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**SEE WHO CREATED THESE: A STUDY OF THE DESCRIPTION OF
YAHWEH'S CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN ISAIAH 40-55**

Fiona Black
Department of Religious Studies
McGill University, Montréal
August, 1994

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55). In the last century, biblical scholarship on creation has been concerned primarily with its relationship to redemption. This thesis will study the descriptions independently of redemption.

The references to creation incorporate a broad spectrum of material which is presented randomly throughout Deutero-Isaiah. Because of their diversity, the references will be organized into three groups: Yahweh's initial creation (cosmogony), his creation of the people, and his new creation (his present or upcoming creative activity). Discussion will begin with the cosmogonic material, since it is the most obvious of the groups in terms of its language and similarities to other biblical material. The other aspects of Yahweh's creative activity will then be studied in accordance with their lexical relationship to the cosmogonic texts.

This thesis will investigate what is said specifically about creation, how the creation language functions (i.e., how the message/meaning is effected), and what purpose it serves (i.e., why creation is mentioned). Special attention will be paid to the lexical material in the descriptions, notably the verbs. References will be examined in their immediate context (poem, etc.) and in their Deutero-Isaian context. Where relevant, other texts in *Isaiah* (Isa 1-66) or the rest of the Hebrew Bible will be used in the expectation that they will provide added insight into the meaning of the references.

RESUME DE THESE

Cette thèse a comme objet de voir comment l'activité créatrice de Yahwé est décrite en Deutero-Isaïe (Isa 40-55). Pendant le dernier siècle, les études bibliques sur la création se sont centrées principalement autour de la relation de cette dernière avec la rédemption. Cette thèse tient à se concentrer sur ces descriptions, mais à exclure la rédemption.

Les références à la création incorporent une vaste gamme d'éléments qui se retrouvent un peu partout dans Deutero-Isaïe. A cause de leur diversité, les références seront divisées en trois groupes: la création initiale de Yahwé (cosmogonie), la création de son peuple, et sa nouvelle création (son activité créatrice présente ou future). La discussion débutera avec les matériaux cosmogoniques puisque, de tous les groupes, c'est celui qui est le plus évident en ce qui concerne le langage et les points communs avec d'autres éléments bibliques. Ensuite, les autres aspects de l'activité créatrice de Yahwé seront étudiés, selon leur relation lexicale avec les textes cosmogoniques.

Cette thèse cherchera à déceler les références exactes à la création, le fonctionnement du langage créateur (c'est-à-dire, comment le message/la signification est effectué), et son objet (c'est-à-dire, la raison pourquoi elle est mentionnée). Une attention particulière sera accordée aux matériaux lexiques dans les descriptions, notamment aux verbes. On examinera les références dans leur contexte immédiat (poème, etc.) et également dans le contexte de Deutero-Isaïe. A l'endroit approprié, on fera appel à d'autres textes tirés d'*Isaïe* (Isa 1-66) ou de l'Ancien Testament au moment où leur usage permettra de voir plus clairement la signification des références.

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of creation in the Hebrew Bible has been of interest to scholars for some time. Much of the recent scholarship on the subject has been concerned with the relationship between creation and redemption in the biblical text.¹ Often, descriptions of creation are studied and/or interpreted in light of statements about redemption, and frequently considered subordinate to them. Might, however, creation be approached and studied differently? The purpose of this thesis is to identify and investigate the descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55).² I will survey the references to creation in Deutero-Isaiah independently of redemption. I suspect that attempting to account for creation in the book in this manner might yield results different from those previously reached.

The references to creation in Deutero-Isaiah are quite diverse and are found scattered throughout the book. They constitute brief, often general statements which span a broad range of ideas about Yahweh's creative activity. They are most often expressed by means of several verbs or verbal ideas, but may also involve certain nouns. Because of their diversity, it will be important to organize the references somehow in order to facilitate discussion. The different facets of Yahweh's creative activity fall naturally into three groups: Yahweh's initial creation (cosmogony), creation of the people and Yahweh's new creation.

The descriptions of creation are not organized into these three groups in Deutero-Isaiah, nor are the different aspects of creation presented in any kind of linear fashion. However, in an effort to understand what Yahweh's creative activity

¹ This concern with the relationship between creation and redemption is most clearly traced to an article by G. von Rad ("The theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation," *Creation in the Old Testament* [ed. B.W. Anderson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984] 53-64). The article is responsible for influencing most of the subsequent scholarship on creation in this century.

² One of the most rudimentary issues that has to be addressed in any study on Isaiah concerns the division of Isaiah 1-66 into three parts, a practice popularized after the work of B. Duhm over a century ago. The details of this issue will not concern me here. References to creation are essentially only present in Isaiah 40-55, with a few exceptions in "Trito" Isaiah (Isaiah 56-66; see 65:17; 66:22). My work, therefore, will be limited to chapters 40-55 and will not concern itself with the debate over the division of texts.

in Deutero-Isaiah is and how it functions, I propose a reading strategy that organizes the texts into these three groups and considers them in this order. I will begin with cosmogony because it is the most obvious of Yahweh's creative activities. The language used to describe this stage is the clearest and most easily identified of all of the groups. Cosmogony is the aspect of Yahweh's creation which Deutero-Isaiah shares with other biblical material, and is likely the facet of which readers first think when they think of creation in the biblical text. Cosmogony is furthermore a good starting point because Deutero-Isaiah begins with an extended discussion of the subject (40:12-31) which may be relevant to the ensuing creation material. The layout of my thesis will then be as follows.

Before actually studying the references, it will be important to do two things. First, I will discuss some of the relevant scholarship on creation in Deutero-Isaiah and the Hebrew Bible. It is not possible to cover all studies on this subject in my thesis. Instead, I will try to highlight the main trends in the discussion and show where I think my thesis fits into this tradition of scholarship (chapter 1). Secondly, I will address briefly the possibility of *Chaoskampf* imagery in Isaiah 40-55, a one-time popular topic for scholars of creation in the Hebrew Bible which has even been pursued in Deutero-Isaiah.³ I discuss *Chaoskampf* in response to various suggestions made by scholars that this language is present in the book and refers to creation. My suspicions are that the book might employ imagery reminiscent of a battle between Yahweh and his enemies, but that it is hard to connect this with cosmogony. This brief investigation will comprise chapter 2.

Chapter 3 will constitute the discussion of references to Yahweh's initial creation or cosmogony. These utilize a series of verbs (נָסַח, רָקַע, יָצַר, עָשָׂה, בָּרָא) and are quite sparse in detail. The cosmogonic references most often are expressed

³ I did not mention the subject of *Chaoskampf* in my grouping of Deutero-Isaiah's statements about creation. It would fit into the subject of cosmogony. *Chaoskampf* language for my purposes is that which describes Yahweh's creation of the world in terms of a primordial battle against certain elements (enemies). These supposed references consist primarily of certain nouns, like תְּהוֹמוֹת, תְּהוֹמוֹת, תְּהוֹמוֹת and אֵר. Additionally, the theme of Yahweh-warrior will be discussed.

by means of participial titles concerning the deity.⁴ In addition, there are also references to this same subject matter which use suffix conjugation verbs.

The references to Yahweh's creation of the people will be discussed in chapter 4. The creation of the people is expressed by means of some of the same verbs which are used to describe cosmogony. There is therefore a close lexical link between these two groups. Because of this link, Yahweh's creation of his people is a logical next step in my investigation of creation in Deutero-Isaiah.

Yahweh's new creation (the re-creation of the land) will be considered in chapter 5. I will begin with three texts which employ the creation verbs to depict Yahweh's creation of some unusual objects (evil and darkness, the artisan and the destroyer, etc.). These three texts are the only clear lexical (verbal) connections to the previous two groups of references. The remainder of the new creation material is linked much more tenuously, along other lexical or thematic means. It is depicted by means of various images, the majority of which concern irrigating and planting. The verb נָמַץ is of particular importance here. This plant imagery is also connected to Yahweh's re-peopling of the land. In addition, the book shows the suggestion that Yahweh, depicted as mother, gives birth to her creation. Finally, there are a few subjects which also come under Yahweh's new creation but which do not fit into the planting/peopling imagery (they are, however, connected to it in some way). These are the possibility that Yahweh creates via his word and the depiction of the elements of creation being exhorted to praise Yahweh.

References will be given a critical reading. Attention will be paid to what is being said about the process of creation, how the language is being used, (how this message is effected), and to what end it is being used. Since I am interested in how the three groups of creative activity relate to each other, I will naturally be investigating how their language is related. I will not be concerned with historical

⁴ I will be paying some attention to the verbal forms used in the descriptions. The reason for this is that there is a definite concentration of participles which describe Yahweh. It follows that I might try to ascertain the relevance of these forms in the descriptions. Scholars have never been able to clearly establish the meaning of these verbal forms, however, and I will have to wrestle with this problem when I meet it.

issues of dating, identification of the author, or the historical setting of a particular passage.⁵

My approach will consist of several layers. I will isolate and study the lexical material on creation and identify the basic message being presented.⁶ I will also consider the immediate context of the references within Deutero-Isaiah: is it a poem on creation, a series of participial descriptions of Yahweh-creator, and so on?⁷

I will try to comment on how the references are functioning in their context and how their context might be influencing what is being said about creation. Here, I begin to ask questions like: why bring up creation in this portion of text? How does the reference contribute to the meaning of the passage?⁸

Additionally, other texts in Deutero-Isaiah, *Isaiah*, and the rest of the Hebrew Bible will at times be relevant to the descriptions of Yahweh's creative

⁵ My dealings with the text will be such that I do not need to interpret or make decisions on the basis of a date or an historical evaluation. In general, I am assuming that Deutero-Isaiah was composed and/or redacted in the exilic or post-exilic period. (My interests in the redaction of the text do not extend beyond this assumption.) I will not attempt to identify the author, save to say that he (sic) was likely a part of the exiled community, and was addressing the eventuality of the return to the promised land. In general, I will try to avoid statements about the author or authorial intent in this project, since I am aware that our knowledge of this figure(s) is severely limited. I will use the denotation, "speaker," for the person speaking in the text.

⁶ For commentaries, see P. Miscall, *Isaiah* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993); C. North, *The Second Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964); J. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (WBC, 25; Waco: Word Books, 1987); C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (trans. D.M. Stalker, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969). North and Watts (especially Watts) provide good philological and textual-critical notes, and will be used primarily. Watts will also be used because I appreciate his provision of a clear picture of relevant textual (MT) problems and his conservatism in agreeing to textual emendations. Westermann will provide form-critical insight when needed, and Miscall is interesting for his commentary which reads Isaiah 1-66 as a unity.

⁷ I use the word, "poem," throughout my thesis very generally. I intend to indicate that the verses under consideration fit well together as a kind of unit, because of their literary style or content, or both. I am not using poem to agree with any particular form-critical conclusion. For example, 41:17-20 can be called a unit or poem because of its thematic coherence, and can on this basis be separated from the preceding and ensuing verses for the purpose of discussion.

⁸ One has to be very careful with the word "meaning" and the temptation to assign a fixed interpretation to a particular description or image. Miscall provides a caveat to this kind of practice which is highly appropriate here. He draws attention to the fact that there are a number of ways to read descriptive language (images), to get "into" the text (within reason), and therefore there is a certain danger to trying to fix definite meaning onto it. I shall try to resist this temptation in my discussion of the references to creation. Already, my division of the texts into three groups puts me in danger of this. See P. Miscall, "Isaiah: The Labyrinth of Images," *Semeia* 54 (1991) 103-21.

activity.⁹ They will help to elucidate the meaning of a certain passage or provide insight into the passage's significance in its Deutero-Isaian context. My study of the creation references will involve looking at some of these other texts when appropriate. I am not attempting to compare all references to creation in the Hebrew Bible. Rather, I am interested in how the meaning of a text can be affected when it is considered along with another (regardless of its supposed date of authorship, or the author's "identity") and discussed with the benefits of the other's message or stylistic features.¹⁰

At the end of this thesis, I intend to make some general comments on the way in which creation functions in Deutero-Isaiah. I will also be able to return briefly to the scholars first considered and discuss the implications of my thesis on the general conclusions of their work. Additionally, it might be that I can suggest some possibilities for further study in Deutero-Isaiah. The book's imagery is very involved; creation is only one of a few "strands" that helps to establish the message of these chapters.

⁹ *Isaiah* denotes here chapters 1-66 of the book of Isaiah. I am convinced of the importance of considering other texts in the reminder that Isaiah 1-66, regardless of its 'parts,' is presented as a unified text and must have some kind of coherence. See E. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991) chapter 1; P. Miscall, *Isaiah* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 9-13; J. D. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*. (Waco: Word Books, 1985) xli-xliv.

¹⁰ Peter Miscall comments on this process in his article, "Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book," in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. D. Nolan Fewell (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992). I cannot quote Miscall at length, but, briefly, he is speaking not of understanding the relationship between texts as "borrowing," but as a reader-oriented practice of bringing one text into discussion with another to see how the one might conflict with/complement the other. (42-3, 47). Miscall is commenting on "intertextuality," which although I find compelling, I cannot begin to deal with here.

CHAPTER I

BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATION

Creation in the biblical text has been a fairly popular topic for biblical scholars in the last century. The purpose of this chapter is to consider some of the scholarly discussion about creation in the Hebrew Bible, particularly, in Deutero-Isaiah. This review of scholarship will provide an essential starting point for my thesis. It will allow me to fit my own approach into the scholarly discussion on creation and to benefit from some of the insights of other scholars. I am interested in how scholars have studied creation and what kinds of material they have incorporated into their investigations. In other words, what qualifies as creation in their studies? Does creation differ as different questions and methods are brought to the texts? To what extent has the orientation of scholars led in their studies to the selection of some references to creation and the omission of others? Will it be the case that a different approach might open up new possibilities for understanding creation and give a different perspective on the subject in Deutero-Isaiah?

It will not be possible to provide a complete review of all biblical scholarship on creation here. This chapter will highlight some of the main trends in the discussion, beginning with Gerhard von Rad's influential article, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation."¹ In rough chronological order, various approaches will be considered according to their relationship to von Rad's article. General studies of creation in the Hebrew Bible as well as more specific approaches to the subject in Deutero-Isaiah will be included.

In addition, there are some trends in current *Isaiah* studies which may not involve creation per se, but which be helpful in approaching the topic of creation in Deutero-Isaiah. Lately, for example, scholars have been arguing that Isaiah 1-66 should be treated as a unity, rather than as a collection of various material. While I

¹ in *Creation in the Old Testament*, 53-64.

will only be considering chapters 40-55, it is instructive to note that scholars readily perceive a connection between Deutero-Isaiah and the rest of *Isaiah*. Other *Isaian* texts, when studied together with the creation references in Deutero-Isaiah, will help to elucidate them or provide interesting insight into them. In addition, Edgar Conrad's study of *Isaiah* is insightful regarding issues such as the role of the reader and the audience.² Lastly, the work of Peter Miscall on imagery in *Isaiah*³ may prove to be a useful way of treating various images and literary devices in biblical poetry.⁴ Together with these works, I will make some further comments on my own approach to the creation references in Deutero-Isaiah.

A. Biblical Scholarship and Creation.

The recent revival in scholarly interest on creation in biblical studies can be linked to von Rad's article, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation."⁵ A significant proportion of the discussion about creation in biblical studies has been influenced by the orientation of von Rad's work which considered the relationship of creation to redemption. Scholars have, of course, varied the degree to which they have followed von Rad's concerns and approach. As much as anything, this variation is a reflection of the types of criticism or methods applied to the biblical text which were en vogue at different times throughout the last century.

Like most studies of the biblical text, von Rad's concerns, approach and goals are partly a response to previous treatment of his subject by biblical scholars.

² *Reading Isaiah*.

³ See "Isaiah: New Heavens," and "Labyrinth."

⁴ So far, I have been using the general terms, "description," or "reference," to describe the creation texts which I will be considering. As I study these references in detail, different literary terminology will become relevant, such as metaphor, or simile, etc. I use the word "imagery" here quite loosely to embrace various descriptive literary language/devices.

⁵ Although Hermann Gunkel had, years earlier, published his in-depth study on the Babylonian influences on creation and chaos in the Hebrew Bible, its effects and influence on subsequent biblical scholarship were not nearly as far-reaching as were von Rad's. See H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 2 und Ap Joh 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeft & Ruprecht, 1921). I am using Anderson's précis of this monograph ("The Influence of Babylonian Mythology upon the Biblical Creation Story," *Creation in the Old Testament*, 25-52).

He may well be criticizing the work of Hermann Gunkel, whose monograph, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, had thus far been quite influential in the discussion on the biblical subject of creation. Von Rad observes that, "it is impossible to arrive at an assessment of OT doctrine simply by using the methods of the history of religions" (63). Though he gives no detailed critique of the history of religions approach in his article, it seems that von Rad's complaint is with the comparative approach to creation in the Old Testament and in various ancient Near Eastern texts.

Gunkel was attempting to uncover the influence of Babylonian mythology upon the creation/chaos themes which are scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible. On the premise that the Priestly account of creation was not a "free composition of its author" (25), Gunkel identified certain traditions throughout the story, like the "brooding spirit" or the dark/light theme and argued that they were influenced by ancient Near Eastern traditions. Gunkel then turned to other major traditions of *Chaoskampf*, like the dragons or the primeval sea, and traced their development throughout the Hebrew Bible. Von Rad's criticism seems to be leveled at the orientation of this kind of approach: it endeavoured to trace the development of creation in the Hebrew Bible, showing where certain ancient Near Eastern traditions had left their mark. It was therefore not really concerned with the "theological structure" of the creation statements, which, von Rad felt, was a more important issue to investigate (von Rad, 63).

Von Rad states that his approach to creation is a question of theology.⁶ He summarizes Yahwistic faith as one which is "based on the notion of election and therefore primarily concerned with redemption" (53). He asks of creation in the Hebrew Bible:

How are we to define theologically the relationship between this predominating belief in election and redemption, and that belief in

⁶ "Theological Problem," 53. By using the word theology, von Rad is contrasting the history of religions approach (53) and asking questions that pertain to the nature of the faith of the OT. Within the context of this article, this means asking how creation will fit into "OT belief as a whole" (53). This belief is in part visible through expressions of Yahweh's redemptive acts in history, which are also polemics against the religions of Israel's surrounding culture (54). For "theology" see also *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Row, 1962-5) 1.111-12, 136-9; "Some aspects of the Old Testament World View," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays* (trans. E.W. Trueman Dicken; London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966) 144-65.

Yahweh as Creator which is also attested by the OT? How far is the idea of Yahweh as Creator a relevant and immediate conception, over against this redemptive function (53)?

Having set up his study this way, von Rad thus questions whether redemption faith is based on creation faith, whether creation faith exists and is ever expressed independently (56), and how the two "faiths" are combined and work together throughout the Hebrew Bible. Unlike Gunkel, von Rad chooses to work from the other creation texts in the Hebrew Bible, back towards the Genesis account (54). He reasons that the hymnic sections in Deutero-Isaiah and the Psalms are clearer expressions of creation faith than the Genesis texts, both from the kinds of statements they make, and from their posited *Sitz im Leben*. Further, they are "theologically much less hidebound than the scholarly priestly code, whose course is dictated by a theological system" (55). Von Rad proceeds to work through a number of texts, investigating their "theological structure" (63), first, as in Pss 33, 136 and 148, showing that theological statements about creation are followed by those concerning Yahweh's acts of redemption in Israel's history. Von Rad "proves" this succession of thought repeatedly, especially in Deutero-Isaian texts, where creation and redemption are explicitly interwoven.⁷ In fact, von Rad interprets Yahweh's creative acts in Deutero-Isaiah and Yahweh's historical acts of deliverance as "one and the same act of the universal redemptive purpose of God" (58).

Von Rad's final step is to consider material in the Hebrew Bible which is generally seen as the main evidence for its creation faith. He calls texts (e.g., Pss 19 and 104) which have the creation of the world by Yahweh as their main theme a "very striking phenomenon, in view of all the other evidence found in Yahwistic faith" (61). Because these texts do not fit into von Rad's conclusions regarding creation and redemption faiths, he is compelled to "inquire into the origin" of them (61). He finds material which does not support his argument to be not "wholly

⁷ Von Rad shows this to be the case in Isa 40:21ff; 44:24ff; 45:12ff, then explicating the "ease with which the two doctrines... [creation and redemption] are here brought together" (56-57). This is proof that even in cases where the prophet might be speaking solely about creation, [he] "is not in any way sidetracking the doctrine of redemption in so doing. His thought remains firmly within the sphere of soteriology." (58). Similar "absorption" of these ideas can be seen in 54:5 (58).

original to Yahwistic belief" or the results of a "reasoned, reflective theology," which must be a later development (61-62). Von Rad's final conclusion of all of the material on creation which he has studied is that

. . .the doctrine of creation was never able to attain an independent existence in its own right. Either it remained a cosmic foil against which soteriological pronouncements stood out more effectively, or it was wholly incorporated into the complex of soteriological thought.⁸

Von Rad's article influenced much of the subsequent biblical scholarship on creation. The question of the relationship between creation and redemption faiths (whether creation is subordinate to redemption) has been taken up by many who followed him.⁹ However, though von Rad's influence was extensive, Gunkel's concerns with *Chaoskampf* were never completely eclipsed. *Chaoskampf* has rarely formed the singular theme of a study, since the material available in the biblical text is limited.¹⁰ This is especially the case in Deutero-Isaiah, though some efforts have been made to deal with it.¹¹ Instead, *Chaoskampf* has most often been part of a

⁸ "Theological Problem," 63. Von Rad later modified his position on this subject: see R.J. Clifford, "The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation," *Theological Studies* 46 (1985) 507.

⁹ One might consult, for example, R. Martin-Achard who discusses this relationship in his study of three creation stories from around the exilic period: *Et Dieu cree le ciel et la terre: Trois études: Esaïe 40--Job 38-42--Genèse 1* (Geneve, Labor et Fides, 1979). See also B.D. Napier, "On Creation-Faith in the Old Testament," *Int* 16 (1962) 21-42. (Napier actually spends a good part of his article translating von Rad's.); G. Lambert, "La création dans la Bible," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 75 (1953) 252-81; T. Boman, "The Biblical Doctrine of Creation," *Church Quarterly Review* 165 (1964) 140-51; and J.P. Hyatt, "Was Yahweh Originally a Creator Deity?" *JBL* 86 (1967) 369-77. This last is of interest since it attempts to show, chiefly by philological means, that Yahweh was not originally perceived as creator, as evidenced by the meaning of his name.

¹⁰ A recent exception is John L. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). The author argues, however, that most of the texts which he considers have been "historicized," and "eschatologized," and no longer really refer to Yahweh's primordial battle for creation.

¹¹ See N. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985). Fishbane's work concerns "inner biblical exegesis," where one text can be seen to interpret another. One instance of this he locates in Deutero-Isaiah, calling it a "demythologizing" of Gen 1:1-2:4a. He gives texts such as 40: 18, 25; 45:7, 18, and 46:5 as evidence for an "exegetical reappropriation" (324-26) of the Genesis story; the text was "transposed. . . into a new theological key" so as to better fit the author's historical and theological milieu (326). Or, see D.M. Gunn "Deutero-Isaiah and the Flood," *JBL* 94 (1975) 493-508. Here, the author looks for references to the story of the flood in Deutero-Isaiah, on the premise that 54:9-10 is probably not the only allusion to the event of its kind in the book. He considers the "drying up of the waters" motif (495) and some phrases which are reminiscent of the flood story, like אָזַח עוֹלָם (506). Gunn's argument is that these texts are not as

broader treatment of creation, which also has included von Rad's concerns. Studies of creation by Dennis McCarthy and Bernhard W. Anderson best exemplify the "mixture" of the interests in *Chaoskampf* and the creation-redemption relationship.¹²

In his article, " 'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," McCarthy, like von Rad, displays an interest in the relationship between salvation and the so-called creation imagery in the Hebrew Bible (76). He is primarily concerned with *Chaoskampf* and how it might contribute to the biblical discussion of creation. McCarthy criticizes the reading of *Chaoskampf* in biblical poetry as creation motifs. He defines creation not, as one might expect, in terms of absolute origins, but rather, as an expression of the coming into being of social order.¹³ McCarthy believes that the *Chaoskampf* motifs illustrate this interest in order, and points to some of the earliest poetic texts in the Hebrew Bible to argue his point.¹⁴ He asks three basic questions of the poems: (1) "What does God do in them which can be related to creation?"; (2) "How does God act? Is the imagery used that associated with creation?"; and (3) "Why does he do it" (77-8)? McCarthy notes that this last question "is crucial, for the purpose of an action will often reveal if it is creation or not, and in what sense" (78). Finally, McCarthy applies his theory to the Yahwist's creation story (Gen 2-11) and argues for the concept of ordering for creation there.

B.W. Anderson's approach to the texts is quite different from McCarthy's. Anderson's major work, *Creation Versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible*, continues Gunkel's interest in the mythological background of the creation imagery in the Hebrew Bible (8). Anderson is interested in how the biblical writers have appropriated the creation stories of the ancient Near East into their expressions of creation faith. He sees in the biblical text a demythologization of the *Chaoskampf* motifs and an embracing of Yahweh's historical acts within the

similar to the *Chaoskampf* motif as has previously been thought; they make more sense as allusions to the flood. See also L. Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," *Encounter* 26 (1965) 183-97.

¹² B.W. Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible* (New York: Association, 1967); D. McCarthy, " 'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," in *Creation in the Old Testament*, 74-89.

¹³ This "ordering" is an important concept, and re-surfaces periodically in other studies of creation.

¹⁴ Gen 49; Exod 15:2-18; Deut 32:1-43; 33; Judg 5; 2 Sam 22:2-51; Psalm 29; 68 (77).

cult, these often expressed in "chaotic" terms. He examines this demythologization first with reference to the creation stories in Genesis and then in other biblical texts on creation.

Like von Rad, however, Anderson also investigates the relationship between redemption and creation, though his interests appear to be more historical (salvation history).¹⁵ Anderson agrees with von Rad that, though important, creation had a secondary place in the biblical text, particularly in its early traditions (49). He differs from von Rad, however, in reaching this conclusion in part by comparing the Hebrew Bible with other ancient Near Eastern texts. He concludes that creation must be secondary in the Hebrew Bible since it does not appear there nearly as much as in the ancient Near Eastern texts.

In an earlier article, Anderson explained that creation faith "affirms that God alone is the creator of meaning."¹⁶ This meaning is disclosed throughout the events of human history (9). Anderson holds that the paradigmatic event in Israel's history is the exodus. It is only from a redemptive understanding of Yahweh (viewed through the exodus) that the creation stories in Genesis can be written.¹⁷ Anderson subsequently locates the expression of the consummation of creation and redemption in Deutero-Isaiah.¹⁸ There, he sees that the creation material never occurs independently of references to history.¹⁹ A chart of Deutero-Isaiah's creation verbs shows the book's interest in "all of Yahweh's creative acts-primordial, historical and eschatological" (126). Anderson observes that Deutero-Isaiah "understands Israel's historical calling and destiny between the eschatological

¹⁵ This refers only to von Rad's article which I have been considering ("Theological Problem"). One could not make such a conclusion if one were to look at all of von Rad's work.

¹⁶ "The Earth is the Lord's: An Essay on the Biblical Doctrine of Creation." *Int* 9 (1955) 3-20. See p. 6.

¹⁷ *Creation versus Chaos*, 35.

¹⁸ *Creation versus Chaos*, 130. The imagery of *Chaoskampf* here, in Deutero-Isaiah, does not represent the primordial act of creation, but the time of the exodus. Thus, Anderson is able to say that in actuality, creation for Israel was the exodus, the paradigmatic historical event. Therefore, in all of the representation of Yahweh's creative acts, the historical, that is, the making of Israel, is emphasized.

¹⁹ *Creation versus Chaos*, 120. The texts he cites, however, do not illustrate such an evaluation: 40:21-23; 40:25-26; 44:6-8 (120-22).

horizons of beginning and end."²⁰ With all of this creation vocabulary, one can see a "typological relationship between the beginning and the end, between creation and new creation" (130). This involves a correspondence of events (showing Yahweh's continuity in history), and also a shift, as creation is not merely repeated, but occurs anew in a different form.

After Anderson and McCarthy, biblical scholars ceased to mix their interest in creation and redemption with an investigation of *Chaoskampf*. At the same time, it is possible to identify a greater variety of approaches towards the text which were employed in the investigation of creation. A few of these approaches are form-critical. Scholars tried to draw conclusions about the relevance of genres to the subject of creation. As far as I am aware, the approaches to creation which have employed a form-critical approach have concentrated on Deutero-Isaiah, not on the Hebrew Bible as a whole.²¹ It will be important to discuss briefly the work of two authors, Rolf Rendtorff and Carroll Stuhlmueller, and to see how they have contributed to the ongoing creation debate.²²

²⁰ *Creation versus Chaos*, 115. Here, the author is interested in a statement made by Gunkel (*Schöpfung und Chaos*) concerning Israel's mythical view of time, which equated beginning with end (Anderson, 114-15).

