# Telling Tales: The Israelite Oratorios of George Frideric Handel as a Platform for Social Thought in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain

by

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# Abstract

*Identity is built on the ideologies of a collective nation*; there is no statement that rings clearer in the case of eighteenth-century Britain. This thesis examines the formulation of British identity as evidenced through allegorical narratives in Handel's Israelite oratorios. As part of this investigation, three modes of inquiry are considered: what is the nature of the interrelationship between narrative and identity; why is the interrelationship successful; and how is this interrelationship reflected in the medium of oratorio?

Each chapter tackles one of these questions directly. After establishing the methodology behind the project, the major motivation behind Chapter 1 is to outline the characteristics that defined the nature of narrative in eighteenth-century Britain. Factors such as the religious influence of deism, the role of the classical epic, and the subversive politics of satire became platforms for British self-expression, an expression that measured the nation's worth by the actions of its predecessors. Chapter 2, "*Solomon*," examines the role of music in the oratorio as a potential narrative for corroborating the social values pertinent to the British people. It aims to illustrate how music uniquely expresses signatory traits that could not necessarily be inferred through other artistic forms. While not independent from text, musical aspects such as form and harmonic structure aid in capturing certain ideas predominately expressed by the libretto. Chapter 3, "*Judas Maccabeus*," demonstrates that if such actions determined contemporary social thought, then a historical paradigm organized under an allegorical narrative could most effectively reflect that link between past and present. After comparing separate accounts of the same historical event, a correlation is recognized that in this period, the narrative organization of an event was intended to reflect political positions contemporary to the author; therefore, with varied opinions came varied historical accounts. In other words, it was the narrative's

effectiveness in *legitimizing* social values, as opposed to *exemplifying* historical accuracy, which made allegory a powerful device for carrying over ideas existing in both the fictional and real world. Finally, in the conclusion we examine how the different forms of interpretation explored come together under one social theory, how these different perspectives come together in the analysis of a single oratorio, and the potential directions that might stem from the insight gleaned in this thesis.

Through these chapters, one concludes that, from an eighteenth-century perspective, the identity of the individual is formulated by the collective values that their nation observes in its history. The narratives of the Israelite oratorios provided an effective representation of Britain's connection with its past, pointing to a sense of power and unity forged between God and his chosen people. To borrow a term from Ruth Smith, these oratorios conveyed a second story beyond the biblical narratives, one of a transcendent people: the British Israel.

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# 1. Introduction: Oratorio and Social Thought

When the social affect of a musical work comes into question, a likely avenue for investigation is to consider the motivations from which said work was conceived. For instance, political or religious themes can be arbitrated through the music; due to the presence of text, such circumstances are overtly recognizable in the case of vocal music. I do not refute the necessity for such considerations, but are we selling the music short by going straight to the content? To pose my inquiry more bluntly, should I as the musicologist approach oratorio as a medium or a manifestation of social thought?

## Identity and Performativity

In this project, I make the assertion that if the reader accepts that music as a constructed social framework can be defined by the same parameters as identity – also a constructed framework – then music can be established as a type of identity. Furthermore, if one accepts the premise that the nature of an identity is translatable by the performativities it enacts, then it becomes favourable to consider the formulaic elements that contribute to music's performativity as a means of gaining insight into the social environment which the music and its audience occupy.

When tackling a concept such as identity in early eighteenth-century Britain, the true dilemma exists in arbitrating the individual among the public expectations of its collective society, each participating in the ever-changing parameters of their social environment. First and foremost, in using the term *identity,* I should clarify that this is not exclusively reserved for defining the qualities of a "person," but rather anything capable of self-determination. From this position, I recognize the possibility for music to be heard to define itself by many discourses and,

therefore, appropriate many identities; how music *comes to mean* tells us who exactly music is trying to be.

The context with which I use the terms *identity* and *performativity* are not necessarily commonplace to musicological interpretation. As a result, a brief delineation of their origins and some insight into their relevance to the thesis seem appropriate. My understanding of both terms is rooted in a gendered reading of the definitions. The research of gender theorist Judith Butler carried a profound effect upon the early stages of my work; with respect to *identity*, the connections I draw between a subject's sense of self and the institutional discourses that are interwoven into this determinacy come from thoughts expressed in Butler's book *Gender Trouble*. While predicating the various theories that have been formulated regarding feminist identity, the author recognizes the lexicon of descriptive traits that attempt to promote a sense of inclusiveness in establishing the feminine identity, when in truth they distance the subject due to the limitless discourses that could participate in this process.[1] The argument that identity is understood by the rule-bound discursive practices that signify it appealed to the approach I was trying to take in this thesis. Butler states that "the rules that govern intelligible identity, i.e., that enable and restrict the intelligible assertion of an 'I' … operate through repetition. Indeed, when the subject is said to be constituted, that means simply that the subject is a consequence of certain rule-governed discourses that govern the intelligible invocation of identity." In other words, the discursive identity is identifiable by the epistemological traits that show that discourse is being practiced.[2] I have already alluded to music's capability to be understood as discourse both as a medium and by the formulaic elements that contribute to its identity. This definition

[1] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 1999), 182.
[2] Ibid., 184-5.

also works effectively for discussing the elements in narrative that participate in establishing the characters, but also what they might represent on an allegorical level.

The "manufacturing" quality that Butler attaches to *performativity* is one that factors well into the thesis, again, because of the emphasis placed on imposed discourses: "Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means."[3] The author uses the term *incorporation* when she describes the process of identification. When said identity becomes self-possessed by the discourses imposed upon it, it strives to perform a coherent image of this identity through a series of gestures that idealize the discourse.[4] This *fabrication* (Butler's word) reveals the organizing quality behind the construction of the identity.[5] Since I argue that contained within the oratorio narrative, both textually and musically, is a signification of eighteenth-century British thought – something I treat as a form of collective identity – it would make sense that I would look for gestural displays that mediate this identity on a reflexive level.

In Handel's oratorio *Saul* (1737), the title character appropriates a rather undesirable role with respect to effective kingship. The oratorio starts at the narrative point in which David has defeated the Philistine giant Goliath. As is this case with many of the Israelite oratorios, the chorus is appropriately praising God for the deliverance he has provided. Themes of fraternity are displayed in the relationship of Jonathan and David, while in contrast, King Saul is enraged with jealousy over David's fame, a fame David takes with humility. The libretto's content is drawn from biblical material from the First Book of Samuel as well as the epic *Davedeis* by

[3] Ibid., 173.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

seventeenth-century English poet Abraham Cowley (1618-1667). Through these sources, the librettist Charles Jennens (1700-1773), constructs a binary opposition centred in constructive and destructive acts of kingship. The following is a brief excerpt that acknowledges the duality in the context of kingship.

Figure 1-1. Libretto Excerpt from *Saul*, "With rage I shall burst…"

*Saul*
With rage I shall burst his praises to hear!
Oh, how I both hate the stripling, and fear!
What mortal a rival in glory can bear? (*Saul*, Act I, Sc.3)

David, for his acts of friendship, demonstrates everything a king should be, and Saul, for his tyrannical acts, falls short.[6] However, moral discourse is only part of it. Audiences knew the biblical stories: who was good and who was evil, and the fatal flaw or divine gift that manifested such characterizations. The key aspect to the organization of these oratorios is the performative actions within the narrative; it was the acts of the heroes and enemies that aided in demonstrating the politicization behind the veil. If David was the virtuous hero, his actions secured this identity. Because the actions reflect definitions of virtue in the eighteenth century, the work becomes more relevant to its audiences.[7] Interaction aided in directing the archetypical tropes imposed upon the characters, in turn communicating their social significance to the audience. Awareness of action's role in the oratorio allows us to recognize the temporality shared between action and music – which, through its performance, is an action. While the text may lead the listener to an understanding of its meaning, this temporality may also inform the audience independently.

[6] Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 234-35.
[7] Ibid., 233.

In this investigation, I examine the vocal literature of George Frideric Handel as a platform for issues of narrative and identity in early eighteenth-century Britain. My intent is to explore how the composer's own musically-embodied representations of these concepts in specific Israelite oratorios, particularly in situations of patriarchal authority, engaged distinct constructs of the British social environment. In the analysis, I address and work to rectify aspects of cultural ambiguity arising from the various social intersections that merge to form discursive identity – discursive referring to the defining qualities of performativity which mark an identity. For instance, one identifies a king through his performance of kingship; a moral king is identified through actions that society recognizes as moral. Because of its performative nature, the action of music promotes a space for mutual exchange through the transactions of practice and ideological expectations which occur between two constructed social environments – Britain itself and the oratorios produced there – where a hegemonic "voice of Britain" is represented as the collective majority and, in parallel, the oratorio becomes the voice of a given cultural ethos.

My effort is not simply to argue that one real event stands in for a fictionalized one, but instead to focus on the forms of reasoning that lead into potential interpretations regarding the meanings behind specific works. As the reader will soon recognize, many of these oratorios carried the potential to reference multiple ideals, events, and people within eighteenth-century Britain; sometimes, that *was* the intention.

Looking back at *Saul*: what questions are brought to the foreground as a method for drawing our interpretation? The first condition addresses the characterization of the protagonist; his capacity for being an archetype must be apparent. By confirming Saul's archetypical potential, we can begin to generate points of signification to identities and values in Britain. It then becomes necessary to familiarize the reader with the narrative space of the oratorio: are

there particularly revealing excerpts or elements that demonstrate connections? These aspects are used to uncover the presence of criteria that rhetorically characterize the archetype. The binary comparative between Saul and David, along with historical tropes in literature that embraced the use of the literary archetype, would substantiate this. The development, or in Saul's case, degradation, of the character provokes the necessary comprehension of the type of profile being presented and its likely impact towards the audience. The different points of impact can be measured by examining an aria's emotional aesthetic and where it fits in the narrative as a whole. In the case of *Saul*, his aria "With rage I shall burst…" comments on a turning point in the narrative, where the active rage expressed imprints itself upon the character and contributes to the archetypical value he offers to the audience. The second condition is that characters like Saul and David can be appropriated into discourses, events, or people in the real world. It is one thing to suggest a potential connection and another to truly confirm it. In the case of *Saul*, I would begin by examining contemporary connections that might lend to a politicization of the narrative. How do characterizations of people such as George II, or institutional systems of power such as the Church of England or Parliament, parallel to ideas expressed in the oratorio?

Once these conditions are met, my overall approach in this thesis will be to examine the form these intersections of meaning take, and how, precisely, they impact the audience they are intended for. There are essentially two sides which investigation can gravitate towards: analysis of text as a component of narrative structure; and an examination of music and text, where music acts as a signifier to the meaning of the text. With respect to the latter, while I am inclined to argue that narrative meaning cannot be fully gleaned with the context of the libretto, I am of the opinion that there are certain ways in which the music reveals meaning that the text cannot convey as effectively.

As a social concern, realizing the project's emphasis on *how* things mean, rather than *what* things mean, is crucial to understanding the motivations behind this research. One avenue of investigation will examine the socio-political consciousness. Surely, these works were intended to flatter specific patrons and political figures – narrative elements in the text certainly reflect this. However, a second avenue of investigation focuses on uncovering evidence of a creative participation in a societal structure that gave rise to common modes of thinking and to knowledge that was naturalized to the extent that it appeared self-evident. This mutual understanding of the way things *mean* can lead to a form of communicative action – a transactional sort of dialogue where the intent of one party is impressed upon another – that inadvertently leads to certain degrees of shared interpretation.[8]

As I undertake this investigation, I examine not only narrative structure in the fictionalized world of the oratorio, but the ways in which it bled into methods of historicization in the real world. We will examine what aspects permitted narrative to operate in both spheres and how this popularized oratorio specifically. With the inner-workings of eighteenth-century narrative established, in Chapter 2, which considers a later oratorio, *Solomon* (1749), I move beyond musical works as a medium for disseminating allegorical narrative to musical content as a structured narrative itself. This chapter is more theoretical, relying on musical analysis as a means of exploring potential social implications behind the music. Afterwards, Chapter 3 investigates allegorical potential through a study of Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* (1746). I argue that if narrative exists as both a literary device and a tool for historicization, then it is possible that one could use the literary space of fiction to relay an allegorical form of historical narrative. In this chapter, I examine direct parallels between the oratorio and three varied historical

[8] Omid Payrow Shabani, "Communicative Action Theory and Linguistic Interaction," in *Democracy, Power, and Legitimacy: The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 26–52.

accounts of Prince William Augustus', Duke of Cumberland's (1721-1765) role in the 1746 Battle of Culloden.

## Narrative

I have used the term *manifestation* when situating oratorio in the sphere of eighteenth-century British social thought. It now seems prudent to clarify what exactly that manifestation is. Put plainly, I am addressing the role of narrative as a tool for social organization. Understanding the unique characteristics behind the structuring of narrative, particularly a *British* narrative, will help the reader grasp why historical events were so readily perceived in the interpretations of libretti by contemporary audiences. The value of narrative, whether in the form of poetry, novel, sermon, or song, was twofold. Narrative manifested as a mode of historicization, marking event linearly over a given period of time. Concurrently, narrative – often in the form of a history – could be a form of temporal organization that signified an ideological precedent. In other words, the shaping of the eighteenth-century century not only gave an account, but in its organization told the reader why it was important in the first place.

Over the course of this next section, I intend to explore motivations within the structuring of eighteenth-century narrative, motivations which exemplify directions of British social thought. In the first part, I will discuss how deism had an impact on the biblical underpinnings of the oratorio introducing a secular aspect to the religious sublime. The culmination of this shift is what I describe as the organization of narrative as epic. With *epic* being a word fixed so strongly in the secular realm, this opens up a question regarding how the religious aspect of the oratorio cohesively operates within the more secular confines of the classical epic. In an effort to answer this question, I will show the way the relationship between the pagan gods and the epic hero is

re-contextualized into an Old Testament setting. Similarly, the dichotomy of deist critical thought combating Orthodox Christianity also lay at the forefront of the oratorio.

## Deist Sentiments

The utilization of the epic narrative though music to re-contextualize Christianity marks one major deviation from notions of the sublime in the classical epic. Forms such as the ode were often accompanied by music, but it was readily understood that the narrative message contained in the *words* carried primary importance. I choose my language carefully, however, because the fact that the origin of the epic lay in the space of oral tradition is equally important. By the eighteenth century, the ode and other classical forms no longer remain tied exclusively to that which was spoken. Along with the medieval ballad, such forms were just as likely, if not predominantly, to exist as written text.[9] Poets such as John Dryden and Alexander Pope tackled the task of translating the epics of the ancient poets. As an extension from this, both English adaptations of classical poetry as well as new works that imitated their form came into vogue. The evolution of print culture aided in making these highly political works popular and easily accessible to English audiences.[10] In Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687), it proves noteworthy that he does not permit the reader to forget the musical quality in his epic. The educated eighteenth-century reader would recognize the work as an ode, but the author demands a more passionate interpretation. When Handel sets the text to music in his "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" (1739), he resists the context in which Dryden presents his epic. I believe he does this as a means of de-secularizing the work and, in the process, emphasizing its religious qualities. Ironically, Dryden wants the audience to conceptualize his story as a musical narrative because

[9] Joseph Black, ed., *The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, The Broadview Anthology of British Literature (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2012), 883.
[10] Ibid., 55-7.

he feels it demonstrates a perspective that text alone cannot, while Handel emphasizes how the epic empowers a narrative message that music alone cannot.

There was much commentary from the Church regarding the subversive powers of music. Some individuals within the clergy warned of the deep consequences of not just secular music, but music with sacred themes under the wrong circumstances. In a letter to his brother, James Harris – English politician, eventual father of the 1st Earl of Malmesbury, and very good friend to Handel – recounts one such occasion, implying February and March earthquakes in London as a divine warning to the city's pleasure-seekers.

> I have no news to send you, nor have we any discourse but about earthquakes. Yesterday the B[ishop] of Lond[on] – [Thomas Sherlock] printed a letter to the inhabitants of this town upon the occasion…He describes as a parcel of vile people; but I dare say it will please, for everybody loves to have the world abused in general. He is severe upon infidelity, lewdness, blasphemy, plays, routs, public gardens…[11]

Donald Burrows makes the connection that, in Sherlock's letter, he postures the same theological reasoning as did his predecessor Edmond Gibson, who condemned the Chapel Royal choristers for taking part in the 1732 production of *Esther*. In Gibson's eyes, the oratorio, despite its religious themes, was still viewed by audiences for its entertainment value.[12] One element that the Harris letter does illuminate is that the Church's concern for the salvation of man was based in ethical matters as opposed to a lack of faith. The premise of good works being the paving stones along the road to Heaven was the subject of innumerable sermons.[13] It was from this that the apologist attitude outlining the separation of God, who created the universe, from man, who governed it, came into focus. This becomes important when discussing the Israelite oratorios

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[11] Donald Burrows, Rosemary Dunhill, and James Harris, "'17 March 1750. Thomas Harris, Lincoln's Inn, [London], to James Harris, Salisbury' in *Music and Theatre in Handel's World: The Family Papers of James Harris, 1732-1780*," (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002), 268.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 141.

because it is the nature of their content that gives rise to such sentiments. As a means of historicizing Christianity – and thus removing it from the precepts of divine revelation – two major threads are interwoven in the narratives: the Old Testament as a natural, linear precursor to the New Testament; and the emphasis on Judaism as a means of nationalizing Christianity. Jesus acted upon the teachings of Mosaic Law, a theocratic institution inspired by the covenant between God and Man – however, enacted not by God, but by Man: "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."[14] Emphasizing this separation reinforced the ethical side of Christianity as opposed to the supernatural aspects of divine intervention in the affairs of humanity.

I noted that the oratorio illuminated deist sentiments, but this is not to say that its content consistently represented them. Rather, a more apt description of their role would be that they demonstrate an awareness of the religious criticism important to British audiences. In many cases, librettists avoided taking a stance by providing a potential "second cause," as identified by Ruth Smith in the narratives presented.[15] The stories of the oratorios subscribed to the orthodox perspective through their priority given to the miraculous, but they also leaned towards an apologetic perspective through an effort to rationalize the mystery behind the miracle. *Joshua* is one such example with respect to the miracle at the battle of Gibeon. In comparing the biblical source material to the libretto, Smith outlines four discrepancies. From these differences, the author argues that a more emotional and ethical tone is produced in the narrative. I would supplement that argument by saying the changes also lend to a more rationalist interpretation. First, there is the aspect of doubt included in the libretto. Not only does this dramatize the story, but it humanizes it. In the Old Testament account, divine aid is already secured: "And the Lord

[14] Deuteronomy 31:26, *KJV*.
[15] Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 234-5.

said unto Joshua, fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee..."[16] However, in the libretto, victory is dependent on faith. Second, the miracle of hail fire is absent; this played a major role in the biblical narrative, as it destroyed more enemy soldiers than the Israelite army itself. By omitting this, the concept of divine aid can be suppressed in the story as a whole. Third, with respect to the sun and the moon, the phenomenon cannot be removed for it is too engrained in the narrative's identity, but the librettist does change the way in which the miracle operates in the story. In the Old Testament, the miracle is the ultimate factor in the Israelites' success; it affords the time required for a complete annihilation of the enemy forces. Smith states that the libretto affords vengeance on the part of the Israelites, a distinction she makes, I think, because it adds a passionate element to the narrative that was not necessarily there before. Considering the Old Testament's affinity for the wrathful God, I am hesitant to argue an emphasis on vengeance fully humanizes the situation. However, I do argue that the manipulation of text transforms the miracle into a *signifier* rather than a *participating force*; the yielding sun represents the yielding of the Canaanites.

