine wrath and carries connotations of its brevity. A flood, like the divine anger it depicts, rushes in and accomplishes great destruction. Yet it is short-

[264] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 234, comments that "in chapter 49 YHWH's forgetting was vigorously denied. But here it is admitted that YHWH did in fact abandon Zion, though only for a moment, and in order to return compassionately to her."

[265] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 2:339, comment that "a parallel contrast is expressed in the collocation of 'abandon' and 'gather', 'anger' and 'compassion', and underlined by the paronomasia and rhymes which set up aural links between words which are linked or contrasting in meaning."

lived.[266] Fury, likewise, carries all the intensity of raging emotions, rather than long smoldering anger. The abbreviated duration of the divine wrath is emphasized by the second repetition of רגע in this line; and the line's neatly antithetical claim of "eternal fidelity" (ובחסד עולם) contrasts dramatically with the brief duration of anger that the poem insists upon. However, as Brueggemann notes, "the promised *hesed* is *after and in response to* the abandonment, and not in its midst as an antidote."[267] That is, the break between 54:7a and 54:7b is decisive. The reversal and resolution for future fidelity in no way alleviates the abandonment itself. Rather, the abandonment was significant, total, devastating, and real. In admitting to the abandonment the audience had complained of, Yhwh turns fully from the fury over their resistance. In this admission, the tensions of the sequence between the audience's complaint and the divine proclamation of comfort reach their point of resolution.

As this chapter has been arguing, Second Isaiah presents an imaginary world in which the movement from 54:7a to 54:7b is not predetermined, not a yet given. Instead, Yhwh's now past rejection was angry and justified. Second Isaiah presents the divine speaker as wrestling with this anger, largely produced by audience reluctance to accept the message of comfort, and gradually overcoming it and placing it fully and finally in the past. For this reason it is important not to read too quickly past 54:7a to the resolution. For an audience that has been lead to imagine a world in which Yhwh might decide in favor of "the ban" and might resolve to embrace the furnace, the devastation of

[266] Ibid., 2:349, agree with this assessment. They write, "[t]he word is that used of a flash flood which bursts suddenly across countryside and then abates."

[267] Brueggemann, "A Shattered Transcendence," 178 (emphasis original).

54:7a is real and the resolution of 54:7b is offered as a relief, and as a response to their complaint.

In good lyric fashion, Second Isaiah supports the marriage metaphor through appeal to yet another metaphor. The divine voice insists that "this is the waters of Noah to me" (v. 9). The "this" (זאת) must refer to the moment of rejection, for the metaphor is run out as an illustration of un-repeatability. Just as Yhwh swore long ago never to flood the earth and has kept that promise, so Yhwh swears that the rejection will never be repeated.[268] The reference to Noah's flood as guarantee against a return to divine rage is particularly potent in light of the description of Yhwh's wrath as a "flood of fury" in 54:8. As Clifford remarks, "There is no more danger that Yahweh's fierce anger will again strike Israel than there is that the waters of the flood will again burst upon earth."[269]

The concluding stanzas employ images of tenderness, luxury, and security. In v. 11 Yhwh addresses the Zion in terms that acknowledge and account for her suffering, "O afflicted one, stormed and not comforted." This tender expression is followed up by the promise of lavish gifts. Zion is imagined as a princess – bedecked with jewels.[270] The final stanza (vv.14-17) adds assurances of security. These assurances are in harmony with the largely comforting tonality of the passage up to this point. The deity insists that "any vessel fashioned against you will not flourish" (Isa 54:17a). This image presents Zion's future and by implication that of the audience of her children as one of security.

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[268] Daniel R. Streett, "As It Was In the Days of Noah: The Prophet's Typological Interpretation of Noah's Flood" *CTR* (2007): 48, points out that the employment of the Noachic metaphor is appropriate to the imagery of the poem as a whole. Earlier in the poem Yhwh's anger had been referred to as a "flood of fury" (Isa 54:8), and the compassionate address to woman Zion which follows the elaboration of the Noachic metaphor refers to her as "storm-tossed" (54:11).

[269] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 186.

[270] Westermann observes "that the new Jerusalem is God's city in a completely new way, and its glittering splendour points directly to the divine majesty" (*Isaiah 40-66*, 278). Likewise, Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 365, rightly points out that "in the present description reality is left completely behind."

In conclusion, Isaiah 54:1-17 brings the divine vacillation between passion and anger to a balance and an end. Though divine rage is topicalized, it is not present in the moment of the poem. It is discussed as a past event limited in duration – an unspecifiable brief time span that is, in fact, now over. This situation is unlike previous poems that wrestled with its presence. Divine rage and rejection are placed firmly in the past. The sequence's overriding tension between Yhwh's love and anger at the audience's reluctance has been resolved. Yhwh decided in favor of rage, but only for a moment.[271] The anger tonality will make no further appearances in the poetry of Second Isaiah. The tension has reached its point of resolution. A balance has been struck that honors the divine rage and the audience's complaint. Yhwh has now decided in favor of comfort and has resolved the tension with Zion's complaint by placing it in the past. This decision to be Zion's comforter receives particular support in the deployment of the marriage metaphor.

3. Summary of Tonal Flow: The Progression of Tonalities and the Resolution of Their Tension

As we have seen, the sequence has in Rosenthal and Gall's terms "gotten from beginning to end"[272] through initial tonal alternation between the dominant voice's main tonalities of indignant indictment and compassionate comfort, growing dominance of the comfort tonality, and resolution of the conflict between these two tonalities via temporal progression.[273] The sequence's intractable problem, the problem of whether or not

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[271] As Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 187, summarizes, Zion "will no longer have to fear the alienation from Yahweh, for it was only momentary and will not recur."
[272] Rosenthal and Gall, *Modern Poetic Sequence*, 27.
[273] A summary of the tonalities of each poem in sequence appears toward the beginning of this ch.

reconciliation will be possible given audience reluctance and growing divine restiveness over that reluctance, comes to resolution with the definitive answer in Isa 54:1-17. Yhwh addresses the complaint of the audience directly, admitting to the rejection they had feared and placing it firmly in the past via temporal progression. This poem is the climactic poem of the comfort stream and, indeed, of the entire sequence.[274] The alternation and vacillation leading up to this climax was not haphazard nor incidental. Rather, the particular tonal flow of Second Isaiah is the sequence's way of wrestling with its "intractable problem."

4. Tonal Flow and the "Intractable Problem"

The tonal vacillation of the divine voice and the intractable problem of Zion's comfort are intimately tied. It is the tension over the divine resolve to comfort and exasperation over the audience's resistance that produces this vacillation in the divine attitude toward the addressee. Each of the sequence's tonalities and their implied perspectives on this question make a distinctive contribution to the overall meaning and impact of the sequence. Comfort, indictment, and confidence each explore the problem of reconciliation from a different angle, thus shedding light on the difficulty of the problem and highlighting the final triumph of the comfort tonality in a way that straightforward announcement of comfort could and would not. The juxtaposition and alternation of these tonal streams highlights the possible world imagined by each and throws into sharp relief the contrasts between them. The world of divine comfort and the world of divine

[274] This resolution goes beyond the equilibrium of "all passion spent" (ibid., 57), a phrase Rosenthal and Gall use to characterize the type of resolution the lyric sequences typically achieve. See further ch. 2, pp. 79-80 on this distinction between Second Isaiah and the poems Rosenthal and Gall discuss.

wrath are allowed to stand in tension with one another and the audience is offered the opportunity to imagine each. Following this sequence long juxtaposition and alternation, the final resolution in the comfort tonality offers a relief of the sequence's tension built through the contrasts of these tonal streams. Thus, the final resolution to comfort takes on the role of climax, resolving the sequence's tensions into its certainty of consolation.