²¹ I will not consider the specific genre denotations of particular poems and the vast degree to which these vary from critic to critic. E. Merrill, "Survey of a Century of Studies on Isaiah 40-55," parts 1&2, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 1,2 (1987) 24-43 and 144-56 provides a fairly good summary of recent form critical approaches, as do: C. Westermann, *Sprache und Struktur der Prophetie Deuteronesajas* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1981); A. Schoors, *I am God your Saviour: A Form-Critical Study of the Main Genres of Isaiah XL-LV* (VTSup 24; Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1973) 1-31; R. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976) 1-7; "Deutero-Isaiah and Form Criticism," *VT* 21 (1971) 326-37.

²² C. Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah* (AnBib 43; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970); R. Rendtorff, "Die theologische Stellung des Schöpfungsglaubens bei Deuteronesaja," *ZTK* 51 (1954) 3-13. There are two works which cannot be considered at length here, but which will be useful as I investigate specific texts in the next four chapters. One is C. Westermann's commentary on Deutero-Isaiah (*Isaiah 40-66*). Westermann is obviously not concerned solely with creation, but will be useful as a commentator, whose form critical categorization of individual poems is often taken as primary. Secondly, Schoors' form-critical study of Isaiah 40-55, (*I am God your Saviour*) has some interesting insights. In the first place, he argues that a form-critical study of Deutero-Isaiah does not "split up the message of the prophet into a number of isolated topics" (297). Rather, he advocates "abandon[ing] a purely 'formal' approach to the genres [so as] to penetrate into their specific message" (297). With von Rad, he finds that creation has a subordinate role, since the prophet uses it as a premise from which to argue for redemption, especially in the disputations (298-300). Schoors' criticisms of Stuhlmueller are also insightful (see below).

In his article, "Die theologische Stellung des Schöpfungsglaubens bei Deuterjesaja," Rendtorff responds to von Rad's conclusions about creation and redemption faith. He agrees fully with the assertion that creation is "subservient" to redemption in the psalms.²³ However, he seeks to examine the creation references in Deutero-Isaiah more closely in his article, since he sees them as substantially different from creation in the rest of the Hebrew Bible (3). Rendtorff investigates the statements concerning creation and redemption in the *Gattungen* in which they most frequently occur: disputations and salvation oracles. Looking at the *Gattungen* helps him to observe the development in the creation statements which he believes has occurred from the hymnic/cultic material to the Deutero-Isaian texts. Rendtorff sums up the differences between Deutero-Isaiah and the book of Psalms as follows:

Einmal ist an die Stelle der Betrachtung des Schöpferhandelns Jahwes als einer Großtat der Vergangenheit die unmittelbare Beziehung auf das gegenwärtig geschehende Heilshandeln getreten und zum andern hat der Glaube an Jahwe den Schöpfer einen völlig neuen „existentiellen“ Bezug auf die Hörer der Verkündigung bekommen (9).

In part III of his article, Rendtorff explores how the statements concerning redemption and creation in Deutero-Isaiah fit together. He points out the combination of these themes in texts such as 43:1; 44:2; and 44:24, at first in the introductory formulae and next in the ensuing verses (9-10). This combination is further explicated in Rendtorff's examination of creation vocabulary which is used to express Yahweh's deeds in history (11). Even statements which speak only of Yahweh the creator (and not of his historical deeds) are not problematic for Rendtorff, since they exist elsewhere in conjunction with those which refer to Yahweh who has chosen Israel (an historical event).²⁴ Rendtorff's conclusion is that Deutero-Isaiah has "rescued" creation faith from its limiting past, and re-assigned it the place it was due in Yahweh-faith (13). In this sense, Rendtorff differs from von Rad, for he does not agree that the creation faith is secondary, or "subservient" in

²³ Rendtorff actually says supporting or assisting (*dienende*).

²⁴ "Die theologische Stellung," 12. Arguments such as this last are problematic. It is sensible to compare different descriptions of Yahweh. However, to say, as in this case, that all are linked to redemption because some of them clearly show this link, seems to limit the texts.

Deutero-Isaiah. Rather, it is one and the same as the salvation faith—faith in the same God and in the one deed of God.²⁵ A. Schoors sums up Rendtorff's evaluations of the two form critical categories which he considers:

He presents the prophet's thought as follows: Yahwe is the creator of the universe and thus he is able to do with his world as he likes (disputation); that he is particularly the creator of Israel, explains why he uses his power to carry out his will to redeem his people (salvation oracle).²⁶

StuhlmueLLer's monograph, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, focuses primarily on the creation-redemption relationship which von Rad emphasized. StuhlmueLLer agrees that creation is subordinate to redemption, but disagrees that creation forms the basis from which the author of Deutero-Isaiah argues for redemption-faith.²⁷ Based on this understanding, StuhlmueLLer expresses his aim as follows:

Because Dt-Is introduced creation within the context of redemption, our *primary purpose* seeks an organization and synthesis according to Dt-Is' main redemptive themes of the material on creation abstracted from the Bk Con.

A *secondary purpose* may also be achieved, particularly with regard to future research. It can be presented as two-fold: (a) to clarify literary and doctrinal problems related to that of creative redemption; and (b) to establish more clearly an important link in Israel's developing idea of creation.²⁸

StuhlmueLLer's intent is to "write a biblical theology of creative redemption as found in the Bk Con" (8). He provides a definition of creation:

²⁵ "Die theologische Stellung," 13. I see this as different from von Rad's conclusion that creation faith has been wholly "incorporated into the complex of soteriological thought (von Rad, "Theological Problem," 63). Though he has said elsewhere that Yahweh's acts (Isa 51:9) of creation and redemption (the Exodus) are "one and the same act of the universal redemptive purpose of God," he seems to argue more for the assumption of the one by the other. Rendtorff maintains instead that they are the same thing and that creation does not exist without redemption.

²⁶ *I am God your Saviour*, 300.

²⁷ *Creative Redemption*, 5. Schoors criticizes StuhlmueLLer on this point, saying that if he had followed the form critical approach more closely, (especially in the disputations), he would not be able (mistakenly) to argue this (*I am God your Saviour*, 300).

²⁸ *Creative Redemption*, 8. Italics StuhlmueLLer's. StuhlmueLLer uses the abbreviation *Bk Con* (Book of Consolation) to refer to Isaiah 40-55 and *Dt-Is* to denote both the book (Isaiah 40-55) and the prophet (the author of the book).

...an *exceptionally wondrous redemptive* act of Yahweh, bringing to Israel a *new national existence* and a *new prosperity* of *unprecedented scope*, with "creative" repercussions upon all the elements of Israel's existence, even upon the cosmos.²⁹

With this view, StuhlmueLLer analyzes the various motifs of redemption and investigates the creation vocabulary in the book, all in order to "determine what he [i.e., Deutero-Isaiah, the author] meant by creative redemption" (15).

StuhlmueLLer's method is essentially form-critical, though he chooses first to organize his discussion of the creation material according to the "major soteriological themes" in Deutero-Isaiah. He then groups these themes into individual *Gattungen* (6). The reason for this approach is that StuhlmueLLer shies away from a form-critical analysis of the creation poems. Many forms are still being disputed and are really not very clear, since Deutero-Isaiah takes 'liberties' with them in his elevated poetic style (6, 16-19). In the selection of "soteriological themes," StuhlmueLLer's orientation towards creative redemption as opposed to creation is already visible (9). This is seen further in his interpretation of the *Gattungen* and his selection of various texts for study.

A particularly important example of StuhlmueLLer's orientation towards creative redemption is his understanding of what he calls "first creation."³⁰ He concludes that Deutero-Isaiah does not normally present Yahweh's first creation (cosmogony), but rather, is interested primarily in the deity's new creation (26). Thus, first creation does not appear as a "reason for encouragement" in the salvation oracle (26). Similarly, it is not a premise for praise in the hymns (38), or in the disputations. These interpretations of the *Gattungen* (see Schoors for criticism, 300)

²⁹ *Creative Redemption*, 9. Italics StuhlmueLLer's. The author's definitions are sometimes puzzling: He defines creation as "God makes someone or something" (3), and moves to "Yahweh's intention to involve the cosmos in the prosperous and glorious renewal of Israel" (36). Earlier, StuhlmueLLer argued that a working definition be "all things come from God and always depend on God" ("The Theology of Creation in Second Isaiahs," *CBQ* 21 [1959] 430, n5). It might be difficult to identify a reference to creation under such definitions. This last could include anything, technically, in the Hebrew Bible!

³⁰ This term refers to Yahweh's first (cosmic) creation (or cosmogony), and is contrasted by Yahweh's new creative acts which are in process, or are upcoming. See especially chapter 8.

are necessary to support Stuhlmüller's view of the two different creations in Deutero-Isaiah.³¹

Stuhlmüller's study raises certain questions. The author presupposes that all creation language in Deutero-Isaiah is employed for illustrating what he calls "creative redemption." He assumes that creative redemption was the author's intent or main theme. Stuhlmüller must then argue "backwards" from his evaluation of the creation texts, reading them so that they fit his interpretation. This reading will obviously colour how he looks at the creation language in the book, possibly to the end that the meaning of the language is severely misrepresented.³²

Moving on from form criticism, there are a number of studies which investigate creation without considering its relationship to redemption. I will consider two types here, a structuralist approach by Rémi Lack, and two redaction-critical approaches. The first, Lack's study, is a structuralist evaluation of the imagery of *Isaiah*.³³ Lack investigates the principle schemes (images and articulated symbols) which constitute the Isaian text and how they appear and structure that text (13). He perceives that Deutero-Isaiah is split into two major sections, the first of which, 40:1-49:13, stresses creation and "making" (81). Lack argues that 40:12-31 is an introduction to 40:1-49:13, in that it contains a "semantic reserve" of all of the relevant creation/fabrication language in the section (86-88).³⁴ He then discusses the elements of creation/fabrication language in the ensuing parts of 40:1-49:13. I will investigate this possibility of a semantic reserve as I study 40:12-31 in chapter 3.

³¹ One can see how Stuhlmüller's ideas about first creation influence his interpretations of specific texts. For example, in chapter 6, he finds only three first creation texts which are relevant to redemption. He studies these carefully and is able to argue that all of the references to first creation are oriented towards Yahweh's future creation: in 40:12-31, the "proof" is Stuhlmüller's translations of the verbs, where he gives them future meanings. In 40:12-31 and 45:18-22, it is the concern for Yahweh's lordship, a "re-creative" theme. In 48:12-19, the "proof" is the fact that first creation is "quickly dropped", as it was in 40:12-31, to speak of Yahweh's fulfillment of prophecy through Cyrus (161-62).

³² See my investigation of the individual creation references (chaps. 3-5)

³³ *La symbolique du livre d'Isaïe* (AnBib 59; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1973).

³⁴ Lack calls this "développement par enveloppement."

Two scholars will be discussed with reference to the redaction-critical approach to *Isaiah*: Jacques Vermeylen and Richard J. Clifford.³⁵ Vermeylen concerns himself with the redactional unity of Deutero-Isaiah. He sums up recent approaches to creation as being characterized by one common trait: they suppose Isaiah 40-55 to belong entirely (or almost entirely) to one prophet in one specific historical period (186). In contrast to these approaches, Vermeylen presents three specific redactional layers in the book wherein creation is treated differently.³⁶ Vermeylen then studies these three layers in order of their authenticity. He reasons that creation references in the most "authentic" passages refer to the subject in conjunction with phrases which relate to Cyrus. Later redactions of creation texts involve the creation of Israel and the return of the exiled people (221).

Clifford is important for his attempt to read Isaiah 1-66, not as the customary three books, but as a unity, held together by the book's recurring language and themes. He proposes that there are three themes which are problematic for such a reading, one being creation, and attempts to show how these themes are derived from (Zion) tradition, and actually reinforce the unity of Isaiah 1-66.³⁷ It is Clifford's observation that Deutero-Isaiah uses the language of creation to describe the emergence of the people and the rebuilding of Zion (14). This language has its corollaries in First Isaiah and in Third Isaiah, where, in the latter, it is the central theme of the book.

³⁵ R.J. Clifford, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and its Cosmogonic Language," *CBQ* 55 (1993) 1-17; I am loosely calling this work redaction-critical because of its interest in the unity of Isaiah 1-66; and J. Vermeylen, "Le motif de la création dans le Deutéro-Isaïe," in *La création dans L'Orient Ancien*, (ed. F. Blanquart; Paris: CERF, 1987).

³⁶ He reasons that if the literature has undergone a series of redactions, it follows that the creation terminology is also at risk of being redacted (186). His criteria for "authentic" Deutero-Isaian material is a little suspicious: "On considère en général comme deutéro-isaien tout ce qui, dans ces chapitres, ne se trouve pas en contradiction ou en décalage évident par rapport à la teneur générale du recueil" (188).

³⁷ Clifford's concerns with unity place him in a very recent trend in biblical scholarship on *Isaiah*. See, among others: D. Carr, "Reaching for Unity in Isaiah," *JSOT* 57 (1993) 61-80; R.E. Clements, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah," *Int* 36 (1982) 117-29; C. Evans, "On the Unity and parallel Structure of Isaiah," *VT* 38 (1988) 129-47; R. Rendtorff, "The Book of Isaiah: A Complex Unity. Synchronic and Diachronic Reading," *SBL Seminar Papers* (ed. E.H. Lovering, Jr.; Missoula: Scholars, 1991) 8-20; C. Seitz, "On the Questions of Divisions Internal to the Book of Isaiah," *SBL Seminar Papers* (ed. E.H. Lovering, Jr.; Missoula: Scholars, 1993) 260-66; M. Sweeney, "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Research," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 1 (1993) 141-62.

Elsewhere, Clifford makes two observations which are directed at von Rad's formative article.³⁸ The first observation is that "the omission of creation from Israelite confessions of faith is not a sign of its unimportance" (507). Clifford suggests instead that it is quite possible that creation was so commonplace an idea that it did not need to be uttered.³⁹ Secondly, he criticizes the "much-used catechetical sequence creation-fall-redemption," and questions whether its biblical evidence (i.e., Genesis, Exodus, Romans) is a fair representation of biblical doctrine (508). Unfortunately, Clifford never really treats von Rad's idea of subordination, though he sets out to (508). Further, Clifford's choice of texts, while supporting his own argument, is not able to perform a complete analysis of creation as it is represented in Deutero-Isaiah. This "catechetical sequence," however, might be of importance in evaluating some of the scholarly tradition on creation.

A final scholar to be considered here, Susan Niditch, presents yet another approach to creation in the biblical text.⁴⁰ Her study of creation and chaos is somewhat like Gunkel's in its tradition-historical orientation, yet different because of a modern "twist" to the comparative approach. Niditch wants to explore how it is that certain creation texts have "informed the lives of various generations and how in the process the myths themselves have been transformed and renewed" (3). In other words, she argues that the understanding of creation in the Hebrew Bible developed and was reinterpreted.⁴¹

Unlike von Rad, Niditch finds the creation myths of other cultures invaluable, since they urge "one to explore the meanings of certain kinds of

³⁸ R.J. Clifford, "The Hebrew Scriptures." Clifford is commenting on von Rad's article, "Theological Problem."

³⁹ See C. Westermann, "Biblical Reflection on Creator-Creation," *Creation in the Old Testament*, 93.

⁴⁰ S. Niditch, *Chaos to Cosmos: Studies in Biblical Patterns of Creation* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985).

⁴¹ See also W. Rast, *Tradition History and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 68-71. Niditch uses the traditionally studied texts for her biblical material on creation. She begins with the creation story in Gen 1 and 2, and then examines how these themes of arranging and ordering, shown in chaps. 1-2 are continued in the broader context of Gen 1-11.

narrative themes unfettered by a pre-conceived theology" (5).⁴² Unlike Gunkel, Niditch not only examines ancient Near Eastern texts, but gathers others from different parts of the world. This is innovative, and reveals a comparative approach which is not limited to historical or cultural bounds of the ancient Near East, as is usually the case. Niditch is interested, instead, in comparing biblical texts to those with similar contents or stories. At one point, she considers the Israelite prophetic re-interpretations of creation themes, and it is disappointing here that she does not deal with any Deutero-Isaian texts. Her monograph is useful, however, for its comparative approach which enables one to see how texts complement or disagree with each other.⁴³

Niditch's monograph brings the recent work of Peter Miscall on creation in Deutero-Isaiah and Genesis into the discussion. This is also essentially a comparative approach with a twist. Miscall's article illustrates a recent scholarly interest in what is generally being called intertextuality. This intertextual approach attempts to transcend historical-critical and form-critical boundaries, by which much of the previous study of creation has been limited. Miscall explains:

The relationship between two texts is equivocal. It includes, at the same time, both acceptance and rejection, recognition and denial, understanding and misunderstanding, and supporting and undermining. To recognize that a text is related to another text is both to affirm and deny the earlier text. It is affirmed as a type of model and source, while it is denied by being made secondary to the later text, precisely by being regarded as a model and a source that has been suspended. The later text displaces its model.⁴⁴

The evaluation of "later" and "earlier" text, and the displacement of one text by another is not something that the text itself causes. Rather, these activities are the results of reader-oriented actions of placing a text in a particular relationship to

⁴² This statement can well be compared with Clifford's, discussed above. An excellent example of a "pre-conceived theology" could be the "much-used catechetical sequence" of creation-fall-redemption which he describes.

⁴³ Niditch also investigates the notion of "ordering" as a viable description for the creative process, as did McCarthy. B. Ollenburger also argues for this notion of "order," ("Isaiah's Creation Theology," *Ex Auditu* 3 [1987] 54-71) 51. He quotes, and agrees with R. Prenter, "The biblical witness understands creation. . . as God's battle against all destructive powers. . ." (63).

⁴⁴ "Isaiah: New Heavens," in *Reading Between Texts*, 44.

another, to see what the one means against the other.⁴⁵ Thus, Miscall reads *Isaiah's* creation texts against those in Genesis (1:1-2:4), where *Isaiah* is seen to usurp the meaning of Genesis. Miscall does this specifically by looking at various vocabulary that the two have in common.

Miscall's insights allow readers to suspend discussion of strict historical relationships between texts, where, for example, one is taken to be "borrowed" from another. In this case, the onus would therefore be on the readers to speculate about the dating of certain texts in question. On the contrary, Miscall is willing to consider other passages if they are relevant, in the expectation that these will help to elucidate or provide new insight on the texts which are being investigated.

Niditch maintains a similar practice in her observation that the general notion of tradition is important. That is, creation texts take on newer and fuller meanings when brought together with other creation material. In an intertextual approach to creation, however, the texts brought forward for comparison need not even have anything to do with creation itself. Rather, there simply needs to be some connection which the reader sees might be beneficial to the comparison. The onus is then on the reader to argue for this connection and its relevance to the investigation at hand.

B. Conclusions and Applications.

Von Rad's investigation of the relationship between creation and redemption has been very influential on biblical scholars. Many have concentrated on this issue in their treatment of creation. Stuhlmüller is a clear example of this in his statements that his study is oriented specifically to see how creation fits into redemption faith.

As would be expected, biblical scholarship has dealt differently with von Rad's concerns. I have tried to show a variety of the various approaches used by

⁴⁵ See E. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*. Conrad has some helpful insights about the role of the reader of *Isaiah*. He is interested in how the structure of the texts bears witness to the interaction of text and audience. He views the implied reader and the implied audience as "theoretical constructs encoded in the text" (31).

scholars as they have come into contact with von Rad's work. Some embraced von Rad's ideas fully. Others modified them somewhat in either their evaluation of creation in relation to redemption (e.g., Stuhlmüller, Rendtorff) or the approach they took towards this issue (e.g., Anderson, Rendtorff). Still others rejected von Rad's ideas completely and have tried to approach creation in different ways without considering redemption at all (Vermeulen, Clifford).⁴⁶ As scholars discuss the relationship between creation and redemption, it is possible to see a considerable variance in approaches to the creation texts. Naturally, as scholars begin to ask different questions about the creation material in the Hebrew Bible, they employ methods which will best help them to answer their questions.⁴⁷

Like some of the later scholars I considered, my investigation of creation in Deutero-Isaiah does not concern its relationship to redemption. This is the primary difference between von Rad's article and my thesis. Whereas von Rad has argued that creation and redemption are so closely bound that they should be studied together, I am attempting to view creation independently of other language in Deutero-Isaiah. I am asking only what the book has to say about creation. Furthermore, I am asking whether doing this will yield any results different from von Rad's (and those who followed him). Though redemption can be and often is presented in proximity to creation, my query of some of the other approaches is whether they have been able to study creation as fully as if it were isolated from other language in the book. Has viewing creation through the glasses of redemption obscured what the text says on the subject? Are some of the descriptions of Yahweh's creation omitted from study if they are irrelevant to redemption? Are the

⁴⁶ See also P.B. Harner, "Creation Faith in Deutero-Isaiah," *VT* 17 (1967) 298-306. Harner does not wish to accept the status of "ancillary" function for creation in Deutero-Isaiah, and undertakes his study so as to "raise the question whether creation faith does not actually play a major role in II Isaiah's thought. . . ." (299). Harner looks at creation both as it appears with the language of redemption, and as it functions on its own in the text. He concludes that in Deutero-Isaiah, the function of creation is to "bridge the gap between the exodus tradition and the expectation of the imminent restoration of Israel," and so it must have a "relative independence of its own," in that it brings together the two primary themes of salvation in Deutero-Isaiah (304).

⁴⁷ Miscall is a good example of this in his intertextual approach. Considering creation in Deutero-Isaiah in contrast to creation in Genesis sheds new light on the importance of the subject in Deutero-Isaiah.

references to creation perhaps interpreted in a particular manner because they are understood as being redemptive texts? ⁴⁸

The insights of most of the scholars whom I have discussed will be helpful in my thesis. Even though I have not elected to follow von Rad and StuhlmueLLer, their work is important to the scholarly tradition on creation and as a result cannot be ignored. On the contrary, both scholars will provide useful material with which I may dialogue in my study of the individual creation references. Vermeylen and Clifford's ideas concerning the redaction and unity of *Isaiah* are also useful. Though descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity are essentially all found in *Isaiah* 40-55, it will be important to remember that these chapters fit into a larger context (*Isaiah* 1-66). Other texts in *Isaiah* will doubtless be relevant to the meaning of the creation texts in Deutero-*Isaiah*.

In addition, I proposed in my introduction the idea of reading the references to creation according to a certain grouping. Several scholars have been influential in this respect. Vermeylen implies in his discussion a redactional development in the way creation appears in Deutero-*Isaiah*. This involves a more secondary appearance of the references to Yahweh creating the people and the creative expressions of the return of the exiled people. Though I have decided not to become involved in the debate about the redaction of the material in Deutero-*Isaiah*, Vermeylen's grouping of the material has obviously been influential in my approach. Lack has also proposed that 40:12-31 acts as a kind of a semantic reserve for the subsequent creation language in the book. I therefore begin my discussion of cosmogony (chapter 3) with 40:12-31, viewing it as a kind of introduction to the rest of the creation material in Deutero-*Isaiah*.

⁴⁸ For example, one might consider von Rad's treatment of Ps 136. Von Rad notes the "abrupt change" in v. 10 to Yahweh's acts in history. He reasons that the "rigid form of the litany" does not allow any further comment about the relationship between the two doctrines, and concludes that it is interesting all the same, that they are juxtaposed. The historical references, he says, are clearly the "climax" of the poem (55). I would ask, however, what is said about creation in these five verses. Why begin a psalm with references to creation? What does creation have to do with the rejoinder in the psalm, that Yahweh's love endures forever? Why mention the "main elements" of the world, but not the creation of humankind? Why call Yahweh "God of gods" and "Lord of Lords"? All of these questions and many others make me wonder at von Rad's brief treatment of this psalm and the creation language here, especially in light of his conclusions.

Niditch's newer comparative approach has also been helpful. She has shown that other texts may be compared with creation material, even if they do not fit into the historical and cultural context of the creation texts in the Hebrew Bible. In my thesis, Niditch's work encourages a greater interest in some of the biblical texts which are not necessarily concerned with creation, but which might share similar ideas or language. Here, it is possible to move into the kind of approach which Miscall has suggested through his article on intertextuality.

The insights of Miscall's article, however, imply that one should be careful in studying the references to creation in Deutero-Isaiah.⁴⁹ If one can affect a reading of a text by the passages with which one compares it, it follows that anything read must have a certain fluidity about it. This is especially true of descriptive language which is never completely clear or fixed in meaning to begin with. Here, this means that it is important to be cautious about "pinning down" a certain creation reference to one specific meaning. I must be open to the possibility that identical or similar language means different things in different contexts in Deutero-Isaiah. Miscall comments on this elsewhere in an article on the imagery in *Isaiah*.⁵⁰

The ramifications of such a statement make any investigation of descriptive language challenging. Though, in my introduction, I have roughly explained what the references to creation involve, these present observations make it difficult to pinpoint creation exactly. For not only is Deutero-Isaiah's language of creation diverse, but one must also allow that these texts, when found and studied, can be somewhat fluid in meaning. It is clear that some kind of criteria needs to be established for the selection of creation.

My response to this problem is not to invent a specific (and possibly limiting) definition of creation. The purpose of my thesis is to investigate what Yahweh's creative activity is in Deutero-Isaiah. A statement such as "creation=X" (like Stuhlmüller's) not only seems to defeat the purpose somewhat, but also might limit what could be included as creation in Deutero-Isaiah. Instead, I am attempting

⁴⁹ I am using the word here tentatively based on Miscall's discussion. A more thorough use of the term would require a more detailed study than is possible or appropriate here.

⁵⁰ Miscall, "Labyrinth."

to allow for as wide a definition of creation as possible. My criteria will be established primarily by lexical means. I begin with cosmogony, and my beginning here is meant to imply that this subject (notably its lexical material) has some relevance to the rest of the creation material in the book.³¹ I will then move to the closest group lexically (creation of the people) and study its variation of the creation verbs which appeared in the cosmogonic references. Finally, I will consider other material (Yahweh's new creation) which seems connected to the first two groups, either by lexical or thematic means.

³¹ This does not seem unreasonable to me. Cosmogony is a subject which Deutero-Isaiah shares with other biblical material. It is highly likely that when the audience of the book considered Yahweh's creation, they thought of his creation of the world. In the same way, when modern-day readers consider the topic of Yahweh's creation, they likely think of cosmogony.

CHAPTER II

CHAOSKAMPF IN DEUTERO-ISAIAH

In chapter 1, I observed that recent scholarship on creation in the Hebrew Bible has included the investigation of *Chaoskampf* imagery. The *Chaoskampf* myth is a cosmogonic myth. Scholars have looked in the biblical text for remnants of ancient Near Eastern creation patterns which have been used to describe the beginnings of the world. Traditionally, scholars have sought this material in the creation narratives of Genesis and some of the psalms.¹ Fisher, Gunn and others, however, have included Deutero-Isaiah as a viable source for their search for *Chaoskampf*.

In this chapter, I will briefly examine the *Chaoskampf* references which these scholars have suggested are present in Deutero-Isaiah. I will investigate whether the vocabulary they have selected is indicative of *Chaoskampf*, specifically, whether it can be linked with Yahweh's cosmogonic activities. These references should be examined to see whether they belong in a discussion of creation in Deutero-Isaiah. The connection with cosmogony must be stressed. It is not enough to locate imagery which suggests Yahweh engaged in battle with certain elements. This might appear in Deutero-Isaiah, but if it does not refer to creation (cosmogony), it is of little use to my thesis.² Therefore, for the purposes of this chapter, *Chaoskampf* language is that which describes Yahweh's cosmogonic activity in light of his battle against certain primordial elements (enemies).

The possibilities for *Chaoskampf* in Deutero-Isaiah are limited. This chapter will focus on two general categories which scholars normally identify in the *Chaoskampf* myth, the appearance of Yahweh's primeval enemies (often sea

¹ See B. W. Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos*; H. Gunkel, "Babylonian Mythology."

² Nor, I would argue, is it properly *Chaoskampf* language. McCarthy challenges this notion, showing in a number of early Hebrew poems that these images have nothing to do with the question of absolute origins whatsoever. Rather, they are concerned with "ordering" (" 'Creation' Motifs").

monsters) and the traditions concerning his subjugation of the sea.³ The proposed *Chaoskampf* references in Deutero-Isaiah do not appear to extend beyond these categories. The references are comprised predominantly of several nouns: רָרַב, תַּנִּינִים, אֲרִי, חֲשָׁד, תְּהוֹמוֹת, אֲדָמָה and אֲדָמָה. In addition, there is one verse to be examined (42:13), where Yahweh is depicted as warrior.⁴ Isa 51:9-10 will take up most of the discussion. Its presentation of four key *Chaoskampf* characters makes it the most likely reference to Yahweh's primordial battle for creation.