Figure 1-2. Libretto Excerpt from *Joshua*, "O thou bright orb…"

*Joshua*
O thou bright orb, great ruler of the day,
Stop thy swift course, and over Gibeon stay!
And, O thou milder lamp of light, the moon,
Stand still, prolong thy beams in Ajalon.

*Israelites*
Behold, the list'ning sun the voice obeys,
And in mid heav'n his rapid motion stays.
Before our arms the scatter'd nations fly,
Breathless they pant, they yield, they fall, they die. (*Joshua*, Act II, Sc. 7)

[16] Joshua 10:8, *KJV*.

While not explicitly denying the occurrence of the miracle, this text does oblige the audience to interpret it more poetically than literally, perhaps along the lines of one who is lost in the moment due to intense focus on the task at hand. In these ways, the narratives of Handel's oratorios reflected a more rationally-aware interpretation of biblical events, making the stories more relevant to eighteenth-century audiences.

## Narrative as Epic

A common thread throughout Handel's Israelite oratorios is the emphasis placed on religious values that give priority to the collective, for it was these predilections that kept the nation strong.[17] Even though the titles reference singular biblical characters, this is not necessarily done to individuate these characters from the collective group, but rather to have them represent that group. More precisely, they serve the role of reifying the values of the collective to transform cultural ideas into ideologies *in practice*. In its simplest terms, the motivation behind the oratorio is a nation's demonstration of moral values presented in adherence to biblical teachings.[18] As I attempt to more accurately define a social context for the oratorio, one may ask why I have emphasized the epic over the emergence of the novel. In many ways, the novel provides a platform for social exchange in much the same way as the epic, but I think where they differ is in their perspective. The novel is directed more to the individual, whereas the epic speaks to the individual as part of the collective. In their very nature, the two

[17] There are a number of oratorios that reflect this mindset. Perhaps the strongest one is *Israel in Egypt* (1739) where the analogy of *religious deliverance* is so aptly stated when the Israelites are pitted against the pagan Egyptians in much the same way England stood united against Catholic Spain. See Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-century Thought*, 213-4.

[18] As Deborah Rooke points out, the individual acting as part of the collective is an important aspect to oratorio libretti. One such example she offers is in the work *Deborah* (1733). The librettist Samuel Humphreys (c. 1697-1737) deliberately presents Deborah's divinely inspired wisdom to Barak as words that impact a collective as opposed to one person: "Trust in the God that fires thee, to vindicate *our Laws*; Act now, as he inspires thee, Thou shalt revive *our cause*," (*Deborah,* Act 1, Sc. 1, "Where do thy ardors raise me…). See Deborah W. Rooke, *Handel's Israelite Oratorio Libretti: Sacred Drama and Biblical Exegesis* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 50.

differ because the novel expresses a relationship with a single reader, while the epic was born out of dramatization to a collective audience. Furthermore, I think the *ethical aspects* of the two vary in perspective. An interesting comparison exists when considering Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). While both are novels in that they are entirely works of prose fiction, the latter functions much like an epic in its narrative message and organization. The major theme in Defoe's work is the hero's achievement of moral betterment through social individuation. The narrative tells a story of a protagonist who only develops an enlightened sense of self when he is removed from the corruptive nature of society. Crusoe's optimism can be seen in the way he weighs the good and evil of the situation in which he finds himself.[19] In this way, the author is telling the reader to embrace his or her individualism. Swift, however, sets a narrative that is completely contrary to this message. As Gulliver encounters the four lands of his journey, he loses his independence, becoming more and more absorbed into the collective of whatever civilization he encounters. While the book is one that remains focused on a single reader, the responsibility of the reader has now shifted to one that critiques the moral standing of each civilization in comparison to Britain's state of social politics.[20] Like the classical epic in its truest form, the ideological values of the collective nation to which the narrative is directed are never placed in the background.

Let us shift our perspective to a work explicitly in the realm of the epic. The eighteenth-century essayist, Sir Richard Blackmore, listed two motivations that stemmed from the writing of his epic poem *Alfred* (1723), a historical narrative of England's King Alfred dedicated to Prince Frederick of Hanover: first, that the contribution exemplified that which was good in his country;

[19] Black, *The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, 393-94.
[20] Ibid., 460-62.

and second, that it served the reformed religion.[21] Such motivations, as Smith outlines in her reference to Blackmore, derives from a recognition of sacred rites and public worship. This explains why occasions of praise are such a popular theme in the oratorios, and, in my opinion, why they occur so often in the choruses specifically.[22] The vehicle by which this recognition occurs is the hero's quest, one founded in a need to defend his people from some antagonistic force. Virtue and good acts are the sacred rites that justify the protagonist's merit for divine aid. While these components play a role in the classical epic, they transform just as effectively into Old Testament dogma with these biblical characters touched by the divine.

Evidence of the sacred realm, whether in the form of attributes or manifestations of the divine, play strongly into the eighteenth-century epic narrative. As is the case with the classical epic, these allusions often take the form of the sublime. By this statement, I emphasize the relationship of *man* and *mystery* from the human perspective.[23] I argue it is this relationship which explains how the phenomenon of the sublime translates so effectively under the rules of art in instances of classical literature and beyond. In the individual's endeavor to understand the unknown, he or she sets out on a journey to *become* the unknown; through this journey, the rules of morality are set. Eighteenth-century writers such as John Dryden and Alexander Pope were largely affected by the sublime. One of the more relevant literary works that reflects this implementation of the sublime is Dryden's "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day," set by Handel himself in *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*. "The striking lyre," "the trumpet's clangor," and "the flute's complaint" all evoke the epic rhetoric of war, passion, and religious contemplation.[24]

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[21] Richard Blackmore, "Dedication," in *Alfred. An Epick Poem. In Twelve Books. Dedicated to the Illustrious Prince Frederick of Hanover. By Sir Richard Blackmore, Kt. M. D* (London: W. Botham, 1723), 6.
[22] Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 128.
[23] Ibid.
[24] A suggested source for the poem would be Joseph Black [et al.], eds., *The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, The Broadview Anthology of British Literature (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2012), 164-5. The annotations to the poem are helpful in outlining its biblical and classical connections.

They also illustrate the evolution of the epic narrative and the sublime through the adaptation of Greek myth and Old Testament narrative, alluding to potential crossovers, the most obvious being Orpheus and Jubal.[25] In all these cases, we observe mythology encountering the theme of music being translated into narratives that personify music.

[25] Dryden alludes to both characters in context to their mastery over the earth through music: Orpheus from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* could charm Nature itself through the magic of his lyre while Jubal used his shell to empower his brethren in battle – the Old Testament describes him as a father of music, "And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ," Genesis 4:21, *King James Version*.

# 2. *Solomon*

> And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.[26]

The biblical excerpt above references the encounter between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon when she comes to question the king's wisdom and, furthermore, Solomon's ability to govern his people. In Handel's oratorio *Solomon* (1749), this and other narratives participate in a musical anthology that explores Solomon as a character and the manner in which he justified his supreme governance as the king of Israel. Part of Solomon's notoriety as a biblical figure is that he is a king of divine wisdom; his actions are justified because he performs them from the position of a pre-established ideology: just as British audiences would not challenge the notion that their monarch was supreme head of state and church, the Israelites would not challenge Solomon's divine authority. For all intents and purposes, Solomon stands in for the unchallengeable voice of God. In this way, he is both a formulated archetype for kingship – a conceived ideology – and an identity intended to symbolize what provokes the identification of kingship, because he is the voice for the collective opinion that *legitimizes* kingship.

## Structuring *Solomon*

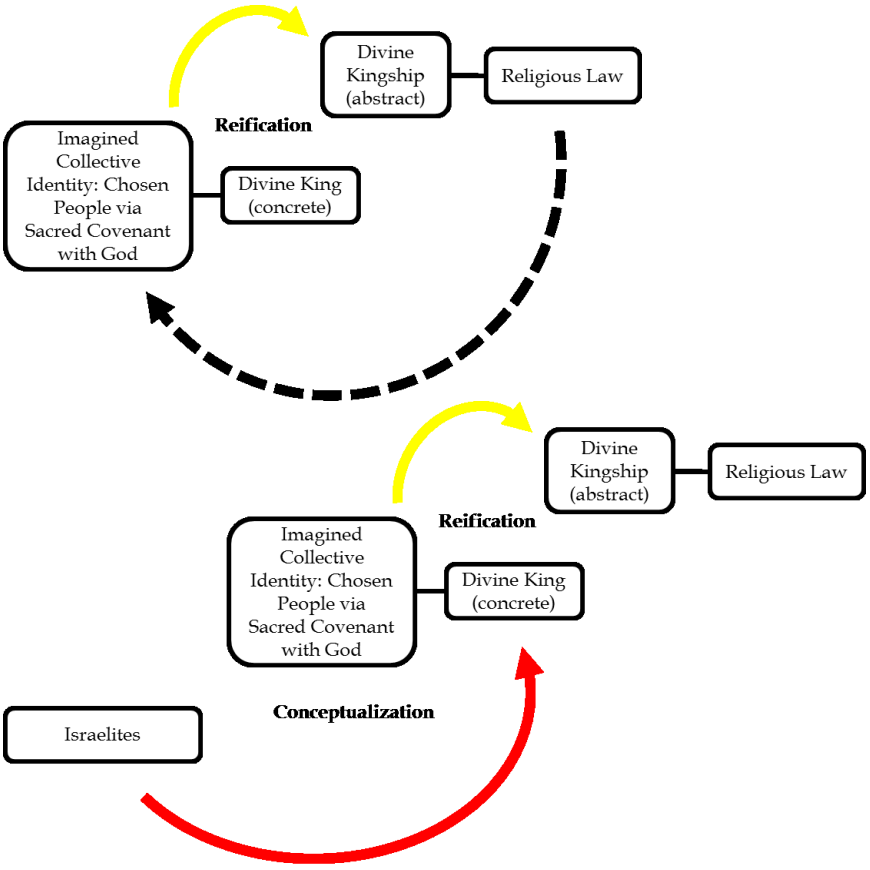
In this chapter, I will examine a form of dialogue integral to the narrative of *Solomon* in order to determine the actions imposed upon the protagonist that formulate the nature of his identity. Here the purpose is to demonstrate how music is one of a number of ways in which social values might be imparted upon an audience. The recurring theme of *praise* is the form of

[26] 1 Kings 10:6-9, *KJV*.

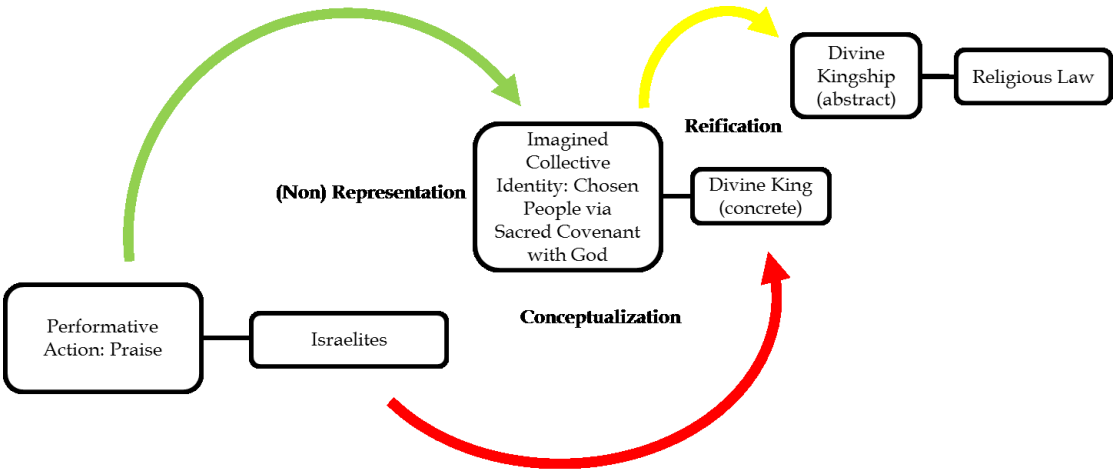
performativity which justifies Solomon's role in the narrative; furthermore, his response to this action confirms the oratorio's lesson.

There are a number of elements that validate the ideal relationship Solomon is meant to have with his people. First, the context of this passage outlines the hierarchical role the two identities – Solomon and his people – share with one another under the ideology of kingship. The instantiation of this exchange is what makes the duet effective in displaying the moral values for the audience. Figure 2-1 illustrates this relationship.

Figure 2-1. Situating the Narrative of *Solomon* within the Public Exchange of Kingship

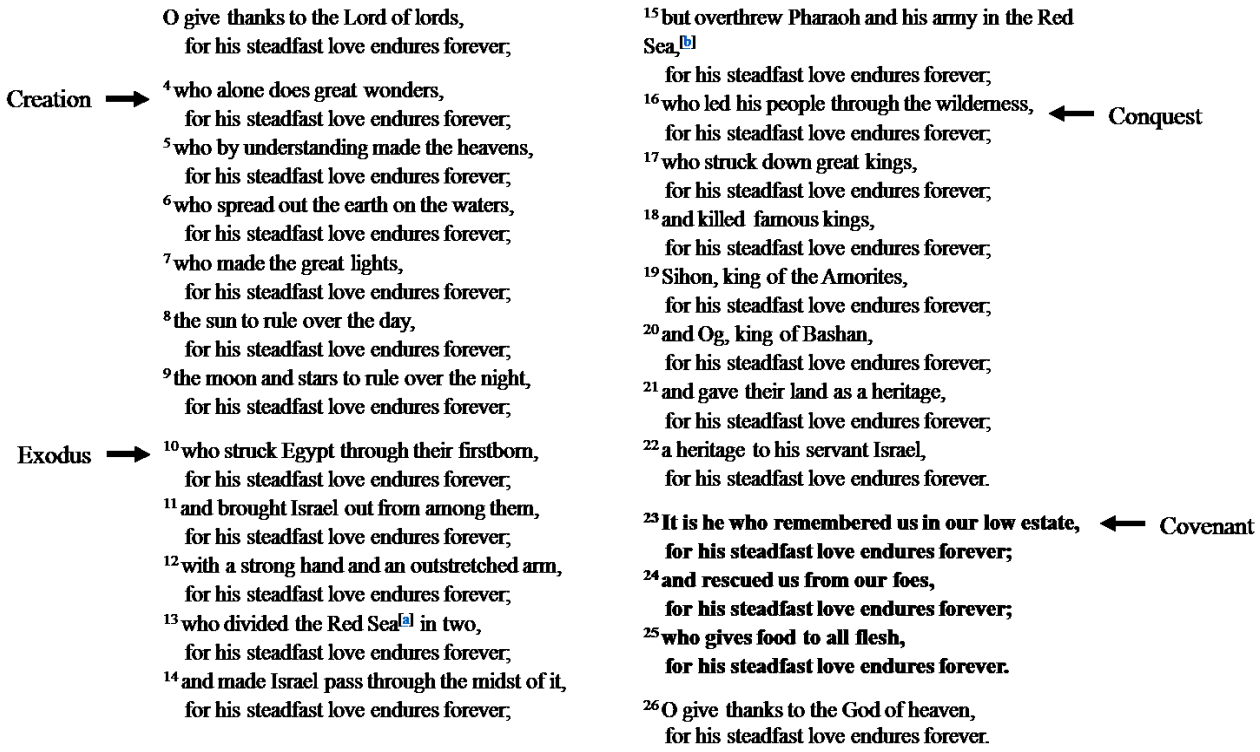


(Fig. 2-1 cont'd.)




What contributes to the scenario's duality in Solomon's narrative of kingship is that the discourse of divinity is built into the idea from the start. Superseding the reification of kingship operating within the confines of a humanistic perspective is the concretization of God as king from a divine perspective. Those proponents of religious law reinforce the idea of the divine by producing a passive collective voice that speaks to the presence of divine acts. This implicates an identity who performs these acts: God. The following psalm is an example of this process, demonstrating a linear progression of divine acts that secure and maintain the covenant God shares with his people.

Figure 2-2. The Role of Divine Acts as an Enforcer of the Covenant between God and His People, Psalm 136: 3-26, *KJV*




Such hymns of praise imply a speaker who affirms justification of God's supremacy through the acts he has committed; the intended individual then conceptualizes this reified figure and responds accordingly with the action of praise. Consider Solomon as the intended figure, and one has not only a conforming individual who supports the role of divinity within a social system, but also an individual who can appropriate the discourse into his own earthly role within that paradigm. Note how the bolded section of the psalm switches to the second person; this facilitates a way in which the individual can situate itself in the scenario.

So how might such an exchange exist in the oratorio itself? To show this, I will examine one particular duet in the oratorio *Solomon*, "Thrice bless'd the king." This example proves effective because it demonstrates the relationship between Solomon and his people while doubly outlining his connection to God. I noted earlier that a purely musical analysis might be too

abstract without the context of the libretto to direct it, so in preparation for the duet, I would like to examine the text of another section that I feel appropriately shapes the nature of the protagonist in the narrative. I choose the following recitative and aria sung by the Levite priest because it prepares a literary device that purposefully recalls itself upon listening to the duet.

Figure 2-3. Libretto Excerpt from *Solomon*, "Great prince, thy resolution's just…" and "Thrice bless'd that wise discerning king"

*Levite*
Great prince, thy resolution's just;
He never fails, in Heav'n who puts his trust,
True worth consists not in the pride of state,
'Tis virtue only makes a monarch great.

Thrice bless'd that wise discerning king,
Who can each passion tame,
And mount on virtue's eagle wing
To everlasting fame:
Such shall as mighty patterns stand
To princes yet unborn,
To honour prompt each distant land,
And future times adorn.
Thrice bless'd. . . *da capo*

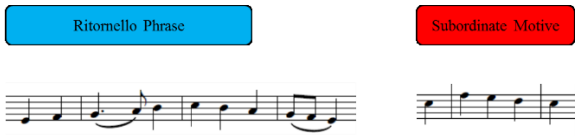
Note how the Levite priest first establishes a hierarchy between Solomon and God and then sets up a model that reifies divinity through an individual's (Solomon's) performed action (trust) towards the anthropomorphized ideology of divinity (God). The third and fourth lines of the recitative secure Solomon's role in society as one who is touched by divine kingship; he trusts in his established covenant with God rather than trusting in the earthly kingdom he rules. In both cases, praise, an action within the discourse of the divine, proves relevant to both scenarios, as well as Solomon's need to humble himself before God – something the Levite priest already recognizes. In the text, the Levite priest is not blessing King Solomon, but acknowledges that he is "thrice bless'd;" in other words, blessed by the divine, an affordance given because he recognizes the source of Israel's providence.

## Analysis: “Thrice bless’d the king”

If one considers “Thrice bless’d the king” to be a type of narrative exchange, a valid scenario at both a textual and formulaic level, questions arise as to how this dialogue is effectively communicated to the audience. From an affectual and hermeneutic perspective, one infers a theme of gratitude. What we do not necessarily glean immediately is the transference of praise from Solomon to God, nor do we get a full sense of how God is understood to be working through Solomon’s divine wisdom. This, I argue, is where the music plays a predominant and often independent role in expressing these aspects in the oratorio’s narrative. I will show this by examining the duet from two positions: phrase structure and harmonic activity (or lack thereof).

Figure 2-4 illustrates two elements that play a significant role in the duet: What I am calling a ritornello phrase (blue), named as such due to the fact that it consistently returns as part of a larger formal scheme in the music; and the second motive (red), carrying multiple roles including that of a vocal incipit and an ostinato figure in the bass line.

Figure 2-4. Melodic Elements Significant to “Thrice bless’d the king”[27]




In the case of the duet the melodic fragment identified operate under a dialogical framework. In other words, the interaction between these fragments coincides with the identity of the characters established in the textual dialogue.