4.1. Contributions of the Comfort Tonality

The *comfort tonality* provides one potential response to the sequence's central driving question. Implied in the situation that gives rise to the difficulty of reconciliation is a complaint of the absence of a comforter, especially given the sequence's tendency to allude to Lamentations.[275] The comfort tonality's response allows the audience to imagine a possible world in which Yhwh responds to Lamentations' complaint with the intention of being Zion's comforter. The comfort tonality also provides a dominant metaphor for imagining comfort, the marriage of Zion and Yhwh, with a secondary use of the fertility metaphor. Both of these have in common that they are familial metaphors. They carry a particular image of comfort and reunion, one that is stable, and safe. Promises of bountiful provision are another frequent element of the comfort stream. The comfort stream paints word-images of a future of comfort that is abundant, luxurious, and secure. It opens up an imaginary world in which the audience may picture what comfort would be like if they accept it while the divine voice continues to offer it. This picture is of renewed relationship, stability, security, and abundance.

[275] See the discussion of the Second Isaiah's allusions to Lamentations in ch. 3.

4.2. Contributions of the Indictment Tonality

The *indictment tonality* contributes to the sequence's tonal flow by announcing the difficulty of comfort and exploring the various imaginable obstacles to reconciliation, through the various justifications for the deity's anger. The legal language that pervades this tonality highlights the sense of justifiability and leads to a different sort of imagination from the comfort tonality. Here the audience has the opportunity to imagine receiving what it has admitted it deserves, a very unpleasant prospect indeed. The violent images that frequently accompany this tonality reinforce the sense that the imaginative world offered by the indictment tonality is not a happy possibility. Accusations and invitations to argument function similarly and the rhetorical questions may be seen as implying a courtroom or testing scene even where none is present. In this tonality, Israel must imagine herself on trial and must reckon with the unpleasant sentence that she suspects she deserves. The indictment tonality thus provides an alternate set of possibilities from the promises of comfort. When placed in tension with the comfort tonality the indictment tonality propels the reader away from self-pity or reluctance by highlighting the expected devastating results of divine anger and by making the juxtaposed promises of comfort all that much more appealing through contrast. Thus the indictment tonality ensures that the comfort tonality does not offer an uncomplicated picture of Yhwh's relationship with Israel. Rather, this relationship is one that has wounded both sides as Yhwh's indictments and Israel's complaints testify. The indictment stream preserves this tension in the relationship, ensures that the comfort stream is not allowed to gloss over the difficulties of that relationship, and contrasts sharply with the imaginary world presented by the comfort stream. Rather than security,

provision, and abundance, the indictment tonality invites the audience to envision a world of justice, judgment, and violent punishment.

4.3. Contributions of the Confidence Tonality

The *confidence tonality* highlights the centrality of the divine speaking voice for the overall flow of Second Isaiah. Though the voice alternates and vacillates between irreconcilable positions, the divine voice never looses its grandeur. The confidence of the divine voice flows through both the indictment and comfort tonalities, unifying them as the expression of one voice despite their obvious tension. Indeed, each time the divine voice speaks it exudes confidence. This confidence characterizes the voice of Yhwh to such an extent that it helps to unify the voice's otherwise divergent expressions. The dignity of the voice also reinforces the sense that it is in control of the internal contradiction, that whatever resolution of the intractable problem this voice ultimately reaches carries authority. Indeed, the confidence with which the voice speaks should be strong evidence that the announced comfort is certain and reliable. However, the obvious continuing tension within Second Isaiah shows that the audience does not accept it as such. Despite the confidence of the divine speaker, the audience's doubt and despair leave the reconciliation in doubt throughout the majority of the sequence.

The markers of the divine voice's confidence (self-predications, "I am" statements, creation imagery, etc.) are the markers of its dominance over the other voices that are frequently anything but confident. When the divine voice arrives finally at a resolution to comfort that fully embraces the audience's complaint, then the implied audience can breathe a sigh of relief. The disaster of the other option has certainly been

avoided. The authoritative voice has turned away from indignance over their complaint and reluctance, and has placed that rage firmly in the past. The attitudes and expressions of the other voices in Second Isaiah, particularly the despairing tonalities of the audience, are directly contravened by the confidence and dominance of the divine voice. The confidence tonality of the divine voice thus reinforces the resolution of that voice's central tension in the certainty of comfort through its depiction of the confident divine voice as the authoritative voice in Second Isaiah.

5. Rhetorical Impact and Implications for Second Isaiah's "Message"

As a response to the implied audience's expressed concerns over abandonment and Lamentations' complaint, Second Isaiah's deployment of a tensive and dominant divine speaking voice proves remarkably effective. The dominance of the divine speaking voice responds to the audience's complaint of Yhwh's absence emphatically with its pervasive presence. However, the *nature* of this presence is important as well. The divided and vacillating voice of Yhwh in Second Isaiah provides a sense of a dominant and realistic literary presence of Yhwh in the text. The divine speaker is not a "flat" character, but a full-fledged nuanced speaker torn between two conflicted tonalities. The struggle to reconcile with reluctant Israel is presented as a real and difficult one. This difficulty takes account of the audience's complaint of abandonment and treats the fears expressed in that complaint as realistic and relevant. The tension between comfort and indictment accounts for the implied audience's fears and ensures that Second Isaiah's response to them and to Lamentations is neither trivializing nor trite. Rather, these fears are given voice in the sequence's alternation, and juxtaposition of comforting and indicting

expressions from the divine speaker. The intensity, presence, and persistence of the indictment tonality reflects the struggle of Second Isaiah's audience to accept its message and honors the intensity of Lamentations' (and the audience's) complaint. The alternation between the two dominant tonalities paired with the authorizing impact of the confidence stream leads the implied audience to imagine the possible worlds opened up by each stream and guides them to welcome and accept the sequence's resolution with the certainty of comfort. After imagining the world in which Yhwh's wrath blazes like a furnace against them, must be forcibly restrained as with a muzzle, and is likened to the total extermination of the ban, the comfort tonality's promises of provision, security, abundance, and reconciliation prove all the more appealing. The sequence's movement thus allows the audience to face, voice, and ultimately turn away from their fears of abandonment.

The sequence gives voice to the darker emotions surrounding the concept of reconciliation between Yhwh and Israel not least in the voicing of the "indignant indictment" tonality. The presentation of this possibility, the experience of hearing the "voice" of the deity expressing these emotions, allows the audience to experience and ultimately release the expectation of judgment. The audience would rightly suspect a reconciliation that is too easy or too straightforward. The complexity of the situation and their own undoubtedly conflicted emotions about the task of reconciliation make a simple solution dubious. For this reason, not only is this alternation and structural tension more effective than a straightforward proclamation of comfort, it is more true to the nature of the situation. Simply put, reunion of an admittedly rebellious people (42:24) and the God who admittedly abandoned (54:7) them is no easy matter, but a complex and emotionally

fraught one. The tonal tension of Second Isaiah honors and acknowledges this struggle by working through its complex and tensive emotional energies for the purpose of producing resolution.