A. Isaiah 51:9-11: Yahweh's Battle for Creation?

Isa 51:9-10 appears to be the most plausible reference to *Chaoskampf* in Deutero-Isaiah. V. 9 presents the sea monsters רָרַב and תַּנִּינִים, and places them specifically within the context of a battle which Yahweh was said to have fought. V. 10a continues the image by referring to the subjugation of אֲדָמָה and תְּהוֹמוֹת. These verses make no overt statement about cosmogony, but they could suggest *Chaoskampf* without actually openly discussing Yahweh's cosmogonic activity. This is especially the case if this imagery is known by the audience to describe creation. However, vv. 9-10 appear to be part of a unit, 51:9-11, and should be considered in this context. The unit shows a progression from ideas which are ambiguous and could be read as references to *Chaoskampf*, to those which have little to do with it. The latter can substantially affect the meaning of the former.

A strong case can be made for reading vv. 9-11 together. V. 10 continues the rhetorical questions begun in 9b, and asks similar questions to 9b, based on Yahweh's acts on behalf of the people in the past. It therefore furthers the argument begun in 9b. In addition, v. 11 follows the thought of v. 9a by depicting a possible result of Yahweh's response to the imperative that he awake. Vv. 9b-10, which may refer to the exodus, bridge the gap between vv. 9a and 11. A comparison is made: in the same way that Yahweh allowed the redeemed to pass across, when a way was

³ These can be found, for example, in Gunkel's summary of *Chaoskampf* references, in *Schöpfung und Chaos*.

⁴ See L. Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos."

made in the sea (v. 10), so too will Yahweh provide deliverance for the people and return them to the promised land (v. 11). This will be considered in more detail below.

Isa 51:9a begins the unit with a series of imperatives addressed to the arm of Yahweh. The arm, used metonymically for Yahweh, appears fairly frequently elsewhere in the biblical text to represent the deity's might and power.⁵ The meaning of the reference to *קַרְנֵי דְרֹחַ עוֹלָמָם* is at this point, unclear. The reference might make the audience think of Yahweh's creation of the world (and a battle which had to be fought in order to accomplish it). Or, it might refer to Yahweh's acts of salvation carried out throughout the nation's history.

V. 9b then begins a series of rhetorical questions. The first question contains the reference to *תַּנִּינִי* and is paralleled by a similar question concerning *לִבְיָתָן*, the dragon. The questions establish that Yahweh was, sometime in the remote past, involved in a battle where he defeated these creatures. The questions seem to be attempting to persuade Yahweh to act. The imperatives in v. 9a ask Yahweh to repeat this destructive action once again, now on behalf of the nation. There is a strong possibility of *Chaoskampf* here. One could plausibly draw the conclusion that Yahweh's battle with *לִבְיָתָן* and *תַּנִּינִי* pictured in v. 9 might be the primordial battle that took place at Yahweh's creation of the world.⁶ If this is the case, one question presents itself already: why would the audience be attempting to persuade Yahweh to act again to create the world?

A third rhetorical question in v. 10a supports the possibility of *Chaoskampf*. The question reminds Yahweh of his responsibility for drying up the sea. The nouns used are *בְּהֵמָה* and *דָּג*, both of which are often included by scholars in their investigation of *Chaoskampf* in the Hebrew Bible.⁷ I will consider these two nouns briefly. Both of them, especially if they are perceived to be primordial enemies of

⁵ See, for example, Ps 89:10; 98:1; Job 40:9; Isa 30:30; 52:10. This language is reminiscent of the complaints, where the speaker requests that the deity wake up to help. See Ps 7:7; 44:24; 59:5.

⁶ The verse is reminiscent, for example, of texts like Ps 89: 8, 9; Job 26:7-13, where the connection between a battle against primeval monsters and creation is clearly established.

⁷ See J.L. Day *God's Conflict*.

the deity, could connote *Chaoskampf* when found in the context of Yahweh's battle against רָבִיב and רִיבִי . Since the immediate contexts of these nouns does not tell us any more about the creation event, it is helpful to consider their use in other biblical contexts. It is not imperative that 51:10a be read against these other texts. However, it is often the case that investigating other biblical attestations of a noun will add insight into the discussion. When such an investigation is undertaken, support for a *Chaoskampf* reading is scarce. מְהוֹרָה in other biblical contexts does not really seem to refer to *Chaoskampf*; such a reading in 51:10a would therefore be anomalous. Furthermore, the use of the noun מַלְחָמָה is quite varied in Deutero-Isaiah. In contexts where Yahweh is seen as having power over the sea, מַלְחָמָה appears to refer to the exodus rather than to cosmogony (43:16; 50:2).⁸

When מְהוֹרָה is employed in the context of a discussion of creation, it does not seem to connote the battle-setting of *Chaoskampf*.⁹ Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, מְהוֹרָה can be seen as the force with which Yahweh destroys or threatens destruction.¹⁰ The word also appears in more general texts which merely show Yahweh's control over the elements.¹¹ If it does refer to *Chaoskampf* in 51:10a, the noun appears to be quite anomalous from the perspective of its larger biblical context.

An investigation of the noun מַלְחָמָה in Deutero-Isaiah leads to similar conclusions. In Deutero-Isaiah, the meaning of the word is varied and does not seem to be linked with *Chaoskampf*, specifically in a cosmogonic sense. There are two texts which use the noun מַלְחָמָה in a context where the deity is portrayed as having

⁸ Isa 51:15 is an exception. Yahweh is able to stir up the sea so that it roars. This appears to connote neither the exodus nor *Chaoskampf*. Isa 44:27 shows the deity's ability to dry up the sea, but the noun here is צִלְהָה , a *hapax legomenon*.

⁹ Prov 8:27, 28; Ps 104:6; (or, Yahweh's power over the deep in the context of verses which speak about creation: Job 38:16, 30). Even when מְהוֹרָה is used in the Priestly creation account (Gen 1:2), this connotation of battle is missing.

¹⁰ See Gen. 7:11; 8:2; Ezek 26:19; Amos 7:4; Hab 3:10. One would then have to argue that this show of power refers to an event which led to the creation of the world. This is difficult to argue, since the contexts of the verses do not seem to be concerned with creation.

¹¹ Ps 42:8; 135:6; 148:7.

some kind of power or authority over the sea (43:16; 50:2).¹² In one of these, 50:2, Yahweh asks rhetorically, "is my hand too short to ransom?"¹³ In answering the question, he declares his ability to dry up the sea.¹⁴ When read with 43:16, 50:2 makes sense as a reference to the drying up or controlling of the sea, so that the redeemed may return home. Isa 43:16 actually speaks of making a way in the sea, not Yahweh's drying up of it. These two texts combined present a likely picture of the exodus.

A third text (44:27), while not employing \square , is also relevant to the discussion of Yahweh's control over the sea in Deutero-Isaiah. The noun used here to refer to the sea is the *hapax legomenon*, צִיָּה . Isa 44:27 belongs within the context of 44:24-28. Yahweh is identifying himself, beginning with his creative activity, and then extending to his historical acts of salvation. There seems to be an historical progression in the poem: Yahweh's creation, promise of people's inhabitation of the land, drying up of the (Reed?) sea, then ultimately, directing Cyrus. It is difficult to know for certain if 44:27 does in fact refer to the exodus, but such a reading is definitely plausible, based on this progression and discussion of salvation acts.¹⁵

Isa 51:10a, then, can be considered in its greater context of verses in Deutero-Isaiah (43:16; 44:27; 50:2), where Yahweh is seen to control the sea for a certain purpose. This controlling of the sea has strong redemptive rather than cosmogonic connotations and is plausibly read as a reference to the exodus

¹² I do not include 40:12 here. This verse uses \square in a creative context. It describes measuring, however, and does not really seem to be comparable to the ideas in these verses that Yahweh subjugates (i.e., asserts his control over the sea by force).

¹³ Watts observes the literal meaning is "my hand for ransom" (noun), but BHS suggests the infinitive construct, "from redeeming." Watts suggests we keep BHS (192).

¹⁴ D.M. Gunn argues again that this context is inappropriate to the *Chaoskampf* motif ("Deutero-Isaiah and the Flood," 499), though the idea of rebuking might be applicable (500). He actually believes the text to be alluding to the flood.

¹⁵ If 44:27 is, however, a reference to creation, it is in an unlikely place in the poem and furthermore, gives an unlikely detail about the creation event. Yahweh's cosmogonic activities are not normally described using this detail. In Deutero-Isaiah, especially, the phrases about Yahweh-creator do not incorporate anything about water, specifically, water being dried up by the deity. Further, Gunn argues that "drying up" is not "appropriate" to the *Chaoskampf* motif, but does fit the flood and Exodus traditions ("Deutero-Isaiah and the Flood," 497).

tradition.¹⁶ As part of this context, 51:10a contributes to the depiction of Yahweh's redemption through the deliverance at the Reed Sea.

The suggestion of the exodus in v. 10a is further supported by v.10b. The speaker asks rhetorically whether Yahweh was the one who made a way in the sea for the redeemed to pass over. The action of drying up the sea does not refer to Yahweh's victory over the enemies, *וַיַּחַדְם* and *וַיַּחַדְם*. Rather, Yahweh dried up the sea so that Israel might escape from its pursuers. V. 10b seems to persuade a reading for the exodus in v. 10.

If this verse does in fact refer to the exodus event, what is the relevance then of *וַיַּחַדְם* and *וַיַּחַדְם* in v. 9b? Does this poem in vv. 9-11 present two separate events, *Chaoskampf* and the exodus, juxtaposed to show Yahweh's almighty acts? Or, could it be the case that both vv. 9 and 10 refer to the exodus? Might they be meant as a sort of a foil for v. 11?¹⁷

It is helpful, again, to look at other biblical texts in order to answer this question. Evidence outside of the Deutero-Isaian text suggests that if the use of *וַיַּחַדְם* and *וַיַּחַדְם* once referred to *Chaoskampf*, the language has been used also to refer to Egypt or another nation.¹⁸ *וַיַּחַדְם* appears in Isa 30:7, where there is a strong connection made to Egypt. Yahweh announces that Egypt's help is empty and meaningless. Therefore, says Yahweh, she will be called *וַיַּחַדְם*.¹⁹ If such a connection already existed in the minds of the audience, it is easy to see how *וַיַּחַדְם*

¹⁶ A pertinent question, however, is whether creation should be seen as a redemptive activity. If it is, as von Rad and Stuhlmüller would argue, then it could be that these texts use creation language to describe redemption. I am not willing to concede this, however, since I am not convinced that creation is redemptive, and since I do not see a discussion of creation revealed at all in these texts.

¹⁷ By foil, I mean something which sets off something else by contrast.

¹⁸ Cf J.L. Day, *God's Conflict*, chapter 3. Day speaks of the "historicization of the divine conflict," where this language of battle between Yahweh and the dragon/sea is "applied to a nation or nations hostile to Israel" (88).

¹⁹ There are certain textual problems here: literally, the text reads "Rahab, they a sitting still" (Watts, 393). *וַיַּחַדְם* is a seldom used noun (393). This does not make the best of sense. Could the meaning be that Rahab (a former enemy of Yahweh), now sits here, like easy prey? Watts suggests "Rahab: Roaring while sitting still" (roaring would read the *וַיַּחַדְם* as *וַיַּחַדְם*, "a roar"), (393). J.L. Day suggests, "the silenced Rahab" in reading *וַיַּחַדְם*, following Gunkel (89).

might be interpreted in 51:9.²⁰ Yahweh subjugated Egypt so that the redeemed could return home.

The case is not as clearly made for יָמִינִי, but there is a case in *Isaiah* which is similar to the use of יָמִינִי in 30:7.²¹ The noun appears in 27:1, where it is paralleled with לְיָמִינִי.²² The verse speaks of Yahweh's subjugation of both monsters as a future event.²³ Although there is no stated connection between Egypt or any other nation and the monster, this verse continues a thought from the previous chapter. In the preceding verses (26:20-21) it is said that the people should hide themselves because Yahweh will punish the inhabitants of the earth for their wrongdoing. If the people hide themselves, it would appear that the punished will be the other nations. The subjugation of the monsters here, then, could plausibly refer to the punishment of the nations.

It can be reasonably argued that the point of יָמִינִי within the context of vv. 9-11 is not to describe *Chaoskampf*. Given its larger biblical context, the noun seems to refer to Egypt and Yahweh's subjugation of it. This does not preclude the possibility that this description draws on battle imagery. The question is whether this passage is meant to comment on cosmogony. There are certainly texts in the Hebrew Bible which show יָמִינִי in a creation milieu, where Yahweh has subjugated the monster in order to achieve the creative purpose.²⁴ What is surprising is that no mention is made of cosmogony in 51:9, where in Deutero-Isaiah there is enough discussion about creation to warrant that it could be mentioned here, if this is really what was meant.²⁵ יָמִינִי, תַּיִם, אֶרֶץ and תְּהוֹמוֹת and their subjugation are certainly

²⁰ This evidence can be further augmented by Ps 87:4, where, among a list of nations, יָמִינִי is included, presumably to refer to Egypt.

²¹ None of the other texts in the Hebrew Bible which refer to יָמִינִי establish a link between a sea monster and a nation (particularly Egypt), as clearly as 30:7 links יָמִינִי with Egypt. At best, these texts which refer to יָמִינִי are at least ambiguous so that they suggest the possibility of this link.

²² יָמִינִי here appears with a definite article; in Isa 51:9, it is indefinite.

²³ Verbs: prefix conjugation : יָמַן, יָמַן.

²⁴ See Job 26:12; Ps 89:11.

²⁵ J.L. Day, *God's Conflict*, cites 51:13, 16 as support for the fact that creation is being considered here in 51:9 (93). However, I am not convinced: the poem which begins in 51:12 must be a different text than ours in 51:9-11. The speaker changes, the subject clearly changes, and the

depicted here. My reading of 51:9-11 is not intended to deny that this language exists. However, in its present context, I do not think that it contributes to a description of cosmogony. Any comment on cosmogony would need to be inferred in the minds of the audience in the first half of the poem (vv. 9-10a). It would quickly be altered as the unit progressed and showed that its subject matter was really the future of the exiled people. The unit is aimed at explaining Yahweh's upcoming action on behalf of the exiled people, in the language of a previous, similar action, the exodus out of Egypt.²⁶

B. Other Possibilities for *Chaoskampf* in Deutero-Isaiah.

The noun *חִוּיָּהוּ*, the word pair *אֵלֶּיךָ* and *אֵלֶּיךָ*, and the theme of Yahweh the warrior need not be studied as closely as the nouns in 51:9-10. With the exception of *חִוּיָּהוּ*, they do not seem to suggest cosmogony. Furthermore, they do not appear to present a primordial battle involving Yahweh and various enemies. The noun *חִוּיָּהוּ* is rarely included in scholarly discussion on *Chaoskampf*. However, its appearance in 45:18 recalls the Priestly account of creation (Gen 1:1-2:4; see 1:2). When read with the Genesis text, the verse might suggest a conflict between the deity and a chaotic force. Isa 45:18 is therefore worth considering briefly.²⁷ Other instances of *חִוּיָּהוּ* in Deutero-Isaiah provide a context in which the noun in 45:18 may be studied.

Isa 45:18 introduces Yahweh in some detail as creator of the world.²⁸ Yahweh then speaks in vv. 18b and 19. The reference to Yahweh's creative activities is clearly cosmogonic.²⁹ This reference is unique in that it is said that the earth was created by Yahweh *חִוּיָּהוּ* לֹא. What does this mean, exactly? How should *חִוּיָּהוּ* be understood here? Should the verse be taken as a response to an inference

argument/conclusion is different. It might be possible to see it as a kind of response to 51:9-11. It does not support Day's conclusions that creation here must mean creation in 51:9-11, however.

²⁶ The evidence is not as strong for *חִוּיָּהוּ* but since it is parallel with *אֵלֶּיךָ* here, it likely has the same referent.

²⁷ I will have cause to discuss this verse later in detail in chapter 3, and so I will limit my remarks here.

²⁸ This introduction of Yahweh as creator is quite common in Deutero-Isaiah (see chapter 3).

²⁹ I will discuss the series of participles which describe creation in this verse in chapter 3.

that Yahweh's creation was somehow connected with chaos? Does *הָיָה* here signal that Yahweh fought against some kind of force in order to create?

In the first place, the particle *לֹא* does not really mean "against." One could not argue that this text means that Yahweh fought against *הָיָה* in order to create. Second, it would be difficult to argue that *הָיָה* here is a proper noun, the name of one of Yahweh's competitors. (The meaning would then be, Yahweh, not *הָיָה*, created the earth.) The question remains as to whether one can read a battle into the statement that Yahweh created "not" a chaos, that is, so that the earth was not a chaos. The parallel statement tells us what this means: Yahweh created the earth instead to be inhabited (*לְשִׁכּוֹן*).

It has been suggested that 45:18 be read as a kind of response to the Priestly creation story in Genesis.³⁰ In the Priestly source, the text states that the earth was *וְהָיָה תִבְוָה*, i.e., that it was in a formless, chaotic state. The reference in Deutero-Isaiah (*לֹא-הָיָה*) might be a criticism of the Priestly source, depending on whether one sees that the *וְהָיָה תִבְוָה* occurs after Yahweh's creation, or before it.³¹ If it occurs before Yahweh's creation, and can be read as a force pre-existent to the deity against which he fought, then one might argue that the Isa 45:18 might be criticizing this text. However, apart from the doubtful reading of the Genesis text, this possibility raises a significant problem. In the Priestly source, Yahweh also created the earth to be inhabited. This is certainly the outcome of the story's account of Yahweh's activities. There is no suggestion that inhabitants were an afterthought.

³⁰ M. Weinfeld has suggested that parts of Deutero-Isaiah function in this manner, though, to my knowledge, he does not deal with the noun *הָיָה*. (M. Weinfeld, "God the Creator in Gen 1 and in the Prophecy of Second Isaiah," *Tarbiz* 37 [1968] 105-32, article in Hebrew; See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 325; J.D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988) 124, for discussion of Weinfeld's work.)

³¹ There has been considerable discussion of this issue. Scullion points out that it can be traced to Rashi who read v. 1 as a temporal, subordinate clause in construct with v. 3. (V. 2 would be a parenthesis.) Scullion's view is that Yahweh's action of speaking (*וַיֹּאמֶר*) introduces each work of creation after chaos has already been presented (*Genesis: A Commentary for Students, Teachers, and Preachers* [OTS 6; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992] 22). Speiser observes that v. 2 is parenthetical; "a normal consecutive statement" would have begun with the verb (waw consecutive) (*Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964] 5). See also von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1972) 35-6; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Trans. J.J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 104-5.

One would then have to ask why Deutero-Isaiah should be read against Genesis 1:1-2:4, or why it might be seen as a criticism of this text. The outcome of a world which was to be inhabited is present in both the Genesis and Deutero-Isaian texts.

An alternative way to read 45:18 would be to look at other biblical texts in which *הוֹרֵי* appears. David Tsumura observes that in the Hebrew Bible, *הוֹרֵי* has the meaning of a "desert-like state" (32).³² Tsumura explains that *הוֹרֵי* in 45:18 "here is contrasted with *לְשֹׁכָה* in the parallelism and seems to refer rather to a place which has no habitation. . . ."³³

Other instances of the noun *הוֹרֵי* in Deutero-Isaiah reflect a more abstract meaning of emptiness or nothingness.³⁴ For example, in 45:19, Yahweh appears to be making a case for an ensuing challenge. The verse seems to provide evidence for the veracity or validity of Yahweh's words. The conclusions of the verse, the assertions that Yahweh speaks the truth (19b), are then in effect supported by the evidence given in 19a.³⁵ Other instances of *הוֹרֵי* in Deutero-Isaiah provide clearer examples of this abstract meaning: they are used as something against which Yahweh is frequently compared.³⁶

In summary, the instance of *הוֹרֵי* in 45:18 is one of a number of variable meanings of the noun in the Hebrew Bible. In Deutero-Isaiah, *הוֹרֵי* connotes both

³² D. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) 32. This includes passages like 48:15, which Westermann claims refers to the "state which is opposed to and precedes creation" (Tsumura, 30).

³³ P. 33. Tsumura also cites other biblical texts with similar meanings for *הוֹרֵי*, such as Isa 24:10 45:19; Job 26:7 (32-34).

³⁴ D. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters*, explains that the word "lacks something abstract which should be there, such as worth, purpose, truth, profit & integrity" (31).

³⁵ Both of these parts of the verse contain verbs of speaking, which I think is the focus here. V. 19a makes sense in the context I have just elucidated: Yahweh did not speak secretly. V. 19b is a little more confusing, however, since it does not really continue the description of the manner in which Yahweh spoke. Yahweh does give a command, but this does not concern listening or hearing, rather, seeking. In any event, the point of 19b is that Yahweh is not to be found in *הוֹרֵי*. The deity's word is reliable, as v. 19c goes on to state.

³⁶ Isa 40:17, 23 compare the nations and their rulers against Yahweh; they are *הוֹרֵי* in comparison. Isa 41:29 and 44:9 show idols, again, as nothing in comparison to Yahweh. It is a bit more difficult to place the last example of *הוֹרֵי*, which occurs in 49:4, the second servant song. Generally speaking, however, again in comparison to Yahweh, the servant's work might mean nothing, but this is overshadowed by his reward, which will be to be with Yahweh, and Yahweh's sometimes incomprehensible plans.

an empty or meaningless state and a desert-like place. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible the noun also refers to the latter, an inhabitable place. These meanings show that it is difficult to establish the meaning of *הוֹרֵר* in 45:18 as anything connected with *Chaoskampf* in the sense of cosmogony. There would need to be a strong suggestion that *הוֹרֵר* was something against which the deity battled in order to create the world. The uses of *הוֹרֵר* in Deutero-Isaiah do not allow such a reading. Further, the statement, *לֹא הוֹרֵר*, also does not seem to allow this reading, even if read against Genesis 1:2.

The final nouns to be considered are the word pair, *חָשֶׁךְ* and *אוֹר*, found in 45:7, where Yahweh claims that he creates these two elements as well as *עָרָב* and *שָׁלוֹם*.³⁷ Darkness and light are included in Gunkel's study of the influence of Babylonian mythology on the biblical text.³⁸ It is difficult to argue for *Chaoskampf* here, however, since there is no connotation of battle, or even the suggestion that these elements are primordial figures against whom Yahweh might have fought.³⁹ Indeed, even the reference to creation (via the verb *בָּרָא*) is non-specific, therefore making it difficult to connect the reference to cosmogony.

The final possible *Chaoskampf* reference to be investigated is the depiction of Yahweh as warrior.⁴⁰ There is only one text, 42:13, which is relevant to this discussion.⁴¹ It is difficult to locate in this text a reference to or a discussion of cosmogony. As a description of Yahweh as warrior who will go out and provoke war, or else as an image of a frightening foe which intimidates the enemy, 42:13 may refer plausibly to Yahweh in battle, possibly even primordial battle. However, there is nothing in the verse nor in its immediate context to suggest that this battle

³⁷ See chapters 3 and 4 for a discussion of Yahweh's usual objects of creation.

³⁸ "Babylonian Mythology," 26-27.

³⁹ It has also been suggested that this verse should be read as a response to the Priestly account of creation. Weinfeld has posited that Deutero-Isaiah's text is a correction to the doctrine in Gen 1:3 that Yahweh has only created light; this leaves obvious questions concerning whether darkness was therefore a force pre-existent to creation. This, however, is speculative, and difficult to argue. It would be subject to the same reading as we saw in the case of *הוֹרֵר*. See N. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 325; J.L. Day, *God's Conflict*, 55. See also footnote 30.

⁴⁰ See L. Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," 191.

⁴¹ I will have cause to look at this text in more detail in chapter 4, so I will try to limit my comments here.

was one which contributed to the deity's creation of the world. Isa 42:13 likely refers to the foes against which the deity will battle in order to bring the exiled people back home (see 51:9). The verse is therefore ambiguous enough that calling it a reference to *Chaoskampf* would be risky.

I have tried to establish the meaning and significance of the possible references to *Chaoskampf* in Deutero-Isaiah. I have understood *Chaoskampf* language to be that which refers to Yahweh's primordial battle against certain elements, specifically in his creation of the world (cosmogony).

My conclusions were that none of the texts which I considered clearly presented *Chaoskampf*. That is, I could locate either a possible reference to Yahweh in battle (in one very clear case, 51:9, against primordial enemies) or to his cosmogonic activities. Nowhere, however, were these two aspects combined so that one could definitively see that Yahweh's creation of the world was being expressed in terms of his battle against primordial enemies.

It is possible that since descriptive language is often vague or ambiguous, it is not enough to say that unless *Chaoskampf* is overtly presented, it does not exist in the text. In this case, it became difficult to assess the references which I have considered. I looked for more clues in the contexts in which they were found (their immediate poetic context, and, in the case of some of the nouns, their Deutero-Isaian or biblical context). Again, however, I could see no convincing evidence for a *Chaoskampf* reference.

I spent the most time on Isa 51:9-11, primarily because of the players, כִּנּוּי and יְהוָה. I concluded that the first half of the poem (vv. 9-10a) is ambiguous enough to suggest *Chaoskampf*; some elements of this language are certainly present. The larger textual context (51:9-11), however, does not seem to encourage this interpretation. It appears more likely that the nouns are employed to describe the exodus, which in turn is explicating Yahweh's return of the exiled people. There does not seem to be any interest in describing Yahweh's initial creation of the world

here. Further, the request that Yahweh awake seems directed more at persuading him to exercise his abilities to control certain forces, rather than to create the world.

It is very difficult to support a reading for *Chaoskampf* in the case of the other nouns considered (הוה, חָשָׁךְ and אֵר) and the depiction of Yahweh as warrior. The nouns all had general meanings in their greater context of the Hebrew Bible, and did not suggest, like תַּבַּחַח and תַּבַּחַח, primordial monsters. Further, while these nouns could be linked to a creation context (הוה to cosmogony), they did not really suggest a battle, as 51:9 described. One could certainly maintain that depicting Yahweh as warrior suggests battle, but it would be hard to argue convincingly that this battle implies *Chaoskampf* (i.e., primordial battle in a cosmogonic context).

In sum, strong evidence for *Chaoskampf* in Deutero-Isaiah is difficult to locate. It has been possible to argue either for the presence of cosmogony or primordial battle, but never both together. The *possibility* of the presence of *Chaoskampf* which we see in 51:9, is not enough to include it in this study of creation in Deutero-Isaiah.

CHAPTER III

THE DESCRIPTIONS OF YAHWEH'S COSMOGONIC ACTIVITIES

In chapter 2, I investigated the references to *Chaoskampf* which scholars proposed were present in Deutero-Isaiah. I observed that it was possible to find texts which suggested Yahweh's battle with certain forces or his creative (cosmogonic) activities. However, I concluded that it was difficult to establish in these texts a clear connection between cosmogony and battle, and thus argue for a reference to *Chaoskampf*. I suggested that the best possible case for *Chaoskampf*, 51:9, was not convincing when looked at in its poetic context of 51:9-11. I was therefore able to exclude *Chaoskampf* from my consideration of creation in Deutero-Isaiah.

In this chapter, I will examine the way in which cosmogony is described in Isaiah 40-55. In my introduction, I suggested a strategy for reading the references to creation in Deutero-Isaiah. Because of the diversity of the references, I proposed that they be divided into three groups for discussion (cosmogony, creation of the people, new creation). This chapter presents the first of these groups. The cosmogonic references are the most obvious of the references to Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah. They make simple, clear statements that Yahweh is the one responsible for the creation of various physical and geographical aspects of the world. They employ a certain vocabulary which describes Yahweh's creation (building, forming, making). They pertain to an aspect of creation which is probably the most obvious to readers, and which is also discussed in other biblical books. For these reasons, cosmogony is a logical place to begin an investigation of the descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah.

The references to cosmogony in Deutero-Isaiah rarely seem to be introduced for the purpose of presenting a specific, detailed account of Yahweh's initial creation. Instead, two basic created elements (the heavens and the earth) are

repeated in various ways. The references share a small group of verbs (עָשָׂה, בָּרָא, יָצַר, נָטָה, רָקַע) which are used in different combinations. What is presented, then, are descriptions which function like stock references to cosmogony.

The material on cosmogony is varied and scattered enough that a discussion of it requires some further organization. I will focus mainly on the verbs or verbal ideas, paying some attention to the verb forms employed.¹ These verbs are one of the unifying features of the cosmogonic references, and are also pertinent to the descriptions which concern the creation of the people (see chapter 4). The references will be discussed in order of appearance.² Deutero-Isaiah's presentation of cosmogony will be divided into several parts. First, I will consider the opening poem found in 40:12-31 (section A). Next, I will look at the subsequent references in Chapters 41-55 (section B). I will also consider briefly the idol passages in Deutero-Isaiah (section C), for they seem to employ the creation verbs in a kind of a satire.³ Finally, there are two somewhat puzzling texts in Deutero-Isaiah which refer to cosmogony, where Yahweh challenges his own creation by showing that what has been created is transient (51:4-6; 54:9-10). These will complete my study of cosmogony in Deutero-Isaiah (section D).

The opening poem (40:12-31) is interspersed with references to cosmogony (40:12, 21-22, 26, 28). Four of these (21-22, 26, 28) could be studied in section B because they share the same verbs and characteristics as the subsequent references. I have chosen to discuss the opening poem separately from Isaiah 41-55, however, because it provides an excellent introduction to the subsequent descriptions of cosmogony and will help to shed some light on them. These verses in the poem work together in their poetic context to make a comment on the nature of Yahweh.

