

PETER A. HEASLEY

Prophetic Polyphony

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Peter A. Heasley

Prophetic Polyphony

Allusion Criticism of Isa 41,8–16.17–20; 43,1–7;
44,1–5 in a Dialogical Approach

Mohr Siebeck

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*To my parents, Tom and Jan,
for mixing up the puzzles.*

Preface

This work is the slightly revised version of my doctoral thesis, *Prophetic Polyphony. Allusion Criticism of Is 41,1–16.17–20; 43,1–7; 44,1–5 in a Dialogical Approach*, defended at the Pontifical Gregorian University on May 14, 2019. The thesis director was Prof. Elżbieta M. Obara, SSD, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for adopting this thesis already in progress, and for being a most astute and sympathetic reader. The *mentor* was Prof. Nuria Calduch-Benages, SSD, for whose instructive and enthusiastic comments I am grateful. The *preside* of the defense was Rev. Scott Brodeur, SJ, whose clarity in instruction and leadership at the Department of Biblical Theology at the Gregorian University have been priceless. I would also like to thank the director of my license thesis, Prof. Bruna Costacurta, SSD, for first nurturing my love for the *‘anawîm* and for teaching me to find what I was not looking for.

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With thanks to God, on the memorial of Saint Jerome, September 30, 2019.

Rev. Peter A. Heasley, S.Th.D.
New York City

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations can be found in the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd Edition, except as follows:

ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
<i>BBC</i>	<i>Broadman Bible Commentary</i>
BST	Basel Studies of Theology
BVSGW.PH	Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-Historische Klasse
Comp	Comprender la Palabra
CThM	Calwer theologische Monographien
DNL.T	Dissertationes Neerlandicae – Series theologica
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
EHS.T	Europäische Hochschulschriften – Reihe 23, Theologie
EpC	Epworth Commentaries
FThL	Forum theologicae linguisticae
Jian Dao DS	Jian Dao Dissertation Series
JPSTC	The JPS Torah Commentary
<i>JSem</i>	<i>Journal for Semitics</i>
<i>Lippincott</i>	<i>Lippincott's Magazine, A Popular Journal of General Literature</i>
MAT	El mensaje del Antiguo Testamento
NVBTA	Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi
OTWSA	Ou Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika. Meeting
<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Paragraph. A Journal of Modern Critical Theory</i>
<i>PTL</i>	<i>PTL. A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature</i>
RWTS	Religionswissenschaftliche Texte und Studien
SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
ScrBib	Scripta biblica
SGKA	Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums. Paderborn
SRSLCH	Studies in Russian and Slavic literatures, Cultures and History
<i>Ter</i>	<i>Teresianum</i>
TH.Lit	Theory and History of Literature
UTP.SS	University of Texas Press. Slavic Series
WeBC	Westminster Bible Companion

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Introduction

The child receives all initial determinations of himself and of his body from his mother's lips and from the lips of those who are close to him. It is from their lips, in the emotional-volitional tones of their love, that the child hears and begins to acknowledge his own proper name and the names of all the features pertaining to his body and to his inner states and experiences. The words of a loving human being are the first and the most authoritative words about him; they are the words that for the first time determine his personality from outside, the words that come to meet his indistinct inner sensation of himself, giving it a form and a name in which, for the first time, he finds himself and becomes aware of himself as a something.¹

Just as a child learns who he is from the mouth of his mother, who mimicks his babbles and cooing while adding her own well-formed words, so Israel, in the Salvation Oracles of Second Isaiah, learns who he is from the mouth of God, who speaks Israel's own words of lament and praise back to him in the new form of literary allusion. By the time of the Babylonian Exile, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah have amassed a certain amount of religious literature, literature recounting their formation, identity, and relationship to God in history and in prayer. In exile, stripped of land and king, God speaks to his people of new salvation in allusion to that literature. He gives new form to those who are to occupy a place and a time no longer their own in worldly terms. In this thesis, we study inner-biblical allusion as giving form to the literary composition of the Salvation Oracles in Isa 41–44 (specifically, Isa 41,8–16.17–20; 43,1–7; 44,1–5), to the reader's contemplation of them, and to the form of relationship between their author and their reader.

1. Authorial Intention of the Salvation Oracles and the Formation of the Reader

We situate this study at an important moment in the history of biblical research, in which the presuppositions, prerogatives, and purposes of form criticism have begun to shift away from the search for the oral and literary origins of the written biblical utterances handed on to us, and toward a description of the ends, or teleological shape of those utterances within the biblical tradition. In so

¹ M.M. BAKHTIN, "Author and Hero," 49–50.

doing, form-critical biblical scholarship has begun to draw upon the work of contemporary literary theorists and philosophers, such as Mikhail Bakhtin, and to apply their approaches to biblical interpretation. We hope to advance the teleological shift in biblical exegesis and interpretation precisely through the work of Bakhtin, such that the scholarly contemplation of these 2500-year-old Salvation Oracles contribute to an understanding not just of their historically-situated time and place, but indeed of our own reading of them.