To return to where the present study began, the tonality of the poetry's speaking voice, and particularly the paratactic juxtaposition of tonalities that stand in tension with one another are aspects of Second Isaiah that a lyric approach illuminates. The examination of the tonalities of various poems within this chapter has illustrated that elements of Second Isaiah's poetry contribute to and reinforce the tonalities of these poems. Alliteration (e.g., 49:25; 51:13; 54:8), metaphor (e.g., 48:4; 49:16), thematic threads (e.g., 54:1-17), sound play (e.g., 54:4), and line length (e.g., 54:6-8) all contributed to the analysis of the divine speaker's tonality at various points in the discussion. Further, chapter four's analysis of the centripetal and centrifugal impulses within Second Isaiah pointed to the importance of the divine voice in producing Second Isaiah's overarching unity. Thus, the analysis of Second Isaiah on analogy with lyric sequencing has led to this point. The examination of Second Isaiah's tonalities has further illustrated the importance of Second Isaiah's poetic devices in its overall meaning making.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

"[A] good poem …is [a] discourse with a surplus of significance. It provides stuff for our meditation, offers words for our voice, gives form to our consciousness, shapes our interpretation of life and reality."[1]

The present study began with the proposal that progress could be made in understanding the meaning of Second Isaiah's final arrangement if the widely acknowledged poetic character of these chapters were allowed more fully to inform the discussion of its meaning. This approach required some methodological clarification regarding the use of lyric poetic tools for interpreting biblical Hebrew poetry. This clarification, along with the study's attempt to add nuance to traditional interpretations of Second Isaiah, constitute its primary contribution to Second Isaian scholarship and the study of biblical Hebrew poetry more broadly.

1. Summary of Argument

In contrast to widely-held understandings of Second Isaiah as "the book of comfort" and as urging "homecoming," this study has claimed that attention to Second Isaiah's parataxis, juxtapositions, tensions, and poetic flow present a far more complicated picture of the work's message.[2] Second Isaiah does not so much call for some singular activity, or express a singular idea, so much as it offers an encounter. In apparent response to the embedded complaints of the audience that Yhwh has abandoned, forgotten, or forsaken

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[1] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 186.

[2] The conception of Second Isaiah as the "Book of Comfort" is discussed throughout this project. See especially ch. 3, n. 84. See further the discussion of Richard J. Clifford's work in ch. 1, pp. 10-23 and his proposal that Second Isaiah urges homecoming.

them, Second Isaiah offers a vivid and multifaceted encounter with the speaking deity. Through repetitions, contradictions, allusiveness, and ambiguity, Second Isaiah's poems weave a fabric composed of variegated threads, unified almost exclusively by the address of the speaking deity that dominates the poems. This speaking voice, not surprisingly, is not undivided in its attitude, message, or emotional expressions. The deity's utterances alternate throughout the sequence of poems between indignation and compassion. This wrestling between the intention to comfort articulated by the sequence's opening lines (40:1) and the expression of divine aggravation likely produced by audience reluctance to accept this message produces the central driving tension of Second Isaiah as a whole. Through the imaginative worlds opened up by each of these modes of address, the audience is invited to entertain the possibilities of both experienced and expected judgment and offered reconciliation. The eventual resolution of this tension between wrath and compassion alleviates the experience of angst exacerbated by the sequence's tonal flow. The climax of the sequence thus functions as a relief that resolves the emotional tension created by the two primary tonalities of the divine speaking voice.

The "message," then, indeed proves to be one of comfort. Generations of scholars have not been wrong in pointing out that the image of return to Zion is one of the ways in which this comfort and reconciliation is imagined. Indeed, the series of poems taken as a whole does exhibit strong impulses toward the homecoming theme. At times (e.g., 51:9-52:12) return does seem to be the way the divine voice urges the audience to respond to the proclaimed comfort, and the juxtaposition of tonalities seems designed to create urgency about such a response. Yet the expressions of this theme are heavily rooted in the poetry's interest in the relationship between Yhwh and Israel. Only Yhwh's final

decision in favor of that relationship and direct address of Zion's complaint makes the homecoming theme ultimately compelling. As this study has shown, anger, wrath, and judgment are important – indeed crucial, central, and essential – aspects of Second Isaiah's presentation of its message of comfort which must not be minimized in the description of the sequence's contents and meaning. While the return from exile is one element of the comforting message of Second Isaiah, it is not the whole of Second Isaiah. The sequence, then, is not about a journey, but about a relationship – a relationship in which a journey will occur and is, in fact occurring, within the relationship itself.

This clarification of the sense in which Second Isaiah may be read as the "book of comfort" has been the direct result of the application of tools drawn from the study of lyric poetry. The study's insistence that in light of a lyric approach Second Isaiah need not necessarily issue a call for specific action led to the discussion of what elements of Second Isaiah's rhetorical situation were implied by the poetry itself. This approach highlighted the embedded speeches of the addressees as heavily influential in understanding Second Isaiah's driving concerns. The notion of an "intractable problem" drawn from the study of modern lyric sequences was employed to illustrate how the audience's voiced concerns over divine abandonment played out in the series of poems. In addition, this study's analysis of Second Isaiah's centripetal and centrifugal forces led to the determination that the most significant aspect of Second Isaiah's overarching cohesion was the dominance of the divine speaking voice throughout the fifteen chapters. The analysis of the tonalities of that voice was both a deployment of one aspect of a lyric approach and was dependent at numerous points upon the recognition of other lyric features such as alliteration, word play, and metaphor. Thus, the application of a lyric

approach shows itself to be a useful model in the task of interpreting Second Isaiah as a whole.

2. Significance of These Findings

This study makes contributions to biblical scholarship in three main areas: (1) the question of the meaning of Second Isaiah as a whole, (2) the application of a lyric approach to biblical Hebrew poetry, and (3) by providing a different approach to enduring critical questions in the study of Second Isaiah, i.e. the division of Second Isaiah's units and the relationship of the Servant Songs to the whole.

2.1. The Question of Second Isaiah's Meaningful Arrangement

One contribution of this study is its attempt to gain greater precision in the understanding of Second Isaiah's meaning as a whole as I have just described. As chapter one's discussion of the history of scholarship showed, this question has been largely stagnant in recent biblical scholarship. This stagnation may have resulted from general agreement with the "homecoming" interpretation. Whatever the reason for this inattention to Second Isaiah's overarching meaning, researchers have turned their attention to other areas. Notable among these other areas are the study of Second Isaiah's frequent allusion to other biblical texts, and the broader discussion of the composition of the sixty-six chapter whole of Isaiah.[3] Though scholarship has not been particularly interested in the question, the issue of Second Isaiah's overarching meaningful arrangement has not been conclusively addressed. Thus, this study's approach to the question provides both a

[3] See ch. 1, pp. 23-24.

return to an open and under-addressed problem and a new approach to answering it. This study's lyric approach preserves and attempts to understand the significance of Second Isaiah's self-contradictory tendencies, disjunctions, and disharmonies. In this way this study carries forward Melugin's observation of the recurrent juxtaposition of judgment and salvation and attends to the meaningful implications of this observation.[4] Namely, this study explores further the tension between judgment and salvation in Second Isaiah by treating these as juxtapositions in the tonalities of the divine speaking voice. Additionally, this study contributes to the synthesis of scholarly perspectives on Second Isaiah by integrating the relative consensus regarding the poetic nature of Second Isaiah into the question of its meaningfulness as a whole. By attempting to further the conversation about the meaningful arrangement of Second Isaiah as a whole, this study makes both methodological and interpretive contributions to the study of the composition of the whole of Isaiah if only because interpretation of one portion impacts the study of the composition of the whole. So, similarly, a better understanding of the meaning of Second Isaiah as a unit may also inform interpretations of Isaiah as a whole.