¹ It is important not to make too much of an issue of the variation in forms. However, one should be aware of the frequent use of the participle in the book's discussion of cosmogony. It might be that I will be able to speculate on the function and significance of this form at the end of my study.

² Because these verbs appear in various combinations, it is not helpful to discuss the references verb by verb.

³ Most notable is 44:9-20. Westermann calls this passage a satire or a taunt song (*Isaiah* 40-66, 144, 146), North, a "satirical description" (*The Second Isaiah*, 139). Gitay calls it a parody (*Prophecy and Persuasion: A Study of Isaiah 40-48* [FThL 14; Bonn: Linguistica Biblica, 1981] 160). The literary terminology is not important here. I use "satire" loosely to denote the fact that this passage and the others I will study (40:18-19; 43:10; 46:5-7) ridicule the construction of idols.

I believe that this comment is pertinent to the cosmogonic descriptions of Yahweh in chapters 41-55.

The poem is also a good introduction for several other reasons. Most notably, it is a lengthy text on cosmogony (in comparison with the rest of the material in Isaiah 41-55) which has been placed at the beginning of the Deutero-Isaian corpus. An extended cosmogonic discourse in this position in the book implies that it might have specific relevance to the ensuing material.⁴ In addition, as Lack pointed out, the poem contains much of the ideas and vocabulary which are used in the subsequent cosmogonic descriptions and even in some of the references which describe the other aspects of Yahweh's creative activity (see chapters 4 and 5). Finally, it will become apparent that the poem has a rhetorical or persuasive quality about it. Most of the subsequent references also appear to be functioning as a kind of rhetorical device in the book. That is, they attempt to persuade the audience of Yahweh's legitimacy and reliability: Yahweh cares for what he has created and will perform his promised actions of salvation.⁵

A. The Opening Poem: Isaiah 40:12-31.

The nature and exact boundaries of the poem in 40:12-31 have been disputed by scholars. Some believe the end of the poem to be located at v. 26.⁶ I am including vv. 27-31 in the poem for two reasons. First, vv. 12-31 contain five references to creation (40:12, 21-22, 26, 28). V. 26 is the last detailed reference. However, an important titling of Yahweh as creator appears in v. 28 which seems to sum up his creative activity. Secondly, vv. 27-31 act as a conclusion for the general theme of the poem. They provide the reason for the previous lengthy description of Yahweh in vv. 12-26.

⁴ I am not implying that the book was written or organized in this manner since I am not interested in this kind of investigation into the text. Rather, I have taken this poem in its position in the book and asked whether it relates to the material which follows it.

⁵ I use the word 'rhetorical' to mean 'persuasive.' See Y. Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, for a detailed rhetorical-critical analysis of Deutero-Isaiah (chapters 40-48).

⁶ See Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption*, 144, n. 482 for a good summary of different opinions on the boundaries of this poem.

My investigation of cosmogony in Isa 40:12-31 will raise several general questions or issues which need to be addressed. First, what specifically is being said about cosmogony? Secondly, if this poem functions as an introduction to Deutero-Isaiah, how might it set up subsequent discussion of cosmogony in the book? Thirdly, since I have suggested that 40:12-31 is a rhetorical or persuasive text, it will be important to investigate this possibility. The central message or point of the poem seems to be its attempt to depict Yahweh in relationship to his creation: the nature of the divine identity involves creative activities. There appears to be a reason in the text for establishing who Yahweh is. This works in the poem to convince the audience about the legitimacy of the deity.⁷

It appears that the basic point of the poem is to show that Yahweh is greater and more permanent than the material elements of creation (heavens, earth, etc.) with which he is compared. Descriptions of Yahweh's cosmogonic activities best illustrate this size comparison. The poem operates around a series of rhetorical questions found in vv. 12, 13-14, 18, 21, 25, and 27. Vv. 18 and 25 actually ask whether the deity can be compared, and can therefore be seen as "hinges" on which the argument of the poem works.⁸ The last rhetorical question in v. 27 reveals why all of these questions are being asked (the point of the poem).

The comparison of the deity is primarily made through spatial imagery which involves various elements. This comparison is begun through some "measuring vocabulary," expressed in v. 12, the first of the rhetorical questions. The speaker is asking about the creation of the world, and inquires who has measured, marked, enclosed, and weighed (שָׁקַל, כוֹל, חָכַן, מָדַד).⁹ In addition,

⁷ Sometimes the audience is named (i.e., Jacob or Israel, or "my people" as in 40:1), other times its presence is implied by the message delivered in the text. I am purposely not making any effort to comment on the particulars of the audience's identity (i.e., who specifically is meant by Jacob or Israel, or who is being implied). I use the word "audience" simply to denote my recognition that the text is directed at a particular group of people, often to the end of convincing them of a particular point.

⁸ Gitay sees the questions as a refrain which holds the poem together (*Prophecy and Persuasion*, 83). Watts comments that vv. 10-31 constitute a "scene" which exhibits an arch-shaped pattern. V. 18 is the keystone of this arch (*Isaiah 34-66*, 88-9).

⁹ The image of measuring and so on best describes cosmogony. It makes little sense as a present or future action of creation. The language used here is similar in Job 28:25, only here Yahweh

some nouns are used which pertain to measuring, like נִרְחָה (span of a hand), פָּלֶם and מֵאֵינִים (referring to various parts of scales). The image, then, is of an enormous creator, who measures and manipulates the created elements of the world (waters, heavens, earth) in deity-sized hands and scales.

In v. 13, the speaker reverses the attempted comparison made in v. 12 by now asking who can measure Yahweh (instead of who measures the earth). Besides the verb הָכֵן , is there any connection between v.12 and v. 13? What is the relationship of this verse to the cosmogonic material in v. 12? The use of the noun נִרְחָה might provide an answer. The noun is an interesting way of expressing the question asked here: instead of actually asking who can measure Yahweh, the action of measuring is directed at Yahweh's נִרְחָה . There is only one other context in the Hebrew Bible where Yahweh's נִרְחָה is associated with the creative process.¹⁰ In the Priestly account of creation, we see that the נִרְחָה of Yahweh moves or broods over the waters. However this נִרְחָה in Gen 1:2 seems to have little to do with Yahweh actually creating. Is there something in v. 13 which is being assumed about Yahweh and Yahweh's נִרְחָה which has some connection with creation?¹¹ Or, is the speaker making a general comment about Yahweh's incomparability through this question?¹² Though this is not clear, the basic point of the verse is apparent: Yahweh and the divine creative ability cannot be measured in human terms.¹³

measures (הָכֵן) the waters, not the heavens, as in Isa 40:12. I will not discuss these verbs in this verse. They are not used again in the subsequent discussions of Yahweh's cosmogonic activities.

¹⁰ It is said in Amos 4:13 that Yahweh creates נִרְחָה . This is placed in parallel with Yahweh's creation of the mountains. נִרְחָה likely refers to wind, not spirit.

¹¹ North suggests that it is "beyond the thought of the passage to read into it the doctrine of the 'spirit' of Yahweh as the agent of creation." The noun here means "mind" (*The Second Isaiah*, 83-4). However, if the mixture of Yahweh's נִרְחָה and Yahweh's creation existed in the minds of the audience, it is certainly plausible that this verse might fill out the reference to creation made in v. 12.

¹² North and Gitay point out the fact that Yahweh is said to measure (הָכֵן) the spirits and hearts of the people. See Prov 16:2; 21:2; 24:12; (C. North, *The Second Isaiah*, 83; Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 89).

¹³ Both Gitay and North suggest that v. 13 "answers" v. 12 (North, *The Second Isaiah*, 83; Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 81). This is a difficult conclusion to support. V. 13 asks another question about a topic which is difficult to relate to v. 12. It is likely, however, that the answers to vv. 12 and 13 are all directed towards the same end, finding Yahweh to be superior to his creation.

V. 14 appears to continue the ideas begun in v. 13. The speaker asks rhetorically who taught or showed Yahweh. The question, "who taught Yahweh how to create?" is inferred in this verse. However, the connection with cosmogony (depicted in v. 12) had already become tenuous in v. 13. Like v. 13, it is difficult to determine if this really speaks about creation or just makes a general statement about Yahweh's nature.

One might argue for the association of Yahweh's wisdom with cosmogony in v. 14 because of other biblical texts which show a similar connection between cosmogony and Yahweh's wisdom or knowledge. For example, Proverbs 8:22 establishes that Yahweh created Wisdom (personified) at the beginning of his creation. The series of questions in Job 38-39, 41 which Yahweh asks of Job, also make inquiries along these lines.¹⁴ The texts when considered together might reveal that Yahweh's wisdom played a significant role in the biblical depiction of the creation process. To mention wisdom roughly within the context of creation here (v. 14) might evoke this idea in the minds of the audience.

Vv. 12-14 have accomplished two things so far in the poem. First, they have brought only Yahweh's creation into the discussion and not any of Yahweh's other deeds or works. The implication is that Yahweh's creation is the proof needed to respond to the audience's challenge of the deity which is implied in the text. This implication may be tested as the poem continues. Secondly, they have asked questions about Yahweh's abilities, rhetorically, suggesting a response to the audience's implied challenge. Yahweh is presented in different ways as being incomparable.

If the audience does not yet have the answers to the questions asked in vv. 12-14, the next three verses provide further clues. Here, the depiction of Yahweh creating drops out of the picture briefly. Vv. 15-17 continue the dimensional imagery begun in v. 12, but argue from another perspective. V. 12 showed that Yahweh is physically much larger than his creation, so much so that it is measured

¹⁴ See, for example, Job 38:2, 4, 18, 33, 36, 37; 39:1-3, 26. These verses all ask questions which pertain to some form of Yahweh's knowing about the created elements and/or Yahweh's wisdom in creation.

out by him. Vv. 15-17 continue the comparison by showing the smallness of the earth through the nations which Yahweh has created. There is a movement throughout these three verses. They begin with the language of size and weighing, seen in v. 12. Similes describe the nations as a drop in a bucket, or as dust on Yahweh's weighing scales.¹⁵ This idea of smallness is continued in 17, but merely restated using the noun *הֵיחָל*: the nations are like nothing.

V. 16 adds to the movement in vv. 15-17 by continuing the comparison of the deity and adding a new subject of sacrifice.¹⁶ *לְבָנִין* presumably appears as an example of one of the nations of vv. 15 and 17. The country is not large enough to be fuel (for an offering to Yahweh, implied). Stated differently, its beasts are not numerous enough to be sufficient for sacrifice to the deity. The new subject, sacrifice, while seemingly a little out of place here, might be setting up the subject matter of vv. 19-20 (idols).¹⁷

I noted that the questions in vv. 18 and 25 can be viewed as an axis on which the poem hangs. V. 18 asks a logical question of comparison after the response to the audience's challenge (12-14) and the depiction of the nations' diminutive stature (15-17): With whom can Yahweh be compared? There is simply no one (dimensionally) big enough! In v. 25, even Yahweh, who is now quoted, asks this question.

Located between vv. 18 and 25 (in 19-24) are three important ideas. One is new: the speaker asks rhetorically whether Yahweh can be compared with an idol. The second idea continues the subject which has already been introduced, Yahweh's creation. The third idea adds to the subject matter of vv. 15-17: it stresses the transience of those who inhabit the earth. Here, the rulers are singled out for comparison.

¹⁵ In 15a, the noun *כֶּטֶף* is a *hapax legomenon*. Normally, it is an adjective which means "bitter." Presumably, "drop" was posited because of the rest of the verse.

¹⁶ Watts explains that there is an ellipsis of thought between vv. 15 and 16. The ancient hearer or reader would likely have made a connection between Yahweh's greatness, and sacrifice. Yahweh is so great that sacrifice is an appropriate human response to the deity (91).

¹⁷ This is a "long shot." However, it could be that the whole subject of sacrifice, so condemned by the eighth-century prophets for its abuses, might make the audience think of the problem of idols and the people who erect them as their gods.

Vv. 19 and 20 introduce the idol.¹⁸ This figure has already been suggested in 18b by the noun *תְּמוּנָה*, meaning "likeness," and perhaps the general term, *לֵאלֹהִים*. It is interesting that the idol has little to do with the comparison regarding size, on which the poem has so far focused. What seems to be happening with the change of imagery is the inclusion in the poem of a comparison regarding transience and permanence, which supplements the large-small comparison seen thus far. The main details about the idol are that it is well-crafted, that it is built sturdily so that it will not topple, and that the wood with which it is crafted will not rot. The idol requires human craftsmanship to secure it and to attempt to make it permanent. Yahweh, as the poem makes clear, is not dependent on human activity or craftsmanship.¹⁹ The answer to the question in v. 18, then, is that Yahweh cannot be compared with an idol.

Vv. 22-23 re-introduce the description of Yahweh creating, a subject which seems to have fallen into the background in vv. 15-20. V. 21 asks the audience whether they know from the beginning or the foundations of the earth (that Yahweh is creator; vv. 22-23). The latter suggests not only a time (like *מֵרֵאשִׁית* in v. 21), but also the actual physical foundations. Can the audience see from creation that Yahweh is the creator? Vv. 22-23 explain further, again, by a comparison of size. Yahweh is depicted as one who sits above the vault of the earth.²⁰ The inhabitants seem as tiny as grasshoppers to the deity. Further, Yahweh does the work of creating the heavens, which are then used as his tent or dwelling place.

In these verses, the first participial descriptions of Yahweh as creator appear. The verb *בָּרָא* (with object, *בְּרִיאָה*) is used again several times in Deutero-Isaiah to

¹⁸ There is some question here about whether vv. 19-20 present one idol or two different kinds of idols. See North, *The Second Isaiah*, 85-86; P. Trudinger, "To whom then will you liken God? A Note on the Interpretation of Isaiah XL 18-20." *VT* 17 (1967) 220-25.

¹⁹ Gitay observes that this poem (vv. 12-31) is not directed towards Israelites who are "inclined to adopt pagan religion." It is also not a theological debate about the nature of Yahweh which engages pagan worshippers (*Prophecy and Persuasion*, 81). The only reference to idols here seems to support Gitay's evaluation of the poem. The idols are part of the system of comparisons of Yahweh to various elements.

²⁰ Some have suggested that this refers to Yahweh's enthronement. See N. Habel, "He who Stretches out the Heavens," *CBQ* 34 (1972) 417-30.

describe Yahweh's creation of the heavens (42:5; 44:24; 51:13).²¹ Yahweh stretches out the heavens (participle, נָסַח) and has spread them out (waw consecutive; נִסַּח) like a tent.²² Is the use of these forms significant? The combination of the participle which may connote ongoing activity and the waw consecutive might prompt some questions about the time in which this creation was supposed to have taken place.²³ It might be that the inclusion of the waw consecutive is intended to place the creative activity in the past time.²⁴ This would certainly make sense in a reference to the initial creation of the world.²⁵

I fit this participial description of cosmogony into the general purpose of the poem. It is persuading the audience of Yahweh's size. There is one significant detail mentioned in 40:22 which will not be included in the other uses of this verb: Yahweh's action on the heavens is for his own purpose. The infinitive construct, לְשַׁכַּח, can only refer to Yahweh, who has just been described as sitting above the vault of the earth (22a). Here, then, is the first suggestion of Yahweh's creation being for his own purpose.

While vv. 22-23 concentrates on the size of Yahweh, the theme of his permanence as compared with his creation's transience is picked up again in 24,

²¹ The participle of נָסַח is here made definite. In the other cases, it is indefinite.

²² נִסַּח is a *hapax legomenon*. Usually, when this action of Yahweh's is described in Deutero-Isaiah, נָסַח and נָסַח are used.

²³ There is some question about the meaning of participles (see section B, below). They can often denote ongoing action or they may simply act as nouns which denote a job or description of the subject.

²⁴ North agrees with the perfect tense translation: "stretched out the skies" (*The Second Isaiah*, 87). Watts translates this waw consecutive as a present tense verb, however: "he spreads them like a tent" (*Isaiah 34-66*, 85).

²⁵ This is the most plausible referent for this passage. The action of stretching out the heavens makes sense as a cosmogonic event, and not as something which Yahweh frequently repeats. However, if, as Habel has argued, this is an enthronement passage, then the activity could be one which is repeated by the deity, and might not pertain to creation at all. See Habel, "He who Stretches out the Heavens." StuhlmueLLer argues that the passage emphasizes "lordship" over creation. He chooses to stress the present time in this passage (vv. 22-24). He points out that the noun מֶלֶךְ exists also in Job 22:14; 26:10 and Prov 8:27, where the concern is also with lordship, not creation. For StuhlmueLLer, this provides further evidence for the understanding of this passage as a present event. Yahweh's lordship over the created elements involves such actions as stretching out the heavens (*Creative Redemption*, 147-8).

where the speaker discusses the inhabitants of the earth.²⁶ Here, the rulers are likely representative of the people. Previously, the nations were described as nothing, like dust on the scales (15, 17). In v. 24, all Yahweh need do is blow on them, and they would wither.²⁷

After the three ideas presented in vv. 18-24, a reiteration of the question of comparison occurs in v. 25, this time presented as if a quote from Yahweh. The final proof that the effort at comparison is futile comes in another picture of Yahweh creating. This time, the object of creation is the stars, an element which appears again only once in Deutero-Isaiah as part of Yahweh's creative achievements (45:12).²⁸ At this point, the verb *כָּרַע* appears for the first time in Deutero-Isaiah. Interestingly, the form used is a suffix-conjugation verb which seems to refer to the past action of creation. This action is paralleled with participles which describe Yahweh's numbering the stars and calling them by name. The emphasis here is on Yahweh's strength and might. Because of this might, all the stars appear and can be controlled by Yahweh. It is not clear why the creation of stars should be linked with might, whereas the other created elements presented up to this point have contrasted the deity's size. It might be that the stars suggest transience again, as an element which disappears (at daytime), and needs to be recalled and organized by the permanent controller of creation, Yahweh, at night.

The final crux of the poem, the point of all of the questions and comparisons, comes in vv. 27-31. This is where a deeper meaning of all of the poem's description of Yahweh becomes comprehensible. The speaker asks one last series of rhetorical questions: Why is Israel doubting Yahweh's lack of concern for

²⁶ V. 23 uses the verb *עָשָׂה* to describe Yahweh's actions. We will see this again in the description of his creation of the earth (section B) and the people (chapter 4).

²⁷ An interesting metaphor is used here to describe the people as plants. This metaphor will be used again throughout Deutero-Isaiah (see chapter 4).

²⁸ The actual words are the host (*צְבָאוֹת*). North assumes that this refers to the stars, described as the "martial retinue" of Yahweh (*The Second Isaiah*, 88). Westermann also sees this host as the stars, seemingly agreeing with North in describing them in military terms as one of three challenges to Israel. The other two are the nations/isles, and the princes/rulers in vv. 12-17 and 18-24 (*Isaiah* 40-66, 49, 57). The noun *צְבָאוֹת* is used in 47:13 to describe those who use the stars to try to determine the future. There is no connection there to Yahweh's creative activities in 44:26, however.

the nation, and his ability to help?²⁹ The depiction of Yahweh as dimensionally great is certainly important, but likely not the true point here. Even if the audience might be convinced that Yahweh is bigger than Yahweh's creation, what relevance would this have for them in their current plight? Yahweh's grandeur might suggest to the audience that he is too big to see them in their current situation.

Not relying on the audience's insight into the comparisons, the speaker actually states the point. Yahweh is everlasting, the creator of the ends of the earth. Here, we see another participial description of Yahweh as creator which employs the verb בָּרָא, as did v. 26.³⁰ Yahweh is described as the בּוֹרֵא קִצּוֹת הָאָרֶץ. This is the only place where קִצּוֹת הָאָרֶץ appears as the object of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah. Does the reference literally refer to the actual making of the ends of the earth, or could it be a way of saying that Yahweh makes everything?³¹ If the latter, the description of Yahweh as the בּוֹרֵא קִצּוֹת הָאָרֶץ might function as a summation of the creative activities of Yahweh, described in vv. 12-26. It need not, therefore, specifically refer to past creation, but may affirm Yahweh as creator (i.e., the one responsible for creation in all of its aspects).³²

This participial statement in 40:28 which describes Yahweh as creator (בּוֹרֵא) is the completion of the rhetorical questions in 27, 28a. Israel's fear and anxiety is pointless. The poem has argued that Yahweh is larger and more

²⁹ Though Yahweh admits that his face was hidden from the people for a time (54:7-8), the speaker urges that the people do not think this neglect is the case now.

³⁰ For Stuhlmüller, this description of Yahweh as creator is a description of present action, not of Yahweh's cosmogonic activity. Stuhlmüller's proof is in the context of vv. 27-31, which describes the people's current plight (*Creative redemption*, 150). However, the context of the entire poem (12-31) lends credence to this verse as a reference to Yahweh's cosmogonic activity. V. 26 sums up all that has been said before about Yahweh's creation.

³¹ קִצּוֹת הָאָרֶץ is also attested in Job 28:24; Isa 41:5, 9. Its only other appearance in a cosmogonic context is in Job 28:24. Here, it is used with the heavens to give the connotation of everywhere: Yahweh is the source of wisdom (compare Prov 8:22ff), and sees and knows all.

³² Stuhlmüller would certainly agree. He asserts that this reference could not be referring to "first creation" because of its concerns with Yahweh's lordship (see comments on 40:22) and because of its context in vv. 27-31. These verses concern themselves with the present situation of Israel (*Creative Redemption*, 150). The ensuing description of Yahweh who will not grow weary (prefix-conjugation verbs) seems also to describe the present situation. However, if the larger context (12-31), as I pointed out above (section A), shows Yahweh as creator in a cosmogonic sense, this description in 40:28 could just as plausibly refer to cosmogony as present creation.

permanent than all earthly things. Yahweh's greater dimension is not just a comparison which illustrates the difference between deity and creation in terms of their physical sizes. Rather, the physical size of Yahweh suggests that if he is greater than what has been created, (in permanence and in dimension), Yahweh will of course be great enough to sustain the weariness and troubles of the nation of Israel. Thus, the participial description seems to have a purpose which goes beyond the simple description of Yahweh. Its identification of Yahweh is meant to be an assurance to the audience: because Yahweh created, Yahweh is reliable, and a legitimate source of assistance. This participial title, as does the one in 40:22, seems therefore to be part of the general persuasive nature of the poem.

As I suggested in my introduction to this chapter, the opening poem sets the stage for some of the ensuing discussion on Yahweh's cosmogonic activity in Deutero-Isaiah. The poem actually presents cosmogony in more detail than the rest of the book. (The references in chapters 41-55 are brief statements which are sometimes sparse on detail.) Some of the vocabulary which will be used later is present here: עֲשֶׂה, גִּטָּה, בָּרָא. The verb רָקַע (which we will see in the chapters 41-55), does not appear here. It might, however, be suggested by the description of Yahweh's activity on the earth in v. 12 (though this is not really pounding or flattening out, as רָקַע connotes). The principal elements which Yahweh has created are here: the heavens and the earth. The speaker attempts comparison with idols, which will be suggested several more times throughout Deutero-Isaiah, possibly adding to the descriptions of cosmogony in a covert manner. In addition, the poem makes the suggestion that Yahweh creates for his own glory. Finally, the people are depicted as transient, when Yahweh so wills it, but also described metaphorically as plants, which Yahweh will cause to flourish once again (this idea will be important for Yahweh's new creation, see chapter 5) As I noted in chapter 1, R. Lack has proposed that 40:12-31 functions as a kind of semantic reserve for the first half of

the book. This part of Deutero-Isaiah is concerned with the language of making and creation.³³

B. Yahweh's Cosmogonic Activities: Isaiah 41-55.

In all, there are seven texts to be considered in section B. Four of them are participial constructions which describe Yahweh's cosmogonic activities: 42:5; 44:24; 45:18; 51:13. These constructions sometimes comprise only participles and sometimes consist of participles paralleled with either suffix-conjugation or prefix-conjugation verb forms. In addition, there are two descriptions of cosmogony which employ only suffix conjugation verb forms (45:12; 48:13). There is also one verse, 51:16, which uniquely uses infinitives to describe Yahweh's cosmogonic activity. The descriptions (whatever their forms) exhibit various combinations of five creation verbs: *ברא*, *עשה*, *נטה*, *יצר*, *רקע*.³⁴ All of these references have the *שמים* and the *ארץ* as their object (the basic information given in the texts).³⁵ Each reference then provides its own unique interpretation of the event through the inclusion of extra details or through its involvement in its poetical context. The

³³ *Symbolique*, 87. Lack lists the relevant vocabulary under several headings. He broadens the scope of creation language to a degree which I will not follow. However, his work is useful in providing an excellent summary of relevant vocabulary. Interestingly, Lack includes words like *חורר*, *חור*, and some of the nouns which describe the physical geography of the earth (*גבעות*, *הרים*). These are created in 40:12, but not actually described in quite the same manner in chapters 41-55 (see section E of chapter 5). In addition, Lack also includes some verbs which appear often in the ensuing chapters, such as *שמע*, *בין*, *ידע* and *נגד*. While these certainly appear in the opening poem, I would not describe them as verbs of creation.

³⁴ A sixth verb, *סד*, will also be mentioned briefly. Stuhlmueller provides excellent statistical information on these verbs (*Creative Redemption*, 209-229, 268-71). He also studies *כון* and *פעל* (219-20, 225-27). I have not included *פעל* in my discussion of cosmogony. I do not agree that the verb is used to refer to creation (see footnote 71). There is only one attestation of *כון* (45:18). *ברא* is generally agreed by scholars to be a verb which became important and was heavily used doctrinally during the time of the exile, specifically to describe creation. The majority of the occurrences of the verb are found in Deutero-Isaiah. *ברא* is employed three times in a cosmogonic context (40:28?; 42:5; 45:18) and twice with reference to the creation of Jacob/Israel (i.e., the people): 43:1; 43:15. Isa 45:7 (2x) is anomalous in its objects of *ברא* and will be considered in chapter 5.

³⁵ G.J. Wenham observes that the use of both terms, "heavens" and "earth" represents the totality of creation (*Genesis 1-15*, [WBC 1; Waco, TX, Word Books, 1987] 15). See also J. Trublet, "Le motif de la création dans les Psaumes," *Foi et Vie* 138/5 (1988) 25. This is generally called a "merism."

references to cosmogony will be considered in order of appearance in Deutero-Isaiah.

A significant number of the descriptions of Yahweh's cosmogonic activity in Isaiah 41-55 are expressed by means of participles.³⁶ I commented above on two instances of participial descriptions in the opening poem (section A). I offered some remarks about the meaning of these forms in their contexts, but observed that it is unwise to assign one specific meaning to this verbal form. As stated, participles are somewhat ambiguous, since their range of meaning is quite wide. The issue of participles is not of course a major interest in this thesis. However, some kind of comment needs to be made on their use here in Deutero-Isaiah. In addition, StuhlmueLLer (as have others) has argued that the participle generally has an active, continuous meaning. This enables him to assert that many of the cosmogonic references, because they use this form, cannot refer to "first creation."³⁷ This interpretation of participles might therefore significantly affect a reading of the descriptions of cosmogony in Deutero-Isaiah. It is thus another reason to consider the meaning of the participial form here.

Scholars for some time have generally agreed that the participle is a kind of combination of the verb and the adjective in biblical Hebrew. Samuel Driver observes that it is used when neither of the two tenses (imperfect, perfect) would be "suitable," that is, where "stress is to be laid on the continuance of the action described."³⁸ He adds that the participle can be used to describe past, present, or future time. Often, present-time meanings simply resemble a present indicative active English verb (e.g., "she sees") (166-8). Gesenius observes that the judgement

³⁶ In addition, some of the descriptions of Yahweh's creation of the people are expressed using participles: 43:1; 44:2; 44:24; 45:11; 51:13; 54:5. These will be considered in chapter 4. (44:24 and 51:13 are combinations of the two. They will be discussed in part in this chapter.)

³⁷ For "first creation," see chapter 1, footnote 29. StuhlmueLLer then interprets these cosmogonic references as indicating Yahweh's ongoing creation, which is essentially Yahweh's redemptive activity.

³⁸ *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and some other Syntactical Questions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1892) 165.

about the period of time to which the participle refers must be "inferred from a particular context."³⁹

The general understanding of participles denoting continuous or ongoing activity has been challenged lately by biblical scholars. For example, P. Wernberg-Møller argues that participles do not always have to denote a person or thing in a continuous state of activity.⁴⁰ Rather, they may denote "the action, or state, or abstract idea, of a certain verb, with no reference to some subject (either person or thing) performing a certain action or being in a certain state" (57). To Wernberg-Møller, this suggests a relationship to the infinitive form of the verb.⁴¹ Alternatively, Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein has challenged the linking of participles to a dual verbal-substantive category, on the grounds that the substantive *qôṭēl* pattern can be distinguished from the *qal* active participle.⁴² He divides the *qôṭēl* nouns into several classes, which show different uses and meanings.⁴³

Bruce Waltke and M. O'Connor present a very thorough study on the semantic and syntactical ranges of the participle.⁴⁴ They observe that the form has four main uses in biblical Hebrew: substantive, adjectival, relative and predicative (613). The authors maintain that the "characterization of the participle as denoting unbroken aspect is true only in the case of the participle's almost purely verbal use as predicative" (614). This would arise in a situation where the participle was part

³⁹ W. Gesenius and E. Kautzsch *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 2nd English edition* (ed., E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon, 1910) 372-79. See p. 373.