It is in the work of Bakhtin that new approaches to form-critical analysis meet new methods for the study of inner-biblical allusion. The study of allusion can function within a form-critical approach that is dialogical, considering the relationship of author to reader. Literary allusion assumes a reader familiar with a body of literature, makes the reader more familiar with that literature, and, while conforming the reader to the mind (or intention) of the alluding author, it brings the reader into the act or event of authorship. The well-formed reader, then, completes or fulfills the author's utterance. It is precisely here, in the co-ordering of allusion and literary form, that this thesis seeks to build upon form-critical and allusion-critical studies, indeed to advance their respective interests and contributions into an exegetical and interpretative whole.

2. The *Status Quaestionis* of Form Criticism and Allusion Studies of the Salvation Oracles

The form-critical study of the Salvation Oracles in Isa 41–44 as such begins with a proposal of their oral *Sitz im Leben* in the shift in tone of the Psalms of Lament and reaches a stable literary schematization in the consideration of their *Sitz in der Literatur* of Isa 40–55. Begrich, first in his collaboration with Gunkel on their study of the psalms, and more definitively in his own work, proposes the Salvation Oracles of Isa 40–55 (some 24 total) as imitations of the priestly Oracle of Salvation (*Heilsorakel*) given in the context of the cultic utterance of the Psalms of Lament.² After several decades of scholarly debate, Westermann provides what becomes the near universally-received literary schematization of the Salvation Oracles, in so doing reducing their number to the three that we have singled out for investigation – Isa 41,8–16.17–20; 43,1–7; 44,1–5 (though Isa 54,4–10 is sometimes included in his and others' lists).³ Scholars employ and reshape this literary schematization in order to propose various literary functions of the Salvation Oracles, such as in Conrad's studies on the "democratization" of the royal prerogatives of Judean and Israelitic

² See H. GUNKEL/J. BEGRICH, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, 243–247; J. BEGRICH, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," 81–92; *Studien zu Deuterjesaja*.

³ See C. WESTERMANN, "Das Heilswort bei Deuterjesaja," 355–373; cf. *Sprache und Struktur der Prophetie Deuterjesajas*, 81–87; *Prophetische Heilsworte*, 19–31.

kings.⁴ On this line, scholars of Ancient Near Eastern literature, like Weippert, find in the Salvation Oracles of Isa 41–44 evidence of direct contact with the cultic oracles of the Neo-Assyrian empire.⁵

Despite the many attempts to compare the Salvation Oracles in Isa 41–44 to other utterances of their perceived kind, no one has, until this study, proposed a direct literary dependence, by way of allusion, to those comparable utterances. This is despite the many direct references to the Psalms of Lament that Begrich makes in his work, references that suggest not simply a formal connection, but a literary one. This literary connection remains so far unperceived because of the lack of a method of studying allusion that is rigorous enough to deal with the question of form.

That said, if advances in form criticism over the past century have followed or occurred precisely through the comparative study of Second Isaiah and the psalms, then so have advances in the study of allusion. Three major works, two of which appearing independently and at the same time, have greatly contributed to our understanding of allusion in Second Isaiah. Tull Willey, in *Remember the Former Things* (1997) brings Bakhtin's insights to bear upon her rhetorical-critical study of allusion in Isa 49–55. Simultaneously, Sommer, in *A Prophet Reads Scripture* (1998) demonstrates some of the formal-compositional devices through which we can detect allusion in Isa 34–35; 40–66. Soon after, Nurmela, in *The Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken* (2006) compiles a more thorough list of allusions that he discerns in Isa 40–66. Along with influential works on allusion in other biblical books (especially Zechariah, Job, and the Pauline corpus, upon which we shall depend in some part), these three works have greatly contributed to our understanding of inner-biblical allusion in general and the methodologies required for detecting it and discerning its purpose.

That said, these scholars, who most often focus their work on the rhetorical purpose of literary allusion, have left open for us a thorough investigation into the relationship of allusion to form. To this end, we shall apply in these pages a more developed allusion criticism, one directly concerned with compositional form and the form of the relationship between author and reader.

⁴ See E. CONRAD, "Priestly Oracle of Salvation," 234–246; "'Fear Not' Oracles," 129–152; *Fear Not Warrior*; "The Community as King," 99–111.

⁵ See M. WEIPPERT, "Assyrische Prophetien," 71–115; "Die Herkunft des Heilsorakels," 48–59; "Ich bin," 31–59.