Progress in discerning the arrangement of Second Isaiah as a whole may have interpretive impact on the study of specific motifs and themes in Second Isaiah. The possibilities of disharmony and disjunction that this study has highlighted offers a significantly different context in which individual motifs may be studied than those offered by the reigning paradigms for Second Isaiah's overarching meaning. In particular, new possibilities are opened up for interpreting Second Isaiah's thematic threads as both concordant and discordant without recourse to often speculative

[4] See ch. 1, pp. 6-10.

redactional explanations, which are often the result of prosaic harmonizing with a predetermined "theme" such as homecoming, or a simplified understanding of comfort.

2.2. Methodological Contributions

This study has claimed that attention to the lyric features (e.g., tonalities, metaphor, alliteration, and word play) and lyric forms of cohesion (e.g., centripetal and centrifugal forces and parataxis) that Second Isaiah exhibits offers a different reading than the ones produced by other approaches. The study of biblical Hebrew poetry utilizing tools drawn from the study of lyric poetry more broadly offers significant potential for gains in the interpretation of biblical poetic texts, yet very little literature has been produced that offers guidance in utilizing lyric approaches. Biblical scholars have historically made reference to biblical poetry's lyric character, yet the term is frequently used without great specificity or clarity.[5] Lyric approaches are also sometimes discounted as anachronistic. Chapter two's discussion of lyric traits and articulation of characteristics that illustrate the reasonability of reading a biblical text as lyric poetry offers the possibility of clarification in these areas.

Additionally, while scholars such as Gunkel, Melugin, and Muilenburg have used terms such as "tone" or "mood" to discuss aspects of biblical Hebrew poetry, these terms, too, have been vaguely or ill-defined and no particular means of discerning various tonalities has been offered.[6] Chapters two and five of this study address the problem and

[5] E.g., S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: The Meridian Library, 1957), 360; James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction, and Exegesis" in *Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, and Jeremiah* (*IB*; ed. George Arthur Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5:398.

[6] See ch. 2, pg. 85-87 for a discussion of the use of the terms "tonality" and "mood" in discussions of biblical Hebrew poetry.

importance of identifying tonalities, and offer a mode of accessing Second Isaiah's various tonalities utilizing specific tools drawn from the study of modern poetry. Chapter five examines several poems within Second Isaiah that are exemplars of each of Second Isaiah's primary tonal streams. This examination highlights the individuality of each poem's tonality within the tonal stream. The discussion of these several poems and their tonalities in sequence illustrates the progression of Second Isaiah as a whole through a near alternation between indignation and the intention to comfort up to the point of the resolution of this tension in the final poem of the comfort tonality. This tonal approach to interpretation highlights the movement of the poetry in its attitude towards the audience and illustrates the emphasis placed on the climactic poem (54:1-17) through this tonal flow. Attention to tonality shows itself to be a useful tool as it illuminates the readings of these poems. The discussion of these poems and their tonalities also highlighted the centrality of imagery, metaphor, paratactic juxtaposition, and tropological density to the production of tone. The discussion thus integrated the discussion of tone into my larger claim that the interpretation of Second Isaiah may be usefully employ lyric tools, and showed that attention to tone is one aspect of such a study.

2.3. Addressing Critical Problems in Second Isaiah

Finally, throughout the course of this study, a lyric approach has offered new modes of engagement with ongoing critical questions in the study of Second Isaiah. As this study has repeatedly noted, the delineation and determination of the various units within Second Isaiah is a problem that has produced a wide divergence of opinions.[7] The lyric

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[7] See ch. 2, n. 65.

approach does not solve this problem. However it does offer possibilities for understanding this lack of clear unit demarcation as a meaningful part of Second Isaiah's final form. The lyric approach employed in this study has shown that unclear unit demarcation functions both centripetally and centrifugally to reinforce the audience's encounter with the divine speaking voice. The application of lyric tools undertaken in this study also pointed to Second Isaiah's largely paratactic structure as an element that compounds the difficulty in delimiting the individual poems. The lyric approach does offer some help with the problem of unclear units. This approach adds the elements of shift of speaker and change of tonality as parts of cumulative case arguments for unit division.

Additionally, the lyric approach has advanced an argument for the rejection of approaches that excise portions of Second Isaiah because of their perceived non-fit with the whole. The Servant Songs are, as this study has had occasion to point out, treated by some scholars as an independent stratum within Second Isaiah. This study's attention to the centripetal and centrifugal impact of thematic recurrences has advanced an argument for the retention of the Servant Songs as an integral part of Second Isaiah as a whole. In addition, this study's recognition of discontinuity and disjunction as characteristic elements of this unit has further contributed to the sense that the Servant Songs should not be excised merely because they exhibit some discontinuity with other poems. Indeed, such discontinuity ironically points to their continuity with the sequence as a whole.[8]

Perhaps most importantly, the demonstration that disjunction and disunity are part of the meaningful arrangement of Second Isaiah addresses the ongoing problem of the

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[8] See ch. 4, pp. 199-201.

presence of negative elements in the "book of comfort." This study has claimed that these negative and indicting elements of Second Isaiah are a meaningful element in its appeal to its historical audience to accept the promised comfort of Yhwh. The poems spoken in the indictment tonality, as this study has argued, make the promises of comfort more appealing through contrast and wear down audience resistance to the proclamation of divine comfort. This observation of the importance of the indictment passages to Second Isaiah's overarching message argues against their deletion, whether for historical, literary, thematic, or redactional reasons.

3. Avenues for Further Research

This study has opened up several avenues for further research both within Second Isaiah and in the broader corpus of biblical Hebrew poetry. This study has raised the possibility that poetic prophetic texts may be interpreted using lyric poetic tools and has suggested that lyric may provide particularly appropriate interpretive tools for prophetic poetry because of their shared vocative character.[9] This concept offers opportunities for further investigation into the relationship between prophecy and its literary expressions. For example a broader ranging study of prophetic poetry could be undertaken to determine if particular lyric devices are especially common in prophetic poetry and if prophetic poetry exhibits preferences for more or less centripetal orientations. Additionally, the lyric approach offers tools for additional new readings of the prophetic corpus and further work may apply this approach to other prophetic collections (e.g., Amos, Isa 1-39).

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[9] See ch. 1, pp. 30-31, and especially n. 86.

Secondly, the methodological contributions made to the study of biblical Hebrew poetry offer opportunities for expansion of this approach to other poetic biblical texts. Chapter two acknowledged that the examination of the truth of S.R. Driver's suggestion that "[h]ebrew poetry is almost exclusively *lyric*" lies outside of this study.[10] However, this study's articulation of clear characteristics that help to determine whether or not a text may be interpreted using lyric tools opens a door for further examination in this area. In addition, in the case of those texts that are found to by discernibly lyrical, the study has offered several tools for their interpretation.[11] These tools include attention to tonality and voicing; metaphor, imagery, and tropological density; and parataxis and juxtaposition, in addition to the use of centripetal and centrifugal forces articulated by Grossberg. In addition, this study has applied the concept of lyric sequencing to interpret the significance of arrangement of Second Isaiah's poems into a larger whole. This approach may be profitably applied to other such collections of biblical poems, and some work has already been done in this area.[12]

4. Conclusion

This study opened with Paul Ricoeur's comment that, "[t]o interpret a work is to display the world to which it refers by virtue of its 'arrangement,' its 'genre,' and its 'style.'"[13] One of the primary claims of this project has been that further interpretive work needed to be done because of a lack of clarity about the relationship between Second Isaiah's

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[10] Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 360 (emphasis original).