⁴⁰ "Observations on the Hebrew Participle," ZAW 71 (1959) 54-5.

⁴¹ The author gives a list of examples of participles to support his proposal. He argues for a relationship to the infinitive form of the verb by studying examples of alternative vocalization within the Masoretic tradition (57). Wernberg-Møller's list of participles is open to question. It is difficult to determine how these differ from what many have called the substantive use of the participle. Need any connection with the infinitive be made at all?

⁴² "Semantic Aspects of the Pattern Qôṭēl," *Hebrew Annual Review* 1 (1977) 155-76.

⁴³ Two of these have particular relevance to the creation participles in Deutero-Isaiah, "class e" and "class f." The former denotes certain professions, and the latter, "a permanent feature of the subject in character or behaviour" (166). This is especially relevant to divine attributes that describe divine activities, which in turn have been turned into epithets. Here, Kedar-Kopfstein excludes *qôṭēl* forms which are used predicatively (e.g. "Yahweh, your creator," Isa 43:1). He puts this down to the ambiguity of participles (174). While the latter is important, I disagree that the author's example shows a predicative function. After the *כֹּהֵן אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה* phrase, it seems attributive, like many other of the participles which we will be discussed below.

⁴⁴ *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 612-31.

of a verbless clause. The authors emphasize that the "participle tends to describe a state of affairs rather than to present a bare event" (614).

Biblical scholarship shows that there is varying opinion on the use and function of the participle in biblical Hebrew. Lately, scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the range of meaning for this form is quite varied and that it does not always have to denote continuous action. I do not intend to decide on one particular meaning for all participles in my discussion of this form. Rather, I simply observe that the form may connote a number of different ideas. On the one hand, one should take seriously the idea that the participle can present ongoing activity. On the other hand, it is important to note that these forms often describe jobs or professions, or attributes (particularly divine attributes), without necessarily describing continuous action.⁴⁵

The meaning of the participle in the Deutero-Isaian descriptions of cosmogony will of course depend on its context (as Gesenius has suggested). When considering individual cases, it might be worthwhile to speculate why the participle was selected and what it might mean in its particular context, as I tried to do with those found in the opening poem (40:22, 28). I concluded there that the participles were a rhetorical or persuasive feature of the poem. They described Yahweh in his role as creator and attempted to present him as larger and more permanent than his creation. These two notions of description and persuasion will be important as I consider the next cosmogonic references.

The first participial reference to cosmogony, 42:5, appears just after the first servant song (42:1-4). It marks an abrupt change of topic which is meant to identify the speaker, Yahweh (v. 6). After the introductory phrase, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, the deity is described as the one who created the heavens (בָּרָא) and who stretched them out (נִטָּו); both participles).⁴⁶ In the second half of this same line the speaker

⁴⁵ One should refrain from restricting statements like Stuhlmüller's that, "in Dt-Is a ptc about creation joins that idea [i.e., creation] as an *aspect* of the other *principal* activity, Israel's imminent redemption from exile (*Creative Redemption*, 49)." Italics Stuhlmüller's.

⁴⁶ Three of the participial descriptions indicate the descriptive nature of the cosmogonic references particularly because they occur after a כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה phrase (42:5; 44:24; 45:18). The phrase is not important in and of itself. However, it seems to signal a kind of introductory formula.

describes Yahweh as the one who spread out the earth (עָרַךְ, participle) and all of its offspring.⁴⁷ In the second line of the verse, the speaker moves away from the simple details of the heavens and the earth to include the offspring אֲנָשִׁים as another object of עָרַךְ. Further, in the third line of the verse, additional information is provided about the people on the earth, presumably the אֲנָשִׁים.

It is said that Yahweh gives breath (רוּחַ) to the people on the earth and spirit (לֵב) to those who walk on it. This choice of detail about breath and spirit is interesting. It might be read along with Yahweh's incomparable לֵב in creation (in the opening poem, 40:13), and the role of Yahweh's breath in the creation of humankind (Gen 2:7).⁴⁸

The next verse, 42:6, presents the contents of Yahweh's speech and is closely related to vv. 1-4 (the servant song) in topic. Yahweh proclaims that he has called the servant (?) in righteousness, given him as a covenant to the people, and has directed him to free prisoners (presumably the exiled) from their captivity. The question arises why the reference to creation might interrupt the topic of the servant and Yahweh's deliverance through him. The series of participles (of the verbs בָּרָא, etc.) in the verse seem to be used descriptively: the audience is still waiting for the content of Yahweh's words, after hearing/reading the כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה. These participles identify who the יְהוָה is, even though he is named. The implication

The participial descriptions which occur after these phrases appear to function as a kind of parenthetical reference which describes Yahweh. An English equivalent would be: "Thus says Yahweh, who makes (who made) the heavens. . ." or, "Thus says Yahweh, maker of the heavens. . ." The description of creation thus seems to modify Yahweh. The contents of Yahweh's actual speech then follow in the text.

⁴⁷ I have used a past tense translation because of the context, which seems most plausibly to be cosmogony. The participles are not paired with prefix or suffix-conjugation forms which might suggest a specific time-reference. Creation of the heavens and earth seems most logically to be a one-time activity (cosmogonic). Compare Watts, who translates using present participles (*Isaiah 34-66*, 111). StuhlmueLLer suggests that because of the close link (in proximity) to a servant song, this text shows movement from Yahweh's concerns with Israel's redemption to the world's redemption—a present or upcoming event (*Creative Redemption*, 206). The servant song is certainly important, but I would still maintain that creation serves here not to modify the redemption (promised in v. 7ff), but to identify the redeemer.

⁴⁸ Compare Isa 40:27, where it is stated that Yahweh has only to blow upon his human creation and it would wither.

is that the creation must somehow further identify the named deity, or possibly, legitimize him in some manner, so that his promises in v. 7ff can be taken seriously.

The participial reference in 44:24 is very similar to 42:5 in its selection of verbs. As in 42:5, all of the verbs which describe creation in this verse are participial. Yahweh stretches out the heavens (נָטָה) and spreads out the earth (רָקַע).⁴⁹ In addition, Yahweh is described as maker of everything (עֹשֶׂה כָּל), and in the first part of the verse, “your redeemer” (גֹּאֲלְךָ) and “your former from the womb” (יִצְרָךְ מִבֶּטֶן). These two participles add a personal address to the audience in their pronominal suffices. Their descriptions are not cosmogonic, but seem connected to another, perhaps present experience of the audience (see chapter 4). This verse is somewhat unusual in the context of the references to be considered in section B. It is actually a combination of a description of Yahweh's cosmogonic creation and his creation of the people (see chapter 4), and furthermore, includes the stray reference to Yahweh's redeeming (גֹּאֲלְךָ).⁵⁰ The verse is therefore used frequently as evidence to support von Rad's (and others') ideas about the subordinate relationship of creation to redemption in Deutero-Isaiah.⁵¹

Like 42:5, 44:24 also follows a אֲנִי יְהוָה phrase. It functions somewhat differently from 42:5, however. V. 24 is actually the first of a series of participles where the deity describes his accomplishments throughout Israel's history (vv. 24-28). The participles thus constitute Yahweh's speech, instead of the speaker's description of Yahweh before his words are revealed, as in 42:5. The creation reference, then, marks the beginning of Yahweh's speech: “I am the Lord, who made all things. . . .” (24). Interestingly, participles are also used throughout the speech to describe Yahweh's actions in history, though not uniquely. Other verbal forms are also used in vv. 25-28.

⁴⁹ כָּרַע is not in this description of Yahweh's activity on the heavens, as it was in 42:5.

⁵⁰ It will be important to speculate what the combination of these creative aspects signifies (see chapter 4).

⁵¹ See von Rad, “Theological Problem,” 58; Stuhlmüller maintains that the “prophet here presents *first* creation as an ongoing work in the *present* redemption of Israel” (*Creative Redemption*, 197). He therefore translates the participles which refer to cosmogony in the present tense.

The presence of the participles to describe cosmogony (when later other forms are used) might cause one to ask questions here about this verb form. Is there something particular being communicated here about creation which requires this form, or which only this form can express? These questions can also pertain to 42:5. At this point, there do not seem to be any tangible answers to them. One can observe that, like 42:5, the participial descriptions of creation seem to identify Yahweh, or describe him to the audience, as do the list of actions which follow in 44:25-28. The deity proclaims, "I am Yahweh. . ." who does all of these things.

It is important to ask how creation fits into this descriptive series. The other actions which Yahweh describes are really a mixture of accomplishments. Isa 44:25 refers to Yahweh's ability to frustrate omens or any tool that humankind uses to attempt to discover information about the divine realm. Yahweh's ability is reminiscent of 40:13-14 which describes his superiority in the creative process. Further in the series, Yahweh directs his "servant" (26), and oversees the actions of Cyrus and the rebuilding of Jerusalem (28).

In this mixture of accomplishments, Yahweh describes his creation first.³² It might be possible that creation is to be seen as a premise on which some of the other statements can be made. As in 42:5, creation can be seen to describe who Yahweh is, perhaps to remind the audience that this God is the legitimate one, the one who created the world (and also the people).³³ The poem then continues in its

³² However, it is interesting that the speaker describes Yahweh as "your redeemer" and "your former from the womb" before any of this.

³³ It is noteworthy that along with the participial descriptions of Yahweh as creator, the deity asks questions like, "who was with me?" (see Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 151, North, *The Second Isaiah*, 143), and asserts that the creative process was performed only by himself. This is similar to the kinds of questions which the deity asks of Job in Job 38:1ff, and yet its implications are contradictory to Prov 8:22ff, where wisdom is present at Yahweh's creation. Yahweh's assertion of his ability and his capability to frustrate omens (26) is a fitting response to the main part of this chapter, a satire on idols (and thus, other gods). There are a number of similar challenges made to these deities by Yahweh in Deutero-Isaiah. The reference to creation may thus be part of Yahweh's assertion of the divine authority over these figures. In section C, I will examine the use of the creation verbs in the idol passages. They seem to be part of a satire. On the one hand humankind makes idols (verbs of creation) which are basically ineffective. On the other hand, Yahweh makes the heavens and the earth and humankind (verbs of creation). I am suggesting that this might be behind the inclusion of the reference to creation here in 44:24. Further, it is clear that Yahweh's challenges to the other gods always involve asking them if they can declare what has happened or what will happen. Vv. 26 and 28 might continue the stab at the other gods, since they affirm Yahweh's ability to pronounce events

descriptions of Yahweh's actions to describe future times. It moves eventually into promises which concern Cyrus, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Once described as creator, Yahweh may be seen as legitimate re-builder.⁵⁴ The reference to creation, then, can be read as an attempt to persuade the audience of Yahweh's legitimacy in his various roles.

Isa 45:12 is the next reference to cosmogony to be considered. Unlike the above references, this one employs only suffix-conjugation verbs and has no participles. Yet, the subject matter is essentially the same as the participial references studied so far. Yahweh claims that he has made the earth (עֲשָׂה) and created (בָּרָא) upon it, and that his hand has stretched out the heavens. The extra detail of the stars is also mentioned here, which was introduced in the opening poem (40:26).⁵⁵ Note that the usual order of the created elements is reversed, and further, that it is Yahweh's hand which is the subject of נִטְוֶה, not Yahweh.

Isa 45:12 appears within the context of a poem (vv. 9-13) where Yahweh uses two metaphors to characterize his personality. The poem employs two woe (וָה) proclamations in vv. 9-10 which are unique in Deutero-Isaiah.⁵⁶ The first half of v. 12 makes the more general statement of woe against someone or something which might strive with its maker. Here, the participle of עֲשָׂה is used, which we have already seen in descriptions of Yahweh. The first metaphor (9b) cries woe against the unlikely situation where an earthenware vessel might question its potter. The second metaphor cries woe against someone who might ask a father what he is begetting, or a mother to what she is giving birth.

which will come true. Thus, I would suggest that this whole series of participles is really a response to the satire on idols in 44:9-20.

⁵⁴ This becomes clear with some of the imagery considered in chapter 5.

⁵⁵ Again, the noun used is אֲרָצָה and not אֶרֶץ.

⁵⁶ The woe proclamations, because they appear only here in Deutero-Isaiah, have caused some to doubt the authenticity of vv. 9-10 (see Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption*, 201). However, if read in the context of vv. 11-13, these verses show that they clearly belong (even if v. 11 begins with a הִנֵּה אֲנִי יְהוָה phrase; Stuhlmüller, 201-2). These verses are the means by which Yahweh's point is made. Stuhlmüller argues that vv. 9-10 present certain steps in Yahweh's history of creation of Israel (202). He then sees the reference in v. 13 as a present creation: Yahweh's care as creator still exists now. This seems a backwards reading of the verses, however.

The woe proclamations are strong statements which may serve here to shock the audience. The situation where clay and children questioning their respective makers seems somewhat ridiculous, and the resulting proclamation, quite severe. However, the main point of the poem comes in vv. 11-12. Yahweh asks, will you (i.e., the audience) ask me, your maker (יָצָא, participle), about what I have created?

The presumption of the audience is just as great as the child or the clay, and just as ludicrous. Yahweh asserts his divine right to have mastery over the creative situation of forming and fashioning.

Yahweh asserts this divine right by referring to past creative actions.⁵⁷ He seems to be responding directly to an implied challenge.⁵⁸ It is noteworthy here that Yahweh includes the creation of עָמָל in his description of his cosmogonic activities.⁵⁹ This is unusual for the references which I have been discussing, but logical in this context. Yahweh has questioned the audience's implied doubts about his children and has used the metaphor of a parent in v. 10. The reference to creation here, then, is used by the deity to provide legitimacy in the current implied challenge. In the same way that clay or a child would not question what has made it, the people have no need to question Yahweh about his current or upcoming actions.⁶⁰

The next reference to Yahweh's creation of the heavens and the earth is found in 45:18. Here, there is no mention of Yahweh stretching out the heavens. Rather, they are created (as in 42:5, which employed בָּרָא as well as נָסַח). Furthermore, Yahweh does not spread out the earth (as in 42:4; 44:24), but makes

⁵⁷ The suffix-conjugation verbs here make sense as references to past activity.

⁵⁸ See P. Miscall, *Isaiah*, who sees a debate in progress (44:1-45:19) (112).

⁵⁹ I would not call 45:12 a combination of a description of cosmogony and of Yahweh's creation of the people (see comments re 44:24, p. 17). The latter use Jacob/Israel or the second person singular suffix pronoun. This verse uses עָמָל which is a noun found in the cosmogonic accounts of creation in Gen 1:1-2:4a. עָמָל is a more general term for humankind.

⁶⁰ Westermann observes that this mention of creation is the "basis of [Yahweh's] lordship of history" (*Isaiah 40-66*, 169). The connection is made by v. 13. If this "lordship of history" refers to Yahweh's current activity, this certainly seems true. Creation provides, in the context of the poem, the reason why Yahweh's lordship should be trusted and accepted.

and forms it (עָשָׂה and יָצַר).⁶¹ This reference to creation shows a combination of different verb forms. Most of the descriptions are participial. However, the last three verbs, which give further information about Yahweh's creation of the earth, are suffix-conjugation verbs. Do these signal a possible time reference for the description in v. 18? A past occurrence would certainly be logical for a cosmogonic event. The suffix conjugation verbs might have been employed to express any "extra" material outside of the stock phrases of creation, and they might be influencing a reading of the participle.

Yahweh's creative abilities appear to be contributing to a discussion in progress.⁶² The context, like 44:24, is idols: In vv. 16-17, the speaker asserts that makers of idols will be put to shame. Yahweh will subsequently challenge the nations and their gods in 45:20. Before the challenge, Yahweh declares himself to be the only God, and makes mention of the veracity of the divine words (18b, 19).⁶³ The speaker introduces the deity in this context as creator. Because they have been placed together, it seems logical that there is some connection being made in this verse between the two ideas of creation and the veracity of Yahweh's words. Does creation (not of chaos) reflect on the deity's words in v. 19? The implication is that, just as Yahweh's creation is not chaotic, so also his words are not chaotic, i.e., they are orderly in the sense of right.⁶⁴

The next creation reference, 48:13, utilizes only suffix-conjugation verbs, as did 45:12. Upon first inspection, the verse appears to be simply identifying the

⁶¹ As we will see in chapter 4, יָצַר most often has the people as its object, not the elements of the world.

⁶² The particle וְ implies this connection. See J. Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66," *The Interpreter's Bible* (vol. 5; New York: Abingdon) 531.

⁶³ As I mentioned earlier, Yahweh's challenge to other gods in Deutero-Isaiah often involves that they establish that they can prophesy accurately what is to come.

⁶⁴ Muilenburg sums up the connection, "what is true of [Yahweh's] creation is true of his revelation" ("Isaiah," 532). Creation in this context, therefore, seems to act as a kind of premise or proof for what comes next in the chapter (v. 19). Stuhlmueller argues the opposite. He believes that Yahweh's true words (v. 19) are proof that his "orderly creation of the universe still manifests itself" (*Creative Redemption*, 155). It seems illogical to me to read the verses in reverse order. However, this reading of Stuhlmueller's corresponds with his evaluation of much of the references to creation in Deutero-Isaiah as present-time events. Past prophecy would thus support the possibility of present (or future) creation.

deity. In v. 12, Yahweh proclaims who he is: the first and the last. V. 13 continues the identification: It was Yahweh's hand which laid the foundations of the earth (יָדוֹ) and spread out (?) the heavens.⁶⁵ The verb יָדוֹ is new to the descriptions of creation at this point. It is only used again elsewhere of cosmogonic events in 51:13, 16.⁶⁶ Note again the subject of the creating is here Yahweh's hand, as in 45:12.⁶⁷ In addition, the elements of creation have been reversed, also as in 45:12. Like the stars in 40:26, the heavens and the earth are said to stand together when Yahweh calls them.

There seems to be a challenge implied in this chapter, to which Yahweh might be responding with this reference to creation. In 48:1, Yahweh calls on the people to hear. The chapter speaks of hearing and seeing what Yahweh has done and will do, specifically in response to the people who seem to be obstinate (5, 7-8). Further, Yahweh announces that what is now being done is done for his glory, for his own name. Gitay points out that chapter 48 is illustrative of the prophet's inability to convince the audience of his point. The tone of the passage is therefore quite harsh.⁶⁸ Vv. 12-15 (into which the creation reference in v. 13 fits) "stresses God's superiority as a means of refuting those who argue that His late revelations are actually due to His lack of control over the present situation."⁶⁹ This is of course reminiscent of the text in 45:12, where Yahweh asserts, by means of elaborate metaphors, that his role as creator means that he should not be questioned in his current activity.

⁶⁵ The verb יָדוֹ has not been used thus far to describe Yahweh's action on the heavens. In fact, this is the only attestation of this meaning in the Hebrew Bible. The verb also exists in Lam 2:22, where it appears to mean "dandle, carry on the palms" (of children; BDB, 381).

⁶⁶ The verb is also used in 44:28 to describe the rebuilding of the temple and in 54:11 with reference to the rebuilding of Zion (not part of the cosmogonic texts). Stuhlmueller observes that the passages in 44:28 and 51:13, 16 are judged "inauthentic," and so he does not include these in his discussion of the verb to refer to creation (*Creative Redemption*, 225, n. 731).

⁶⁷ Here, however, the parallel expression concerning Yahweh's right hand (יְמִינִי) occurs, whereas it did not in 45:12.

⁶⁸ Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 216. Miscall points out the stress which the pronoun "I" adds in vv. 12-13 (*Isaiah*, 116).

⁶⁹ Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 216-17.

The final two cosmogonic descriptions to be considered (51:13, 16) occur as part of the poem found in 51:12-16.⁷⁰ Isa 51:13 employs the standard נָתַן to describe the creation of the heavens. Yahweh says, “you have forgotten Yahweh, your maker (עֲשֵׂהְךָ), who stretched out the heavens and made the earth.” The description of the deity’s action on the earth is unusual. It does not employ קָרַע (seen in 42:5; 44:24), but the verb בָּרַא which we saw in 48:13. Yahweh’s description of himself as “your maker” (עֲשֵׂהְךָ) personalizes this reference and identifies the audience for us. The people’s creation is also included here in the address, making this another “combination” reference like 44:24.

Yahweh has been describing the audience’s present situation. They are afraid (of death) because they realize that they are transient in nature (v. 12). They have forgotten who Yahweh is (i.e., creator), and further, they are frightened of their oppressors (v. 13b; all waw consecutive verbs). Yahweh attempts to persuade the audience in asking, “where is the fury of the oppressor (now?)?” The deity asserts that whoever is presently suffering will be released from this suffering. The audience will not die (v. 14).

Yahweh continues this point in 51:16. This portion of text is unique in the references to cosmogony. Continuing from the assertion that the audience will not die (v. 14), Yahweh provides a few reasons. The first does not refer to cosmogony, but does exhibit Yahweh’s power over the created elements (v. 15).⁷¹ The second reason is that Yahweh has done a number of things, which includes putting words in “your” (i.e., the people’s) mouth, and hiding “you” in the hollow of the divine hand.⁷²

⁷⁰ See Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption*, for a list of authors who comment on the inauthenticity of this passage (14, n 44).

⁷¹ I will consider, in chapter 4, whether the references to the created elements (specifically in the context of them praising Yahweh) should be included in the discussion of references to creation in Deutero-Isaiah.

⁷² Scholars are unsure as to whom this might refer. Is it the people of Israel in general?

At this point, Yahweh makes a reference to stretching out the heavens the heavens, and laying the foundations of the earth (see 51:13).⁷³ The meaning of these infinitive constructs is puzzling. If they are used, as is normal, to denote intention or purpose, it is very difficult to understand the point which Yahweh is making to the audience. Does this suggest that the creation of the heavens and the earth was something which occurred after Yahweh's actions of salvation? In spite of these questions, the function of this reference to creation is the same as it has been in the five previous cases. Creation describes who Yahweh is and presents a reason or premise for why he should be seen as a legitimate source of help. The people will not die because of Yahweh's abilities which are discussed in vv. 15 and 16.

C. The Idol Passages in Deutero-Isaiah: The "Other Gods" and the Creation Verbs.

In my investigation of the cosmogonic references in section B, I occasionally mentioned several of the idol passages. These describe the manufacturing of idols, often in comparison with Yahweh. They utilize some of the same verbs which were used to describe Yahweh's cosmogonic activities. This might be coincidental, however, it is quite probable that the verbs are used to satirize the construction of idols. In this way, these passages might be a covert addition to Deutero-Isaiah's discussion of cosmogony. There are four verbs which are employed: נָסַח, יָצַר, פָּעַל, and רָקַע.⁷⁴ These are found in four units of text: 40:18-19; 43:10; 44:9-20; 46:5-7.

⁷³ The MT suggests emending the text, which reads לִלְבָּשׁ, to plant, instead of the more logical, לִלְבָּשׁ, to stretch out. In all likelihood, this is a plausible correction to make, especially since the usual verb for creative activity on the heavens has been נָסַח to this point. In addition, the idea of planting the heavens does seem peculiar. However, נָסַח, as we will see in chapter 4, is not all that unusual in the context of the creation imagery. Watts asserts that it makes sense (*Isaiah 34-66*, 209).

⁷⁴ The verb פָּעַל has not been used in my discussion of the creation vocabulary in this chapter. Stuhlmüller, however, does include it in his work, especially its occurrences in 41:4; 43:13 (*Creative Redemption*, 219-20). The verb is used only five times in Deutero-Isaiah. With the possible exception of 45:9, 11, I do not consider it to be a creation verb because it does not seem to be used to describe this material (see note 33). I include it in my discussion here primarily because of Stuhlmüller's suggestion.

Isa 40:18 begins with the question, “to whom will you liken God?” The specific way in which the question is phrased adds to the contrast which the question it attempts to make. The noun used for the deity is the generic ⁷⁵לֵאלֹהִים. The speaker also asks a parallel question, “with what likeness (כִּמְצָאָה) will you compare God?”⁷⁶ Both nouns attempt to limit Yahweh to the generic terms used to describe other gods, but he cannot be limited. There is only one creation verb used in this passage: In v. 19, the verb עָקַד describes the process of the idol being overlaid with gold. Yahweh, conversely, is elsewhere described with this verb as he spreads out the earth during creation (42:5; 44:24). The contrast is therefore quite striking. Yahweh’s activities are on a global scale, whereas here in 40:19, this same activity describes the human construction of the idol.

Isa 46:5-7, like 40:18, 25, asks whether Yahweh can be compared with anyone. The question is unusual here in that the objects of comparison does not seem to be the idols themselves, but the people who construct them.⁷⁷ There is only one creation verb used in this passage, עָשָׂה (v. 6), which describes the making of the idol by the goldsmith. By contrast, in some of the participial references, Yahweh is described as making all things (44:24), or as “your maker,” (עֹשֶׂה) i.e., the audience’s (51:13; 45:11). This passage can be compared also with the image of Yahweh creating in the opening poem (40:12) and the depiction of humankind (40:15), though there is a slight difference in some of the lexical material there. In 46:6, the manufacturers of idols weigh out (שָׁקָה; as in 40:12) their silver in scales. The words used in v. 6 for scales are not those selected in 40:12, however, the image is the same. Idols are made, their materials must be measured out. Yahweh, by contrast, measures out the elements in his divine scales, and makes all things.

⁷⁵ North observes that the noun לֵאלֹהִים can be used for any god. Deutero-Isaiah uses it six times for idols: 44:10, 15, 17 (2x); 45:20; 46:6; (*The Second Isaiah*, 85).

⁷⁶ Interestingly, the noun also appears in Gen 1:26 to describe the creation of humankind in Yahweh’s image.

⁷⁷ The Hebrew seems ambiguous. After the questions about comparison in v. 5, the next verse presents those who are wealthy enough to requisition an idol from a goldsmith, instead of the idols themselves, as in 40:19.

In 43:10, Yahweh asserts, "before me no god was formed." The verb used here is **צָרַח** which has been employed on several occasions to describe the deity's creation of the earth, but appears more often to denote his creation of the people. This being the case, the use of the verb here contrasts Yahweh's activities well with the formation of idols or other gods. The implication is that gods are not formed (unless one makes idols). Yahweh did not need to be formed: Yahweh just is.

The final idol passage to be considered is Deutero-Isaiah's most lengthy description of the construction of idols (44:9-20). There are several creation verbs used in this context. The speaker states that all who make (**צָרַח**) idols are nothing (**אִדֹּלָה**).⁷⁸ Further, the speaker asks who might form (**צָרַח**) an idol for no profit (v. 10). The formation is then described in vv. 12ff. First, some kind of working-tool is made (**פָּעַל**), then it (the tool?) is formed with hammers (**צָרַח**), and made (**פָּעַל**) with the worker's strong arm. Next (v. 13), the speaker describes the work of a carpenter, who stretches out (**נָטָה**) a line in order to mark the idol, and then makes (**עָשָׂה**) it with a plane or similar tool, and causes it to resemble (**עָשָׂה**) a human form. The final reference is found in v. 20, where the speaker notes that a deluded mind has led the worker astray. The verb **נָטָה** is used here, which of course often describes Yahweh in his action of stretching out the heavens. In all, this passage is replete with creation verbs, and it is difficult to ignore the contrast they make to Yahweh who forms (**צָרַח**) and makes (**עָשָׂה**) his creation.

The above texts suggest the possibility that the creation verbs, which are used to describe Yahweh's creation of the world and the formation of the people, are employed here in order to ridicule the manufacture of idols. One difficulty with this conclusion arises, however. Whenever Yahweh challenges the other gods, it is never in terms of their creative abilities or activities. Yahweh never asks whether they have created the heavens or the earth, or the people. Instead, the deity summons them and demands that they declare themselves right or legitimate. They

⁷⁸ V. 9. See Isa 45:18.

are asked to declare that they can proclaim what is coming in the future, or that they have been able to make these kinds of correct proclamations in the past.

D. Yahweh's Challenges to his own Creation.

I have observed thus far that references to creation are used to identify Yahweh and to argue for his legitimacy as a reliable source of assistance for the audience. There are two other texts in Deutero-Isaiah's discussion of cosmogony which should be investigated briefly (51:4-6; 54:9-10). These texts present Yahweh's suggestion that what has been divinely created is transient. These, in effect, could be seen to negate all of Yahweh's claims made through the references to creation.⁷⁹

Isa 51:4-6 contrasts Yahweh's salvation with his creation. The subject of these verses is a promise made regarding the imminence of Yahweh's salvation for the people. Yahweh promises that justice will go forth quickly from himself, and that deliverance is near (v. 5). In order to reinforce this point, Yahweh makes a comparison with his creation using a series of similes. The heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants will die like gnats. The meaning of this passage depends to a marked degree on how the particle ׀ is translated. Is Yahweh saying that *even though* the heavens will wear out (etc.), his salvation will not? Or, is he saying *if* (in the unlikely event that this could happen) creation passes away, his salvation will not? The differences are subtle. The first meaning for ׀ concedes that the transience of Yahweh's creation is an accepted eventuality. The second meaning, however, suggests that Yahweh has taken an improbable event as his assurance to the people. It is as if he is saying that they know creation will not wear out. How much more can they be assured that Yahweh's salvation is here to stay forever.