So who are these identities? From a narrative standpoint, three characters are present in the duet: the First Woman, Solomon, and God. As I will show in my musical analysis, the deeper

[27] To avoid redundancy, unless otherwise stated all remaining figures refer to the “Thrice bless’d the king,” *Solomon*, Act II, Sc. 3.

meaning suggested in the duet might be that its overall theme is less about gratitude and more a contemplation of the power that lies at the heart of all blessings. To provide a general overview of the duet Figure 2-5 gives the complete text.

Figure 2-5. "Thrice bless'd the king," Complete Text

First Woman
Thrice bless'd the king, for he's good and he's wise.
My gratitude calls streaming tears from my eyes.

Solomon
The Lord all these virtues has giv'n,
Thy thanks be return'd all to Heav'n.
Tis God that rewards, and will lift from the dust
Whom to crush proud oppressors endeavour...

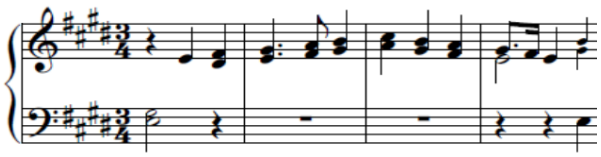
First Woman
How happy are those who in God put their trust!

Solomon
For His mercy endureth for ever.

In the libretto, the First Woman acknowledges the earthly wisdom of her king, King Solomon. Through this act of praise, she sets herself apart from him, the first occasion in which hierarchy surfaces. Solomon counteracts this expression through humility, recognizing his power as not being one of earthly wisdom, but of the divine. Though the libretto expresses a dialogue between the characters of the First Woman and Solomon, the musical setting defines divine presence in subtle ways, as we will see.

An overall evaluation of the introduction, mm. 1-16, indicates the home key to be E major. There is the initial resounding pitch of E in the bass and tonic/dominant/tonic motion over the sixteen bars. However, in listening more closely, it becomes clear that the first four measures guide the ear to E major by way of a detour.

Figure 2-6. Introduction, mm. 1-4

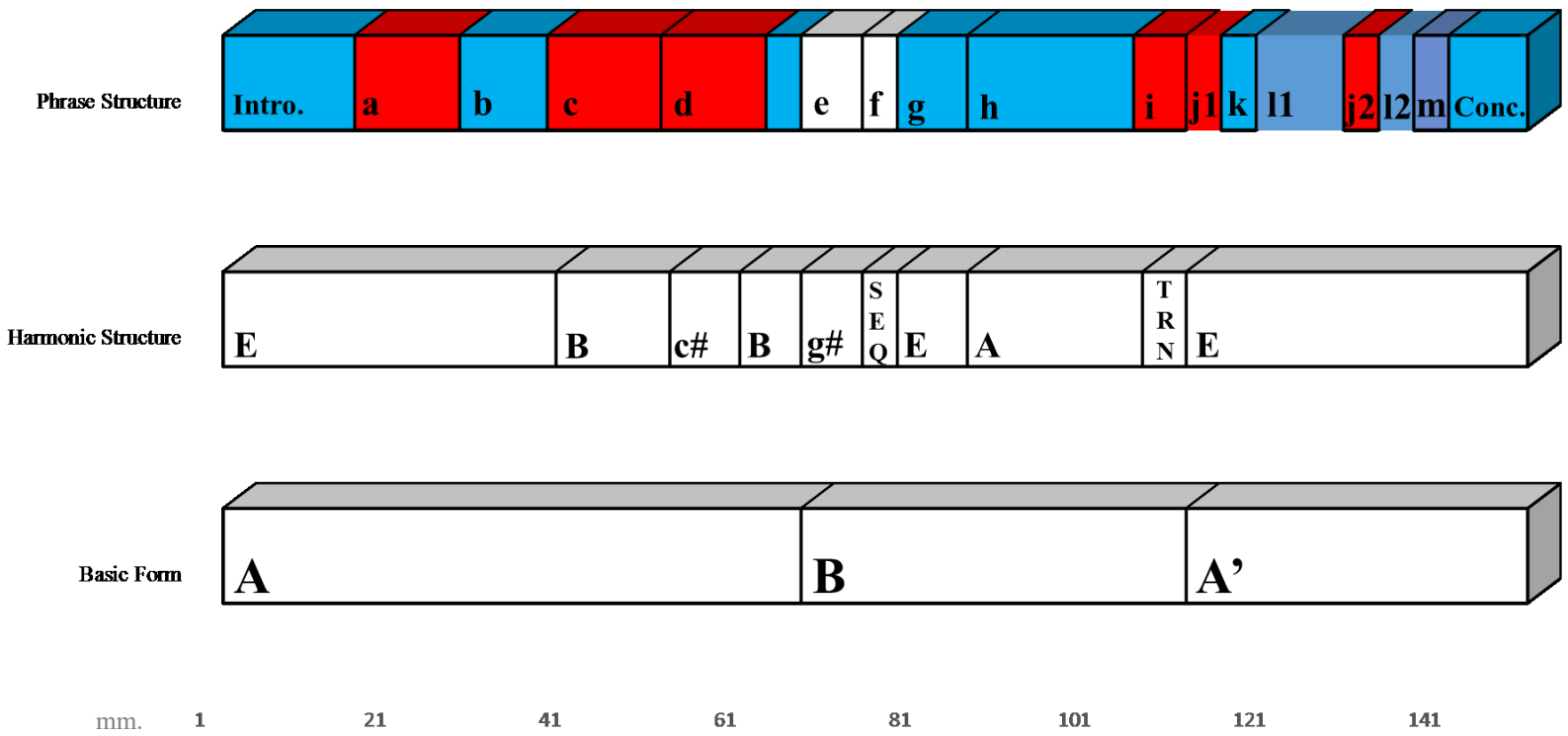


There is an ambiguity, or perhaps a misdirection that establishes E major by way of the key of the subdominant, A major. The contour of the phrase gives a certain prominence to the A/C# dyad at the apex of the line. The plagal detour, though integral to the key of E, suggests a reference to the cadential signature of prayer, and perhaps even a nostalgia for the sacred. This characteristic proves to be an important component to the duet's narrative development. The slightly inflected harmonic syntax of the ritornello phrase gives an alienating, but also elevating breadth to the phrase as it continually reappears in the music. The key of the subdominant, A major, plays much more than an incidental role suggested in the present context. As we will see, A major will return as an independent key in its own right in a crucial passage in the middle section of the piece.

Figure 2-7 contains an outline of the basic form, harmonic structure, and phrase structure of the duet as a whole. It should be emphasized that my intent was to provide context in a way that is as simplified as possible; therefore, at times, minute approximations of phrase lengths were made to remove the complexities of elisions and extensions. The lower bar of the schema represents the basic form; the middle bar details the key relations; finally, the top bar contains phrase groupings, as they are distributed across the keys and the overall form. Following the color key already presented, all blue segments indicate the ritornello theme; all red segments indicate the secondary theme. The two uncolored segments are the only instances where new material is introduced. The segments without borders are intended to show phrase overlap.

Finally, the letters inside these segments are keyed to the text, and to aspects of my detailed analysis which I will reference in the course of the chapter.

Figure 2-7. General Structural Analysis of the Formal and Harmonic Elements




Text Corresponding to Phrase Structure

a) Thrice bless'd...
b) The Lord all these virtues...
c) My gratitude calls…
d) My gratitude calls…Thy thanks…

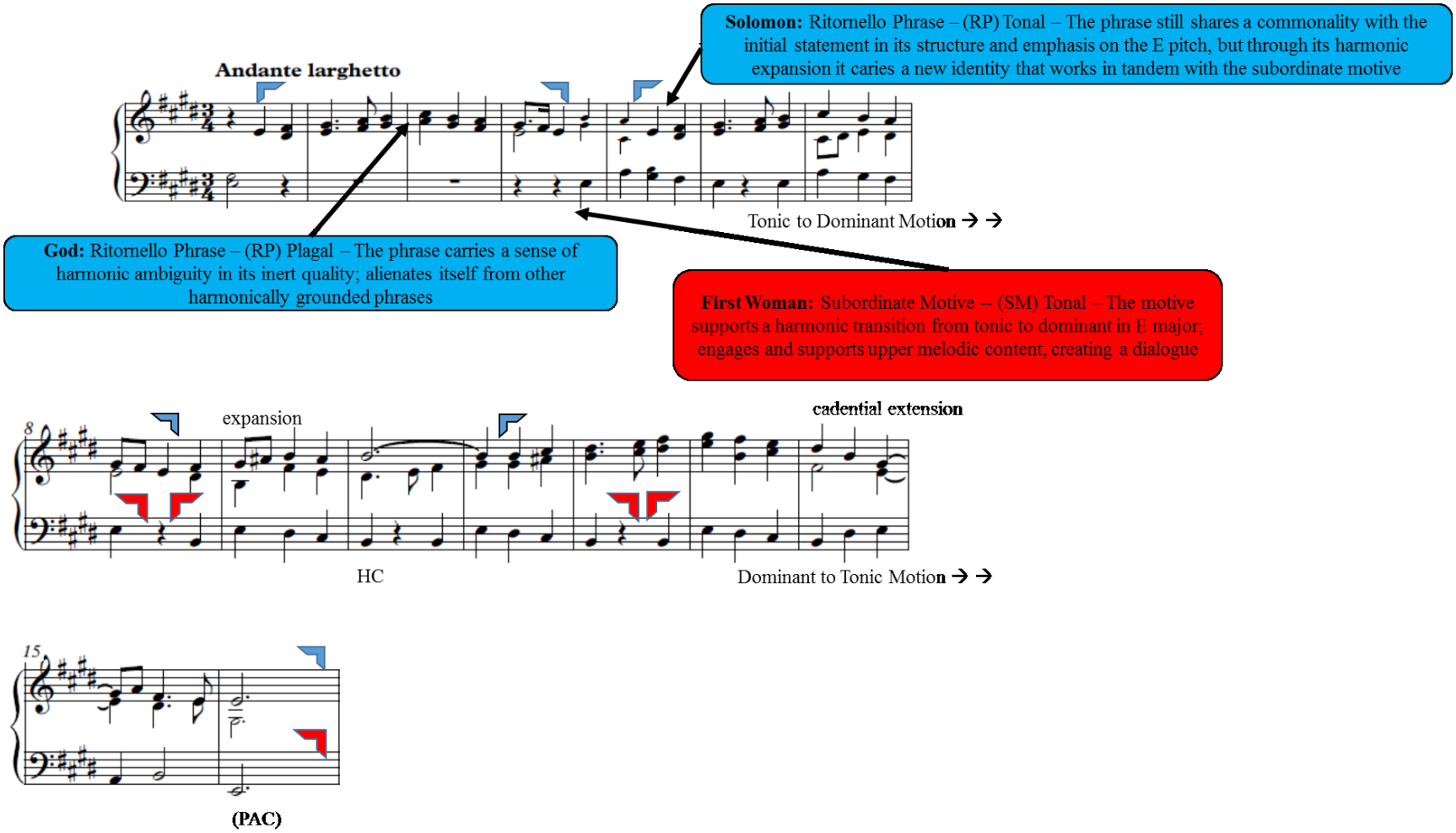
e) Tis God who rewards…
f) How happy are those…
g) For his mercy endureth…
h) How happy are those…For his mercy…

i) How happy are those…who in God…
j-1&2) How happy are those…
k) For his mercy endureth…
l-1&2) For his mercy…forever, forever
m) For his mercy…forever, forever

The ritornello phrase holds the key, in my analysis, to the characterization and projection of authority, both earthly and divine. It is the first phrase we hear; it is presented by the instruments, and functions as an introduction. The first utterance, the Woman's line: Thrice blessed is the King... which I have identified melodically as the secondary phrase, initiates the dialogue pattern as an antecedent phrase, to which Solomon responds, in the consequent, with the words "The Lord all these virtues has given." Both musically and narratively, we recognize the ritornello theme, here in a cadential, concluding, or affirming role: the voice of Solomon, associated with the authority of God. The dialogical framework between the First Woman and Solomon is evidenced by the harmonic stability that is achieved following the initial ritornello phrase.

Figure 2-8, the analysis illustrates a tonic-to-dominant shift in both voices, with the subordinate motive engaging the harmonically stable version of the ritornello phrase, which is then extended to establish a half cadence. Later, starting at measure 11, the same event occurs again, but with dominant-to-tonic motion culminating in perfect-authentic cadence in E measure in measure 16.

Figure 2-8. Form Analysis, Introduction, mm. 1-16



The text in the first section, spanning from mm. 16-67, is already significant in that it alludes to both a divine and earthly king.

Figure 2-9. Text, Section 1, mm, 16-67

FW: Thrice bless'd be the king for he's good and he's wise,
S: The Lord all these virtues has giv'n.
FW: My gratitude calls streaming tears from my eyes,
S: Thy thanks be return'd all to Heav'n.

The Woman directs gratitude towards Solomon, but the listener infers a dual meaning that references Christ through the trinity. It is particularly notable because the librettist, Newburgh Hamilton (1691-1761), shifts the narrative outside of the Old Testament and into the realm of Christianity. The passage does not reference any direct expression of gratitude, but rather an acknowledgment to the divine wisdom of the king. Examining the form of the text, the alternating rhyme scheme ABAB frames the potential for a very typical periodic phrase structure – a type of call and response – when set to music. Handel, instead, opts for an asymmetrical structure (Figure 2-10) by adding repeated fragments of text; the bolded text indicates a repetition of the entire phrase, while the italicized text indicates repeated fragments.

Figure 2-10. Asymmetrical Text Form, Section 1, mm, 16-67

FW: Thrice bless'd be the king for he's good and he's wise,
**Thrice bless'd be the king for he's good and he's wise**,*for he's good and he's wise.*
S: The Lord all these virtues has giv'n.
**The Lord all these virtues has giv'n.**
FW: **My gratitude calls**, *my gratitude calls*, (calls) **streaming tears from my eyes,**
My gratitude calls, streaming tears from my eyes.
S: Thy thanks, *thy thanks*, be return'd all to Heav'n.
**Thy thanks**, *thy thanks*, **be return'd all to Heav'n.**

Although the duet's phrases are inconsistent in length, the sense of periodic phrasing is absolutely essential to Handel's overall organization and to the music's meaning. Not only does awareness of this organization clarify cadential structure and key relationships, but it also affords

a formal balance challenged by the text. The following three figures begin to delineate the important connections between phrase structure and text.

Figure 2-11. Phrase Structure in Relation to Text, Section 1, mm. 16-67

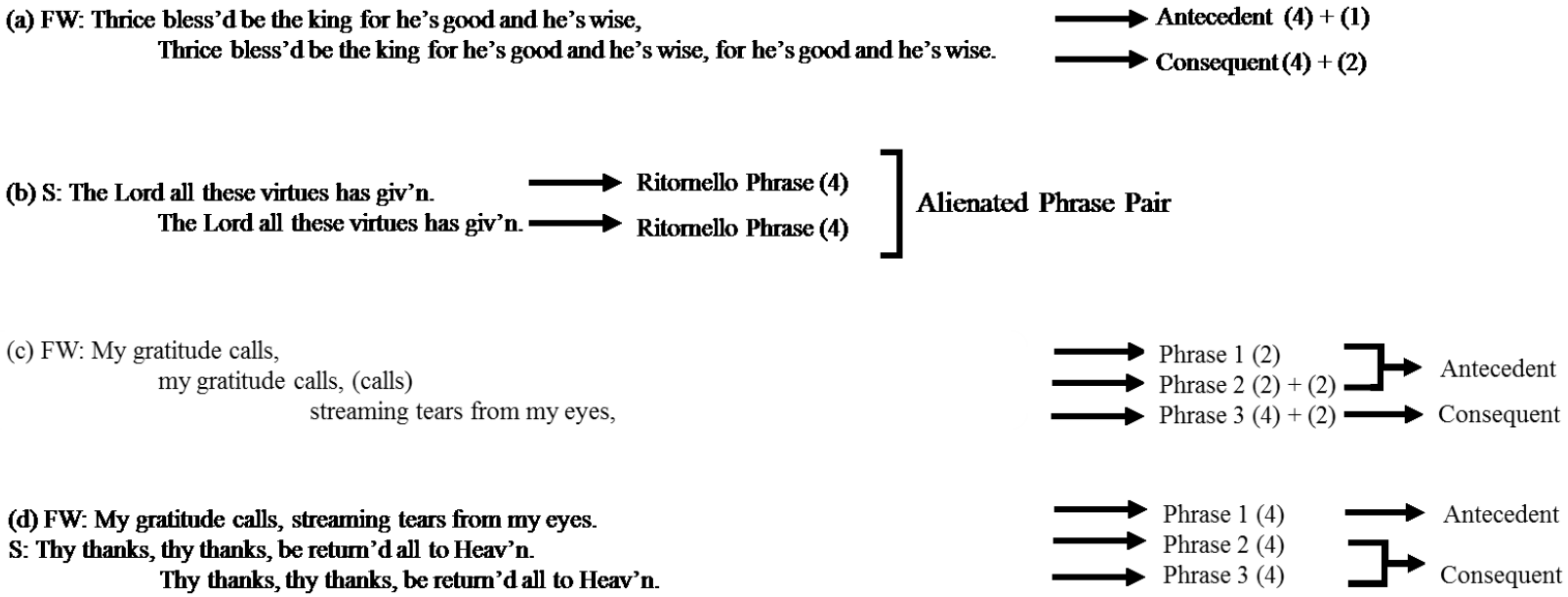


Figure 2-12. Phrase Structure Implied by a Symmetrical Reading of the Text

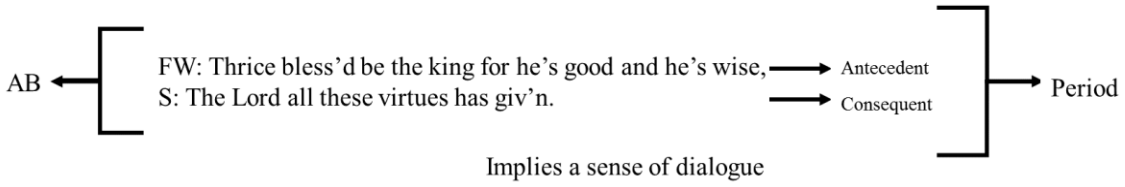
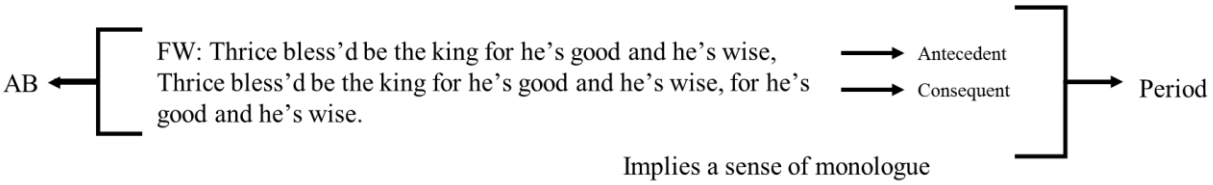