[11] Some work has begun in this area. See ch. 2, ns. 26, 70, and 74 for discussion of several studies of biblical Hebrew poetic texts applying a lyric approach. However, much work remains to be done in this area.

[12] See further ch. 1, n. 108.

[13] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (trans. Robert Czerny; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 220.

genre – poetry, analogous to lyric poetry and a series of lyric poems – and its meaning. Over the course of this study it has become apparent that attention to both the genre and style of Second Isaiah offer a new appreciation of the meaningful implications of its final arrangement and the imaginative world it offers to its reader. The world Second Isaiah opens to its reader is one of disjunction, tension, and paradox, offered in an arrangement and style that are, appropriately, poetic. Indeed, attention to the poetic form has revealed that the message of Second Isaiah is very much in harmony with its common characterization as "the Book of Comfort." Through the tonal alternation of the divine speaking voice highlighted by the lyric approach, Second Isaiah appeals to its audience to accept the divine offer of coming comfort. The poetic structure of the sequence – its balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces – points to the divine speaker as central to the Second Isaiah's overarching appeal in this regard. Thus, the lyric model has illuminated this message of comfort in new and interesting ways.

I am not suggesting that that lyric tools I have discussed are the only ways to read Second Isaiah, nor am I the first to employ them for reading biblical texts. Neither are my conclusions the only possibilities for understanding the meaningful arrangement of Second Isaiah. These are, rather, suggestions. However, they are suggestions that seem, to me at least, to open up possibilities for reading Second Isaiah with attention to features that have so far been less than fully explored.

APPENDIX 1: Motif Recurrences in Second Isaiah

Centripetal Recurrences[14]

1. Idolator/Idols depictions (עצב, ציר, נסך, פסל): 40:19-20; 41:7, 23-24, 29; 42:8, 17; 44:9-20; 45:16, 20; 46:1, 6-7; 48:5; 54:16.

2. Islands/Ends of the Earth/East of the Sun (איים, חוג ארץ, קצות ארץ, מזרח, ארץ אפס): 40:15, 22, 28; 41:1, 2, 5, 9, 25; 42:4, 10, 12, 15; 43:5-6; 45:6, 22, 46:11; 48:20; 49:1, 6; 51:5.

3. Commands to Arise/Get up (עורי, סור): 51:9, 17; 52:1, 11.

4. Knowledge/Understanding (ידע, בין): 40:14, 21, 28; 41:20, 22-23, 28; 42:16, 25; 43:10, 18; 44:8-9, 18-20, 25-26; 45:3-6, 21; 47:8-12; 48:4-8, 18; 49:23; 50:4; 51:7; 52:15; 53:3, 9, 11; 54:13; 55:5.

5. Desert (מדבר, ערבה, מעקש, חרב): 40:3-4; 41:18-19; 42:11, 16; 43:19-20; 48:21.

6. "I am He" (אני הוא): 41:4; 42:8; 43:11, 12 ("I am God") (אני־אל), 13, 15, 25; 51:12.

7. "put it to heart" (שים על־לב): 41:20; 42:25; 47:7.

8. "Do not fear"(אל־תירא, אל־תפחד): 40:9; 41:10, 13-14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 8; 51:7; 54:4. Other fear references (ירא, פחד): 50:10, 51:12-13.

9. Incomparability of Yhwh (שוה, דמות): 40:13, 18, 25; 44:7; 46:5, 9; 55:8-9.

10. Ringing Cry (רנה): 42:11; 43:14; 44:23; 48:20; 49:13; 51:11; 52:8; 54:1; 55:12.

11. Blind with eyes, deaf with ears (e.g., עור ועינם יש וחרש ואזנים): 42:7, 18-20; 43:8 Other blind and deaf: 42:16; 47:13.

12. Peace (שלום): 41:3; 45:7; 48:18, 22; 54:13; 55:12.

13. Torah (תורה): 42:4, 24; 51:7.

14. Humiliation/shame (בוש, כלם, חרפה): 41:11; 42:17; 44:9-11; 45:16-17; 47:3; 49:23; 50:7; 51:7; 54:4.

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[14] Recurrences which are entirely within the "consonance" category are listed as centripetal.

15. Word (דבר): 40:8; 41:28; 44:26; 45:23; 50:2; 51:16; 55:11.

16. Comfort (נחם): 40:1; 49:13; 51:3, 19; 52:9; 54:11.

Centrifugal or Ambiguous Recurrences[15]

17. Water Imagery (ים, גשם, אגם, נהר, מר, מים): 40:12, 15; 41:17-18, 42:10, 15; 43:2, 16, 19-20; 44:3-4, 12, 14, 27; 47:2; 48:18, 21; 49:10; 50:2; 51:9-10, 15; 54:8-9; 55:1, 10.

18. Memory/Former Things (ראשון, זכר, מחה, שכח): 41:4, 22; 42:9; 43:9, 18, 25-26; 44:21-22; 46:8-9; 47:7; 48:1, 3; 49:1, 14-15; 51:13; 54:4.

19. Fashioner/Former/Creator (יצר, עשה, ברא): 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 10, 20; 44:2, 9-10, 12, 21; 45:7-9, 10-12, 18; 46:11; 48:7, 12; 49:5; 51:13; 54:16-17.

20. Parent/fertility imagery (אם, עקרה, רחם, בטן, אב, בן, ילד, זרע): 41:8; 42:14; 43:5-6, 27; 44:2-4, 24; 45:10-11, 25; 46:3; 48:8, 19; 49:1, 5, 15, 17, 20-23; 50:1; 51:2, 12, 18, 52:14, 53:10; 54:1-4, 13.

21. Abandonment (עזב): 41:17; 42:16; 49:14; 54:6; 55:7.

22. Mountains/valleys (בקע, גבעה, גיא, הר): 40:4-5, 9, 12; 41:15, 18; 42:15; 44:23; 49:11; 54:10; 55:12.

23. Precious things (including copper, iron, silver, gold, stones, spoil, plunder, smelting): 40:19; 42:22-24; 43:3-4, 23; 44:9, 12; 45:2-3; 46:6; 48:4, 10; 49:18, 24; 54:11-12.

24. Justice (משפט): 40:14, 27; 41:1; 42:4.

25. Wind/storm (רוח,סערה): 40:7, 24; 41:16; 42:5.

26. Rock (צור,סלע): 42:11; 44:8; 48:21; 51:1.

27. Trees/Herbage (ציץ, חציר, עץ) (including specific species): 40:4-8, 20, 24; 41:19; 42:15; 43:17; 44:4, 14, 19, 23; 45:8, 20; 51:3, 12; 53:2; 55:10, 13.

[15] Recurrences which include any "dissonant" occurrences are listed in this category, despite the acknowledgement that they may have "consonant" iterations as well.