⁷⁹ This idea was suggested but not stated outright in the opening poem (40:12-31). There, the speaker reminds the audience that the nations, like grass, are transient; they wither when Yahweh blows on them. The created world, too, was subject to Yahweh's control (26), but one nevertheless got the impression that Yahweh's heavens and earth were meant to last. The argument was that if Yahweh can create all of this, Yahweh would be in a position to attend to the people who seek divine guidance and help.

The message is stated slightly differently in 54:9-10, but the same ambiguity for עֵי exists. Yahweh speaks of his compassion and his "covenant of peace." Through the use of a simile which refers to Noah, Yahweh promises not to rebuke his people or be angry with them any longer, just as he has sworn not to let the floods wipe out the earth again (Gen 9:11). Following this, a reference to creation points out that *even though* Yahweh's creation may fall away, his חֶסֶד and בְּרִיחַ שְׁלוֹם will not fall away. Or, stated another way, *if* these things should happen (though this is unlikely), Yahweh's חֶסֶד and בְּרִיחַ שְׁלוֹם can be trusted. They are more permanent than Yahweh's permanent creation.

It is difficult to choose how to read these two texts. It is unlikely that Yahweh, identified as creator, would then challenge his identity and assert that his creation would pass away. It is more likely that Yahweh might use the permanence of his creation as an assurance to the people. Muilenburg points out that a similar practice exists in much of the prophetic texts. He cites Jer 31:35-36 and Jer 33:19-20 as examples.⁸⁰ In both of these cases, the word אֵל is used instead of עֵי. This word more often denotes conditions and removes some of the ambiguity that עֵי allowed in Isa 51:4-6 and 54:9-10.⁸¹ In Jeremiah, Yahweh asserts that if in the unlikely event that his job as creator is no longer in effect (if his creation passes away), then so will his salvation. In other words, the permanence of his creation is a guarantee for the permanence of his salvation. It would seem that this is the most logical reading of the Deutero-Isaian passages.

A similar kind of comparison is made by the deity in Isa 49:14-16.⁸² Here, the deity is compared to a mother who would never leave her children. But, says Yahweh, the unthinkable might happen, a mother might abandon her children. Yahweh exhibits this kind of dedication and love for his children, without the unthinkable possibility of abandonment. As in the texts concerning creation, Yahweh here has used something extremely reliable to make his point. The love

⁸⁰ "Isaiah," 638.

⁸¹ Though, BDB observes that אֵל can also mean "surely," so ambiguity is still present all the same (50)

⁸² This passage will be studied in more detail in chapter 4.

and devotion of a mother is permanent, just like Yahweh's creation. But, if on the slim chance that it is not permanent and reliable, Yahweh states that his salvation is.

In sum, I divided the references to cosmogony into several sections for discussion. I dealt first with the five verses (40:12, 21-22, 26, 28) in the opening poem (40:12-31). The references in the poem provided a good way of beginning a discussion of cosmogony in Deutero-Isaiah. Their position at the beginning of the book suggested to me that they might serve as an introduction to the subsequent cosmogonic references. Their content and vocabulary is similar to the references in the rest of the book. In addition, their role in their poetic context provides insight into the ensuing references. This poem showed clearly an argument where Yahweh was presented as creator, an attribute which depicted him as superior to his creation, and therefore legitimated him as one who was in a position to help them.

The seven references which follow the introductory poem are a mixture of verbal forms and presentations of creation (42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 48:13; 51:13; 51:16). They all have in common the stock reference to the creation of the heavens and the earth and use a small number of verbs in various combinations to express this event. Each reference varies its presentation of the creation of these elements by extra details which it adds, or the context in which it presents them. Despite the variance, however, it is clear that the point of these references is not to present a detailed picture of all aspects of Yahweh's creation of the world (such as one might find in Gen 1:1-2:4a). It was necessary to ask, then, what purpose the references to cosmogony fulfill in the book.

Since the poem is clearly developing a point in its depiction of Yahweh, I speculated that it is reasonable that the subsequent references might be doing a similar thing. They all seem to be identifying the deity in some manner or another. That is, the discourse is about Yahweh, who is presented as creator (of cosmogony), but not actually *in* his cosmogonic activity. The text does not stop on the topic of cosmogony to give specific details or present a story. Rather, it moves on from this identification of Yahweh as creator to reveal what Yahweh is doing next or what he

is saying. For example, three of the references which followed a *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה* phrase presented creation parenthetically. Yahweh (who created) says the following. The implication here is that creation somehow describes or legitimates the deity so that his words (and promised actions) can be seen as dependable and true.¹³ This is certainly in keeping with the role of the references to cosmogony in the opening poem. In the same manner, the two references which employed only suffix-conjugation verbs clearly implied some kind of challenge to the deity. Yahweh responds by asserting that as creator, his current plan for the people could be trusted (see especially 45:12).

There were two texts discussed in this chapter which will require some further discussion: 44:24 and 51:13. I called these texts "combination" references, because in addition to Yahweh's cosmogonic activity, they also contained descriptions of Yahweh's creation of the people. This issue will require further comment after I have studied the references to Yahweh's creation of the people in chapter 4.

In addition, I looked at a number of texts which employed the creation verbs to speak of the construction of idols. It is very likely that this language is used here to ridicule the makers of idols. This ridicule forms an underlying theme about idols which should be taken seriously in Deutero-Isaiah. The interesting thing about this satire was that creation is never the means of Yahweh's open challenges to the gods. Rather, creation seems simply to be the tool of Yahweh's ridicule. Perhaps the suggestion of the other gods as creators is so ludicrous that it need not openly be challenged by Yahweh.

Finally, I also considered two texts where it appeared that Yahweh was proclaiming the inevitable passing away of his own creation. This possibility was bewildering in light of all the assertions of Yahweh as creator and the attempts to legitimate him through this role. Upon closer inspection, I saw instead that these texts might not speak so much of the inevitable transience of Yahweh's creation, but use it rather as the only means to compare the permanence of the deity's salvation.

¹³ See, for example, 45:18, where Yahweh uses creation to assert that his words are true.

The comparison of Yahweh's dependability to a mother's love in 49:14-18 was particularly instructive here.

In chapter 1, I suggested the organization of Deutero-Isaiah's descriptions of creation into three groups. This chapter on cosmogony discusses the first group. Yahweh has created the heavens and the earth. This identifies and legitimates him. We will see that his present relationship to the people is also creative (chapter 4). Some of the verbs used in these references are also used to describe Yahweh's close connection with Israel. In addition, some of the ideas which we saw in the opening poem will also depict Yahweh's upcoming activity (chapter 5).

CHAPTER IV

THE DESCRIPTIONS OF YAHWEH'S CREATION OF THE PEOPLE

I have been organizing the descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah into three groups for discussion. In chapter 3, I considered the first of these groups, the cosmogonic references. I observed that they employed five creation verbs in order to describe Yahweh. The next group of references show a close lexical connection to these because they use three of the five creation verbs. This next group comprises a series of brief statements which depict the formation of the people, specifically the nation of Israel.¹ Like the cosmogonic references, they also seem to be stock phrases with minor variations on the information given about Yahweh's creative activity.

The descriptions of Yahweh creating the people employ the verbs בָּרָא, צָרַ, and עָשָׂה.² There is a particular emphasis on the verb צָרַ. Nine texts will be considered in this section: 43:1, 7, 15, 21; 44:2, 24; 45:11; 51:13; 54:5. These vary in degrees of detail. Some, for example, (45:11; 51:13; 54:5) merely call Yahweh "your maker" (עֹשֶׂה) and offer little else in the way of description of Yahweh's creative activity. As in the references to cosmogony, these descriptions mostly utilize participial constructions. There are three references, however, which employ only suffix-conjugation verb forms (43:7, 21; 43:21). All references to Yahweh's creation of the people, no matter what verb form, seem to be commenting on a particular relationship which the deity has with Israel.

The first two descriptions, 43:1 and 7, form the frame of a poem (vv. 1-7). V. 1 is a participial construction which describes Yahweh as "your creator" (בָּרָא)

¹ Unlike 45:12 which presents the creation of אֶתְּ, this new creation names the people specifically as Jacob or Israel (or "you," by means of a second person singular suffix pronoun).

² עָרַךְ and נָטַח are irrelevant here because the subject matter has changed. It would be illogical to describe Yahweh as stretching or pounding out a people.

and "your fashioner" (צַר).³ The audience is addressed as "Jacob" and "Israel," and thus the nation must be the subject of the 2nd person singular pronouns which are added on to the descriptions. The two participles are followed by two suffix-conjugation verbs which also refer to the deity. Through these verb forms, Yahweh tells the audience not to fear because he has redeemed them and called them by name.⁴

Isa 43:7 basically reiterates v. 1, only it adds עֲשֵׂה to בָּרָא and reverses the selection of verb forms. Creation is here the subject matter of the suffix-conjugation verbs. V. 7 differs from v. 1 in that it does not directly address the nation, but refers to it through the word כֹּל. The calling of Israel is expressed by means of a participial form. Note here that the name by which Yahweh calls is his own, not Israel's. The reference to creation in this verse states the purpose of Yahweh's activity: his creation of the people was for his own glory.

Do the verb forms which are employed provide any additional information about these two references? The alternation of verb forms between vv. 1 and 7 makes any judgement about time referents dangerous. It could be that the calling in v. 1 (suffix conjugation) refers to the nation's beginning, and the calling in v. 7 (prefix-conjugation) to its being called back from exile, a future event (see v. 6). If this is the case, however, it is still unclear why the creation of the people would be described in one verse with participles, and in another by means of suffix-conjugation verbs.

Isa 43:1-7 can be described as a kind of love poem from Yahweh. The contents of the poem are an exhortation to Israel that it not be afraid and a promise to the nation that Yahweh will help them in adverse circumstances. The promises made seem to be referring to the future or at least the present: Yahweh will be with the people as they pass through rivers/fire; Yahweh gives Egypt and Ethiopia as

³ Or, Yahweh "who created you," or "who formed you." Note the presence of the אֲנִי יְהוָה phrase. This is similar to the cosmogonic references which I argued also functioned to describe Yahweh parenthetically.

⁴ The Hebrew reads "by your name," though BHS suggests a change to the noun with a 1st person singular suffix pronoun because of v. 7. Watts observes that this is not necessary (126).

ransom for the people; Yahweh will gather Israel's offspring from all four corners of the earth.⁵ The deity is therefore protector and deliverer. More than this, Yahweh declares love and asserts that the people are precious in his eyes. Yahweh proclaims, "I have called you by name, you are mine" (1b).

The element of naming in this poem (vv. 1-7) is often used to support von Rad's assertions that creation faith is assumed by or subordinate to redemption faith.⁶ Since this has been suggested, and since this is often the way which the language has been studied, it is worth paying special attention to this proposal. I am not convinced that the subordination of creation to redemption is the most appropriate evaluation of the creation material in this text. True, the main emphasis of the poem is not creation. However, references to creation do frame the seven verses, which suggests that they are important. Asking how they relate to redemption may well obscure the discovery of their useful purpose in the poem.

The structure of the poem does not seem to support the proposed subordination of creation to redemption. V. 1 juxtaposes two different elements, Yahweh's creation and his calling of the people. Creation acts in a descriptive or parenthetical manner. Yahweh, (who created) says the following: Do not fear, because I have redeemed you, I have called you. Vv. 2-6 describe Yahweh's promise and v. 7 reiterates the calling and the creation: I have called you who have been created. In v. 1, the verbs *קרא* and *גאל* do not seem to be presented as a parallel expression of *יצר* and *ברא*. Rather the latter modify the *אמר יהוה* phrase, and the former the *אל־יִירָא*. The redeeming and the calling are reasons for not fearing. Creation seems to identify who Yahweh is in relationship to the people. Creation in v. 7 reiterates this relationship. It is my feeling that to call creation subordinate to

⁵ The verbs used in the poem are all prefix-conjugation which likely imply future activity, with the exception of *נָתַן* in v. 3b.

⁶ See for example, von Rad, "Theological Problem," 57-58, and Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption*, 113-14. Stuhlmüller argues that creation does not enter the *Begründung* of the oracle of salvation, and therefore "is a part neither of the basis why Israel need not fear nor the reason why Yahweh will intervene to save them" (113). Rather, it summarizes the "redemptive actions of Yahweh" (114). See also Rendtorff, "Die theologische Stellung," 7-8, 9.

redemption clouds its useful purpose here. Yahweh's actions of creating legitimate him as one who will continue to care for his creation and now help it (vv. 2-6).

The next description (43:15) is a brief reference to Yahweh who calls himself the creator of Israel (בָּרָא, participle). The verse is the final comment in Yahweh's speech in 43:14-15.⁷ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל phrase introduces Yahweh not as creator (as we have so far been seeing), but as redeemer and the holy one of Israel (v. 14). Yahweh promises that Babylon will be defeated, and then seems to sum up his utterance with a statement about who he is, creator, "your holy one" and king. The two-part identification as "your redeemer" in v. 14 and as Israel's creator in v. 15 frames the promise concerning Babylon. Both identifications comment on the deity's relationship to Israel.

The next description of Yahweh's creation of the people, 43:21, is part of the deity's speech in 43:16-21. It is a brief reference which employs a suffix-conjugation verb form of יָצַר. Among other titles, Yahweh calls himself "your fashioner." The reference to creation comes at the end of Yahweh's announcement concerning a new thing which he is doing.⁸ Yahweh refers to his making a way in the wilderness and the provision of water for the chosen people (20).⁹ These people are then described as those whom the deity formed for himself so that they might declare his praise.¹⁰ We have seen the creation of the people for Yahweh's glory in 43:7.¹¹ One can only speculate as to why the suffix-conjugation verb form is used here, instead of a participle. Is it meant to place the action definitely in the past, or

⁷ Muilenburg splits up 43:14ff as follows: 14-15; 16-17; 18-19; 20-21 ("Isaiah," 491) These are part of a series of seven strophes (which continue to 44:5). I have split the text up according to the sense of the passage and the אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל statements, which seem to begin new proclamations.

⁸ The יָצַר is new to the descriptions of Yahweh's creation thus far. It will be considered in further detail in chapter 5.

⁹ The description of the "people whom I have chosen" also appears in 44:2. Stuhlmueller observes that both of these texts depict the only place in Deutero-Isaiah where election is combined with creation (124). Some of the language used to describe Yahweh's actions regarding the new things will be important in chapter 5.

¹⁰ Stuhlmueller comments that this text alludes to the formation of the people at the time of the exodus. However, it "principally and directly intends the new formation resulting from the new exodus" (69).

¹¹ Yahweh's creation giving him praise will also figure into chapter 5.

is it used simply for the sake of variety?¹² The description seems to be of the people, not of the deity, as in 43:7, which also used suffix-conjugation verb forms. It might be that the description of the people prefers this form over the participle.

The next reference, 44:2, reflects a circumstance similar to 43:1. Yahweh is again depicted as the audience's creator, only here the verbs are slightly different from 43:1. Yahweh is described by means of participles as עֹשֶׂה and יִצְרֶךָ מִבֶּטֶן.¹³ Here, the audience is addressed as "Jacob, my servant," which is paralleled with the rare "*Jeshurun*," whom I have chosen.¹⁴ Yahweh's first words to the people are אֶל־תִּירָא. The reason for the exhortation not to fear is similar to 43:1: Yahweh will act now on behalf of the people (See 43:2-6), though calling and redeeming are not actually expressed as the reasons that the people should not fear, as in 43:1.¹⁵ The prefix-conjugation of עֹזֵר is used to express Yahweh's upcoming help. In 43:1, Yahweh was going to gather the people from the places where they had been scattered. In 44:3, Yahweh describes this deliverance in terms of a metaphor where the people are depicted as grass. Yahweh will in essence re-create (re-grow) the people just as though they were grass.¹⁶ This image will be important in Yahweh's new creation (see sections B-C in chapter 5).

The employment of the various verb forms does not seem to provide much clear additional information about the reference in 44:2. The verb בָּחַר is here expressed in a suffix-conjugation verb form, while the creation verbs are participial. It might be that Yahweh's choosing of the people is a past event, and his creation and forming are present or ongoing events. However, I would hesitate to read the participles as denoting ongoing activity. The emphasis in the context of the verse

¹² Stuhlmueller observes that 43:21 and 44:2, which show the election of Israel, refer to Israel's past formation (128). It could be, then, that the past reference in v. 20 links the creation in v. 21 to this past activity.

¹³ "Forming from the womb" seems to be much more of a personal and close connection than simply making, or forming. It is reminiscent of texts like Jer 1:5 and Ps 139:14-17, which express the deity's intimate connection with humankind. It also recalls similar texts which use the noun מִבֶּטֶן, to be considered in chapter 5, section D. See 44:24; 49:5

¹⁴ In 44:1 the audience has already been addressed in this manner, only *Jeshurun* has replaced Israel.

¹⁵ There is no עָזַר expressed here after the אֶל־תִּירָא as there was in 43:1

¹⁶ I will discuss this metaphor in more detail in chapter 5.

seems more to be indicative of who Yahweh is and how he relates to the people than what he is actually doing. What he is actually doing appears in v. 3. It is interesting, however, that these two aspects of Yahweh's relationship with the people (choosing and creating) would employ different verb forms. The promise of help is in the prefix-conjugation form. This is logical for the context if Yahweh is promising upcoming help. However, the verb עֲזֹר is in the same contextual position as the verbs of creation. It too seems to describe Yahweh after the כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה phrase.

Following 43:1-7 and 43:15, it is important to ask regarding 44:2 whether there should be a discussion of the relationship between creation and redemption here 44:2.¹⁷ Again, however, it seems that asking this question might cloud the investigation of how creation is really working in this text. Creation has a clear descriptive and parenthetical function. It comes after a כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה phrase and seems again to be identifying the deity and his relationship to the people. Watts describes *Jeshurun* as a term of endearment, which may remind the audience of 43:1.¹⁸ It is this God, thus identified, who will help. I suggest that this identification of Yahweh is needed to legitimate the deity and his promises.

I called the next participial reference (44:24) a combination of descriptions of Yahweh's cosmogonic creation and the creation of the people.¹⁹ The participle of יָצַר is used, with the second person singular pronoun and the added description, מְצַפֵּן, which 44:2 also had. This is not paralleled with another verb of creation as 43:1 and 44:2 were, but with the participle of גָּאֵל. I asked, in my discussion of 44:24 (chapter 3), why the two different kinds of creations (cosmogonic and creation of the people) would be combined here. Furthermore is it then important to

¹⁷ Stuhlmüller explains that 44:1-5 depicts creative redemption as an act. The formation of Israel refers to a present act (125-29, 215). Rendtorff ("Die theologische Stellung,") notes that the confirmation of help and salvation is fortified by this creation reference (9). Moreover, in the introduction of this salvation oracle, the discussion of Yahweh the creator is left behind and assumed by the discussion of salvation. Any connection between the two as separate ideas is ruptured. Instead, the two have merged (9). Calling and creating are interchangeable.

¹⁸ *Isaiah* 34-66, 144.

¹⁹ I have briefly discussed it in light of the latter, in chapter 3.

consider the relationship between creation and redemption because of the participle of *לגאל*?²⁰

I question, again, whether it is really appropriate to talk of the assumption of creation by redemption, or its subordination to redemption. Yahweh's speech is introduced by a *כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* phrase. After this phrase, the identification of the deity as Israel's redeemer and the one who formed the nation from the womb seems to have a parenthetical, descriptive function. Yahweh (who has these roles) then reveals his words: "I am Yahweh who makes all things" (vv. 24b-28). Then follows a list of his accomplishments which describe who Yahweh is. Yahweh's initial creation is the first on the list of his means of identifying himself. Yahweh prefaces his upcoming acts (26b-28) with the presentation of the history of his dealings with the people. This begins with his initial creation. Further, it is a verb of creation (which perhaps recalls the deity's cosmogonic activities) which describes how he relates to the people. To say that creation has been assumed by redemption would therefore seem deceptive. It would appear that it is very important to what is being revealed in 44:24-28.

The remaining three participial descriptions of Yahweh creating the people (45:11; 51:13; 54:5) merely make brief reference to his creative capacity. Isa 45:11 calls Yahweh *יֹצֵר* (his former, i.e., Israel's).²¹ Isa 51:13 and 54:5 call Yahweh "your maker," (*עֹשֶׂה*), as does 44:2. These verses seem to be commenting in their own brief way on the relationship between Yahweh and the people.

Isa 45:11, as I discussed in chapter 3, is the conclusion to a series of similes which remind the people that they must not question Yahweh and his plan for the

²⁰ The "merging" of the two themes, to which Rendtorff referred (re 44:2; see footnote 17) is even clearer here. He argues that creation and redemption are so linked that they are interchangeable (9). Stuhlmüller cites this as one of the passages which "explicitly introduces the idea of *first cosmic* creation and assigns it a role in the redemption of Israel or the universe" (*Creative Redemption*, 196). Stuhlmüller translates all participles as present tense because he reasons that the prophet is placing first creation within the context of Israel's present redemption. The forming in the womb and the redeeming thus colour how the author looks at creation here. Muilenburg observes that redemption dominates the poem (44:24-45:15) and creation provides "an adequate context for it" ("Isaiah," 517).

²¹ See Isa 44:24, a combination of a reference to Yahweh's creation of the people and cosmogony. Here, Israel is described as "your redeemer."

nation. This would be as inconceivable as a lump of clay questioning the potter. The mention of the creation of the people is incidental. It occurs after a יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ phrase and is paralleled with the description קִדְּוֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל. It seems connected here to the first question which Yahweh asks, “will you question me about my children?” (11b). Yahweh would logically describe himself as the maker of his children.

Isa 51:13 comments on the fact that the people have forgotten Yahweh who has made them. They are afraid as a result of their forgetfulness. This verse, as we saw in chapter 3, is also a combination of descriptions of Yahweh's cosmogonic activities and his creation of the people. The identification of Yahweh as “your maker” directly states to the audience who the deity is and how they are related to the one whom they have forgotten. “Your maker” is at the same time depicted as the one who created the heavens and the earth. It makes sense that these two descriptions might occur together. Yahweh created the earth and the people. The deity who is responsible for the beginnings of Israel is the logical and legitimate one who can and will promise the nation's safety.

Isa 54:5 describes Yahweh's relationship to the nation which is here personified as a woman. The woman is exhorted to sing in 54:1, for she has been barren, but will now have many children. Yahweh (יְהוָה) is then described as “your husband.”²² The personal relationship between Yahweh and the people is expressed a little more intimately here. Yahweh is the husband of Israel, and the father of her children.²³

²² The idea is very similar to that seen in Hosea 2, where Israel is described as an adulterous wife who is sent away because of her indiscretions.

²³ Stuhlmueller observes that Isa 54:5 reveals Yahweh as kinsman of Israel who redeems the nation through becoming her husband and fathering her children (*Creative Redemption*, 115-122). This is an interesting proposition. One would want to ask how the deity who is described as יְהוָה, the maker of the people, can also be its kinsman. Von Rad notes that this text is indicative of the “complete absorption” of creation by redemption (“Theological Problem,” 58). I am uneasy about this evaluation, however, since the verse describes the deity in six different ways. The use of the verb בָּרָא certainly describes redemption, as does, possibly, the noun יִשְׁעָא. However, the other three descriptions (excluding creation) do not seem concerned with redemption. It seems inappropriate to lump creation in with the language of redemption when it could simply be a general description, one out of six various kinds, of the deity.

In sum, I have observed that the descriptions of Yahweh's creation of the people, like the cosmogonic references, resemble stock phrases that vary little in the information which they provide about Yahweh's creation. Furthermore, they utilize three of the five verbs which are employed in the cosmogonic references. These verbs also appear mainly in participial form, and seem to identify Yahweh. As I found in chapter 3, it was difficult to discover how the participles might be functioning and whether, specifically, they were contributing to the meaning of the references.

The descriptions of Yahweh's creation of the people describe the deity's relationship with Israel. As I pointed out in the various references, this relationship is described in various ways. Sometimes it is portrayed with an historical detail, or a statement that Yahweh has chosen, called, or redeemed the nation. These are all important facets of how the deity relates to his people. What, then, might be the significance of describing Yahweh as the creator of the people? The references to creation are noteworthy because of their lexical similarities with the cosmogonic descriptions. It is evident that they recall these descriptions in using the same language. Therefore, part of the significance of understanding Yahweh as creator of the people must be the recognition that he is the same one who created the world.²⁴

The references to Yahweh's creation of the people move the discussion easily into Yahweh's new creation, the subject of my next chapter. I have observed so far that descriptions of Yahweh in his various creative capacities serve to identify him and legitimate what he is about to say and do. The description of Yahweh as creator, however, still promotes more discussion. If Deutero-Isaiah is speaking to the present situation of the exiled people, it follows that the next question to ask of the creation references considered so far is how they are relevant to the audience now. This becomes evident in the description of Yahweh's new creation.

²⁴ This is expressed succinctly in the two combination references in 44:24 and 51:13.

CHAPTER V

THE DESCRIPTIONS OF YAHWEH'S NEW CREATION

In the last two chapters, I have been studying two groups of references which describe Yahweh's creative activity (cosmogonic descriptions, references to Yahweh's creation of the people). I have concentrated on the creation verbs which are used in both groups, and have observed that these establish a lexical connection between them. This chapter will consider Yahweh's new creation, which is material that relates Yahweh's present (or future) actions on behalf of the people.¹ The material included in this group is much more varied than that in the previous two groups. As a result, the clear lexical connection through verbs, which was visible between the first two groups of references, is more tenuous here. There are only five applicable texts. Three of them are participial descriptions which use the verbs to depict Yahweh's creation of some rather unusual objects (45:7; 48:7; 54:16). These objects are unlike anything we have seen so far, and they do not really seem to be all that creative in design. The other two references (41:17-20; 43:19-21) are part of a large group of images which describe Yahweh's new creation using agricultural imagery.

The majority of the descriptions of Yahweh's new creation can be connected to the two texts which involve agricultural imagery. Some of these portray Yahweh irrigating the land and making it productive again: Yahweh re-plants the land. Other references depict Yahweh re-peopling the land, sometimes through his planting activities and sometimes in the suggestion that the deity is a woman who gives birth to her children. In addition, there are also references to new creation which may be seen as further extensions of this imagery. There are two basic

¹ I would not call of the present or future actions which Yahweh is doing creation. There are other sets of imagery which are also being employed to express Yahweh's activity on behalf of the people (e.g., exodus, בְּרִאשִׁית language). Though these are often found mixed in with creation language, I maintain they are not referring to creation in and of themselves. This thesis, however, is not the place to discuss this relationship.

themes here: the exhortation of the created elements to praise Yahweh (related to the praise which results from Yahweh's creation in the other descriptions) and the creative word of Yahweh.

A. Yahweh's New Creation and the Creation Verbs.

The specific texts to be considered are 45:7 (the creation of אֹר and חֹשֶׁךְ, יָרֵעַ and שְׁלֹמֹם), 48:7 (the creation of the תְּהִיָּה) and 54:16 (the creation of the תְּהִיָּה and the מִשְׁחִיָּה). In light of the other references to creation which have been considered in chapters 3 and 4, these do not seem to fit comfortably into the general picture. Two of these references show the creation of destructive elements and threaten destruction by Yahweh (45:7; 54:16). The third, 48:7, introduces a new object, the new things, which will be relevant to other references to Yahweh's new creation (section B).

The first reference, 45:7, shows Yahweh's creation of four elements which appear in two word pairs, אֹר and חֹשֶׁךְ, יָרֵעַ and שְׁלֹמֹם. This verse uses participles of three of the five creation verbs (עָשָׂה, יָצַר, בָּרָא). V. 7 is part of a promise to Cyrus (vv. 1-7), and actually has quite an unusual presence in its context. The promise asserts that Yahweh has chosen Cyrus and will prepare the way for him so that he may subdue his enemies (on behalf of Israel). The poem contains two clauses which employ the conjunction לְמַעַן (3b, 6a). The reason for Yahweh's actions is expressed through these conjunctions which denote result.² The result of Yahweh's actions is that people will recognize who he is and what he has done. In v. 6, this recognition means that people will understand that Yahweh is the only god and furthermore, the one responsible for what happens through Cyrus. While appearing odd upon first glance, v. 7 in this context continues the identification of the deity by stating what he does.

² V. 3b shows that the results of Yahweh's actions will be that people will know that Yahweh has called "you" (the people of Israel) by name. V. 6 proclaims that people will know that Yahweh is the only God—there is no other. V. 4b utilizes the same word, which is here a preposition. It refers to Jacob and Israel, whom Yahweh names, though they do not know it. The implication is that, because of Yahweh's actions, these people who do not know who names them, will know Yahweh. This identification is expressed clearly in v. 5.