3. Method and Approach to the Salvation Oracles in Isa 41–44

In this study of the Salvation Oracles in Isa 41–44, we develop what we shall call ‘allusion criticism’⁶ as an exegetical method and Bakhtinian dialogism as an interpretative approach.⁷ In themselves, they are independent of each other, having each a different scope and procedure, yet we find them mutually enriching. Specifically, the dialogistic approach provides an overall structure to our treatment of the texts, especially in Bakhtin’s distinction between compositional form and architectonic form (discussed in detail in ch. II, §2). Bakhtin’s specific insights into the author-reader relationship then guide our interpretation of the Salvation Oracles within the greater literary context of Isa 1–66, in Chapter VI. Allusion criticism fits specifically within the analysis of compositional form in chs. III–V and its results provide the material for our dialogistic interpretation in those chapters and in chs. VI–VII. That said, we find that allusion criticism can provide a basis for different kinds of interpretative approaches.

We hope to advance the ability of allusion criticism to detect literary allusions through specific formal techniques and to understand their contribution to the overall compositional form of each Salvation Oracle. As an exegetical method, this means deepening our understanding of authorial intention as requiring the reader’s engagement with other texts and providing the signals or markers for this engagement. This allusion criticism will show that there exist specific formal patterns in the use of an inner-biblical allusion in the composition of a Salvation Oracle, formal patterns in some ways already shown by Sommer, in some ways recognizable from studies in the composition of Hebrew poetry in general, and in some ways totally new to this study. The accumulated evidence of these formal patterns will advance, at least for Second Isaiah studies, methodologies for arguing for allusions, and indeed may help their detection in other biblical books. Allusion criticism will bear upon the received results of form criticism to help us discern the compositional form of each Salvation Oracle

Dialogism will help us to interpret the initial results of allusion criticism, namely compositional form, for an understanding what Bakhtin calls the architectonic form of the utterance, the actual relationship of author to reader and

⁶ To our knowledge, the term ‘allusion criticism’ appears only in two distinct scholarly texts (one in literary studies and one in biblical studies) and, in these, only in a passing manner and not formally defined: E. CLARKE, *Yeats and Stevens*, 13; G.B. LESTER, *Daniel Evokes Isaiah*, 9 n. 27.

⁷ We take our distinction between ‘method’ and ‘approach’ from the 1994 document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, esp. “Part I: Methods and Approaches for Interpretation,” 35–75.

reader to author.⁸ This begins with a look at the genre of the alluded utterances to hear the voice of the person speaking through them into the Salvation Oracle. From this look into genre, we shall come better to hear the dialogue between author and reader occurring within each Salvation Oracle, and between the three Salvation Oracles in question and the utterances within their immediate and remote literary contexts. This will mean eventually situating Isa 41,8–16.17–20; 43,1–7; 44,1–5 within the various parts of Isa 1–66, the Old Testament, and the New Testament as voices speaking on their own and together in broader literary situations.

4. The Contributions of This Study to Biblical Theology and Its Outline

Our principal contribution is to bring together into dialogue the tools of form criticism and of identifying inner-biblical allusion. We define allusion criticism, at least for Second Isaiah studies, as the demonstration of specific and repeated formal patterns in the composition of allusive texts. The effectiveness of this demonstration, we hope, should lead scholars to employ it in the study of other biblical books. We shall demonstrate the effectiveness of allusion criticism through the identification of a number of allusions hitherto unnoticed. Allusion criticism, as an exegetical method, can provide the beginnings of biblical interpretation, but as we shall also demonstrate, another contribution of this thesis, corollary to the definition of allusion criticism, is the separation of identifying allusion from interpreting its purpose.

This leads us to the second major contribution of this thesis, the development of a Bakhtinian dialogism adequate to the concern for compositional form inherent in allusion criticism.⁹ It is from a treatment of compositional form that we can engage the action of the reader upon the utterance and the architectonic form of author and reader. It is from this approach that we interpret authorial intention as bringing a multiplicity of voices, a polyphony, to bear upon the utterance as read. Seen in this way, the interpretative concern is not with any particular theme or ideology, but with the formation of the literary ‘hero’ addressed in the utterance and of the reader contemplating the utterance. As we hope to demonstrate, the author reveals already within Isa 40–55 the formation of this hero, ‘Jacob-Israel.’

⁸ See ch. I, §2.

⁹ For reasons that we shall further illustrate in ch. II, §1.1, we refrain from speaking here of ‘intertextuality.’ For now, we should note that with the term ‘intertextuality’ scholars have confused authorial intention (admitted it exists at all) with the reader’s action upon a text.