28. Sheep/Shepherd imagery (רעה,טלא, צאן): 40:11; 44:28; 49:9; 53:6-7.

29. Fire/Burning (בער, אש, עלה, דעך ,כהה): 40:16; 42:3, 25; 43:2, 17, 23; 44:15-16, 19-20; 47:14; 50:11; 54:16.

30. Garment Imagery (לבש, בגד): 49:18; 50:3, 9; 51:6, 8, 9; 52:1.

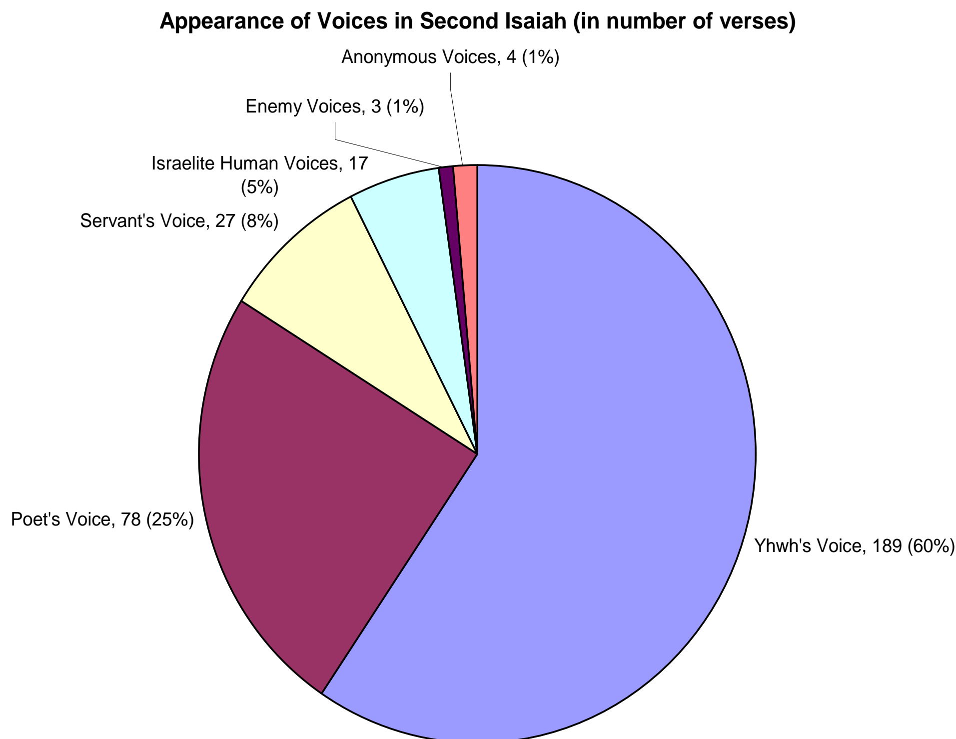
31. Tents (אהל): 40:22; 54:2.

32. Formlessness (תהו,אפס, אין): 40:17, 23; 41:12, 24; 44:9; 45:14, 18-19; 49:4.

33. Chaff (קש,שחק): 40:15, 24; 41:2; 47:14.

34. Called/chosen (קרא, בחר): 41:8-9, 24; 42:1, 6; 43:1, 10, 20; 44:1-2; 45:3-4; 48:12; 49:1; 51:2; 54:5.

APPENDIX 2: Speaking Voices in Second Isaiah



Legend: Each portion of the pie is labeled with the speaker or category of speaker followed by the approximate number of verses that voice speaks, and finally the percentage of Second Isaiah that this constitutes. [16]

Notes: "Israelite Human Voices" include: Jacob/Israel, Zion, Zion's sons, and unidentified or hypothetical voices that seem to be those of rhetorical audience. "Enemy Voices" include: Babylon, the idol-makers, and the "oppressor." The category "Anonymous Voices" refers to the chorus of voices in chapter 40.

[16] In the case of verses shared by two or more speaking voices, a percentage approximating the portion of the verse covered by each voice was used to calculate the total. Verses that contain the expressions of multiple voices were divided up among the various voices that participate in them in this way. It should be noted however, that virtually all of these instances are occasions in which a dominant speaker, either Yhwh or the poet, cites or refers to the hypothetical or past speech of another figure. These are thus embedded quotations and have been included here for the purpose of granting comprehensive coverage to the various voices of Second Isaiah even though they ultimately contribute to the dominance of the Second Isaiah's primary voices.

<u>Speech of Yhwh occurs in:</u>[17] Isa 40:1-2, 25; 41:1-7, 8-29; 42:1-4, 6-9, 14-20; 43:1b-13, 14b-15, 18-28; 44:1, 2b-5, 6b-16, 17, 18-19a, 20, 21-22, 24b-28; 45:2-9b, 10, 11b-13a, 14b, 18b-23; 46:3-13; 47:5-15[18]; 48:3-13, 15, 17b-19, 22a; 49:3b, 6b, 7b, 8b-12, 15-20a, 21a, 22b-24, 25b-26; 50:1b-3; 51:12-16, 22b-23a; 52:3b, 4b, 5, 6; 53:11-12; 54:1, 6, 7-17; 55:8-13. **(189)**

<u>Speech of the poet occurs in:</u> Isa 40:1b, 3a, 6a, 6c, 8-9, 10-24, 25b, 26-27a, 28-31; 41:21b, 21d; 42:5, 10-13, 21-25; 43:1, 10b, 12c, 14a, 16-17; 44:2, 6, 23-24a; 45:1, 11a, 13d, 14a, 15-18, 24; 46:1-2; 47:1-4; 48:1-2; 14; 17a, 20, 22b; 29:13-14a, 22a, 25a; 50:1a; 59:9-11; 52:1-4a, 5b, 5c, 52:7-15; 54:1d-6a,6d, 8d, 10d, 17d; 55:1-7. **(78)**

<u>Speech of the "Servant" occurs in:</u> 47:16; 48:1-3a, 4-6a, 7a, 8a; 50:4-11; 51:1-8, 17-22a **(27)**

<u>Speech of Human Voices to be identified with the audience occurs in[19]:</u> **(17)**

- <u>Jacob/Israel:</u> 40:27b
- <u>Zion:</u> 49:14b, 21b
- <u>Zion's sons:</u> 49:20b
- <u>Herald:</u> 40:9d
- <u>Un-named "we"[20]:</u> 42:24, 53:1-10
- <u>Commanded speech of the people:</u> 48:20b-21
- <u>Quoted hypothetical speech:</u> 45:9d, 10b, 10d; 48:5b, 7d

<u>Speech of Human Voices to be identified with the audience's enemies occurs in:</u> **(3)**

- <u>Babylon:</u> 47:10b, 10d
- <u>Idol makers:</u> 41:6d, 7b; 44:16d, 17d, 19b, 20d
- <u>Oppressor:</u> 51:23b

<u>Non-human or un-attributed voices occur in:</u> 40:3-5, 6-7 **(4)**

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[17] As noted above, in places it is notoriously difficult to parse out whether the deity or the prophetic poet is speaking. This difficulty is a well noted aspect of Second Isaiah's style and the attempt to delineate the voices of this poetry should not gloss over this "mixed voicing." For the purposes of this analysis each unit has been assigned tentatively to one voice or the other with the recognition that often these voices (as well as that of the servant) blend to a certain extent and rigid distinctions are therefore not possible. However, the purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate the overwhelming dominance of the deity's voice which becomes apparent whether a few verses are disputed or not. Additionally, the overwhelming of the poet's voice and its blending with that of the deity only heightens the impact of the deity's dominance rather than detracts from it.

[18] In vv. 9-15 it is virtually undecidable whether the poet or Yhwh is speaking; however, the portrayal of the speaker as knowing the future and the previous clear reference to Yhwh speaking about anger with the people argues in favor of seeing this as the divine voice.