The chosen means of identification for the deity is creation. This is in keeping with many of the references considered in chapters 3 and 4. However, the objects of creation are unique in this verse. Yahweh forms אֱוֶר and עֲלֵי , and לְשֹׁלֶם , as opposed to the expected heavens and earth, or even the people, which might be a logical choice for this passage. It is difficult to determine how these objects of creation fit into this poem. There is a reference to darkness earlier in v. 3. If Yahweh gives Cyrus the treasures of darkness, it follows that Yahweh has control over this realm, and even is logically its creator. The עֲלֵי might be a reference to Cyrus' impending destruction, and the לְשֹׁלֶם to the peace which would ensue for Yahweh's people.

Whatever the case, it is clear that עֲלֵי especially is an unusual object of creation for Yahweh because of its negative quality. Though in its context it might seem positive, the noun also suggests that perhaps all of Yahweh's creation is not good or beneficial. Certainly, if עֲלֵי is relevant to what Cyrus is doing, it might be that Yahweh's imminent creative activities are destructive (see vv. 1-2). This idea will be important in the next reference, 54:16, and in the rest of this chapter (see sections B and C).

In Isa. 54:16 Yahweh's creation of the artisan (שֹׁרֵט) and the destroyer (מַשְׁחֵט) is announced. The verse seems to be a part of the larger context of vv. 15-17, though it is extremely relevant to the entire chapter and need not be separated from it. The whole chapter speaks to Yahweh's promise of renewal of the people. This is expressed in varied ways: a promise of children to the barren woman, Israel (1-6); a comparison with the Noahic promise (9-10); a pledge of great wealth (11-12). Within vv. 15-17, the promise is re-iterated, yet in a slightly different fashion. The verses mention the enemies of the people and promise that Yahweh will not allow them to succeed. The deity asserts that these aggressors are not part of the divine plan. In addition, Yahweh will empower the people so that they may overcome their enemies. Such a promise is not unusual in the context of the Hebrew Bible, but it is uniquely expressed here in Isa 54:16 using a verb of creation

(ברא, suffix conjugation). Interestingly, the actions of the שרש and משהיה are described using participial forms, rather than Yahweh's creating, which has been the case so far in the references in chapters 3 and 4.

Yahweh's promised actions and his weapons of destruction, the שרש and משהיה, clearly portray a deity who has destructive tendencies and abilities. V. 15 brings the destruction and creation into one field, allowing the reading of destruction as creation. This is similar to 45:7, which showed at least one negative object of creation that clearly seemed to be presented for the common good. Again, here, Yahweh's action is not directed at the people, but at their enemies.

These four verses also make an interesting comment on the idol passages considered in chapter 3. We have already seen the noun used here, שרש, to describe those who make idols. I suggest that this passage, too, is part of the satire against idols. Yahweh created the same craftsmen who are making idols to other gods. Here, they are making weapons which are capable of destruction. Ironically, the שרש in this case are contributing to the battle against the enemies of Israel, likely those in other nations where idols are worshipped.

The final reference to be considered in this section is 48:7. This verse announces the current creation (ברא) of the משהיה the new things, uniquely using the passive. This verse appears as part of an address to Israel concerning the nation's redemption by Yahweh (20-22). Yahweh contrasts the former things and the new things. The יהאשנח Yahweh declared and made happen. Because of the obstinacy of the people, however, they did not notice these former deeds.

Isa 48:7 introduces an object of Yahweh's creation which we have not seen so far in the first two groups of references (chapters 3 and 4). At this point, there is little clue as to what these new things might be. All the audience knows is that they are created now, so they must refer to Yahweh's present or imminent activity. The new things will re-appear in some of the other references to Yahweh's new creation (section B). The discussion in Isaiah 48 of the former things and the new things should also be related to Yahweh's challenges to the other gods, which I have previously mentioned briefly. Yahweh always asks the other gods if they were able

to predict the future, and if these predictions have come true. He also asks if the gods are able, now, to predict the future of the people. The implied answer to these challenges is always no. Yahweh declares this right to belong only to himself. I observed earlier that it was interesting that Yahweh's challenges always involved prediction, and never creation. This was unusual, since Yahweh's creation seemed always to function to identify who the deity is. Here, these two elements are brought together: Yahweh's assertions of superiority over the other gods (see vv. 14ff) are combined with his creation.

These three texts, then, represent three of the five situations where the creation verbs are used to describe Yahweh's new creation. Two of them (45:7; 54:16) are quite unusual in that they present negative or destructive aspects of Yahweh's creative activity. This idea will re-appear in other references (see sections B and C). The third text presents the new things, an object not seen in the cosmogonic descriptions and the references to the creation of the people. The new things will be important in the description of Yahweh's new creation which involves agricultural imagery (see section B).

B. Yahweh's Irrigation and Planting of the Land.

Deutero-Isaiah contains a series of descriptions of Yahweh who makes the land ready for planting by irrigating or fertilizing it. The land is then described as replete with wondrous creations which will bear witness to what the deity has done, and cause humankind to praise him.³ There are a number of texts to be considered in this section: 41:17-20; 42:9; 43:19, 20-21; 44:3; 45:8; 51:3; 55:13. In only two of these is Yahweh's irrigation and planting actually called creation (41:12-17; 43:19-21). These two texts together employ three of the five creation verbs which I have been studying so far. Much of the planting imagery to be considered in this section is expressed using the verb פָּמַץ (42:9; 43:19; 45:8; 53:10), which also appears in Gen 2:5, 9; 3:18 in the Yahwist's creation account.

³ This recalls the two descriptions of Yahweh's creation of the people where the deity pronounces that they are created for the his glory or praise (43:7; 43:21).

The first reference to Yahweh's new creative activity (41:17-20) appears after a promise that the people will conquer their enemies (vv. 11-16). In v. 17, Yahweh appears to change the topic.⁴ He suddenly identifies the poor and the needy as a group who will have the benefit of his deliverance. Likely, the poor and needy refer to Israel on the return journey home.⁵ The group will be answered by Yahweh when it seeks water.⁶

The next two verses seem confusing in light of this provision of water for the thirsty. They explain that Yahweh will set trees in the midst of his creation.⁷ Though this might be a logical outcome of irrigating the land, one might wonder what this has to do with satisfying the thirst of the poor and the needy. On first glance, the verses seem little related. They serve here, however, to show the real outcome of Yahweh's activity. It is not so much the point that Yahweh satisfies thirst, but more that his actions, whatever they may be, will show who he is and cause people to see and praise his power. A similar result of Yahweh's actions has been seen before (43:7). Yahweh's creative activity is then summed up by two suffix conjugation verbs, *עָשָׂה* and *בָּרָא*.

The next reference, 43:19-21, is quite similar to 41:17-20. Yahweh declares that he is doing a new thing (as we saw in 48:7; see section A). A way is being provided in the wilderness and rivers are being formed there.⁸ The verbs used here

⁴ The change in topic is not as odd as one might think. Upon closer inspection it seems that the destruction of the mountains and hills by the people (vv. 15-16) is a contrast to the creation of rivers and springs of water in the ensuing verses. As will be apparent, all of this re-arranging of geographical furniture will contribute to new creation.

⁵ See J.D. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 107 and C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 80.

⁶ The text may be contrasted with the journey through the wilderness and the provision of water at Massah and Meribah (Exod 17:1-7). The people were taken care of by Yahweh when they were thirsty, in the miraculous production of water out of a rock (see 48:21). The supplying of water here is even more miraculous since it involves the creation of geographical features. Stuhlmueller reminds us of the exodus imagery in this passage. He calls this a reference to the "new exodus." The way home embodies what creative redemption is all about (*Creative Redemption*, 73).

⁷ North points out that Yahweh does not plant (*עָרַב*) trees, but places (*נָטַע*) them there, apparently fully grown (*The Second Isaiah*, 102).

⁸ Here, it is conceivable that the participle of *עָשָׂה* (19a) denotes imminent action. The forms which follow are prefix-conjugations, which suggest future or present action. The exception is the verb *נָתַן* in 20b which refers to the giving of water in the desert (suffix-conjugation). Watts observes that elsewhere this is attested as a prefix-conjugation verb (*Isaiah 34-66*, 128). However, it is not problematic if the verb represents a past action.

are עֲשֶׂה and בָּרָא. The reason for this activity, ostensibly, is to provide water for the people (לְהַשְׁקוֹת עַמִּי בְּחַיִּירִי). The wild beasts praise Yahweh because he does this. Yahweh's בְּחַיִּירִי, as we saw in chapter 4, are described as the people whom "I formed for myself."⁹ In the second half of the verse, the result is made clear: הָהֵלְחִי יִסְפְּרוּ. Yahweh does these things, again, as in 41:12-17, so that the people will offer praise.

Other examples in Deutero-Isaiah which present the changing of wilderness to fertile land may be mentioned briefly. These do not employ the creation verbs, but are nevertheless concerned with the same two themes as we saw in 41:12-17 and 43:19-21: the changing of the dry ground and praise as an outcome of Yahweh's creative activity. Isa 44:3 explains that Yahweh will pour water on the ground, here itself described as thirsty, rather than the people.¹⁰ Isa 51:3 explains that Yahweh will rescue Zion and make her wilderness like Eden. The result of Yahweh's comforting of Zion is that joy and gladness, thanksgiving and song, will be found there. Nothing else is said of the lushness or fecundity of the garden. This same exuberance over the created natural elements is seen in 55:13, which is the last description of Yahweh's deliverance in Deutero-Isaiah. The mountains and the fields will rejoice along with those who are returning. Most importantly, instead of the dry, threatening briar, the myrtle will spring up. The speaker ends the proclamation with the assertion that this will be like a memorial of what Yahweh has done which will not disappear.¹¹

The description in 43:19 utilizes the verb צִמָּח which may now be brought into the discussion. The verb is not one of the creation verbs that I have been studying so far. However, it does appear in the Yahwist's cosmogonic account in

⁹ Stuhlmüller translates this suffix-conjugation verb, צָרַח in the present tense. He says that "Yahweh's praise. . . consists radically in a manifestation of himself personally as redeemer (*Creative Redemption*, 142).

¹⁰ I will discuss the outcome of this water in detail in section C. The audience is likely expecting the springing up of grass or other foliage which will bear witness to Yahweh's watering.

¹¹ For צָמַח as memorial see North, *The Second Isaiah*, 261. This idea is reminiscent of the rainbow provided by Yahweh after the flood as a sign of his promise to the people (see 54:9; Gen 9:13). See D. M. Gunn, "The Flood in Deutero-Isaiah," 506.

Genesis (2:5, 9; 3:18). For this reason, and for its use in the descriptions of Yahweh's planting activity, I suggest it be considered here. The verb appears in both negative and positive creative aspects in Genesis and other biblical texts. This duality will influence my discussion.

נָמַץ generally connotes the positive aspect of Yahweh's growing of plants after he has created them. In Gen 2:5, 9, one can see that Yahweh causes the rain and therefore the grass to grow. Elsewhere in the biblical text, Pss 104:14 and 147:8 praise Yahweh for his ability to make the grass grow and for the provision of food for humankind and for the animals. Further, Yahweh asks Job rhetorically (38:27) whether he, like Yahweh, is capable of making the ground bring forth grass. This last text intends to impress upon Job the creative power of Yahweh.¹²

The Yahwist's cosmogonic account, however, also uses the verb in a less positive light. Though the texts in Deutero-Isaiah which use נָמַץ are positive, it is important to mention the full range of the verb's meaning here. The negative aspect of the verb (and therefore the potential of Yahweh's power) are important for other references. In Gen 3:18, Yahweh tells הָוָה that one of the results of disobedience is that the ground will bring forth thorns and thistles. Elsewhere (Deut 29:22), Moses explains to the people assembled that their turning away from Yahweh will result in the destruction of the land, one of the signs of which will be that no grass can spring from it any more.¹³

It is true that on occasion, the biblical text shows the verb נָמַץ being used to describe things other than plants (for example, the growing of beards, 2 Sam 10:5). On the whole, however, the connotation of the verb is the sudden appearance of foliage, implying rapid growth, which is sometimes to the betterment of the people and sometimes to their detriment (if it does not occur).¹⁴ The range of the

¹² An interesting image also appears in Ezek 16:7ff, where Israel is described as a young woman whom Yahweh has commanded, "live, spring up like a plant of the field."

¹³ One of the plagues visited on the Egyptians (Ex 10:5) resulted in locusts devouring every tree that springs up in the field. The occasion is one of destruction visited by the deity, but the connotation of נָמַץ here is not necessarily destructive.

¹⁴ See North, *The Second Isaiah*, 125 for meaning of נָמַץ. The verb is also used to describe the heralded appearance of a Davidic figure (Jer 33:15; Ps 132:17; Zech 6:12).

verb's use in the Hebrew Bible is appropriate to the plant imagery we have seen thus far. Yahweh's irrigation and re-planting of the land may remind the audience that once the land was in a destroyed state, requiring repair and re-planting. In addition, the images of the people as grass (easily destroyed when Yahweh blows on them) will also be relevant (see section C).

One reference which employs נָמַץ, 45:8, presents Yahweh's righteousness and salvation metaphorically as a plant. The heavens are invoked that they might provide the rain necessary for agricultural success. The earth is exhorted to open, so that salvation can come up, and righteousness spring up.¹⁵ The inference here is that the land before Yahweh's salvation has been in a dry, infertile state. The verb נָמַץ implies, however, that Yahweh's actions will make the land sprout forth grass (etc.) because of the rain. The stated results of Yahweh's irrigating, however, are righteousness and salvation which will spring up like plants. One might also compare Ps 85:12, which tells of the upcoming salvation of Yahweh: faithfulness will spring up from the ground (נָמַץ) and 58:8, which describes Israel's healing as springing up suddenly (נָמַץ).

Deutero-Isaiah also presents the word of Yahweh through plant imagery. Isa 55:10 describes the cycle of the rain and snow which falls so as to water the ground and make it fertile. It gives rise to plants which in turn provide seeds for the sower to replant. It produces plants so that humankind might make bread and exist off the land. This is in fact an extended simile for Yahweh's word. Like the rain, it will not return to the heavens, but falls on the earth to make it fertile and to make it sprout. The simile reflects well the promise of the next verses (12-13). The joy of

¹⁵ North sees that this text presents the marriage of heaven and earth. The earth is bidden to "open her womb" (*The Second Isaiah*, 152). StuhlmueLLer adopts this idea from North in order to bring 44:3 and 55:10-11 into the discussion. He notes that these passages attribute "life-giving power to the water." StuhlmueLLer observes that this amounts to "re-creation" (*Creative Redemption*, 195). The involvement of the cosmos in this activity in 45:8 allows the conclusion that "Yahweh who orders the universe to participate in creative redemption, must have created the world in the first place" (195-96). This idea roughly addresses the development that I am trying to point out in the language of creation in Deutero-Isaiah.

the exiled peoples' return will be reflected in the land's production of trees like the cypress and the myrtle.¹⁵

In Deutero-Isaiah נִצַּח is used in two instances (42:9; 43:19) to describe the "new things" (see 48:7, section A) which Yahweh is doing.¹⁷ It is through examples like this that it is possible to see the broad range of contexts in which this verb is employed. No other connotation of plants is expressed in these two verses, besides נִצַּח. However, because the verb connotes the quick appearance of plant growth and the growth associated with fertility or fecundity, the new things take on the likeness of plants and become connected with all of Yahweh's planting activities. In 43:19, Yahweh asks the implied audience if they cannot see what is being done. The implication is that it has appeared so suddenly that Yahweh has to say, "there it is, can you see it?"¹⁸ In 42:9 Yahweh asserts that even before the new things spring up, he will tell the people about them.

The texts considered in this section, then, all involve the description of Yahweh irrigating and re-planting the land. One can observe the lexical connections between all of these texts, as well as the links which may be made to those which I discussed in section A. Two texts utilize the creation verbs (41:12-17; 43:19-21); Isa 43:19-21 employs the verb נִצַּח, which is repeated in a number of other texts; two of the נִצַּח texts discuss the new things, which were also present in 48:7. In addition, these texts describe the logical outcome of Yahweh's creation: the praise of the people. The images which describe Yahweh's creation thus become more complex (in comparison to the first two groups of references considered in chapters 3 and 4), and more complexly linked.

¹⁵ This text supports the possibility of creation by Yahweh's word in Deutero-Isaiah. It will be considered along with others in section E.

¹⁷ I have already considered 43:19, above.

¹⁸ 42:9 also involves another issue which I brought up in chapter three: Yahweh makes a claim to being able to foretell what is going to happen in the future. This is often the challenge Yahweh presents to the other gods. In 42:9, Yahweh asserts that before the new things happen, Yahweh will tell the people of them.

C. Yahweh's Re-population via Plant Imagery.

Yahweh's irrigation and re-planting of the land, which I have just discussed, and his creation of the people can be brought together finally through the description of Yahweh's re-population of the nation. There is one text to be examined here, 44:3-4. It is helpful to read these verses with some other Deutero-Isaian texts, as well as some found elsewhere in *Isaiah*. These form a kind of background to the presentation in 44:3-4.

In the introductory poem (40:12-31) we saw that the transitory nature of human life is depicted via plant imagery. The people were compared to grass: Yahweh could blow upon them and they would vanish into the air like stubble (41:26). The image is actually used and developed in greater detail in the prologue of Deutero-Isaiah (40:1-11), where it is presented as the message which the speaker is instructed to cry out ("A voice said cry, and I said, what shall I cry [6]?"). The response from the mysterious voice is that all flesh is grass. Yahweh need only blow on it and it fades and withers (see 40:24). It is implied that the people will pass away. Yahweh's word, however, will stand forever.

The depiction of the people as grass makes sense within the context of the poem in 40:12-31. The contrast is made between people and Yahweh: they are small and inconsequential in comparison with the deity who is large and everlasting. However, the image is a little harder to follow in the prologue. The un-identified voice has just promised that Yahweh's glory will be revealed through his mighty acts. The pronouncement that the people are like grass, which follows, is somewhat abrupt and seems a little incongruous after what appears to be a positive message in vv. 3-5. Is the transitory nature part of Yahweh's plan too? How can this reminder that human nature is frail and fleeting possibly be comforting to people who know this only too well from their recent experiences?¹⁹

In 44:2, after addressing Israel with the term of endearment, *Jeshurun*, Yahweh proclaims that his next act will be to pour water on the thirsty ground and

¹⁹ This is Job's response to Yahweh in 42:2-6.

make streams on the dry ground.²⁰ I concluded with reference to this passage that the audience in all likelihood might expect the assurance of Yahweh's re-fertilization of the land and the springing up of trees which might remind them of Yahweh's wondrous abilities. However, what happens in the ensuing verse is actually quite surprising in light of these expectations: Yahweh doesn't grow plants or trees at all, Yahweh grows people!

Paralleled with Yahweh's promise to pour water on the thirsty ground is the promise to pour his רִיחַ on the audience's offspring. Like the water, this outpouring of Yahweh's רִיחַ will cause new growth: not of plants, but of people. This elaborate metaphor then makes use of two similes to explain further. The descendants will spring up (here נִמָּצ appears, waw consecutive), like grass among waters or like willows by streams. In light of the grass imagery which I have just considered, the comparison to grass in 44:3-4 therefore works two ways. On the one hand, it is a reminder of the people's impermanence and Yahweh's ability to end life abruptly according to some inexplicable divine motive. However, it is also an assertion that this is not what will happen now. The image of rapid, extensive growth which Yahweh can begin and which will spread quickly, reveals Yahweh's new plans for his people.²¹

Other texts in *Isaiah* help to elucidate 44:3-4 further. The רִיחַ of Yahweh which acts as a kind of divine fertilizer is also visible in Isa 32:9-20.²² There, a lament is made for the land which is under threat of destruction. The lament is directed at the women who are told to cover themselves in sackcloth and mourn for the sake of the land. Its harvest will not come any longer, and the soil will yield

²⁰ The word נָמָצ is actually an adjective, meaning a "thirsty one" (Watts, *Isaiah* 34-66, 140). North cautions that it should not be read as referring to the ground since it is masculine and since "all words denoting land are feminine" (*The Second Isaiah*, 133). He suggests that the following context indicates that the thirsty land and dry ground are metaphors for the thirsty people (133).

²¹ The two ways in which this comparison to grass works is also reflected by the verb נִמָּצ. I observed that it connotes the positive activity of Yahweh's planting. However, it also shows the results of the people's disobedience: Yahweh makes the land uninhabitable by causing inedible plants (the thorn and briar) to appear.

²² See also Ps 104:30. Yahweh is said to renew the face of the land with his רִיחַ (here spirit or breath?).

thorns and briars, instead of the rich vines which produce fruit.²³ Vv. 13b and 14 move to bewail the destruction of the actual city, but this is clearly not the focus of the lament: the real loss here is the loss of the fertility and productivity of the land. In v. 15, a turning point occurs with the lament. This destruction prevails until the הַיָּבֵשׁ is poured out. Then, miraculously, the wilderness becomes productive again like an orchard or plantation. Not surprisingly, righteousness and justice are described as being present in the plantations.²⁴

The depiction of Israel using plant imagery is by no means unique to Deutero-Isaiah.²⁵ However, its employment in Deutero-Isaiah is definitely innovative. Combined here are the presentation of the fundamental nature of humankind and the creative power of Yahweh. In addition, in this image resides the promise of Yahweh's new creative acts in re-peopling the land, specifically expressed in 44:3-4.

D. From Yahweh the Farmer to Yahweh the Mother.

Yahweh's re-peopling of the land suggests a connection to another series of images which depict Yahweh as a woman in her procreative or mothering capacity.²⁶ These are possible extensions of the imagery already considered. Tangible lexical links between this material and the aforementioned imagery are difficult to come by. However, it is possible to find certain thematic connections, most notably along the lines of the desolate land and Yahweh's re-peopling of it. For these reasons, and because the imagery of Yahweh as mother is "creative" in the general sense of the word, this imagery will be considered briefly here. There are actually quite a

²³ See 55:13.

²⁴ See Ps 85:12; Isa 45:8. The depiction of the destruction of the land in terms of its foliage and the subsequent re-planting is also well-developed in Isa 34:8-15. It is well contrasted with 35: 1-2, 6b-7.

²⁵ See Isa 5:1-7; Ezek 19:10-14 (see K. Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah*. [JSOTSup 65; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989] 85); Ps 80:9-17; Jer 11:16-17.

²⁶ The woman is certainly a plausible subject for comparison, and there are actually a fair number of texts in Deutero-Isaiah which are applicable. These, however, have often been downplayed by many biblical scholars in the past. It was not really until the work of P. Tribble, (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978]), that these texts became visible in scholarly discussion. Tribble even discusses the noun אִמָּה (11) and its cognates as feminine imagery for the divine (chapter 3).

number of texts which qualify for discussion in this section. The clearest example is the simile in 42:14. It will be clear in a number of places that the imagery of plants and Yahweh as a kind of cosmic gardener is actually quite closely tied to this progenitive and parental imagery of Yahweh.

Isa 42:14 is probably the clearest example of the depiction of Yahweh as mother, but it is also the most textually challenging, because of its poetic context. Here, Yahweh compares himself to a woman in labour. The comparison makes a contrast between Yahweh's previous activity and his imminent actions. Yahweh has been still and restrained for a long time. Now, just like the sudden onset of labour, he will spring into action. What will this action be? Yahweh's first description is gasping and panting (פָּעַף, שָׁעָף), two verbs that are used often in the context of birthing. This seems to be still within the confines of the simile: like a woman in labour, the deity will gasp and pant. The audience then likely expects the depiction of some kind of birth, and is perhaps surprised by what follows.²⁷

Yahweh proclaims: "I will destroy mountains and hills and dry up all of their green plants."²⁸ I will turn all of the rivers into coastlands and dry up all of the pools" (15). This proclamation of future action is troubling. Why will Yahweh now destroy or dry up, when the rest of the relevant plant images which refer to creation promise water to the dry ground and to those who thirst, and plant life that will spring up rapidly?²⁹ The following verse is a little more promising: Yahweh will lead the blind, making the ground on which they walk level and filled with light. This simile in 42:14 is puzzling. What is its place in the context of the creative imagery which I have been discussing so far?

²⁷ According to K. Pfisterer Darr, Muilenburg was the first to suggest the possibility that the imagery here refers to something new which is about to be born. Darr observes that Muilenburg has influenced many with his idea, such as P. Tribble, J.D. Smart, R. N. Whybray, M. Gruber ("Like Warrior, like Woman: Destruction and Deliverance in Isaiah 42:10-17," CBQ 49 [1987] 563).

²⁸ The verb שָׁעָף is used in the first part of this verse for "destroy," however, it also has connotations of "dry up" in other biblical usage (e.g., Gen 8:13; Isa 44:27).

²⁹ Would the audience make the connection between the people and grass (44:3-4), which I have just discussed? This occurs later in the book, after much of the relevant imagery has already been presented. However, perhaps on a second hearing or reading, this might occur to the audience. It is certainly a plausible question to ask: Does this mean that Yahweh will destroy all of the divine creation, and does this negate the promises made that the people will spring up like grass?

K. Pfisterer Darr attempts to elucidate this problematic text by calling attention to the previous verse (13).³⁰ She explains that the intention of the simile is not to show Yahweh in a creative role, through birthing imagery, but is essentially a depiction of the divine sounds which are now occurring. The warrior in v. 13 shouts out loud to intimidate his foes; the woman in v. 14 gasps and pants and cries out. Darr observes that this simile is not used elsewhere of Yahweh, but is used of people. Frequently, it depicts the anguish of the times which prompts people to cry out as if they were women in labour (565-66). Darr is certainly right in calling attention to the imagery of sound which might well go unnoticed in a reading like Muilenburg's or Tribble's, which focuses on the birth of Yahweh's new creation.³¹ However, one would also have to raise questions with Darr's reading.

The questions show concerns about the textual position and juxtaposition of the images. What does a soldier have in common with a woman in labour, except for the sounds they supposedly make? Why place these two together? What is the point which this depiction of sound then makes? Is it relevant to the following verses about Yahweh's destruction and the leading home of the blind? Darr's solution to the problem of the meaning of vv. 13-14 does not seem to be able to clarify this confusing text.

The inclusion of v. 13 in a discussion of v. 14 is certainly helpful. The two sounds together do provide a kind of unity, and also serve to place the somewhat incongruous v. 13 in a particular context, so that it does not float meaninglessly after vv. 10-12. If one looks at vv. 13-16 as a unit, it might be possible to shed some light on these troubling texts.

Warriors make one think of war, and ultimately, destruction. Yahweh-warrior in v. 13 does not actually go to battle or do anything destructive: the intention is all show. However, there is a rather destructive divine activity in the proximity, v. 15. It is plausible that these two verses can be read as having some

³⁰ "Like Warrior, like woman." *CBQ* 49 (1987) 560-71. See p. 562 for a review of scholarly opinion on whether vv. 13 and 14 belong as part of the same poetic unit.

³¹ The sounds are further contrasted when one considers the preceding three verses (10-12): The land and its inhabitants are exhorted to raise their voices in praise of Yahweh.

kind of relationship. Yahweh has certainly been depicted as drying up water before so that the redeemed can return home (along the lines of the exodus motif: 50:2; 51:10). However, the destruction of mountains and hills and of plants has not been used in Deutero-Isaiah elsewhere. It is difficult to read something creative (over something destructive) in this verse.

In the next verse (14), Yahweh compares himself to a woman in labour. The expected result would be the birth of a child. In Yahweh's case, the audience would be disappointed in this expectation, but is greeted by something which is at least "creative" in a loose sense of the word in v. 16. The deity will level the rough ground, and shed light on it, so that the blind may return. As in 41:17-20, it is difficult to know if the group named (there, the poor and needy; here in 42:16, the blind) refers to an actual group of people, or represents Israel, figuratively blind to Yahweh's intentions and creative activities.³² In any event, the result is something positive, which shows the deity's manipulation of the land for a creative purpose.³³

These four verses (13-16), then, seem to be working in a specific relationship that portrays Yahweh's destructive and creative capabilities. This explanation does depend on my reading of vv. 15 and 16 as "destructive" and "creative," respectively, however. Some of the questions I raised with v. 15 still remain (and now occur with v. 13): what place does this destruction have in Yahweh's creative activity on behalf of the people? Why will Yahweh now destroy? One is reminded of the texts considered in section A which depicted Yahweh's creation of destructive objects (45:7; 54:16), and the background to some of the plant imagery. Yahweh has the ability to destroy and to create the people. He is furthermore currently re-planting a destroyed land. More answers may come in the consideration of some of the other comparisons of the deity to a woman in her mothering capacity which appear elsewhere in Deutero-Isaiah.

Though there are clearer comparisons of Yahweh to a mother, the texts 49:19-21 and 54:1-3 are particularly useful at this point in the discussion for their

³² See, for example, 42:18-20.

³³ We have seen this before with 40:4. One could also cite the creation of rivers in the midst of the desert, a creative feat which involves the physical changing of the land for a positive end (41:18)

accompanying references to destroyed land. In both of these texts, it is possible to read Yahweh as an implied mother, who restores the devastation of the land, not by re-creating it, but by re-creating the people who will fill it.