To this end, we have organized the seven chapters of this study into three parts:

In the First Part, “Elusive Form and Allusive Form,” comprising chapters I–II, we lay out our dialogical approach and our method of allusion criticism. In Chapter I, we lay out our dialogical approach to form. First, we present the *status quaestionis* regarding the form-critical identification of Isa 41,8–16.17–20; 43,1–7; 44,1–5 as Salvation Oracles, which identification has become, with little exception or variation, the *status quo* even among scholarship of vastly different approaches. After a brief summary of Bakhtinian dialogism, we then adapt that dialogism into an approach to form that can accommodate the results of allusion criticism. In Chapter II, we lay out our allusion-critical method, with its theoretical principles, its categories of formal and stylistic gesture, and its order of operation.

In the Second Part, “Salvation Oracles in Isa 41–44. Allusion, Genre, and Compositional Form,” we undertake allusion-critical exegesis of Isa 41,8–16.17–20; 43,1–7; 44,1–5 and begin our dialogical approach to each. Chapters III–V each concern one of these passages. First, we delineate the passage as an utterance according to speaker/addressee/object of discourse and according to literary markers of its boundaries, treat its text-critical problems, and translate it. We then identify and categorize the *possible* allusions made within the oracle; while scholars have tentatively identified a few of these allusions already, many or most identifications are original to this study. As part of the process of identifying allusions, we consider the compositional form of the alluded and alluding utterances. This new look at compositional form, as built around what we call “allusive units,” will then inform a new understanding of the generic elements of the Salvation Oracles. Aiding this process is our dialogical approach to the allusions, in which we use the genre of the alluded utterances to identify the voices speaking through them into the new oracle. Since allusion requires the reader’s completion of the utterance, identifying such voices leads us to a preliminary identification of the reader and his formation by the author.

Having understood the compositional form of these oracles through allusion criticism and consideration of genre, we shall then move toward a fuller understanding of the architectonic form of the oracles and their relationship to their greater literary context in the Third Part, “Salvation Oracles of Isa 41–44 in Isa 1–66 and Beyond. Author and Reader in Architectonic Form.” In Chapter VI, we listen for the voice of these oracles in the book of Isaiah, chapters 1–66 and subdivisions thereof, in order further to discern the shape of the relationship between the author and reader, and in particular, the ways in which the author already reveals the reader to himself in the “hero” Jacob-Israel. In Chapter VII, we hear the voice of the reader of the three Salvation Oracles in question outside of the book of Isaiah, in both Old and New Testaments, in order further to support our reading of the Salvation Oracles through the witness of

other readers, as well as to situate their message of salvation in broader theological terms.

5. The Delimitation of the Salvation Oracles in Isa 41–44

We can identify the Salvation Oracles in literary terms as Isa 41,8–16; 43,1–7; 44,1–5 with little difficulty. The only problem concerns the so-called Announcement of Salvation in Isa 41,17–20 (we shall treat this problem in greater detail in Chapter III). As scholars have long noticed, each of the Salvation Oracles begins with one of the homophonic expressions “But you” (ואתה) (Isa 41,8; see Isa 41,16) or “But now” (ועתה) (Isa 43,1; 44,1). Each of these expressions is joined to a clear address to “Jacob-Israel,” both names indicated in parallel. Furthermore, this address is directed toward the imperative “Fear not” (אל־תירא) in each oracle (Isa 41,10.14; 43,1.5; 44,2). In literary terms, these are the three main characteristics distinguishing these oracles from neighboring utterances, such that they are sometimes called “Fear-Not Oracles.” There are other formulas and characteristics that they share, and some of these elements are shared with other passages within Isa 40–55; we shall further discuss these sharings as part of the form-critical questions in Chapter I and in our exegesis in Chapters III–V.

We should also provide here a basic orientation to the Salvation Oracles within their immediate literary context of Isa 41,1–44,23. Given Bakhtin’s definition of the utterance as bounded by the speech subject¹⁰, we shall break down the context of the Salvation Oracles, and their delimitation, according to Speaker, Addressee, and Object of Discourse, along with relevant literary markers. We attach to the verse numbers the form-critical labels usually attached to these sections, since the form-critical designations already speak to this relationship between voices, whether in Trial Speeches, Disputations, or Salvation Oracles. It will be our concern to hear how these utterances speak to and with each other within Isa 41,1–44,23, and eventually Isa 1–66, as a literary context.

Parentheses indicate that the name of the Speaker, Addressee, or Object of Discourse is not explicit in the text though their identification is more certain; in some cases, it is uncertain. While we cannot make here an argument for this

¹⁰ Emerson defines the utterance especially according to Bakhtin’s distinction between the utterance and the ‘sentence’: “A sentence is a unit of language, while an utterance is a unit of communication. Sentences are relatively complete thoughts existing within a single speaker’s speech, and the pauses between them are ‘grammatical,’ matters of punctuation. Utterances, on the other hand, are impulses, and cannot be so normatively transcribed; their boundaries are marked only by a change of speech subject” (in M.M. BAKHTIN, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, xxxiv).