Figure 2-13. Phrase Structure Implied by an Asymmetrical Reading of the Text

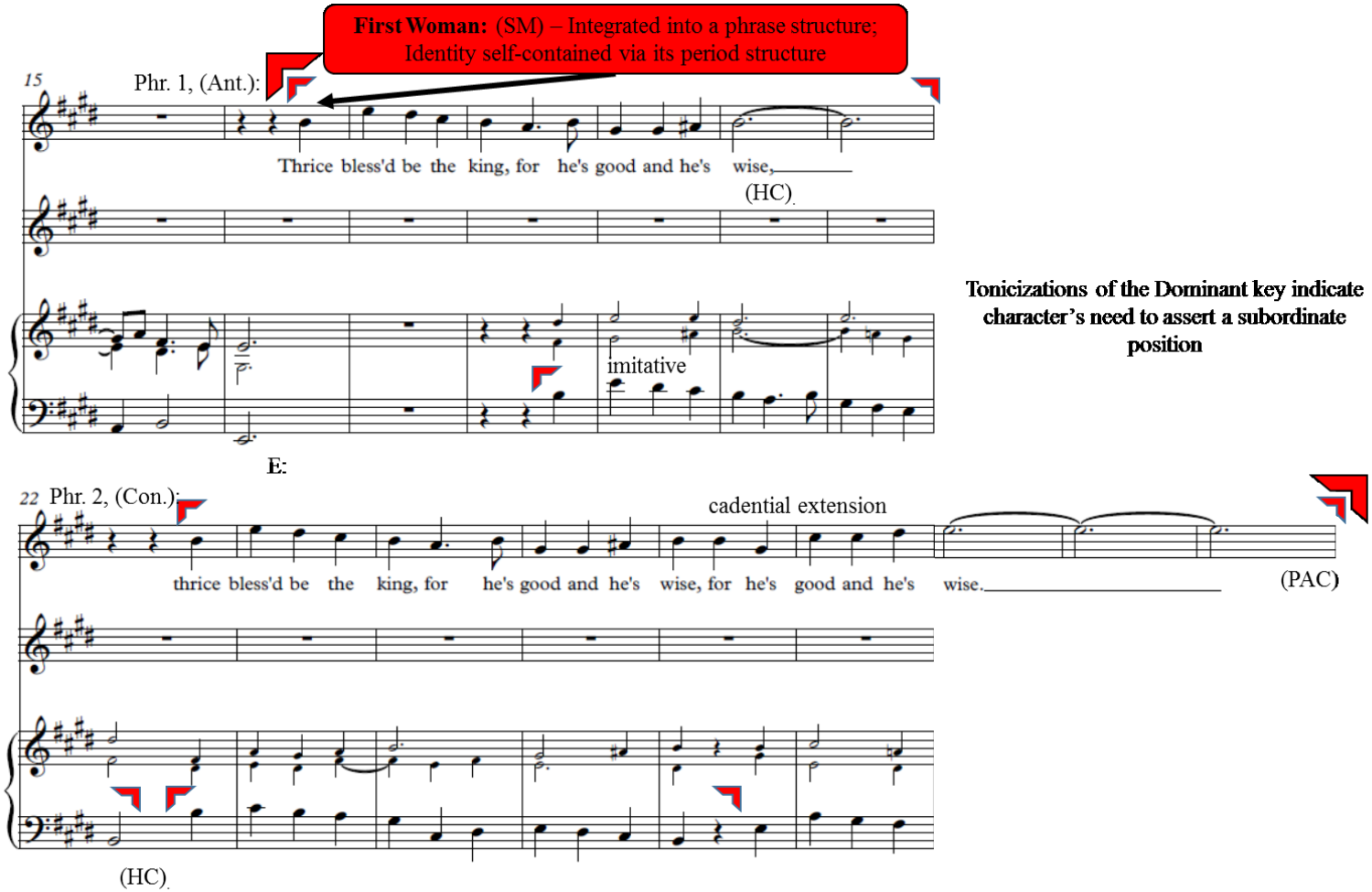



There are a number of distinct factors with regards to how the music sets the text which provide potential insight into how the voices in the duet relate to one another. In what I have labeled (a), (b), (c), and (d) in Figure 2-11, a sense of separation – and, more importantly, hierarchy – is established through the material allocated to the First Woman and Solomon. Handel uses repetition of the initial text in (a) to create an antecedent/consequent relationship locally rather than using the (b) material. By containing content (a) within its own period, the First Woman sets herself apart from Solomon and his text. In other words, if a musical structure had been devised in a way that more closely imitated the inherent symmetrical structure of the text, it would better imply a sense of inclusiveness and dialogue between the First Woman and Solomon. Instead, the asymmetry isolates the woman, making her words sound more like an internalized affirmation or monologue; Figures 2-12 and 2-13 illustrate this difference. The implication behind an asymmetrical setting is that Solomon's text, content (b), adopts a corrective tone. In an exchange, the remark of misplaced gratitude might be considered a *passive* gesture of humility; through its

own alienation, such a display remains present, but an *active* recognition of God's power and benevolence also exists. The tone of the setting relies on these phrasing choices.

Examining the section's narrative potential through a harmonic lens, as shown in Figure 2-14, demonstrates further connections to phrasing. The key is firmly in E major with both a half cadence and perfect-authentic cadence; tonally, this lends to the sense of completion that I asserted regarding the First Woman's line as a confined statement. However, what I find interesting is the subordinate motive's attachment to the female character's behavior in the music. First, it integrates itself into a phrase, producing a sense of an independent identity; there is no motivic engagement with the ritornello phrase as was observed in the introduction. Additionally, the First Woman assumes a secondary position through her expression in the dominant key.

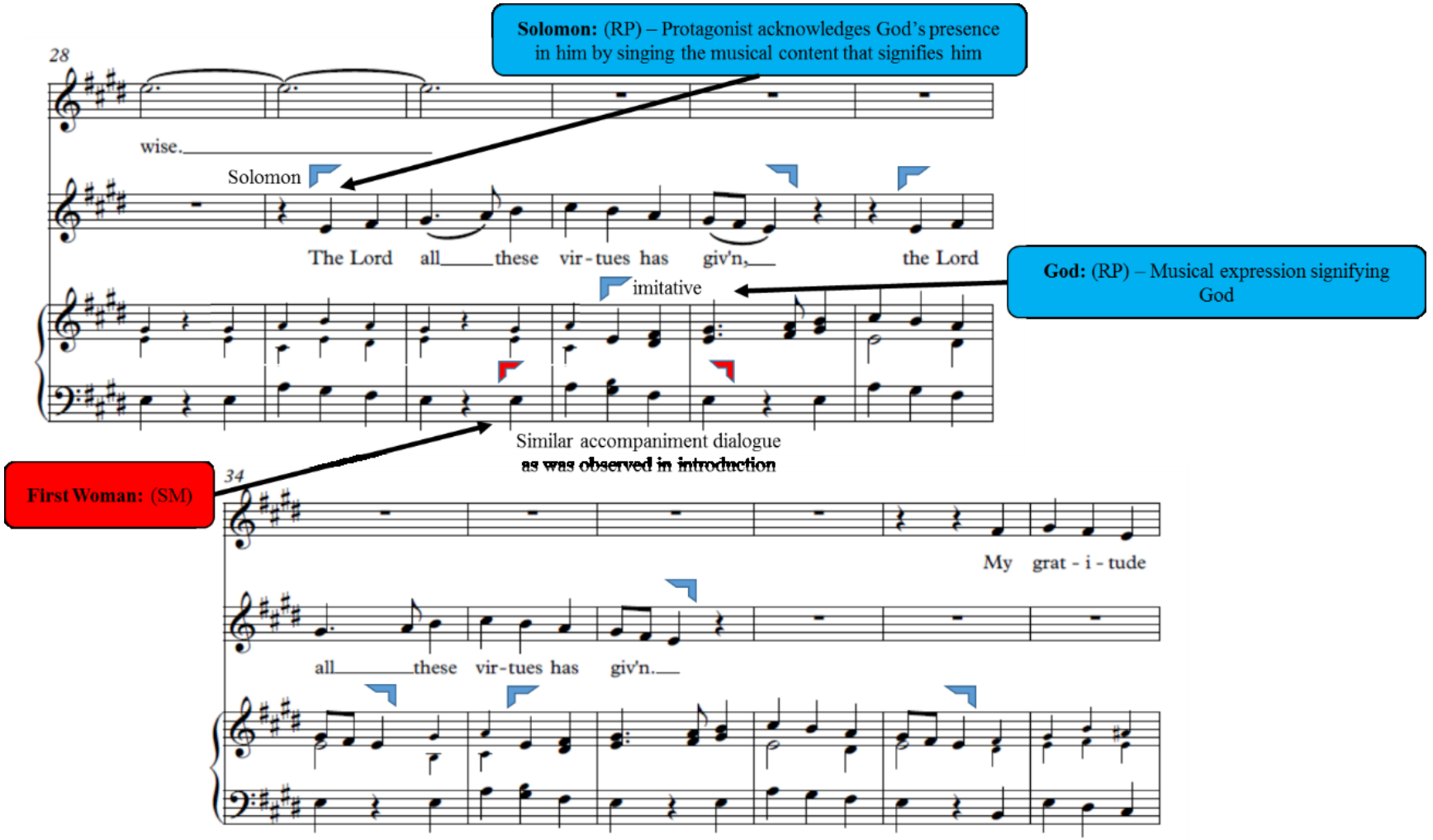
Figure 2-14. Narrative Potential Dictated by Harmonic Structure, Section 1, mm. 16-30



The first and second iteration of the text are in B major – note the tonicization of the dominant via the leading tone A#. It is only in the final fragment of text, a cadential extension, that the listener hears its role in the context of E major. This is important because it is a means through which Handel can demonstrate the difference this female character projects between herself and Solomon.

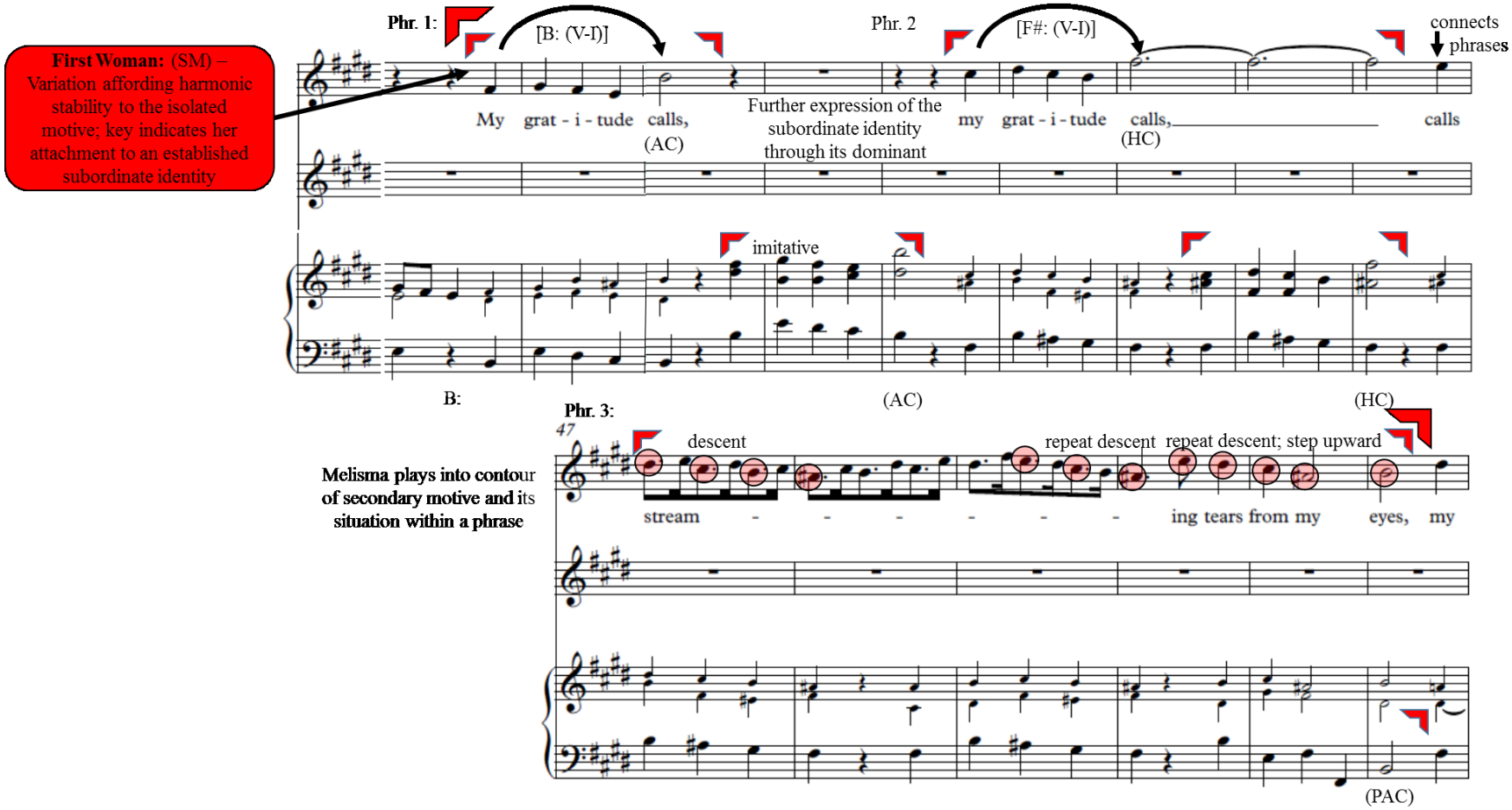
An entity of its own, the displaced (b) material illustrated in Figure 2-15 carries a complex role. It may be sung by Solomon, but I do not necessarily think it *is* Solomon. From a narrative perspective, it becomes the character's way of acknowledging the presence of God, and furthermore, an expression of God's presence in him. While I will not deny the functional reasoning behind the repeat of the ritornello phrase, the duality Handel promotes through it and the imitative response in the accompaniment is also significant. Furthermore, the fact that this imitation interacts with the subordinate motive in the bass are reminiscent of the character dialogue suggested in the introduction.

Figure 2-15. Narrative Potential Dictated by Harmonic Structure, Section 1, mm. 29-38



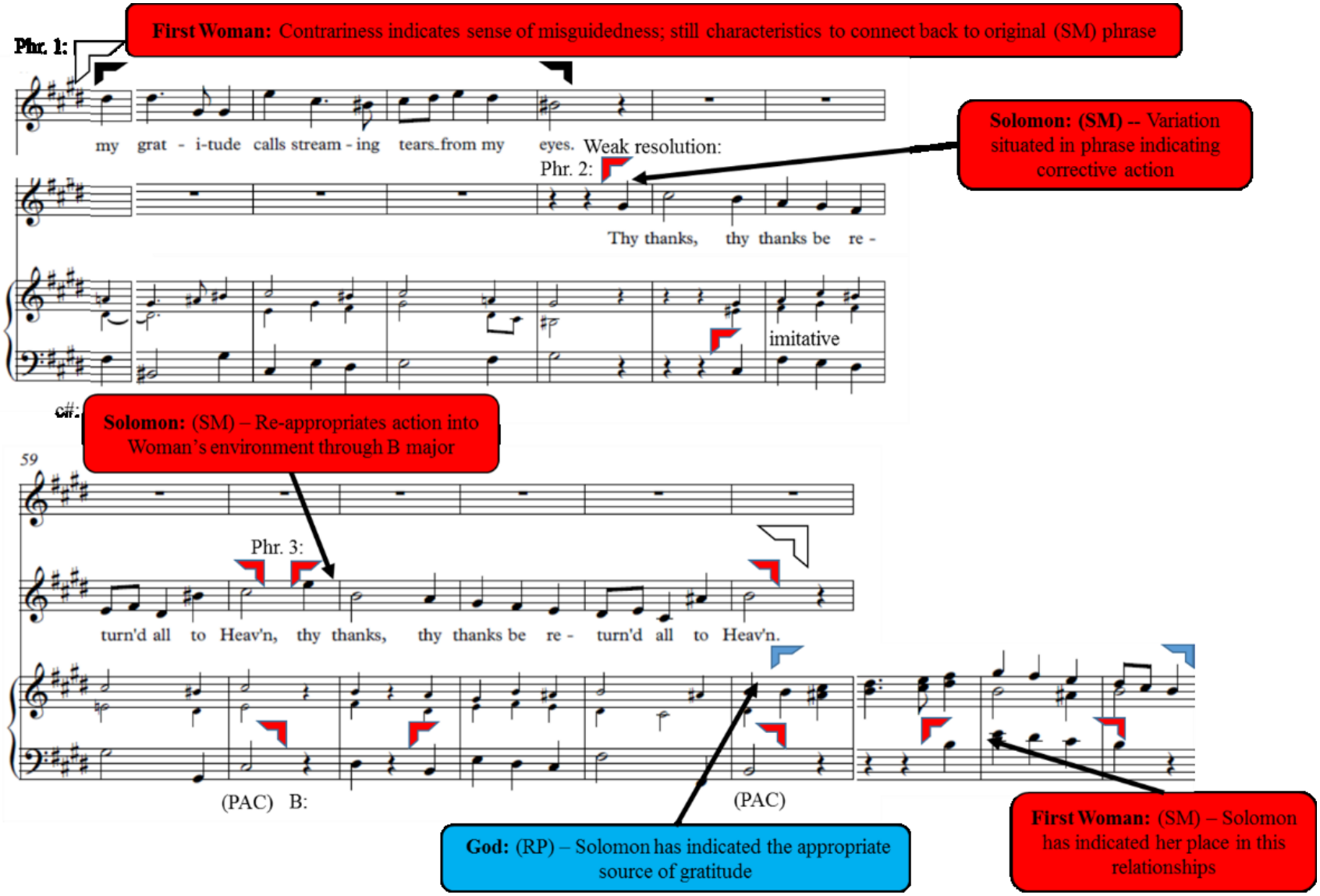
Whereas (a) and (b) promote separation, (c) and (d) clearly demonstrate an occasion for exchange. Each character may have their own period structuring, but both a formal and harmonic overlap on a larger scale indicate an interrelationship. The pouring out of gratitude is first expressed by the First Woman in (c); the action is contained in the antecedent, while the evidence of it occurs in the consequent – the streaming of tears. As observed in Figure 2-16, mm. 38-52 first show a variation of the subordinate motive, afforded harmonic purpose through a V-I relationship in the key of B major – we have already observed the female character's assertion of herself in this key. The motive then repeats the action, this time with a tonicization of the secondary dominant, F# major. The final phrase, which I have marked as six measures in length, might be better explained as a four-bar phase with an internal expansion. Mm. 47-50 contain a brief melismatic sequence, one that plays into the contour of the subordinate motive and its situation within the phrase structure experienced earlier; this ends on a perfect-authentic cadence in B major. The continuity of B major within this period plays into the further development of the character's sense of identity and need to assert a subordinate position; her voice and her actions demonstrate intentions from within. On a larger formal scale, the introduction of the (d) material demonstrates an insistence for a different kind of hierarchy on Solomon's part.

Figure 2-16. Narrative Potential Dictated by Harmonic Structure, Section 1, mm. 38-52



In Figure 2-17, the initial phrase, mm. 52-56, is sung by the First Woman. The presence of both a dotted quarter rhythm and stepwise motion allow the listener to infer connections to earlier material; the (quasi-)inverted contour suggests that something has changed. I believe the change is meant, in fact, to be a revelation. In (a), the First Woman has proclaimed her blessing to Solomon, but in (d), Handel affords the listener with the opportunity to observe how Solomon engages with this perspective. The contrariness of the First Woman's line, obscured by a greater distancing from the home key – C# minor in comparison to E major – and a lack of solid resolution to the phrase all suggest that her intentions may be misguided. The text of "thy thanks" confirms this misdirection. When Solomon enters at m. 56, he humbles himself by performing a variation of the subordinate motive. I would argue he has placed himself in the woman's position to recognize where her gratitude should truly be expressed: the implied character of God. The choice to express this in C# minor, and then again in B major, is also telling. In the first occurrence, it manifests as a corrective action, one that proves effective as Solomon is able to achieve resolution. When he repeats it in B major, it re-appropriates the action back into the First Woman's environment. It is interesting to see how the ritornello phrase fits into this argument. I noted how the First Woman disconnects herself from the theme as a means of suggesting hierarchical separation. Solomon does the same by tagging the ritornello phrase onto the accompaniment after the (d) material has been stated; he literally directs the listener to the true source of provenance, and needs to state it only once to have it stand out.