[19] With the exception of the extended passage in ch. 53 all of this is embedded within the speeches of either the deity or the poet.

[20] These references should probably be understood as the poet speaking on the people's behalf.

Appendix 3 – Chart of the Tonalities of the Divine Voice in Second Isaiah

Key To Tonal Indicator Headings
A – Fear Nots
B – Promise of Provision
C – Vocative
D – Family Imagery
E – Legal Imagery
F – Rhetorical Questions
G – Military/Violent Images
H – Accusation/Invitations to Argument
I – Participial Chains/Self-Predications
J – Magnanimous Promises
K – Description of Past Activities

		Comfort Tonality Indicators A-D				Indictment Tonality Indicators E-H				Confidence Tonality Indicators I-K		
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Isaiah 40:1-	Addresse e Zion				40:1-2*			40:2*				

Addressee Jacob/Israel	41:10, 13, 14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 8	40:29-31; 41:8-20; 42:16; 43:2, 5-7, 19-20; 44:3-4; 44:26-28; 46:4	44:21-22; 48:18-19	43:5-7; 44:1-5; 48:18-19	41:11, 41:28; 42:1, 7; 43:9-13, 25-27; 44:8	40:25, 27, 28; 42:19; 43:9, 13, 19; 44:7, 8, 24; 45:9-11, 21; 46:5; 48:6, 14	40:26; 41:12, 15-16; 42:14-15; 43:14, 17, 28; 45:14; 48:4, 10	40:25; 42:17; 43:26-27; 45:19; 46:8, 12; 48:1, 4, 8	40:28; 41:9-10, 13-14, 17, 20; 42:5-6, 8; 43:1, 3, 8, 11, 14, 16-17, 25; 44:2, 6; 44:24-28; 45:3, 5-7, 8, 11, 18; 46:4, 9-11; 48:12-13, 17	40:29-31; 41:11-20, 27; 42:6-7, 16; 43:2-9, 13, 19-21; 44:3-5; 45:13-14; 46:4, 11; 48:18-19, 21	40:25-26, 28; 41:8-9; 42:5; 43:3, 14-17; 44:21-22, 24; 45:7-8, 11-12, 18; 48:13
Addressee Other					41:1 (coast); 41:21-24 (gods); 47:12-15 (Babylon)	41:4 (coasts); 41:22, 26 (gods)	41:2-3 (coast); 41:25-26 (gods); 45:1-3 (Cyrus); 47:2-15 (Babylon)	41:4 (coast); 41:21-23 (gods); 47:6-7, 10 (Babylon)	41:4 (coast)	45:2-4 (Cyrus); 45:22 ("ends of the earth")	41:25 (gods)

Isaiah 49:1-55:13												
	Addressee Zion	54:4	51:3; 54:11-14, 17	51:4-8; 51:17; 52:1-2, 11-12; 54:1, 11; 55:1	49:15-23; 50:1; 54:1-17a	49:25; 50:1-3; 51:4-5; 54:15	49:15, 24; 51:1, 12-13, 19; 52:5	49:24-26; 51:13-14, 17-22; 54:17a	49:15; 51:12-13, 22; 52:5	49:26; 51:12-13, 15; 54:5	49:8-12, 18-20, 22-23, 25; 51:3, 7-8, 16, 22; 52:1; 54:1-4, 7, 11-17	50:2-3; 51:2, 13, 15; 54:4, 9, 16
	Addressee Jacob/Israe								50:1-2**			
	Addressee Other	51:7 (people)	49:8-11 (servant); 55:1, 10 ("all")				55:2 ("all")		55:2 ("all")		55:1, 4, 12-13 ("all")	55:3 ("all")

Appendix 4 – Sequence of Poems in Second Isaiah and Tonal Descriptions of Each

Isaiah 40:1-31	The divine voice opens this brief poem which is the initiation of the comfort tonal stream and which opens up the sequence's intractable problem. Markers of the comfort stream are allusions to the marriage metaphor and explicit expressions of the intention to comfort. A series of anonymous voices continue this poem and alternate among exultation, despair, comfort, and indignation. The voices interact about the relative frailty of humanity and the incomparability of Yhwh. The voices progress to a strident and indicting tonality faulting the implied audience for its lack of understanding. The divine voice picks up where the anonymous voices of the preceding poem left off. The poem is thus closely linked with what precedes and is distinguished only by the shift in speaker. The indictment tonality in the divine voice is produced by rhetorical questions which echo those of the preceding poem and by direct citation of Jacob/Israel's speech which is refuted. The closing image of provision moves the end of the poem into the comfort stream.
Isaiah 41:1-7	This poem is distinguished from the preceding poem by its shift in addressee from Jacob/Israel to the coastlands. The poem is entirely within the indictment tonal stream as indicated by its use of rhetorical questions, commands to fear, and violent and military images. The end of the poem is marked by a shift in addressee, subject matter, and tonality.
Isaiah 41:8-20	The poem is spoken in the divine voice to Jacob/Israel. As a whole the poem participates strongly in the comfort tonality. Particular indicators of the comfort tonality in this poem include the recurrence of exhortations not to fear, imagery of bountiful provision, and claims about the relationship between Yhwh and the implied audience based on a long history. The poem redeploys the violence of the previous poem to create a tonality of security reinforced by might. Thus some hallmarks of the indictment tonality appear here including lawsuit language and violent imagery. However these reinforce Yhwh's claim to be a strong protector and even these are muted into the bountiful provider image towards the end of the poem. The poem is marked off from what precedes by the shift in tonality reinforced by the redeployment of the preceding poem's images, as well as by a shift in addressee. The end of the

poem is marked by a shift in addressee, subject matter, and tonality.

Isaiah 41:21-29	This strongly indicting poem in the divine voice is addressed to the "gods" and is marked off from the surrounding poems by this distinctive addressee. The end of the poem turns its attention towards Zion and expresses disappointment. Condemnatory language, legal imagery, and violent imagery mark the tonality of this poem.
Isaiah 42:1-4	This short poem in the divine voice is addressed apparently to the implied audience but with no direct address. Here the deity seems to be speaking to whomever will listen, or to no one in particular, and the tonality is one of excitement or anticipation. However, the tonality is not sharp throughout and is largely descriptive. The poem is marked off from what precedes by a change of focus from the "gods" to the servant. The poem is marked off from what follows by the shift to a much more present addressee and a more clearly confident tonality.
Isaiah 42:5-9	The poem is spoken in the divine voice and is a tonal center in the confidence tonal stream. The strong concentration of this stream with its characteristic participial descriptor chains, divine self-predication formulae, and references to divine past activities such as creation differentiates this poem from the unclear tonality of the poem which preceded it. The end of the poem is marked by a shift in speaker.
Isaiah 42:10-13	This poetic interlude in the voice of the anonymous prophetic poet is an example of a lyric center in the minor tonal stream most typical of this particular voice – exuberant exultation. The poem calls out for the praise of Yhwh and is marked off from both the poems that precede and follow by a shift in voice, subject matter, and tonality.
Isaiah 42:14-20	This indicting poem in the divine voice is characterized by violent imagery, accusations, and rhetorical questions. It is marked off from both the poems that precede and follow by differentiation of the speaking voice, and tonality.
Isaiah 42:21-25	This poem is apparently spoken by the anonymous prophetic poet. It begins magnanimously but progresses to justified despair. The poet apparently speaks on behalf of the people as a brief confession is spoken in the first person

plural. Ominous military images close the poem. The poem's boundaries are marked off by the shift of speaker.

