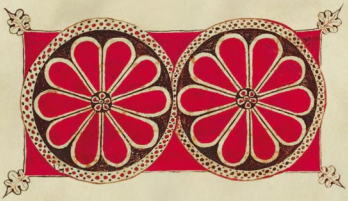
I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes

LYRIC COHESION AND CONFLICT IN SECOND ISAIAH



KATIE M. HEFFELFINGER

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PREFACE

This project is a revision of my Emory University doctoral dissertation which 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. My committee encouraged me 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. I am especially grateful for his willingness to share unpublished and forthcoming manuscripts of his own work which have greatly informed my thinking. 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 this study 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.

I am grateful for the staff at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute who have provided support and encouragement throughout the revision of this manuscript.

Finally, I wish to express thanks to my family. My parents, Jim and Karen Grof, who instilled a love for the Bible in me at an early age, and who modeled industriousness and perseverance, equipped me for this work. 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 have 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 study is dedicated to him and to our daughter Evelyn who makes every day a joy.

ABBREVIATIONS

Literature

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. Edited by David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ASV	American Standard Version
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951.
BHS	Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977.
Bib	*Biblica*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAR	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BSac	*Bibliotheca sacra*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
ConBot	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	W.W. Hallo, ed. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997.
CTR	*Criswell Theological Review*
EuroJTh	*European Journal of Theology*
EvT	*Evangelical Journal*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
GKC	Kautzsch, E. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. 2nd English Ed. Rev. by A.E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 5 vols. New York: Brill, 1994.
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament

HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IB	*Interpreter's Bible*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KJV	King James Version
NASV	New American Standard Version
NCB	New Century Bible
NIB	*New Interpreter's Bible*
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDB	*New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV	New International Version
NPEPP	Preminger, Alex and T.V.F. Brogan, eds. *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies
RB	*Revue biblique*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SwJT	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes and Helmer Ringgren, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by

	John T. Willis. Rev. ed. 15 Vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UMI	University Microfilms
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WW	*Word and World*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Other

ch.	chapter
esp.	especially
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text as printed in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
n.	footnote
ns.	footnotes
pg.	page
pp.	pages
unpbl. ms.	unpublished manuscript
v.	verse
vv.	verses

Additional Notes

All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated

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 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 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

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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 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.

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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 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

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, the seminal commentary on Isaiah 40–66 by James Muilenburg and his subsequent SBL presidential address, "Form Criticism and Beyond" opened up a significant new avenue for exploration of this question.[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

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.

[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 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.

to the larger poems, of which he considered the smaller units 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 individual works' literary artistry.[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 BC" 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.

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 Second Isaiah's overarching flow is marked by a search for "the continuity of the prophet's thought."[11] However, rather than present a claim about what meaningful statement or statements Second Isaiah as a

Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century* BCE (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 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.

whole makes about the world, Muilenburg's discussion of Second Isaiah's message 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 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

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[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."

[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.

> tendency to miss the significance of the *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 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

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

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 he devotes to carefully treating 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 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:

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[22] Ibid., 89.
[23] Ibid., 108.
[24] Ibid., 119.
[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. 40.

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 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,

[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.

[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.'

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 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

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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."

[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

> 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]

Because of the considerable influence Clifford's work has had on the field, particularly regarding the question of Second Isaiah's communicative aims, his work merits significant discussion here. Like Clifford, I am interested in addressing this question, and also like Clifford I argue that reading within an appropriate genre designation is an important element in this task. Precisely because of the importance both this study and Clifford's work place upon the issue of literary genre, and our divergence of opinion about that question, it is necessary for the purposes of this investigation to show why I do not find Clifford's designation of Second Isaiah as oratory ultimately convincing.

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 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 argumentation in support of his designation. Unfortunately however, Clifford neither clearly designates what

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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.

[33] Ibid., 4.

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. 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

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 14.
[36] Ibid., 36.
[37] Ibid., 39.
[38] Ibid., 41.

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 poems command the audience 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 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. Much more frequently the poetic voices employ participles to extol the virtues and characteristic activities of Yhwh. Finite verbs with Yhwh as active subject are also more frequent than imperatives directed at the audience. Examination of the verbal forms would indicate that Yhwh is by far the dominant actor in Second Isaiah. This feature undermines the sense that Second Isaiah is primarily about the audience's activity.

Though his claim 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. However, Clifford's discussion of the nature of Israelite prophecy gives some indication of his reasoning. 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 applying such an understanding of prophecy to Second Isaiah, particularly

[39] Ibid., 15.

the absence of the corollary institutions of monarchy and temple in Second Isaiah's period. However, Clifford does not detail 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 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. Rather his assumption that there was some sort of essential unity to the prophetic tradition 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 or style 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.

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 describe Second Isaiah's role as prophet is not without problems.[43] Samuel's

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[40] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 15.

[41] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 16.

[42] Ibid.

[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

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's literary style is typified by none of these elements. Second Isaiah never explicitly names a prophetic speaker nor does it clearly identify its audience. Second Isaiah contains exhortations to engage in specific action, but these 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 does not typically take the form of 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 Isaiah as a parallel situation

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, and may even contain elements of a historical prophetic speech. However, the speech in its final form cannot be read as a straightforward account of a historical prophetic event given the attribution of the text to DtrH. Thus, its formal and literary characteristics 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 led 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, these studies acknowledge that texts may make reference to one another in a variety of ways including that they might appropriate, reverse, interpret, or revise texts with which they have obvious parallels.

to that portrayed in 1 Sam 12 falls short. 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. Any comparison between 1 Samuel 12 and Second Isaiah should be made with great care. 1 Samuel 12 is not compelling evidence that Second Isaiah should be taken as oratory. Rather, 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 unnecessary and seems to be a framework that differs significantly from the expectations that Second Isaiah's own distinctive style raise.