Figure 2-17. Narrative Potential Dictated by Harmonic Structure, Section 1, mm. 52-67



Section 2, spanning mm. 67-111, continues to explore more distant key relationships that play into Handel's overall design of the work, but first let us consider the relevance of the text:

Figure 2-18. Text, Section 2, mm. 67-111

S: Tis God Who rewards and will lift from the dust
whom to crush proud oppressors endeavour.
FW: How happy are those who in God put their trust,
S: For his mercy endureth forever.

With the singing of the Psalter so important to the Anglican tradition, the audience would more than likely recognize that portions of the libretto are constructed from literary tropes present in biblical psalms. Many examples of these occurrences can be sourced specifically from the Book of Psalms, although a number of other Old Testament texts and apocrypha also contain such tropes. For example, the trope of "how happy are those" is present on at least twenty-four occasions, and it is the choice text to start the Book of Psalms. Additionally, the phrase "for his mercy endureth forever" is present forty-two times. Often, such tropes are associated with poetry connected to the theme of thanksgiving. Two blatant references exist in Psalm 40 and Psalm 136. Examining these texts reveals two ways in which blessing manifests in both Handel's duet and in biblical teaching. The form of petition observed in the preceding text is one that may be easily superimposed upon the First Woman's narrative. She is faced with the adversity of losing her child and blessed with salvation from that predicament through faith in God. In the case of her narrative, the propensity towards faith is achieved through a corrective action – she thanks Solomon directly as opposed to God, but the purpose is not to condemn her for this, but to illustrate a form of misguided gratitude as a lesson for the future, something the narrator of Psalm 40 alludes to as well. Here, the narrator does not make the mistake of misdirected gratitude, but does indicate the consequences of such attitudes: "Blessed is that man that maketh

the Lord his trust, and *respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*"[28] The juxtaposition of faith and pride is something important in the lesson Solomon demonstrates in the duet. From a biblical perspective, the sin of pride, or that of trust in the proud, is a humanistic action and quality – pride of the eyes, the heart, the lips, etc. It distances the person from God and therefore leads to destruction.

As one may observe, the librettist employs the same alternating rhyme scheme that has been present throughout, yet through added fragments and repetition the form becomes asymmetrical in an increasingly complex way:

Figure 2-19. Asymmetrical Text Form, Section 2, mm. 67-111

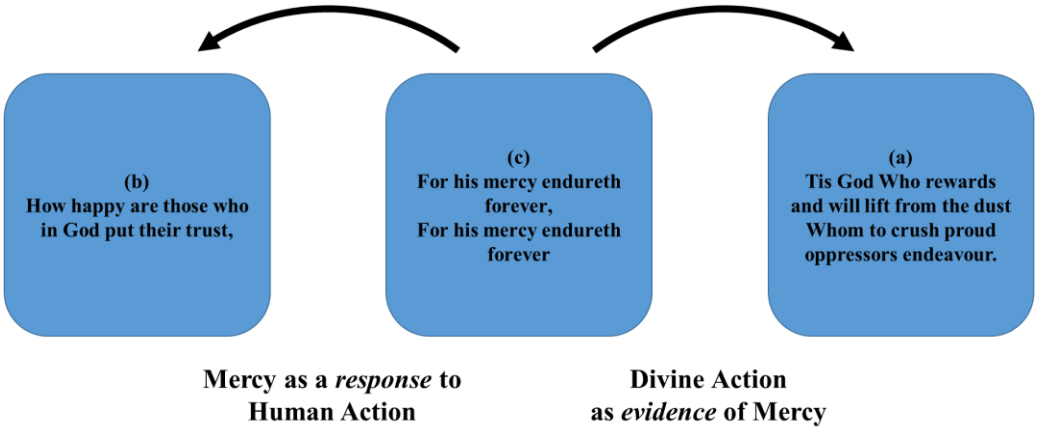
S: Tis God Who rewards and will lift from the dust
whom to crush proud oppressors endeavour.
FW: How happy are those who in God put their trust,
S: For his mercy endureth forever.
**For his mercy endureth forever.**
FW: **How happy are those who in God put their trust,**
S: **For his mercy endureth forever,** *forever, endureth forever* /
FW: **How happy are those who in God put their trust,** *who in God, who in God put their trust*

Figure 2-21 shows in the division of the text into smaller groupings, a reflection of the phrase structure that organizes them: content (e), (f), (g), and (h), as well as a fifth component, (i). Aside from diversions into new musical content, we also observe occasions of phrase elision, unlike the first section. Part of this undoubtedly promotes developmental interest in the music; however, it also provides opportunities for more complex displays of inter-subjectivity among characters. By this, I am alluding to circumstances where the listener may observe introspective negotiations of identity and how they affect relationships with other characters. On a textual level, the characters reflect two types of relationships with God. The trope of "how happy are

[28] Psalm 40:4, *KJV*. Emphasis added.

those" often demonstrates connections on a humanistic level, whereas "his mercy endureth forever" speaks to a divine association. From a hermeneutic perspective, this draws the content of (e), (f), and (g) together to form added meaning.

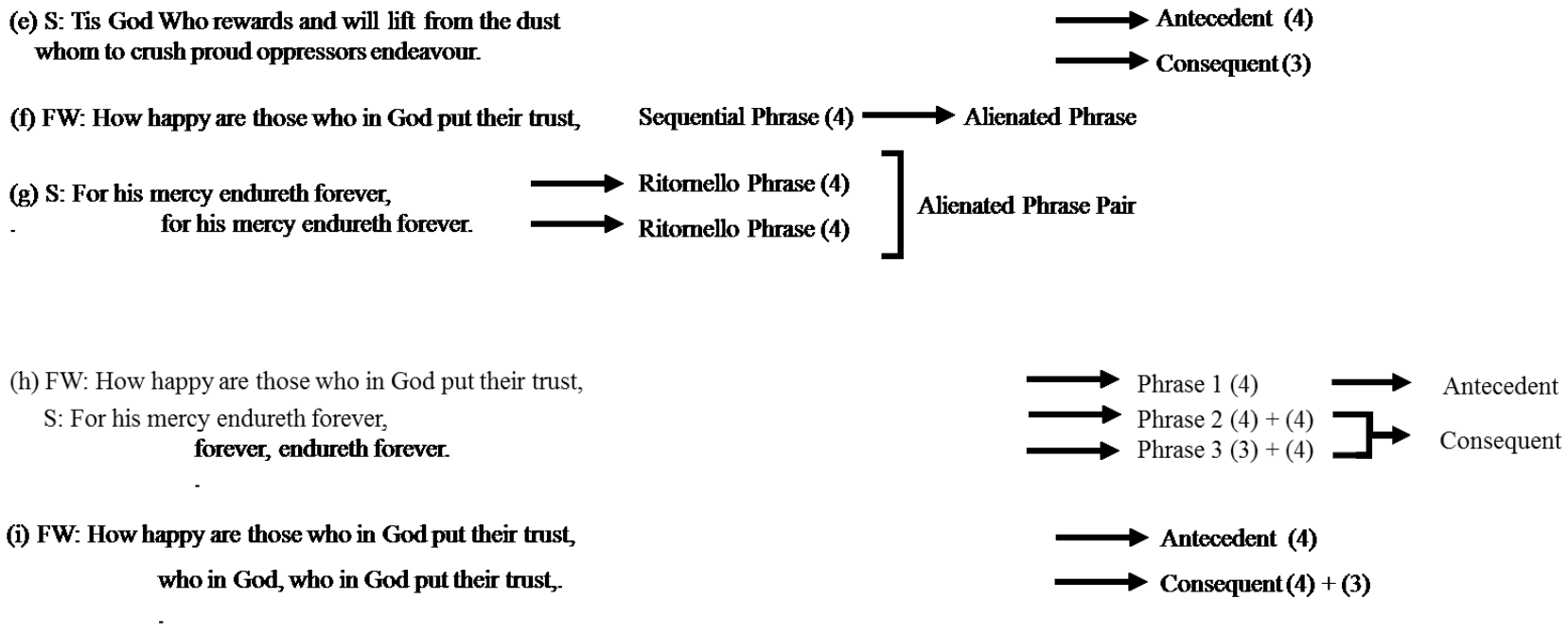
Figure 2-20: Dual Interpretations of Meaning Based on the Ritornello Text




As Figure 2-20 illustrates, the common thread that produces meaning for the listener is the dual role of the ritornello text, "for his mercy endureth forever." At this point, the ritornello's musical role as a representation of God becomes multilayered; as a harmonically-alienated element, it continues to manifest as the character of God, but it also adopts a more action-oriented role in its responsive nature, something that is further augmented in Section 3.

Returning Figure 2-21, the diagram illustrates their musical function in the larger scheme of the duet.

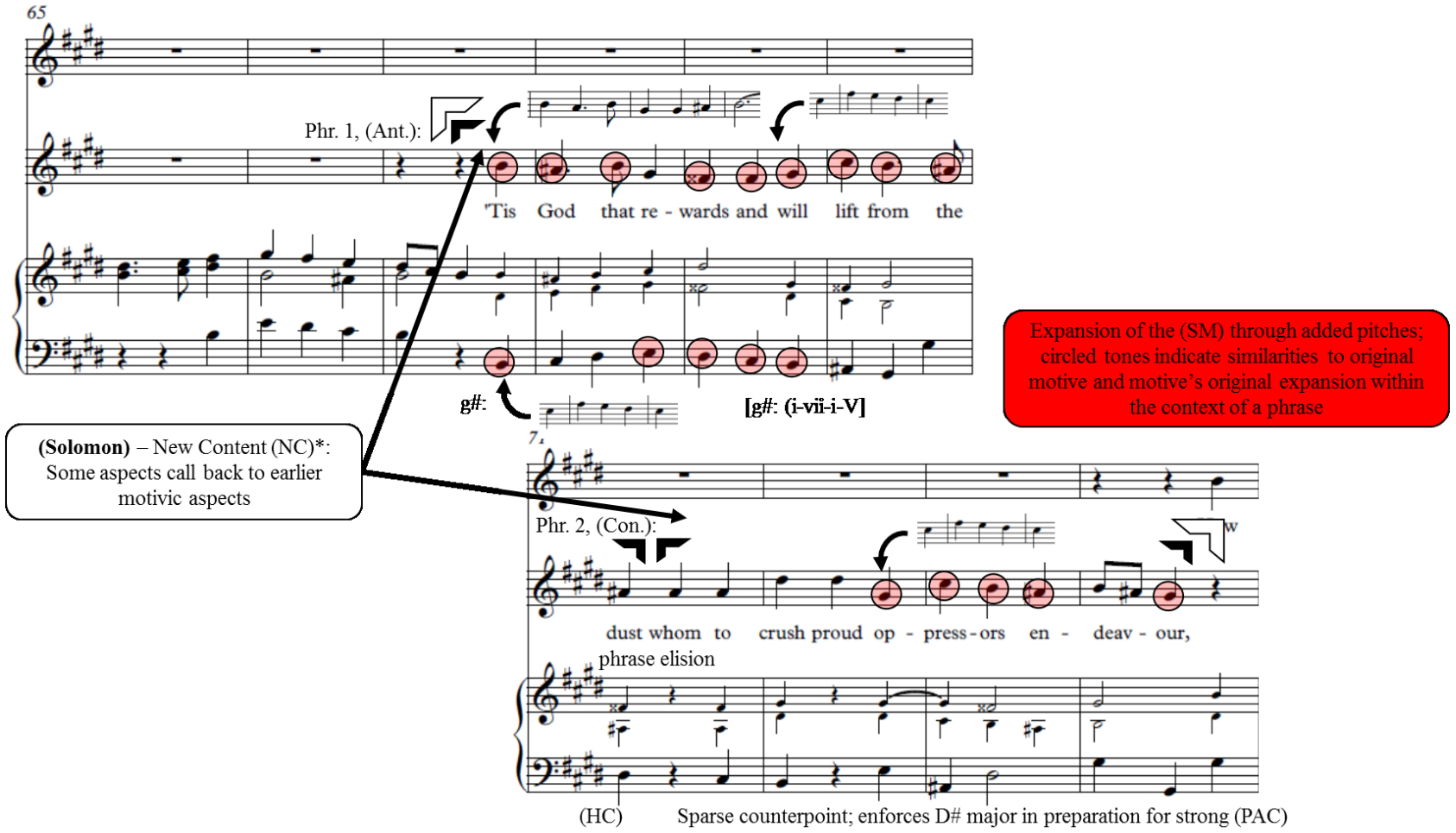
Figure 2-21. Phrase Structure in Relation to Text, Section 2, mm. 67-111



The first two phrases, content (e), function as a statement; more importantly, they contain Solomon's inference of God's love manifested through divine acts, a connection made apparent in the entrance of the ritornello phrase soon after. Just prior to the ritornello phrase, the First Woman also makes a statement, content (f). This reflects the humanistic perspective enveloping a self-realization of the connection between personal trust and God's favor. What is interesting is that, while content (e) and (f) do not interfere with one another in a temporal manner, hermeneutically content (g), the ritornello phrase, carries the potential for (g) to afford itself primacy in the organization of both (e) and (f).

In Section 2, not only does the ritornello phrase alienate itself from a harmonic perspective, but it also interferes with the formal scheme of the music. Figure 2-22 shows that the music shifts, once again, into an increasingly distant key: G# minor. I noted earlier the important connection Handel establishes between E and A major. The composer employs a strategy of exploring both the dominant key (B major) and the parallel minor key of the tonic (C# minor) in the A Section, rather than reserving these diversions for the B section. As an alternative Handel references the plagal relationship initially established in the ritornello phrase by shifting to a series of keys that afford a priority to A major. Starting with G# minor is an interesting choice because it is both the parallel minor key of the dominant B major and a sort of leading tone key to A major. The fact that Handel takes the time to sequentially move back into E major before ultimately going to A major also asserts the importance of this key.

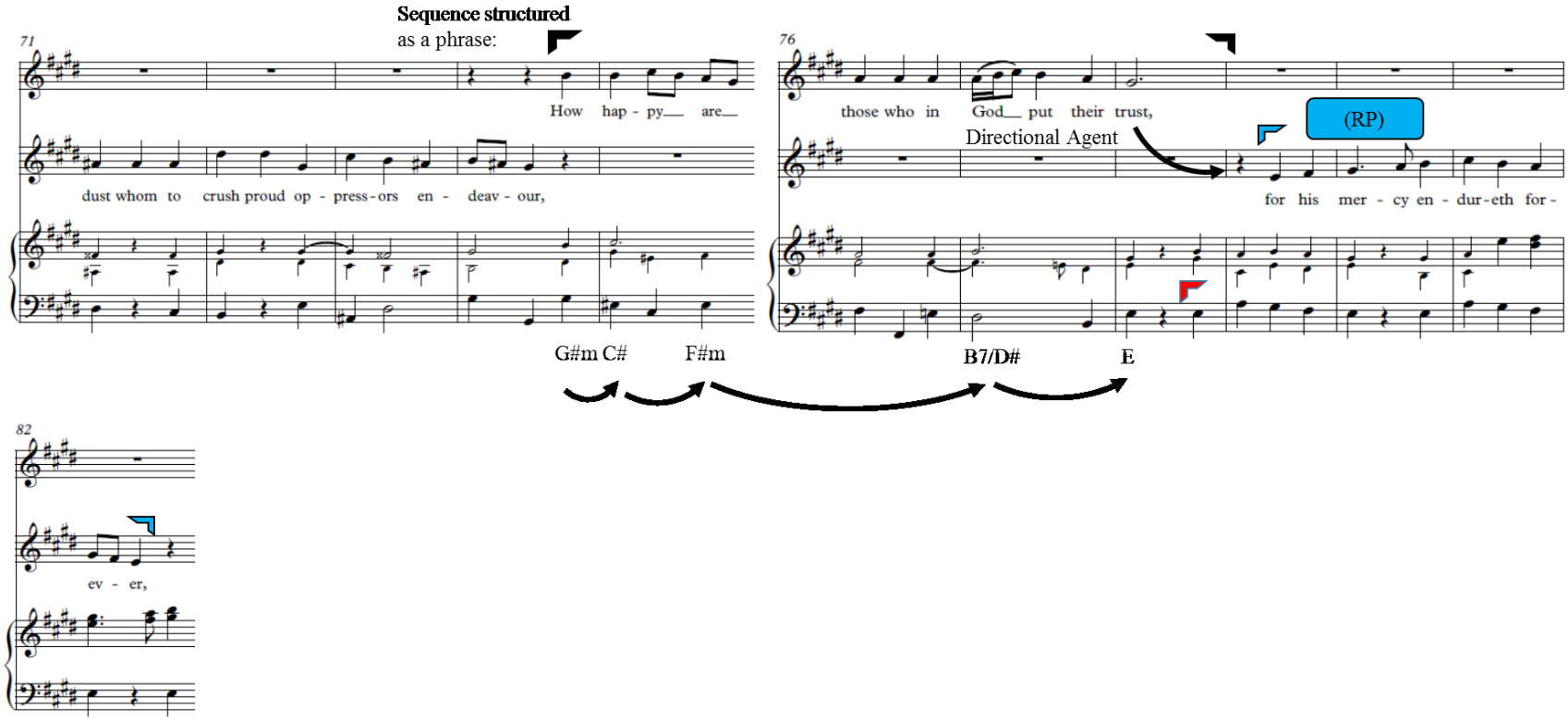
Figure 2-22. Narrative Potential Dictated by Melodic Structure, Section 2, mm. 67-74



As noted, the melodic material of the vocal parts is relatively new, with the exception of certain intervals and contours that recall the subordinate motive. I will not presume to know the composer's motivations behind this nostalgia, but at the very least it produces a sense of continuity in the piece while creating a varied B section. On a motivic level, it may indicate the person to whom the statement is directed: Solomon expressing his point of view to the First Woman. Interestingly enough, the text resembles a psalm from 1 Samuel, where Hannah sings praises of thanksgiving to God for delivering the Israelites from their oppressors.[29] The psalm also implies continued action by God to provide blessings for his people. The larger context speaks to God's work through his king. This is specifically what establishes the prayer as prophetic, as there was no king of Israel during Hannah's time. Here, the psalm may be referencing the generalized archetype of the Davidic king, but it is certainly plausible that the librettist uses the context indirectly to establish a specific connection to Solomon. The periodic structure of the phrases and use of the ritornello phrase aid in making this connection. In Figure 2-23, Solomon begins with the content that I have marked as (e). Although the antecedent is a typical four bars in length, the consequent phrase elides with it, lasting for only three measures. I would argue the compacted phrase structure is a means of painting the act of "crushing" present in the text. When content (f) is introduced, it adopts a transformative role. Over the course of four bars, through a sequence of fifths (G#m-C#-F#m-B#7-E), it does not so much ask a question as direct the listener to the ritornello phrase (g).