Isa 49:19-21 appears just after a promise to Israel that Yahweh will restore the nation. The builders will overshadow the destroyers. Israel promises that Israel will be able to put on these destroyers as a decorative garment. Then Yahweh proclaims that the destroyed land will be filled again with people. In fact, it will be too small because the growth of the people will be great and rapid. The result of this burst of procreation will be that Zion will ask herself, "who has borne these for me?" The answer to this obviously rhetorical question is of course Yahweh, implied as the one who has given birth to these people (יָלַד).³⁴ Yahweh has replaced the devastation with the new creation of people.

A second text which portrays a similar circumstance is 54:1-3. The "barren one," presumably Zion, is exhorted to burst into singing because she will now bear more children than even a married woman.³⁵ She is exhorted to make her tent bigger to fit all of these people.³⁶ The woman is here described as שְׁוֹמֵמָה, from שָׁמָ, which means to be desolate or devastated (See 49:19). Further, the promise is made that the new creation will people the desolate cities (שָׁמָ).

Both of these texts (49:19-21; 54:1-3) imply that Yahweh has caused the births of the people who are promised to Israel.³⁷ They replace or fill up the land which has been destroyed. These two texts fill out the unit 42:13-16 and the texts

³⁴ The verb is masculine and could imply "begotten," so North, *The Second Isaiah*, 195. However, in the context of the image, the masculine is perhaps being used to supply the answer to the question: Yahweh. North agrees (195).

³⁵ The biblical text often presents the notion that Yahweh controls the wombs of women. They are often barren as a sign of Yahweh's disfavour, and fertile because of Yahweh's answering of their prayers. Often, fertility is considered to be reflective of moral conduct. See E. Fuchs, "The Literary Characterization of Mothers and Sexual Politics," *Semeia* 46 (1989) 151-66. For a different view on this issue, see G. Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God: Biblical Symbols of the Church as Bride and Mother*. (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992) esp. chapter 3, "Symbolism of Salvific Motherhood in the Old Testament."

³⁶ Interestingly, the verb נָדַד is used here. The barren woman clearly represents a nation, and one woman's tent would obviously not fit an entire nation's new children. So, the description of the tent varies accordingly: The curtains must be stretched out (just as Yahweh stretches out the heavens).

³⁷ Isa 48:18-19 clearly depicts the relationship between Israel's behaviour and its offspring. In addition, Isa 66:7-8 also depicts this ability of Yahweh.

considered in section A, which I observed contain both destructive and creative images of Yahweh. Perhaps 42:13-16 refers to the land's past destruction and the destructive abilities of Yahweh, as well as the creative abilities and upcoming actions of the deity.

Several other texts compare Yahweh to a mother-figure (45:9-10; 46:3-4; 49:14-16).³⁸ The first of these, 45:9-10, was discussed in chapter 3 with reference to Yahweh's cosmogonic activities. Yahweh compared his situation to two other circumstances: the potter and the clay, and the mother/father and the child. This second metaphor of the child asking the mother to what she gives birth is relevant here. The implication is that, like the mother (the potter and the father), Yahweh need not be asked about his creation.

Isa 49:14-16 uses the metaphor of a mother and her children to answer Zion's challenge that Yahweh has forgotten the nation. Yahweh asks rhetorically whether a woman can forget her own child and not have compassion on it. The audience's expected answer here would be in the negative. The implication thus far is that Yahweh is this mother, and Israel is like her own child, to which she gave birth.³⁹ However, the second half of the verse goes one step further, so that Yahweh might reinforce this point. Even on the very slim chance that a mother might forget her own child, Yahweh will not. Thus, in 49:14-16, Yahweh is like a mother, but is ultimately not like her, because of the slim chance that she might forget her own child.

Isa 46:3-4 presents one last image to be considered. Yahweh describes Israel in two parallel statements as having been carried (נשא, עמס) from the womb. Tribble reads this as a reference to a midwife, a clear female presence or role in the birth process (38). This idea is of course different from the suggestion that Yahweh actually gives birth or causes birth, though in v. 4 Yahweh does proclaim that he has

³⁸ In addition, on Tribble's suggestion (*Rhetoric*, chapter 2) I will briefly discuss the texts which employ the verb נָשָׂא and related nouns.

³⁹ It could be suggested that the phrase יָצָא מִבֶּטֶן 44:2; 44:24; 44:5), which I discussed in section A also has relevance here. Could the implication be that Yahweh formed Israel from her own womb?

made (עשה). However, the depiction of Yahweh in this role in 46:3-4 can only add to the texts which have been considered so far. Yahweh is present at birth and cares for his creation until it passes away.

It is also helpful to read 46:3-4 in its greater context, 46:1-7. This poem makes a commentary upon the manufacture of idols. Yahweh asks to whom he might be compared (see 40:18, 25).⁴⁰ Vv. 3-4 can be read in contrast to the speech about idols in this poem. Here, idols are carried by those who make them, to be set in their places. Prayers are offered to them, but they cannot answer and cannot save as Yahweh can. By contrast, Yahweh affirms that he carries and he saves his people, the very same people who make idols and attempt to pray to them. This creation text really ridicules the manufacture and worship of idols, then, as did some of the idol passages considered in chapter 3. Yahweh actually makes (or carries in this case) those who make idols.

Trible has suggested some further texts which should be mentioned in the discussion of Yahweh's depiction as a mother. These texts employ the verb חנן or the related nouns, חֲנֻן and חֲמִיל. The latter is used to denote "compassion," or "womb love," as Trible calls it. Yahweh's compassion (noun) is mentioned several times in Deutero-Isaiah (47:6; 54:7), as is his action of having compassion (49:10, 15; 54:8, 10). I have already considered most of these texts elsewhere in this thesis. Though it is important not to overemphasize the verb חנן and the nouns, חֲנֻן and חֲמִיל, one might note that they add to the texts we have already considered. For example, in 49:13, 15, the verb חנן and the noun חֲמִיל might well serve to further Yahweh's depiction as creator, if they recall the system of imagery considered here in section D where Yahweh is depicted as giving birth to her creation.

These texts considered in section D fill out the idea of Yahweh re-peopling the land, which I discussed in section C. The connections, however, are thematic, not lexical, with the possible exception of 45:10. Additionally, the use of חנן might remind one of the identification of Yahweh as יְצֵר מַבְטֵן which we have

⁴⁰ Interestingly, the object of comparison here is not the idols, as it was in 40:18, but the people who make them.

discussed in chapter 4. Important connections which these texts had with those previously considered were the action of Yahweh on the destroyed land. Though 43:14 was the most challenging of these texts in terms of meanings, it actually served to remind us of this aspect of Yahweh's land and his creation upon it.

E. The Creative Word in Deutero-Isaiah.

Isa 55:10-11 compares the word of Yahweh to a plant. Yahweh prepares the ground by causing the rain to fall. Like the seed which sprouts and provides food for humankind, Yahweh declares that his word will go forth from his mouth and "grow something," i.e., have a useful purpose. I considered this text in my discussion of the plant images (section C). As I observed, the verb צמח is used here to describe the rapid springing up of the results of Yahweh's word. It has been suggested by StuhlmueLLer that Deutero-Isaiah as a general theme depicts the creation of Yahweh by means of the word. Because of this suggestion, and because of the imagery in 55:10, I will consider this possibility briefly here. Discussion of this theme will entail looking at StuhlmueLLer's ideas on the subject, some relevant texts in the Hebrew Bible, and some other texts in Deutero-Isaiah which may support the presence of this idea in the book.

StuhlmueLLer explains what he means by creation through the word by examining this concept first in ancient Near Eastern culture and then within the Israelite context. With reference to the former, he cites texts which show the gods creating by their words (commands). With reference to the Israelite context, he compares the Deuteronomic concept of the דְּבַר יְהוָה and the word as it appears in Deutero-Isaiah. StuhlmueLLer's point is to show the importance of this concept in Israelite culture and how it has taken on a new creative connotation in Deutero-Isaiah.

As it appears in Deutero-Isaiah, StuhlmueLLer calls the "doctrine" of the creative word "one of the most salient aspects of Deutero-Isaiah's theology of creative redemption" (169-70). He argues that, like creation in general, the creative word is used to bring out the fuller meaning of redemption in the book (170).

Stuhlmüller begins his examination of this subject with Isa 40:1-11, noting that the connection with the word and new creation is indirect, as it is in the case of most of Deutero-Isaiah's poems on the word (179). His inquiry into this subject includes texts like 40:26 (Yahweh calling out the stars); 41:17-20 (Yahweh answering the people); 43:1-7 (calling Israel by name); and 55:10-11.⁴¹

It seems most useful to begin a discussion of this theme with the Priestly account of creation in Gen 1:1-2:4a.⁴² It seems unlikely to speak of the idea of the creative word without first mentioning this text in Genesis. Creation by means of the word of Yahweh seems to be at its clearest in the Hebrew Bible here. Yahweh creates everything in a series of six days using a series of imperatives. With this understanding, one might look again at creation in Deutero-Isaiah. Are there texts which also support the description of the deity creating through word?

Isa 55:10-11 seems to best explicate this creative aspect of Yahweh. This text does not make an overt statement about creation or identify Yahweh's action as creation. It does, however, express the idea that Yahweh's word goes forth and accomplishes something. Furthermore, when read as part of the plant imagery considered in chapter 4, which I have suggested is creation imagery, it is plausible that this text may be understood as a creation text. To this text may be added some other possibilities in Deutero-Isaiah. These will be mentioned briefly.

Isa 40:26, a text which I considered as part of the opening poem (40:12-31; chapter 3, section A) might also qualify as the creative word of Yahweh. In this text, Yahweh creates the stars (כוכבים), but also calls them by name. One might speculate that this calling is like Yahweh's word in 55:10-11. Yahweh imposes the created order on these stars by calling them into place. Having suggested this passage, it is likely that the texts where Yahweh calls his people by name (e.g., 43:1,

⁴¹ I find Stuhlmüller's examples slightly problematic, since I think that, following him, one could basically include anything which Yahweh says as creation.

⁴² Though Stuhlmüller (*Creative Redemption*) studies creation by word in ancient Near Eastern literature, he does not consider the Genesis text in his chapter. He is therefore not trying to argue that the Deutero-Isaian material is like Yahweh's creation in Genesis. However, in his discussion of ancient Near Eastern literature, Stuhlmüller quotes material which is very similar to the Priestly account of creation. It is therefore odd that Genesis 1:1-2:4a does not appear in his discussion.

7) should also be included in the discussion.⁴³ I have so far been reluctant to call this language creation, however, because it was necessary to differentiate it from the references to creation which came along with it (see chapter 4). I would still maintain that calling and creation are not the same event.

Isa 41:4 and 42:9 might also be included in this discussion. In Isa 41:4, the creation verb *לַעֲשׂוֹת* is used to describe Yahweh's accomplishments, although not in the context of a discussion on creation. The speaker then adds that Yahweh has announced these things from the beginning. In 42:9, (a creation reference; see section B) Yahweh declares that he is able to announce the new things before they spring forth. It might be that these texts could be called the creative word of Yahweh. Note the commentary that these texts make on the passages where Yahweh challenges the idols. If Yahweh's ability to announce is an act of creation, then by implication, the fact that the idols cannot announce successfully means that they have not created. So, in fact, if this were the case, creation is an implied part of Yahweh's challenge to the other gods after all (see chapter 3, section C).

Finally, I consider 44:26b and 44:28. Both of these declare that Jerusalem will be rebuilt as a result of Yahweh's actions. In addition, in v. 28, Yahweh asserts that the foundation of the temple will be laid. This last decree employs the verb *יָדַעַתִּי* which was used twice in the cosmogonic descriptions (48:13; 51:16) to describe the founding of the earth. The question with these texts is whether they should be seen simply as the deity's decrees that this will happen, or whether they are instances of him actually creating. The use of the prefix-conjugation might suggest the former possibility.

In sum, I have been reluctant to call any of the texts which I have considered here indicative of the "doctrine" of the creative word. With the exception of 55:10-11, none of these texts really shows Yahweh creating by his word (as one sees in Gen 1:1-2:4a). At best, these texts might suggest this aspect of Yahweh's creation.

⁴³ See Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption*, 185.

However, I would be reluctant to include them as part of the descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah.⁴⁴

F. Creation Praising Yahweh.

I have observed that one of the themes of the new creation references is that Yahweh's creative activity will cause people to praise him when they see what he has done (41:17-20; 43:19-21; 51:3). There are a few texts in Deutero-Isaiah which exhort the created elements to praise Yahweh, independently of any statements about Yahweh's creative activity. It might be that these two groups of texts are thematically connected. I will discuss the latter briefly.

Isa 42:10-12 is the longest example. Here, several geographical areas are exhorted to praise Yahweh. It is likely that these regions represent the people in them. In each case, the place is paralleled with a reference to the people in it (the desert and its cities; the villages that רָקַע inhabits; the coastlands and those who live in them).⁴⁵ In 42:10-12, there is little in the way to signal a discussion of Yahweh's creative activity, but the poem is immediately preceded by a creation reference (v. 9; see section B). It could be that this exhortation to praise is because Yahweh has created (declared the new things).

Isa 44:23 exhorts the heavens and the earth and the mountains and the forests to break into singing and praise Yahweh. These first two elements may be recognized from the cosmogonic descriptions. The reason given for the exhortation in this text, however, is not Yahweh's creation. On the contrary, it is that Yahweh has redeemed Israel and therefore will be praised. Note the similarity between redemption and creation at this point. Both receive the praise of the people.

Finally, Isa 49:13 refers to several wild animals who will praise Yahweh because of his refurbishment of the desert. This text is not an exhortation, but a portrayal of the results of Yahweh's creative activity (see section B). Note the result

⁴⁴ I would especially be reluctant to include some of Stuhlmüller's examples (40:1-11; 44:27; 41:17) since these seem not to be discussing creation, and if considered such, are taken out of context (see *Creative Redemption*, 177-90).

⁴⁵ The reference to רָקַע here is actually in the Hebrew, "those who go down to the sea."

of the praise of the animals, however. Yahweh declares that his activity has been so that the people will declare his praise (see section B).

In sum, I would not call these three texts creation texts. However, at least two of them (44:23 excluded) do fill out the texts in which I have observed that praise is the desired result of Yahweh's creative activity.

The descriptions of Yahweh's new creation are thus quite varied. I began the discussion with the material which had the closest lexical links to the other aspects of Yahweh's creative activity, considered in chapters 3 and 4. Three of these texts utilized the creation verbs to depict Yahweh's fabrication of some unusual objects. As it turned out, these references were not all that different from the other descriptions of Yahweh's new creation. One presented the creation of the new things, which was picked up in several places in the other new creation material. The other two illustrated that Yahweh's activity can sometimes be destructive. This was picked up in 42:13-16 and was background for the images of Yahweh's re-planting and re-peopling of the land.

Two other references which employed the creation verbs brought the agricultural imagery into the discussion. This involved the portrayal of Yahweh who irrigates and re-plants the land and who plants people there. These texts then suggested the inclusion of those which described Yahweh's re-peopling in terms of his giving birth to his creation.⁴⁶ Other texts were also briefly considered: those which might describe the creative word of Yahweh, and those which exhort creation to praise the deity. These last two groups, however, seemed better understood as background material for the references I considered, rather than actual creation references themselves.

In sum, the imagery employed to describe Yahweh's new creation seemed to have a certain duality. On the one hand, the people are expressed as transient. Yahweh can blow upon them, and they will wither. Conversely, however, Yahweh will now plant the land, and continue to "grow" these people, making them great in

⁴⁶ One does not want to make too much of the $\square\pi\eta$ texts and comparisons of the deity to a midwife (46:3-4). While these are certainly plausible suggestions and might "fill out" the female imagery, they are less obvious than some of the other examples considered.

number. Yahweh on the one hand can destroy, but on the other, promises "creation" through the changing of the land in order to bring the people home.

I have been suggesting the reading of all of the creation imagery in Deutero-Isaiah as a multi-faceted description of Yahweh-creator. It is helpful to review this here. Beginning in chapter 3, I discussed the references to Yahweh's cosmogonic activities. With Yahweh thus depicted as creator, and the audience thus reminded of this fact, the references considered in chapter 4 took on a fuller meaning. Not only has Yahweh created the heavens and the earth, Yahweh has also created the people (same verbs, same participial forms). The latter presents Yahweh's relationship to the people in intimate terms ("I have chosen/called" is also present). Finally, Yahweh's new creative activity (chapter 5) then reveals Yahweh's plans for his creation. The earthly elements which Yahweh has formed will be physically re-arranged. The once destroyed land (also part of Yahweh's ability and plan for the people) will be irrigated and re-planted. The people whom Yahweh created and whom Yahweh loves will also be "re-planted" and re-created. All of this new creation is expressed in creative language. The watering, planting, growing, and even birthing undergirds Yahweh's role as creator, expressed first in the depiction of the deity's cosmogonic activities.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of my thesis was to identify and investigate the descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah.

As I observed in chapter 1, my goals for this project were slightly different from the general trend in recent biblical scholarship on creation. The trend was to look at creation in light of redemption, particularly in Deutero-Isaiah, where the two subjects appear often and are frequently intertwined. My concern about this practice was that its focus on redemption might have affected the interpretation of the creation material and even influenced which texts were selected for study. I opted instead to survey all of the references to creation which were present in Deutero-Isaiah and to look at them independently of the language which described redemption.¹

My strategy was as follows: I observed that the descriptions of Yahweh's creative activity were varied and scattered in Deutero-Isaiah, which meant that they required some organization for discussion. They were easily divided into three groups: cosmogony, the creation of the people, and Yahweh's new creation. I began my investigation with the references to cosmogony since they seemed like the most obvious of these groups. I then moved to the material in the other two groups, attempting to find lexical or thematic links between the creation texts as I discussed them. The references in the first two groups shared similar lexical material (verbs) and were basically minor variations on stock phrases. The references in the third group, however, were much more varied and were associated through more tenuous lexical means, or through certain themes. My criteria for what constituted a reference to creation were thus developed along lexical and thematic lines.

¹ My assumption was not that redemption has nothing to do with creation in Deutero-Isaiah. Rather, in order to investigate adequately the one type of language, it seemed appropriate to separate it from the other. As I pointed out in chapter 1, there are some other scholars who have also studied creation in this manner (Vermeylen, Clifford, etc.).

As one might expect, my results have been affected by the way in which I have divided the references and examined them according to these divisions. In my introduction, I stated that I was interested in how one text can affect the meaning of another. I explored this to some extent with material outside of Deutero-Isaiah as I considered the individual references to creation. This interest also follows for the text of my thesis. Both the material which I considered and the order in which I have considered it have affected how I viewed creation in each group. This is most important with the third group (new creation), where the lexical connections to the previous two groups through verbs became more tenuous, and it was necessary to look for other links. The identification of Yahweh's new creation has, in part, some dependence on the recognition of his cosmogonic activities and his creation of the people.²

As the beginning place in my thesis, my discussion of the cosmogonic references in chapter 3 attempted simply to account for all of the cosmogonic material present in the book. I split the references into four major sections. The first of these, the opening poem (40:12-31), I suggested had particular importance for the subsequent references in chapters 41-55. I found that cosmogony was being used in the poem chiefly to show that Yahweh was larger and more permanent than his creation. The cosmogonic references therefore functioned to identify Yahweh and to persuade the audience that this deity was a legitimate source of assistance for the people (see vv. 27-31). The opening poem depicted some of the themes and vocabulary of the subsequent references. The identification and legitimation of Yahweh, however, was the most important for my reading of the ensuing material (Isaiah 41-55, see section B). In the cosmogonic references in Isaiah 41-55, I observed that the implication of creation was that it somehow signalled to the audience who Yahweh was and justified the contents of his speech.

² As I have been trying to suggest throughout my thesis, I am not trying to comment on the literary dependence of one text on another. That is, I do not think that the references to Yahweh's creation of the people and his new creation borrowed material from the cosmogonic references. I am not concerned whether these are different strands of redacted material, as, for example, Vermeylen might suggest. Rather, I am trying to show what material these references to creation have in common and how I as a reader was able to identify and study creation in Deutero-Isaiah.

My analysis of the cosmogonic references was limited to a few observations. I studied the material by means of the verbs (בָּרָא, יָצַר, עָשָׂה, נָטָה, רָקַע) which seemed to be used randomly and in various combinations. The references did not provide specific details of Yahweh's cosmogonic activities, but appeared to be stock phrases with minor variations.³ They seemed, therefore, to describe Yahweh not *in* his activity of creating, but rather as the one responsible for the creation. I paid some attention to the verbal forms employed, and noticed that the majority of the references made use of participles. I speculated in most cases what these forms might signify, but was unable to come up with any clear conclusions because of the ambiguity which the participial form presents.⁴

In chapter 4, I studied the descriptions of Yahweh's creation of the people. This was the material with the clearest lexical connections to the cosmogonic descriptions. These references used three of the five creation verbs which I identified in chapter 3 (בָּרָא, עָשָׂה, יָצַר), also randomly and in various combinations. Additionally, the references were similar to the cosmogonic descriptions in their function and appearance as stock phrases. Again, there was a considerable use of the participial form in these references, but it was difficult to establish if these contributed any additional meaning to the descriptions.⁵

Frequently, the references to Yahweh's creation of the people were paralleled with other introductory statements that Yahweh has chosen, called, or redeemed the nation.⁶ A logical question to ask would be how the introductory

³ That is, most revealed that Yahweh had created the heavens (stretched them out) and the earth. Sometimes extra details would be added about these two basic creations.

⁴ Unlike Stuhlmueller, then, my recognition of a cosmogonic reference was not dependent upon how I translated the verbal forms, but rather on the content of the references. That is, I assumed that the creation of the heavens and the earth most logically referred to Yahweh's initial creation of the world. It was clearly not his creation of the people and seemed illogical as a present or future creative promise.

⁵ It is difficult, at this point, to decide what to do with the issue of participles. It seemed to be necessary to observe that they were present and used fairly frequently. Since it is not possible at this point to decide what they "mean" (if this is possible at all), the issue seemingly must be abandoned for now. Further comment would require a more detailed study of the form in the Hebrew Bible, likely in other creation contexts. This might be a logical extension of this thesis.

⁶ My purpose in my thesis was not to comment on the relationship between the various kinds of language which is descriptive of Yahweh. (This would be a plausible next step for a study of the descriptive language in Deutero-Isaiah.) However, I do have some responsibility to respond to

descriptions relate to the contexts in which they are situated (usually a poem on redemption). That is, one might ask how creation and redemption relate (or how calling/choosing relate to redemption), or perhaps whether creation is subordinate to redemption. However, it would be most effective to ask such questions after a detailed analysis of all of the different kinds of descriptive language (redemption, exodus, etc.) had been made. In a study of the descriptions of Yahweh's creation, it seems more appropriate to ask why Yahweh's relationship to the people would be described in almost exactly the same terms as his initial creation of the world.

I think that the portrayal of Yahweh as creator of the people utilizes the creation verbs because it is meant to draw on the description of Yahweh in his cosmogonic capacity. Yahweh is a creator. The audience has been reminded of this in the identification of the deity as the one who made the heavens and the earth. These references now say to the audience that this same God who created the heavens and the earth is the one who is in a particular kind of relationship with them (and also, if the audience needs further clues, the one who chose them and called them). In the cosmogonic references, creation functioned to legitimate Yahweh's words. The references to the creation of the people rely on this prior connection to Yahweh to describe the relationship between deity and people.

I observed in chapter 4 that there were two references which combined descriptions of Yahweh's creation of the people with descriptions of his cosmogonic activities (44:24; 51:13). These combination references help to illustrate my point. In these two texts, the connection between cosmogony and creation of the people is made in one localized place. Both poems in which the verses are contained (44:24-28; 51:13-16) describe Yahweh's future redemptive activity.⁷ They describe him first, however, as creator in these two aspects.

It is important to observe at this point that I have interpreted the references to Yahweh's creation of the people in light of the descriptions of his cosmogonic activities. This is primarily because of their lexical similarity and the fact that

previous scholarly estimations of these references which combine statements about creation and redemption, especially since I have stated that I have opted not to do my study in this manner.

⁷ Isa 44:24 actually describes Yahweh as 𐤕𐤌𐤕𐤁.

Yahweh's relationship to the people seems to be uniquely described in Deutero-Isaiah in terms of the language of creation. Therefore, my conclusions thus far are in part dependent on the way in which I have chosen to look at the material, though the texts themselves have also allowed me to read and interpret them in this manner.

The descriptions of Yahweh's new creation, which I considered in chapter 5, are basically all those that refer to his creative activity which cannot be confined to the first two groups of references. More than simply being a kind of catch-all, however, Yahweh's new creation particularly refers to his present or future activity on behalf of the audience in their current situation. The new-creation references present a problem with respect to the other two groups of descriptions and the lexical connections which I have observed between them. The verbs which were used in the first two groups appear in the descriptions of Yahweh's new creation only in five instances. Further links between new creation and the first two groups must therefore be made by means of other lexical items (mostly non-verbal) or themes. I persisted in this, however, because it would be misleading to end the discussion of Yahweh's creation in Deutero-Isaiah with the second group (creation of the people) or the five new-creation texts which used the creation verbs. The few times that these verbs are used in the new creation references open up whole other groups of images, which, when considered, seem "creative" in the general sense of the word.

I began my discussion of Yahweh's new creation with three of the five texts which employed the creation verbs (45:7; 48:7; 54:16; verbs used: *יצר*, *ברא*, *עשה*). The objects of Yahweh's creation in these texts were unusual (*חֲשֵׁן*, *אֵז*, *עֵשֶׂה*). The objects of Yahweh's creation in these texts were unusual (*חֲשֵׁן*, *אֵז*, *עֵשֶׂה*). They seemed upon first appearance to present a rather "dead end" in my investigation since they were unlike anything I had been considering so far. However, upon closer inspection, I noticed that one of the references, 48:7 with its object, *חֲשֵׁן*; was actually part of a group of several references with the same object. Two other texts which presented the *חֲשֵׁן* made use of the verb *צמח*, which existed in a number of other references, and which also could be traced to the Yahwist's creation account (Gen 2:5, 9; 3:18).

The remaining two of the five texts which used the creation verbs (41:17-20; 43:19-21) revealed a body of material that was concerned with the description of Yahweh irrigating and re-planting the land. Some of these also involved the verb צָמַח, thereby establishing a connection to 48:7 and the קָדְשׁוֹה text. This agricultural imagery could then be associated with another text which revealed Yahweh re-peopling the land. The theme of re-peopling subsequently involved a body of material which suggested that Yahweh as mother, giving birth to her creation, was responsible for this re-peopling.

In the three unusual texts with which I started my discussion, I found two references to Yahweh's creation of destructive elements (45:7; 54:16). These seemed to intimate that Yahweh might be as responsible for destruction as he was for creation. These texts introduced a theme which I discovered runs through the description of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah, either overtly (42:13-16), or as background to the agricultural images (sections C-D).

Finally, I considered some texts (55:10-13; 41:17-20; 43:19-21) that used agricultural images which brought two other themes into my discussion: Yahweh's creation by word and the instance of creation praising Yahweh. These themes and the depiction of Yahweh as mother have moved the discussion quite far from Yahweh's initial creation and the related statements about his creation of the people. It is clear that in order to include these aspects of Yahweh's creative activity in the discussion, I have had to broaden the criteria for my selection of creation references, beyond the creation verbs.

This study has revealed that the description of Yahweh's creative activity in Deutero-Isaiah is not simply a matter of a few images which make one specific point. For example, the creation material is not presenting a "story" of creation, such as one might find in Genesis. Rather, creation in the book is a very broadly developed subject which is not always that lucid. It is a subject that has a relative quality about it: it can be used in one of its aspects and will connote to the audience some of its other aspects by virtue of the language which it uses.

Because of the nature of the references to creation, it has made sense to examine them independently of redemption. The descriptions of redemption involve language which has its own characteristics and intentions. In order to get the broadest possible picture of creation in Deutero-Isaiah, it seemed most appropriate to study only what the text said about it, rather than asking how it might relate to other language which I had not yet investigated.

There are several possibilities, then, for future study. It would now be worthwhile to consider some of the other descriptive language in the book, such as the redemption language or the use of exodus imagery, in the same manner as I have studied the creation texts. Once this has been done, it would then be possible to have a discussion about all of the major imagery in Deutero-Isaiah. How does this work together in the book to express its central message? Is it, perhaps, the case that creation is the axis on which the other descriptions are built? Is creation the central vehicle for the book's message?

In addition, I have often illustrated my point in part by comparing the creation texts with material from *Isaiah* or the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Space has not permitted me to develop this idea more fully. It would be interesting to further investigate Miscall's ideas about intertextuality. What might happen if, for example, I had not used these other texts, or if I had considered different ones altogether? Additionally, I could ask the same questions of my thesis. Would it be possible, for example, to consider the creation texts in different groupings or in a different order? How would meaning be affected in this instance?⁴

⁴ One could even ask these kinds of questions of von Rad's (or Stuhlmüller's) work. What are the (redemption) texts which he has used, and how might his work be affected if he selected other texts in his study?

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