In addition to the limitations of Clifford's proposal that Second Isaiah both ought to and does call for specific action on the part of the addressee, his description of 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 discussion of the unified persuasive aim of Second Isaiah consists in 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 attempt to find a mode of synthesis from within the text itself is laudable. However, Clifford does not supply convincing proof that this mode should be associated with oratory. At no point does Clifford adduce any examples of the use of polarities as a typical ora-

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

[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.

torical 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] 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.

More importantly, as this study will demonstrate, I do not find a "coherent and compelling" argument to be an accurate descriptor for Second Isaiah, at least not as I understand Clifford to be using the phrase.[49] As this study will detail, Second Isaiah is filled with inconsistencies and contradictions which are certainly compelling, but do not contribute to a sense that Second Isaiah attempts to persuade in the mode of an orator.[50] It is, as I have already noted above, difficult to discern precisely what the audience is being asked to do, at least based on an analysis of the various commands spoken to them. This element undermines the sense that Second Isaiah is primarily oriented towards urging its audience to engage in some activity.

To sum up: Clifford's argument that Second Isaiah is oratory 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.[51] Clifford's important insights into the communicative aims of

[48] Ibid., 41–43.

[49] Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 39.

[50] See, for example, the list above of the various different things the audience is commanded to do, including contradictory commands. See further chs. 3 and 5 on the tonal vaccilations of the divine voice.

[51] 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 using 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

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 goals of prophetic literature. Indeed, Clifford's reading of Second Isaiah produces many helpful insights that have been incorporated throughout this study. 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 a call for action. 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."[52] That is, I do not expect that Second Isaiah must necessarily exhibit complete logical consistency throughout its fifteen chapters. Nor must Second Isaiah build throughout to a primary claim or central point. Clifford himself acknowledges the possibility of contradiction in ancient Near Eastern thinking.[53] 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.[54] 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. Therefore, rather than the consistency demanded by oratorical expectations, it seems that what is

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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.

[52] Clifford, *Fair Spoken*, 39.

[53] Ibid., 33.

[54] Ibid., 38.

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 an oratorical model. As I will argue below, lyric poetry provides exactly 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 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.[55] 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.[56]

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 comes from 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?[57]

Scheuer's response to this question focuses on examining Second Isaiah's ideas about repentance. Her approach thus differs from the approach adopted here which will focus largely on the dominant

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[55] Sommer, *A Prophet Reads*; Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*.

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

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

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.[58] 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.[59]

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 convey?[60] 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

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[58] Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*.

[59] 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).

[60] 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 to 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.

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.[61] 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 Second Isaiah's larger component poems, while attending carefully to representative individual poems. Thus, I will employ the recent work of poetry theorists to further the discussion along the lines sketched by Melugin. First, I will examine the role of disjunctive forces in poetic meaning-making in the light of recent work on centripetal and centrifugal forces in poetry. Second, I will employ strategies 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.[62] 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.[63]

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[61] 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).

[62] The terms 'lyric' and 'lyric sequencing' will be important throughout this study. Each will receive full discussion in ch. 2. See n. 51 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.

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

2. Explaining the Neglect of Lyric 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.[64]

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 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 comment 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.[65] Indeed, as Stephen Geller observes, one con-

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

[65] 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

cern 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."[66] 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 the resistance to the meaningful application of poetic observations to the interpretation of Second Isaiah.[67] 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."[68] The intense prevalence of direct address in the prophets and their specific interaction with historical circumstances support this conception.[69] 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.[70] That the prophets were engaged in the

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to question, not least the confidence with which he constructs his historical scenarios, and the strong Romantic sensibility which pervades all."

[66] 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.

[67] 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.

[68] 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.

[69] 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.

[70] 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

communicative activity of conveying a message to an audience is beyond dispute. This aim is evident in both narratives about biblical prophets and from the works of the writing prophets.[71]

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,"[72] or the poet as one who "talks to himself or to no one about his experience,"[73] is a symptom of what W.R. Johnson calls the "lyric catastrophe,"[74] which emerges only in the modern period. To the contrary, Johnson emphasizes the importance of address in classical lyric poetry. He specifically highlights the use of the pronouns 'I' and 'you,' as of central importance both for the relevance of the work and for the authenticity of the poem's speaker.[75]

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."[76] It is these emotions that the poet communicates to the audience. Cer-

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than a lyric poet." He supports this claim with reference to the "persuasion that is going on in the speeches" (ibid.).

[71] 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. 69) 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.

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

[73] Ibid., 7.

[74] Ibid., 8.

[75] Ibid., 12 and esp., 16. See further Heather Dubrow, "The Interplay of Narrative and Lyric: Competition, Cooperation, and the Case of the Anticipatory Amalgam," *Narrative* 14 (2006): 263. Dubrow observes that many early modern "sonnets and other love songs were persuasion poems, whether or not they advertised that aim."

[76] Johnson, *Idea of Lyric*, 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, in part,

tainly, at times in the history of lyric poetry and the study of lyric poetry, the centrality of emotions has been a central theme.[77] 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.[78] 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.[79]

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.[80] 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' 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

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

[77] 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.

[78] 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."

[79] 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).

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

dominant elements of the messages of Israel's prophets.[81] 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.[82] 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.[83] 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, "prophetic literature may be created as either prose or poetry."[84] In the case of Second Isaiah the question is not whether it is written in poetry or prose; it is poetic.[85] Rather, the question is whether or not it is prophetic. While most of the prophetic books appear to be collec-

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[81] 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.

[82] Johnson, *Idea of Lyric*, 3–4.

[83] 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."

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

[85] See further ch. 2.