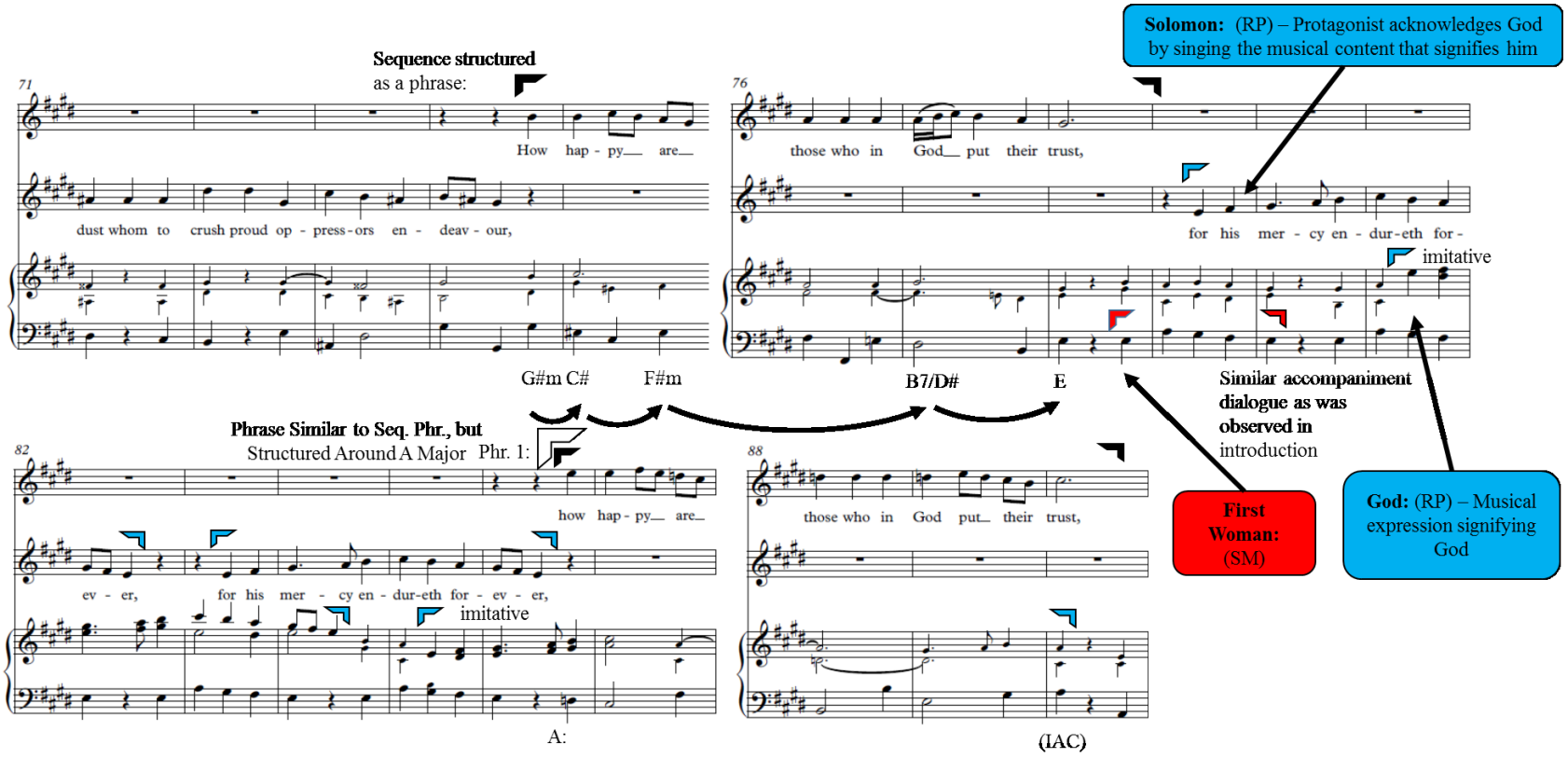
[29] "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed," 1 Samuel 2:8-10, *KJV*.

Figure 2-23. Narrative Potential Dictated by Harmonic Sequence, Section 2, mm. 74-82

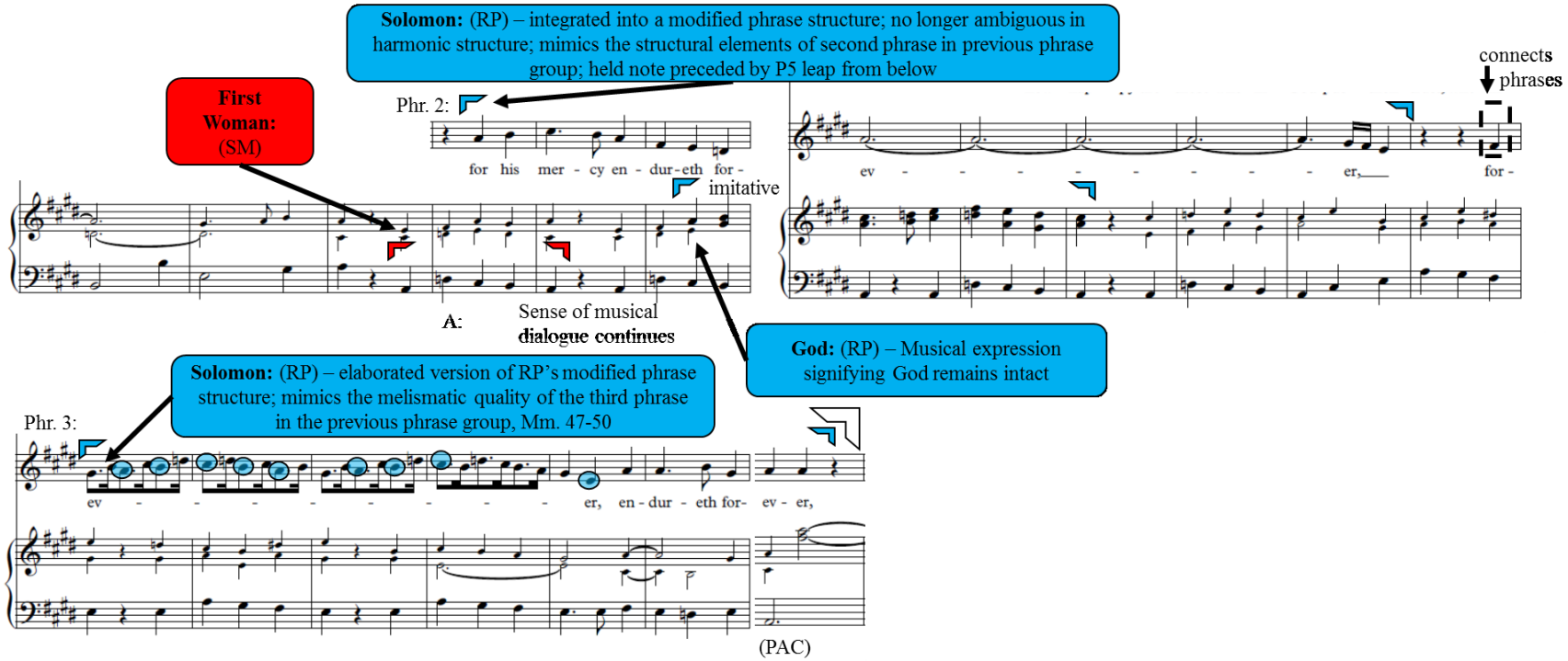


Examining Figure 2-24, there are a number of reasons why the four bar phrase at m. 87 – the start of the (h) content – lacks a responsive function to the phrase at m. 75 and instead adopts an initiatory role to a new phrase group. In contour, this phrase mimics that of the sequence; such similarities may be an indicator of a period structure, but the phrase lacks the harmonic stability that would be typical in such a scenario. The sequence is not part of an interpolation within an E major phrase – it *is* the phrase. E major is not a prepared half-cadence that relates to the imperfect-authentic cadence at mm. 89-90. We as listeners may draw a cross-relationship between the E and A sonorities, but in the overall formal scheme, it is the sequence and ritornello phrase that are a better fit – two alienated units where the former directs itself to the latter. The sudden phrase in A major fits much better within the scheme of a phrase group containing an imperfect, half, and perfect-authentic cadence, respectively.

Figure 2-24. Four Bar Phrase as an Initiator for a New Phrase Group, mm 75-109

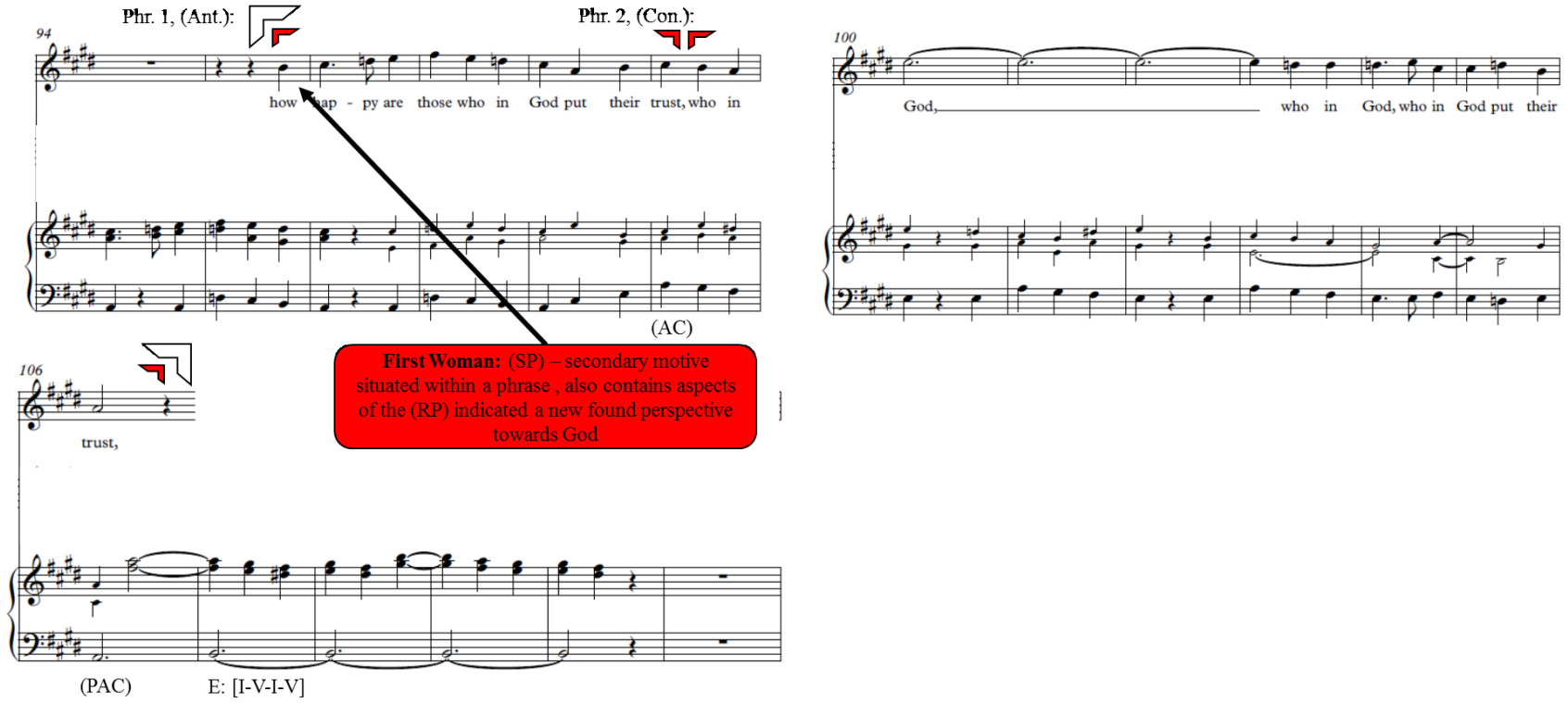


(Fig. 2-24 cont'd.)



As was the case in Section 1, Section 2 ends with another phrase period. I believe this material, content (i), also operates to the same end: to demonstrate the First Woman's self-realization of how she and God relate to one another. Looking at Figure 2-25, tonally, the music's continuation in the key of A major indicates its connection to the rest of the section. However, more important is the potential significance of certain characteristics to the phrase, such as the cadential extension at m. 107. The element of transformation has been a major theme in the duet. At this point, the First Woman's perspectives have changed. Solomon has "afforded his wisdom" and, as a result, elements of the ritornello phrase are incorporated to show her connection to God – note the ascent and descent, and the dotted quarter on the downbeat. Additionally, the overall tonal scheme of the work is able to return to a stable state in the home key of E major.

Figure 2-25. Narrative Potential Dictated by Phrase and Harmonic Structure, mm. 96-110



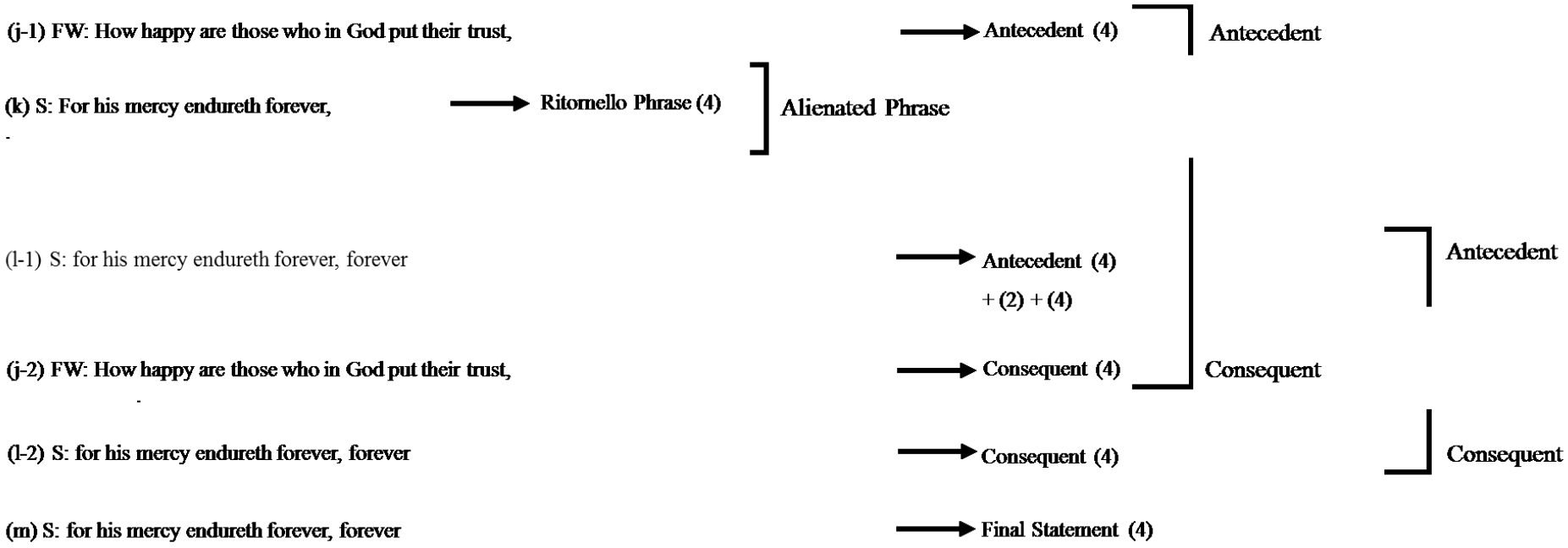
Section 3 encompasses mm. 110-142. While it begins in an uninterrupted fashion, its form becomes increasingly complex as the content is further developed. Unsurprisingly, Handel adopts an asymmetrical format for the text, yet finds a way to apply a sense of symmetry in a musical sense.

Figure 2-26. Asymmetrical Text Form, Section 3, mm. 111-142

FW: How happy are those who in God put their trust,
*who in God, who in God put their trust*
**How happy are those who in God put their trust,**
S: For his mercy endureth forever
**For his mercy endureth forever,** *forever*
FW: How happy are those who in God put their trust,
S: **For his mercy endureth forever**
**For his mercy endureth forever**

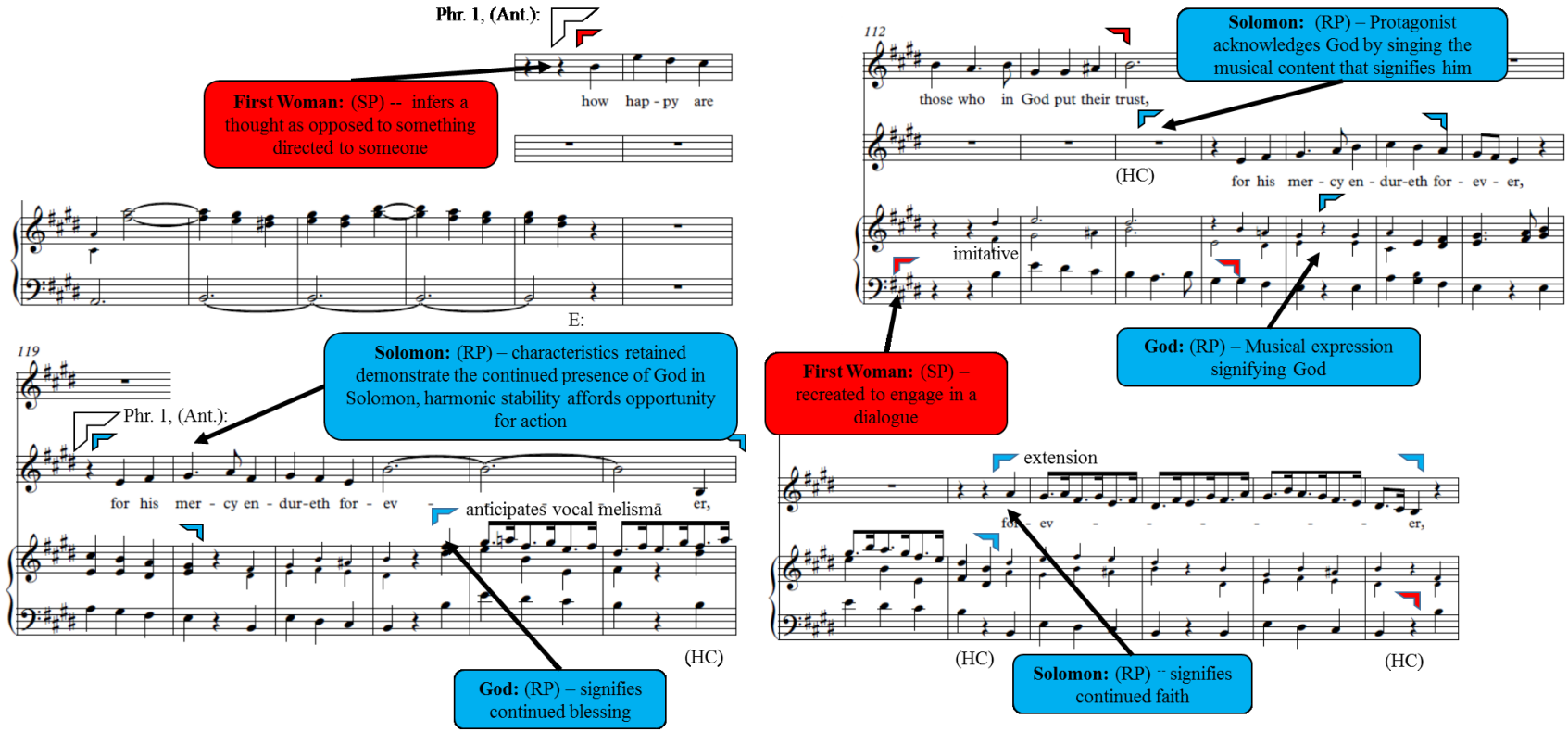
Figure 2-27 shows that the content is distributed among two phrase periods that overlap one another – (j) and (l) – the ritornello phrase (k), and its final statement (m). The following diagram provides the breakdown in greater detail:

Figure 2-27. Phrase Structure in Relation to Text, Section 3, mm. 111-142

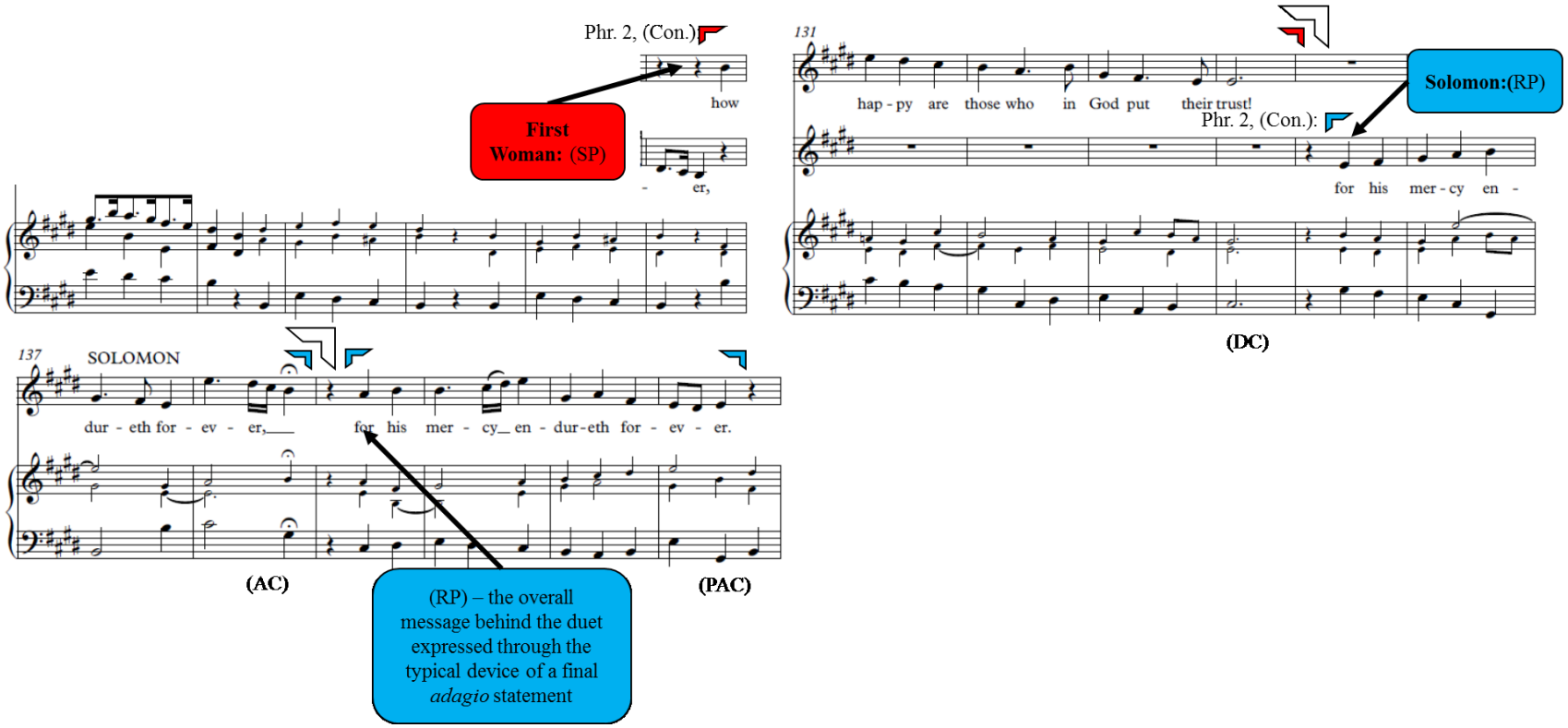


Despite a form of call and response being established and made evident through the cadential format of the phrases, one cannot help but derive a sense of alienation in the First Woman's words – in both the antecedent and consequent of each scenario, the speaker simply repeats the text. The listener is given the opportunity to reach a degree of self-reflection in this kind of structuring while also perceiving a sense of dialogue. In this case, the accompaniment recreates the First Woman's identity through imitation, but also has that identity engage in dialogue with the ritornello phrase. The accompaniment again plays a role in Solomon's part, this time as a participant in perpetuating the cycle of faith and blessing. The prolongation of the note in Solomon's part at m. 122 can be observed in Figure 2-28 as an unending commitment of faith to secure unlimited blessing. Here, the music paints the notion of eternity through the long melisma that occurs in the bass, after which the vocal part then picks up at m. 127. It is clear that Solomon's words take precedence, with the overall lesson being expressed in the final *adagio* statement, "for his mercy endureth forever." Handel does this by ensuring Solomon's text follows the First Woman's, and also by using a deceptive cadence that requires a further resolution. This is achieved by the end of Section 3 and further enforced in the concluding material. The ritornello phrase makes one final appearance, first harmonically ambiguous, and then with an elaborate cadential extension, to create a sense of balance in the duet.

Figure 2-28. Narrative Potential Dictated by Melodic Contour, Section 3, mm. 111-142



(Fig. 2-28 cont'd.)



In summary, in addition to showing an example of the oratorio's utilization of allegory and narrative to illustrate aspects of eighteenth-century British social thought, this chapter has demonstrated the different conditions under which these connections are musically expressed. While the text can never be removed entirely, it has been my aim to show how the organization of musical elements can aid in reinforcing the ideas the oratorio communicates. Investigating the duet in question has provided the opportunity to observe the unique ways in which elements such as phrase-structure and harmonic content can provide additional avenues for interpretation.

# 3. *Judas Maccabeus*

## Politics

In line with eighteenth-century rationalism, ethics played a major role in the form these narratives appropriated. Behind these lessons came the political institutions that both supported and maintained them. Ruth Smith explores three areas of what she describes as allegorical politics: music as political metaphor, literary political allusion, and the *British Israel*. It is the allegorical framework of the last aspect that I find most relevant to my investigation.[30] This will lead effectively into the following chapter as it helps clarify why British audiences were able to glean the subtext of an oratorio like *Judas Maccabeus* so easily.

Considering the relevance of the Bible to English protestants of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, historian Patrick Collinson suggests that, while the New Testament provides the nation with the tools to found its Church and achieve salvation, it is the Old Testament that facilitates the nation's religious experience, one inspired and nourished by the poetics of the Psalms and Canticles.[31] Historian Christopher Hill expresses similar sentiments, suggesting that his book *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-century Revolution* could just as aptly be entitled *The Old Testament and the Seventeenth-century Revolution*.[32] Britain's perspective at the time suggested that it observed its relationship to God on the same terms as Old Testament Israel, particularly in respect to an ethical code. Evidence of this can be observed in literary works that acknowledged the wisdom of the biblical prophets, as we observed in the

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[30] Smith's entire position on the ideology of the *British Israel* can be read in Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 213-29.
[31] Patrick Collinson, "Biblical Rhetoric: The English Nation and National Sentiment in the Prophetic Mode," in *This England: Essays on the English Nation and Commonwealth in the Sixteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 170.
[32] Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 440 noted in Collinson, "Biblical Rhetoric," 171.

earlier analysis of Handel's *Solomon*. Above all, however, it was the Israelites as a collective nation and their role as a paradigm in securing Britain's sense of moral superiority that was a governing factor, first in Britain's internal conflict of succession and later in its institutional identity.[33]

The allegorical use of the Israelite collective to represent Britain would continue in the eighteenth century, exemplified by sermon, political writing, poetry, drama, and, of course, oratorio. It is interesting to see how biblical narrative becomes historicized by evolving political perspectives. A character such as Samson, for example, displays a notable transformation of narrative purpose from the biblical, to the seventeenth century, and ultimately to the eighteenth century point of view. The biblical narrative conveys the repeated trope of divine intervention – or lack thereof. Such a structure employs a strategy where the acts of Samson are representative of the supernatural strength imbued upon him as a deliverer, but Samson's motivations demonstrate the human propensity for avarice – it is here where the moral lesson lies. When Milton adapts the narrative in his poem *Samson Agonistes*, he humanizes the story by presenting it in psychological terms rather than representative ones. In other words, the story is not about the acts, but the stratagem behind them. This is why the narrative starts after Samson's fall. Milton is able to make the narrative more relevant to seventeenth-century British audiences by emphasizing Samson's rationalization of the events that led to his downfall. The hyper-masculine acts of extreme violence and sexual prowess that govern the protagonist's character are re-evaluated as means through which Samson gains access to the Philistines. Samson is the constant *warrior* fighting for the principles of his nation, and, even when he succumbs to pride, the poem focuses on the fact that God has not forgotten him. Milton is emphasizing Samson not

[33] Collinson, "Biblical Rhetoric," 171.

as the divine deliverer that he is, but as the one who *is* divinely delivered, in much the same way as Protestants would eventually receive deliverance from Catholic tyranny. When Hamilton wrote the libretto for Handel's *Samson*, he chose Milton's work as the template because he recognized the politicization contained within. However, despite making direct reference to Milton's text, the work is truly conceived from an eighteenth-century perspective. Not only does the librettist try to demystify the narrative, much in the same way the supernatural in *Joshua* was rationalized by Morell, but the emphasis on the British Israel is much more profound. By removing the messianic qualities behind Samson – his annunciation by an angel, the miracle of being born to a barren woman, and his repeated characterization as a Nazerite – and focusing on Samson the *warrior*, Hamilton aptly shifts the audience's perception to the protagonist as a signifier of the Israelite nation as a whole. Despite his shortcomings, he acts as the nation's champion, making the narrative more about a nation liberated from its oppressors.

An examination of the libretto written by Thomas Morell (1703-84) for Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* (1746) evidences distinct parallels between the construction of the narrative's protagonist and the portrayal of Prince William Augustus (1721-65), Duke of Cumberland and son of King George II. More specifically, I aim to investigate the prince's image within the context of the four Jacobite uprisings following the Glorious Revolution (1688) and Cumberland's role in the 1746 Battle of Culloden – the last battle in that series and a military campaign that would end civil dissent over succession for good. I argue that accounts of the battle served as a means of manipulating civil interests through the fabrication of an imagined collective opinion serving varied partisan politics. Among them, *Judas Maccabeus*, while a fictional narrative, carried the same functional role as other historical accounts.

Within the space of the oratorio, there exists the potential for multiple readings. Historically, a scholar may uncover military accounts regarding Cumberland under the range of assorted perspectives; these are not simply the opposing ideals one expects between Jacobite and royalist forces, but disparity among the politicos of the parties themselves. For example, a royalist supportive of the Hanoverian cause would not necessarily ascribe to the Whig politics of court.[34] With the historical perspective potentially at odds with the actual events of the battle, the oratorio's allegorical representation of the battle is doubly separated from reality. In this double separation, the oratorio has the potential to be both genuine and satirical simultaneously; whether Thomas Morell, the librettist, intended this is subject to debate, as is the meaning of the work's dedication:

> To His Royal Highness Prince William, Duke of Cumberland, This Faint Portraiture of a Truly Wise, Valiant, and Virtuous Commander, As to the Possessor of the like Noble Qualities, Is, with most profound Respect and Veneration, inscribed, By His Royal Highness's most obedient, and most devoted Servant.[35]

The inscription above raises the question: Is Morell hanging a mirror of virtue for Cumberland to see himself, or is it instead a window to observe the consequences of military action? The implications of this question frame the purpose of this chapter.

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[34] Many of Handel's librettists, while often tied financially to the patronage of court, lightly infringed upon oppositional party lines when it came to certain civic policies. Charles Jennens (1700-73), for example, carried strong familial ties to the support of Stuart succession, but his principles as a protestant led him to take a non-jurist political stance as to avoid being deemed a traitor. Newburgh Hamilton (fl. 1712-49) also shared a mixed reputation in respect to his political affiliations. *Ode to St. Cecilia* (1720) was dedicated to Lord Peregrine Marquess of Carmarthen, a Tory whose father, second Duke of Leeds served as admiral of the Pretender's fleet from 1716 to 1723. His master the Duke of Strafford was an unwavering Jacobite. Hamilton's use of Dryden's text for Handel's *Alexander's Feast* (1736) is indicative of Jacobite sympathy. Finally, the most controversial being *Samson* (1743) and the *Occasional Oratorio* (1746). The former was dedicated to George II's eldest son, Frederic Louis, Prince of Wales, at the highest point of his opposition campaign. The latter, however, was a prayer for the end of the 1745 Rebellion, implying a lack of support for the Jacobite cause and a show of support to Frederic's brother William, Duke of Cumberland. For a deeper investigation into the politics of Handel's librettists. See Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 190-201.

[35] Rooke, *Handel's Israelite Oratorio Libretti*. The chapter from which this content originates was a journal publication entitled "On the 'Handel-ing' of 1 Maccabees: Thomas Morell's Use of Biblical Sources in the Libretto of *Judas Maccabeus*," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 57 (2004), 125-38.

Major themes arise in the narrative that speak to the sentiment of the period. British identity was constructed from the building blocks of civil government, religion, and liberty, and as a result, when threatened, swift and aggressive action was held to be wholly justified. The power associated with the identity of an *individual* is based on the value of one's actions. Once these actions interfere with the perpetuation of a society's de facto ideologies, not only does the individual experience humiliation, but he may become a signifier for the nation's collective shame.[36] Considering the event retrospectively, Culloden brought great popularity and favour to Cumberland; however, over time the prince's role in foreign military conflicts began to change public perspective. Cumberland's utter defeat by the French at Fontenoy, a lack of military presence during the '45 Campaign, and Britain's additional defeats at Rocoux and Laffeldt, all contributed to a deprecation of Cumberland's image.[37] Some called him the Sweet, others the Butcher, but what did these assignations mean and how did they evolve over time?

As part of my methodology, I examine the libretto to understand how the eighteenth-century historical approach acted as an allegorical device, a subjective means by which contemporary essayists used its stories like fables for the purpose of moral reinforcement. I insist that this not be misrepresented as some sort of apologist history. Christian apologists were developing their efforts to secure civil relevance for religion through the moral coil of socialized Anglicanism – as alluded to in Chapter 1, after questions of succession were settled, an ethical

[36] While some scholars have argued that, based on the oratorio's dedication, Morell's motivations were intended to celebrate the ending of the 1745 Rebellion, the possibility for deeper interpretation should not be disregarded. The libretto was completed after the official declaration of war with France, a declaration that did not carry a definitive victory, but rather, one invoked due to necessity. Military preoccupation at the internal level eventually took its toll on Britain's ability to fortify itself from external threats. Challenges at the Spanish peripheries of the Empire were of greatest concern, along with an even greater advancement on the Low Countries towards the Hapsburg Netherlands. For evidence outlining this threat see historical commentary in Daniel Szechi, "The Significance of Culloden," 224-6 and Christopher Duffy, "The '45 Campaign," in *Culloden: The History and Archaeology of the Last Clan Battle*, ed. Tony Pollard (South Yorkshire, England: Pen and Sword Military; Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2009), 17–9. Further commentary regarding significant texts from the libretto that support this interpretation can be found in Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 300.

[37] Duffy, "The '45 Campaign," 17; Szechi, "The Significance of Culloden," 224-5.

form of Christianity, deism, began to replace the faith-based one.[38] My chief intention here is to address a kind of narrative history that frames actions of the past as a parallel to and thus justifications for Britain's current state of affairs. To do so, I begin with a brief critical summary of the Jacobite rebellions, their culmination at Culloden, and the pertinence of these events to Britain's political climate in the years following. Afterwards, I turn my attention to some of the subjective views observed in historical accounts surrounding the topic of Culloden: first, a royalist account written almost immediately following the conflict; second, a Jacobite evaluation of Cumberland's treatment of rebel soldiers; and third, a collection of Patriot inquiries into the connection between Culloden and Britain's ongoing state of civil and foreign affairs. Considering these three accounts, I evaluate the implications of structuring history as a narrative. Specifically, how does it shape an event's potential significance, and how do works of art such as *Judas Maccabeus* simulate this approach?

## Satire

Understanding the political implications of satirical writings will assist in comprehending the intent behind, and reception of, historical accounts of events such as Culloden. If we concede that an element of satire may play into *Judas Maccabeus*, then perhaps this might be an outlet evidencing some of the public distaste for Cumberland that arose later on. Regarding this matter, Ruth Smith reminds the reader that the subjectivity of a work of art contributed to its identity in the eighteenth century. It was typical that an allegory may have had two, or even three, meanings.[39] One common form of satirical allegory would be the literary parody that represents a value or abstraction in a figurative sense. With the tongue-in-cheek of satire so deeply engrained

[38] Michael A. Mullett, "Church of England," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2008), //www.oxfordreference.com/10.1093/acref/9780195176322.001.0001/acref-9780195176322-e-301.
[39] Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 210.

in the spirit of British culture, audiences sought out these potential metaphorical interpretations. While satire was about multiple meanings, this did not necessarily involve a scenario of the literal being overt and the "joke" being subversive, nor did one's *inside knowledge* of an alternative reading constitute the presence of something taboo. Satire exemplified anything but a passive form of writing, acting instead as a stylistic convention for facilitating open contrariness. An outright rejection or mocking of truths uncovered the illegitimacy of the ideological standards or the institutions that conveyed them. What I have described thus far reflects the practice of using narrative elements to signify values and moral dilemmas. Satirical writing can be much more complex, indicating not only moral contradictions but also the historical figures or abstractions that perpetuated these contradictions – a form of *application-based* satire.[40] The examination for satirical potential in the oratorio operates on the premise that the character of Judas Maccabeus serves as a *flexible* archetype. Accounting for the historical recollections involving Cumberland, I propose that the libretto decisively structures the protagonist as patriot, tyrant, and liability simultaneously.

[40] Ruth Smith references the distinction Robert Hume makes in respect to thy function of political dramas in the 1730s. On one hand existed the topical dramas that introduced themes that an audience might respond to due to the social climate of the time, on the other hand, there existed application plays with complex narratives inviting the audience to make direct connections between the story and current events. See Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 211. A literary example comes to mind that outlines the difference in the framework of one case study. First published in 1759, the extremely popular series of novels, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* by Lawrence Sterne (1713-68), used the trials of Job to allude to the patience of Tristram's father in the narrative. However, this was not just a figurative means of exemplifying patience, but also was intended to spark the audience's interest regarding the way biblical passages were interpreted – Job's narrative being a popular one – and the civil relevance they carried to the eighteenth-century Christian. See Jonathan Lamb, "The Job Controversy, Sterne, and the Question of Allegory," in *The Eighteenth-Century English Novel*, Bloom's Period Studies 13 (Chelsea House Publishers; Haights Cross Communications, 2004), 219–20.

## Allegorical Narrative

Allegorical historicism was so readily utilized because the narrative devices it employed made its intent so easily recognizable to eighteenth-century audiences.[41] *An Essay on English Poetry* by writer Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) definitively exemplifies this point. While later than Handel, Campbell's essay still exemplifies the distinction between allegorical narrative and the nineteenth-century canonic romanticism that made historical figures appear "larger than life." At one point, Campbell describes the diffusion of poetry as the "emancipation of the national mind from spiritual tyranny"; he references Geoffrey Chaucer as a participant in this evolution.[42] In this remark, Campbell implies that the narratives expressed in Chaucer's poetry are indicative of a creative process. That process was one that exemplified a historical progression paralleling the historical underpinnings of the English Reformation – a period that would later shape the climate of sacred and secular politics in the eighteenth century. I remind the reader of the *application-based* method discussed earlier, in the case the historical account reflecting a relevance between past and present.[43] Observe the following excerpt where Campbell discusses the linguistic evolution of Anglo-Saxon to English:

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[41] I am reminded of the three conditions Jürgen Habermas sets out, one of which must be met, for achieving *communicative competence* between a listener and speaker: the propositional sentence must either confirm the truth conditions of the proposition or presuppose the implications of its fulfillment; the speaker's intent behind the proposition must be linguistically expressed to secure trust; or, the proposition must conform to the norms and images of a society so that the listener might be collectively oriented into understanding its meaning. The use of allegorical signs in these accounts and later in *Judas Maccabeus* will indicate the presence of the third condition. See Jürgen Habermas, "What Is Universal Pragmatics?," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1976), 29.