<u>Isaiah 43:1-21</u>	This largely comforting poem is spoken in the divine voice to Jacob/Israel and is thus marked off from the poem that precedes by the shift of speaker, addressee, subject matter, and tonality. The comfort tonality is indicated by the fear not oracles, promises of bountiful provision, and references to offspring. A few hints of a more indicting tonality surface in occasional rhetorical questions, and legal language. The poem is marked off from what follows by a sharp tonal shift.
<u>Isaiah 43:22-28</u>	This tonal center in the indignant indictment tonal stream is marked off from what precedes by the sharp shift from the strongly comforting conclusion of the previous poem. Clear indicators of the indictment tonal stream in this poem include direct accusation, the structural patterning of negatives, invitation to legal argumentation, and a closing military image. The poem is marked off from what follows by a further shift in tonality.
<u>Isaiah 44:1-5</u>	This brief poem in the comfort tonal stream is marked off from what precedes and follows by its shift in tonality. The speaker and addressee remain constant. Markers of the comfort tonality include provision and fertility images.
<u>Isaiah 44:6-22</u>	A confident and disputational divine voice speaks this poem which contrasts in tonality and subject matter with the poem that preceded. In this poem Yhwh will turn attention towards the other gods and will ridicule idol making in a sarcastic parody. Rhetorical questions, parody, and claims of incomparability mark the tonality of this poem. The end of the poem, however turns toward the comfort tonality as the deity emerges from reflections on idol making to passionately appeal to Jacob/Israel to return to the divine speaker.
<u>Isaiah 44:23</u>	This brief exultation in the prophetic poet's voice punctuates the sequence with exhortations to praise.
<u>Isaiah 44:24-28</u>	The divine confidence stream is on full display in this poem which is dominated by Yhwh's participial self-attributions. Hints of an indictment tonality appear in the rhetorical question, and lightly sarcastic tonality of v. 25, but the poem as a whole seems to aim largely at description of the

	deity's self. The audience is unclear, unaddressed, and largely unimportant to this poem.
Isaiah 45:1-8	This poem spoken in the divine voice is marked off by its unique addressee – Cyrus, and is closely linked to the preceding poem in which Cyrus made his only other appearance. Recurrence of self-predications, creation imagery, and militant, mighty claims typify this poem.
Isaiah 45:9-25	The shift to strongly indicting language and a change of addressee and subject matter mark the poem break that begins this poem. The poem is spoken by a confident condemnatory, defiant deity whose tonality is created by the marked use of rhetorical questions, accusation, military imagery, and creation language.
Isaiah 46:1-13	This poem is marked off from the preceding poem by its introductory set of observations about Babylonian idols which step back from the direct address of the preceding poem. This poem is also directed at Jacob/Israel, spoken in the divine voice, and a participant in the indictment tonal stream. Rhetorical questions, and accusation create the dominant indictment tonality. However, this tonality is somewhat muted by the presence of provision language, and references to salvation. The shift in addressee marks the end of this poem
Isaiah 47:1-15	The endpoints of this poem are marked by its distinctive addressee – Babylon. A strong indictment tonality is produced by the direct accusation, threats, legal language, and violent images of this poem spoken in the divine voice.
Isaiah 48:1-11	The opening vocatives indicating that the addressee of this poem spoken in the divine voice is Jacob/Israel marks this tonal center of the indignant indictment tonality off from the preceding poem. The use of direct accusation, references to divine anger, and military and violent images create this poem's tonality. The end of the poem is marked by a change in tonality and a possible change in speaker.
Isaiah 48:12-22	The poem is largely in the divine voice but lacks the indicting elements of the preceding poem. V. 16 creates some ambiguity about the speaker, further marking poem off from what precedes. Comfort tonality elements - references to bountiful provision, promises of deliverance,

	and fertility imagery - mingle with confidence tonality elements – self-predications, and creation imagery.
Isaiah 49:1-13	This first poem spoken primarily in the voice of the “servant” moves from despair to exhortation to praise. The “servant” recounts a dialogue with Yhwh and speaks on Yhwh’s behalf. Thus, several verses in the middle of the poem are in the divine voice and these speak majestic promises producing a confident and comforting tonality. The “servant” as speaker marks off both the beginning and end of this poem.
Isaiah 49:14-50:3	This poem presents a striking mingling of the comforting tonality and indictment tonality within the divine voice. Here the marriage metaphor makes its first blatant appearance. Zion is figured as a bride and fertility references accompany this image. However, the explicit reference to marriage appears primarily in the indictment regarding divorce at the poem’s end. The poem is marked off from what precedes by a shift in speaker, addressee, and subject matter. It is marked off from what follows by a shift in speaker, subject matter, and tonality.
Isaiah 50:4-11	This second song spoken by the “servant” is marked off from the surrounding poems by its distinguishing speaker. In this poem the “servant” speaks with growing confidence and takes on the characteristics of the indictment tonality of the divine voice. Rhetorical questions, legal language, and violent imagery create this tonality.
Isaiah 51:1-8	The divine voice speaks in a largely comforting tonality assuring Zion of her future in this poem lacking indicators of irritation or indignation. Explicit references to comfort, commands not to fear, and promises of provision produce this tonality. The poem is marked off from what precedes by a shift in speaker, tonality, and subject matter. It is marked off from what follows by a shift in speaker, and tonality.
Isaiah 51:9-16	This poem is a full fledged disputation which includes the charge to which the divine voice responds. Creation imagery, rhetorical questions, direct response to accusation, and references to fear create the disputational and indicting tonality of the poem. The tonality is muted somewhat by the closing assertion of provision and relationship. The poem is marked off from what precedes by the shift in

tonality and speaker. Likewise, the poem which follows has an unclear speaker initially, and its subject matter is quite different.

Isaiah 51:17- 52:12

This poem, whose speaker is somewhat ambiguous particularly at the beginning mixes the exultant tonality of the prophetic poet with a melancholy commiseration with Zion and an increasingly indignant tonality which is clearly in the divine voice towards the end of the poem. The poem is marked off from what precedes and follows by its alternation between the divine and ambiguous speaking voices along with its particular alternation between exultation and indignation.

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

This final poem about the servant is marked off as a unit by its unified subject matter. The opening lines are spoken apparently by the divine voice, while the remainder of the poem constitutes the longest block of text within Second Isaiah spoken in the voice of the implied audience. This confessional first person plural poem is typified by admissions of guilt, pastoral imagery, and descriptions of suffering. The poem takes a largely descriptive posture.

Isaiah 54:1-17

This poem represents the climax of the comforting lyric tonal stream and is a tonal center of that stream. The marriage metaphor, images of provision, exhortations not to fear, passionate appeals, miraculous fertility, and protective images combine to produce a purely comforting tonality which resolves the sequence's open tension over whether or not Zion's comfort would be accomplished. The poem is marked off from the preceding poem by the apparent shift of speaker, shift in subject matter, addressee, and tonality. The end of the poem is difficult to determine with precision. The final poem can be distinguished by its change of addressee, shift in images, and change of subject matter.

Isaiah 55:1-13

The final poem of the sequence, departs from the norm for Second Isaiah and addresses a new audience, "all." The poem is broadly confident claiming the incomparability of Yhwh, and promising sustaining provision. The poem's rhetorical questions do not seem to have an indicting edge and the final lines of the poem focus on the rejoicing of all nature.

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