[42] Thomas Campbell, *Essay on English Poetry*, vol. 1, 7 vols., Specimens of the British Poets: With Biographical and Critical Notices, and an Essay on English Poetry (London: Thomas Davison, Whitefriars, 1819), 61-2.

[43] Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 211.

> Yet, difficult as it may be to pronounce precisely when Saxon can be said to have ceased and English to have begun, it must be supposed that the progress and improvement of the national speech was most considerable at those epochs, which tended to restore the importance of the people ... England acquired the new form of her language, which was destined to carry to the ends of the earth the blessings from which it sprung.[44]

The importance of this quote lies in what remains absent. Campbell the author does not credit monarchial and parliamentary participation for the communicatory state of the nation; instead, his remarks are colored with an egalitarian perspective. While I suspect the author's words have more to do with partisan politics than any private moral concern, the emphasis placed on a national sentiment demonstrates an historical approach outlined through allegorical reasoning – evolution of language in Britain's history acts as a sign of the nation's value for free thinking.

## Culloden: A History

The state of crisis Britain encountered at the cusp of 1745 had its origin in political and social issues dating back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In truth, while conflict stemmed from a quarrel over succession – Hanoverian or Stuart – other factors determined where individuals might align themselves in the issue. Four Jacobite uprisings played a fundamental role in the overall conflict of succession. The first rebellion was in 1689 with the involvement of Ireland at the Battle Boyne. The chief concern was a religious one: James II was seen as an outlet for securing freedom to practice Catholicism. Other sectarian issues were also highly relevant; hope of attaining a certain degree of Irish sovereignty was one such goal. The union of crowns tied England, Scotland, and Ireland together under one monarch, yet Scotland also carried a certain degree of political separation that Ireland did not. Claims to land rights were also the subject of great debate, demonstrating that the English generalization that Irish Jacobites were

[44] Campbell, *Essay on English Poetry*, 18-9.

zealots was misleading.[45] In fact, applying the term in the first place can problematize one's understanding of the historical context. These were Catholic Irish who never really cared much for James II, but instead the French backing that could secure Catholic dominion; he may have been "James the shite, with one Irish and one English shoe," but it would be worse without him.[46] Needless to say, the uprising was a complete disaster with heavy rebel losses, resulting in James's swift departure. It took over two decades to recover before further revolutionary action could be taken. The second rebellion took place in 1715 following the death of Queen Anne. This campaign was the largest, for it accompanied the political justification to re-evaluate Britain's monarchical state of affairs. Following the Glorious Revolution, William III and Mary II had ruled jointly. Because they had no children, Anne, Mary's sister, continued the semblance of a Stuart line. However, following Anne's death, neither a direct Stuart nor Hanoverian heir existed, making it an opportune moment to strike – although their solitary obstacle was the edict coming from the 1701 Act of Succession that demanded a Hanoverian heir upon Anne's passing.[47] In this case, what ultimately crushed Jacobite aspirations for change was a lack of strategic military communication and an absence of foreign aid similar to that which had come to the rebels in 1689. While previously France and Spain found it worthwhile to get involved, foreign interference in Britain's affairs would potentially have put them in a highly vulnerable position. Europe was, for once, in a state of continental peace, a peace that was highly valued. Despite strong Jacobite support in both Lowland Scotland and Northern England, the campaign was over when it had barely started.[48] Circumstances would change four years later, and Spain,

[45] Duffy, "The '45 Campaign," 17-8.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] The key motivator behind this rebellion was to attack Hanoverian succession on the level of British pride. James and his supporters propagated the nation that a *foreigner* king had no understanding of British culture, and, furthermore, did not carry the set of values that established the empire's sense of pride. See Geoffrey Plank,

once again, found it worthwhile to provide troops and funding. Nonetheless, they remained greatly outnumbered.[49] Another factor contributing to this failure, in my opinion, was a lack of true Jacobite identity in the rebellion. Rebels still lacked a unified front due to the 1715 conflict, and while necessary to any chance of victory, having such a domineering Spanish presence weakened the spirit of the cause.

I argue that the outlook changed with Culloden because a shift in British sentiment occurred following the battle. In trying to understand the implications of the fourth rebellion and the finality it brought to the issue of succession, examining it through the scope of a narrative perspective prompts many questions. In an effort to address those questions most relevant to this thesis, I have chosen to focus primarily on the hermeneutic aspects attached to the event.[50]

When one considers the Whig historiography that marked British scholarship of the time, Culloden occupies a more symbolic position as opposed to the end of a linear series of causal events. This was a perspective intended to demonstrate intersections between the battle and varied partisan values: ideologies of royalist solidarity, moral tyranny, and national vulnerability.[51] To have a nation's entire socio-political climate tied to one event comments on the power that a consolidated public opinion can hold; the battle stood for what could have

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"Introduction," in *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire*, Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 17.

[49] Duffy, "The '45 Campaign," 18-9.

[50] For a more detailed account of the tactics applied during the conflict see Jonathan Oates, "The Battle of Culloden and Its Aftermath, 8-18 April 1746," in *Sweet William or the Butcher: The Duke of Cumberland and the '45* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Military; Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2008), 219–98.

[51] Whig history was a twentieth-century term applied retroactively to describe a British historical approach most popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Evidence of it has already been described in the allusions made to David Hume in the introduction of the thesis. The approach is characterized by its tendency to examine historical events in a presentist manner with the chief intention being the causal relationship between the past and Britain's current state of liberal and democratic values. See Herbert Butterfield, "Herbert Butterfield: The Underlying Assumption," in *The Modern Historiography Reader: Modern Sources*, ed. Adam Budd, Routledge Readers in History (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 191–94. While the use of Whig infers a sense of liberty incurred by the governmental structure of a constitutional monarchy, I feel that the other perspectives, although contrary to Whig politics, operate in much the same way – Whig history refers to an approach as opposed to a political perspective.

happened, what really happened, and what might have happened as a result. In a recent publication, historian Stuart Reid aptly recognizes the narrative quality of Culloden by framing his critical analysis of the event as a form of *plot synopsis.* In his opinion, the royalist victory occurred over two waves: a lengthy campaign of artillery fire against the Highland clans, and a relentless infantry of "muskets and bayonets" supplemented by higher numbers and greater military experience.[52] However, as a story evolves, there exists a defining point that propels its direction one way or another. In this interpretation, the battle at Nairn was the 'fork in the road' securing Cumberland's victory. The Jacobite army had planned a surprise offensive at Nairn, the royalist camp, but the plan had to be aborted when Cumberland's scouts gained intelligence of their intentions. Afterwards, tactics changed and the strike was to occur the morning after, April 16th. Due to the delay, however, the scattering of rebel soldiers prevented the army from establishing a solid position, with Cumberland placing them on a defensive at Culloden, a terrain for which they were not prepared.[53] Early on, grassy and boggy terrain, along with poor decisions for solidifying the right flank, prevented the rebels from forming a necessary second line of offense to counter the prince's greater numbers. Instead, the rebels relied on mobile auxiliary reserves to fill in the gaps – once again, a strategy negating the opportunity for a consolidated front. Later, using dragoons, Cumberland's army succeeded in severely weakening the left and right flanks, allowing them to gain a foothold at the rear. It could have been just as difficult for the royalists to fight from four sides as it was for the Jacobite army to defend from four; however, once again, the terrain worked against the rebels. Cannon fire that was meant to push royalist soldiers back failed, as the marshy ground kept the cannon balls at a distance; there

[52] Stuart Reid, "Thr Battle of Culloden: A Narrative Account," in *Culloden: The History and Archaeology of the Last Clan Battle*, ed. Tony Pollard (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Military; Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2009), 103.
[53] Ibid., 103-07.

was not enough time to gain success in this strategy before royalist infantry could move in and achieve victory.[54]

## Three Historical Narratives

Based on my observations, subjective accounts from the battle imply that it was not the event itself but the moral and ethical concerns leading into, and following, Culloden that were the chief concern. An excerpt from James Ray of Whitehaven's account evidences this kind of mentality:

> To Every Friend To Liberty, Truth and his Country; But particularly to the Candid Reader, the Following History Is most humbly inscrib'd – By their most sincere Friend, Most devoted, and Most obliged Servant, James Ray.[55]

Already, the preface has established Ray's social values, inscribing both a *sentiment* and *warning* for the learned reader to be equally candid in displaying their political affiliations and civil opinions.

In Ray's narrative account, these are not historical figures participating in a historical event, but characters standing in as archetypes of morality. It is very important for the author to establish George II, and Prince William by proxy, as signs of a liberated nation. One of the ways the author achieves this early on is by shifting the blame from the Jacobites as a collective body to the Young Pretender as a reified ideology of social oppression. In the preface, he describes the Highlanders as men being fit for taking advantage of:

> …and in these a strict Regard ought to be paid to so memorable, as well as melancholy a Series of Transactions as this History contain, carried on by a Set of Men whose desperate Fortunes, and unreasonable Prejudices, made them fit Instruments for our common Enemy to work upon, delude, and at last engage to join them in distressing the Nation, endeavouring to depose the King, and set on the Throne of these Realms an abjured Pretender…[56]

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[54] Ibid., 107-12.
[55] James Ray, *A Compleat History of the Rebellion, from Its First Rise, in 1745, to Its Total Suppression at the Glorious Battle of Culloden, in April, 1746* (Bristol: S. Farley and Comp., 1752), iii.
[56] Ibid., vi.

From a civil perspective, this plays a very distinctive purpose, demonstrating an intent to promote inclusivity and a unified front for a Britain who had certainly exhausted a great degree of resources in resolving the Jacobite conflict. That inclusivity had potential for smoothing over the relationship of the British parliament – or, more poignantly, that of the English parliament – with Scotland. The *Annexed Forfeited Estates Act* would be passed in 1752 to dissolve any land titles pertinent to Jacobite estates and use the revenues for the benefit of the Highlanders.[57] What looks good on paper, however, does not necessarily translate just as favorably in practice. In the beginning, there was almost unanimous support from Scottish politicians for the passing of the bill. While the failure of the proposed *Militia Act* indicated a continued degree of distrust, the alternative at least suggested an openness towards forging a form of mutual respect.[58] I think the promotion of inclusivity by essayists such as Ray was intended to suggest that the *civilization* of Scottish was in fact barbarism in need of British *liberation*. There are factors, however, that indicate Scottish interests were not always at the forefront – chiefly, the prolongation of the bill's passing. Evidence of discussions surrounding such a bill can be traced back to 1746, yet it was not passed until 1752; this was due in large part to concerns over taxes still owed by those who would have their estates annexed.[59] With the bill, estate revenues went to campaigns to spread Protestantism, promote the English language, subsidize costs for trade routes to the Highlands, and relay efforts to lessen the influence of Gaelic culture through a promotion of Hanoverian

[57] For entries that reference the bill, see entry CUMBERLAND, H. R. H. William Duke of, Index of Matters, 508-509; and Jacobites, Index of Matters, 517-18; For a summation of the proceedings themselves, see Horace Walpole and George Vertue, *Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George the Second*, vol. 7 (in two parts), 7 vols., The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford (John Murray, 1822), 236-40.
[58] C. George Caffentzis, "Civilizing the Highlands: Hume, Money and the Annexing Act," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 31, no. 1, Money in the Enlightenment (Spring 2005): 170 and 175.
[59] Annette M. Smith, "The Annexing Act," in *Jacobites of the Forty Five* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1982), 20-1; Caffentzis, "Civilizing the Highlands: Hume, Money and the Annexing Act," 170.

interests in the sectors of education and other social institutions.[60] It was important that these aims be framed in a favorable light. Ray exempts the Scots from responsibility by elevating the humble and forgiving nature expressed by Cumberland. Near the end of the account, the author cites numerous correspondences from Cumberland to members of Parliament speaking out on the Scottish people's behalf. For instance, the author references a letter from the Prince to the Earl of Leven, Commissioner to the Church of Scotland. The letter emphasizes the zeal shown by the Church against what had been the most *wicked* and *unnatural* rebellion. In the letter, Cumberland draws a parallel between religious morality and Hanoverian support.[61] By referencing the letter, and Cumberland's authorship of it, Ray perpetuates the notion that, within a nation, ecclesiastical and civil action are one and the same. While such a position was valid regarding the Church of England, as it was a state institution under the Act of Supremacy, the same was not the case for Scotland. The church practiced Protestantism and understood it to be the national faith, but it certainly did not exercise its power through parliamentary law, nor represent the entire religious identity of the Scottish people, particularly Highlanders. Using Protestantism as a tool for identifying Hanoverian support subversively suggested all of Scotland had allied itself with George II, except the catholic Highlanders, who simply required a religious and civil reform that Britain was happy to provide.

From a Jacobite perspective, there are many accounts directly related to William's sense of mercy once it was determined beyond a shadow of a doubt that victory was secured. The account of one military Scotsman, James Maxwell, provides few details regarding the battle itself, and chooses instead to focus on the character of the two adversaries:

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[60] Smith, "The Annexing Act," 29.
[61] Ray, *A Compleat History of the Rebellion*, 372-6.

> Exceeding few were made prisoners in the field of battle, which was such a scene of horror and inhumanity, as is rarely to be met with among civilized nations. Every circumstance concurs to heighten the enormity of the cruelties exercised on this occasion: the shortness of the action, the cheapness of the victory, which irrecoverably ruined the Prince's [Charles II] affairs, and above all, the moderation the Prince had shewn during his prosperity, the lenity and even tenderness with which he had always treated his enemies. But what was done on the field of Culloden was but a prelude to a long series of massacres committed in cold blood, which I shall have occasion to mention afterwards.[62]

Maxwell repeatedly refers to the image of barbarism painted by Cumberland and his army, implying them to be men of little integrity. Rather than focusing on Charles' loss, he instead discredits William's success, using terms like "cheap victory" and "cold bloodedness."[63] In addition, we observe the author's attempt to humanize the situation through the implication of national approval. He suggests that if Britain as a personified bystander could be present on the field, such cruelty would be deemed unacceptable.[64] Overall, the narrative becomes one in which Charles is unwilling to forfeit his moral integrity to the point required to secure a victory from one who stoops to such evil tactics. His propensity for *tenderness*, an ironic word to be juxtaposed with *imprisonment* under any circumstances, suggests a resolve beyond any victory. Even the retreat of many Highlander soldiers, a factor that strongly played into the weakness of the rebels' second line, subscribes to a sympathetic characterization, rather than one of cowardice:

> …the day was irrecoverably lost, nothing could stop the Highlanders after they began to run, and the second line was but a handful in comparison of the Duke of Cumberland's whole army; however, their countenance stopped for a while the pursuit of the enemy's cavalry and saved [an?] abundance of men's lives.[65]

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[62] James Maxwell, *Narrative of Charles Prince of Wales' Expedition to Scotland in the Year 1745*, ed. Walter Buchanan (Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1841), 154-5.
[63] Ibid., 154-55; 168.
[64] Ibid., 154.
[65] Ibid.

This language surrounding ideas of arduousness and tenderness would later be used by some members of parliament to blame Cumberland for the state of civic affairs the nation encountered in the years following: was Britain's standing army a utility for civil liberty or the protectorate controlling it?[66]

A biography written by Richard Rolt suggests a supportive and respectful view of Cumberland, yet also an awareness of the political adversity directed towards him following the conflict:

> When their minds [the minds of men] are filled and their hearts warmed with true notions of government, when they know their duty, and love the people, they will not fail, in the great parts they are to act, in the council, in the field, and in all the arduous affairs that belong to their royal office; at least they will not begin to fail by sailing in them… Thus, for instance, a little merit in a prince is seen and felt by numbers; it is multiplied, as it were, and in proportion to this effect his reputation is raised by it: but then a little failing is seen and felt by numbers too; it is multiplied in the same manner, and his reputation sinks in the same proportion.[67]

The primary motivation behind this passage is to explain why opposition formed against the prince. It draws a connection between collective opinion and the power of an individual. I noted earlier that *public opinion* acts as an imagined force utilized by those in power to reify ideology that, in turn, can be used to govern the people; however, this process is not infallible. For some, William's strong military influence and popularity garnered from Culloden came to signify an ever growing martial presence in the direct affairs of the nation. Since institutions of parliament and monarchy placated an egalitarian, and more importantly a civil, presence in government, some became threatened by a royal playing in both courts.

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[66] It should be clarified that I am not implying protectorate in the literal sense, (ie. Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector), but rather, I use the term to emphasize the imbalance of power between military and civil authority. The premise was that martial action was to be a tool to protect civil authority, yet there was fear that it was being used to enforce certain perspectives regarding civil matters.

[67] Richard Rolt, *Historical Memoirs of His Late Royal Highness William-Augustus, Duke of Cumberland: Including the Military and Political History of Great-Britain, During That Period* (London: T. Waller, 1767), 449.

## Oratorio as Historical Narrative

Shifting to a discussion regarding Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, there not only exist striking correlations between aspects of the oratorio and the Culloden conflict, but the libretto also plays out like a contemporary historical account. To illustrate this point, Figure 3-1 compares an excerpt from the oratorio to a military motto from James Ray's narrative.[68]

Figure 3-1. Text Comparison, *Judas Maccabeus*, Arias 11-13 vs. Nottingham Military Motto

| | |
|---|---|
| We come, we come, in bright array,<br>Judah, thy sceptre to obey.<br><br>'Tis well, my friends; with transport I behold<br>The spirit of our fathers, fam'd of old<br>For their exploits in war. Oh, may they fire<br>With active courage you, their sons inspire:<br>As when the mighty Joshua fought,<br>And those amazing wonders wrought,<br>Stood still, obedient to his voice, the sun,<br>Till kings he had destroy'd, and kingdoms won.<br><br>Call forth thy pow'rs, my soul, and dare<br>The conflict of unequal war.<br>Great is the glory of the conqu'ring sword,<br>That triumphs in sweet liberty restor'd.<br>Call forth. . . | This Military Standard lately belonging to the Light Horse Command by the most Noble, and most Puissant Prince Evelin, Duke of Kingston, raised among the First by the County of Nottingham, out of the Love to their Country, and Loyalty to the Best of Kings, in the year 1745, are here dedicated, to the perpetual Fame, and immortal Memory, of their invincible Bravery in the Skirmish of Clifton Moor, the Siege of the City of Carlisle, but especially, at the memorable Battle fought at Culloden in the Highlands of Scotland, on the 16th Day of *April*, 1746. Where, amongst others, they perform'd many and glorious Exploits, in Routing, and entirely Subduing, the Perfidious Rebels, stir'd up, and supported by the *French* King; an implacable Enemy of the Protestant Religion and Publick Liberty.<br><br>God save our ever August King!<br>Long may the Country of Nottingham Flourish. |

Each focuses on the subject of obedience, but does so in such a way as to promote a sense of camaraderie; with leadership guiding the collective, solidarity is attained, which equates to strength. There is an affirmation of values, especially liberty, secured through the exploits of war. Additionally, the threat of the enemy is included to reinforce the power of the one who

[68] *Judas Maccabeus*, Act 1, Sc. 1, 11-13; Following Culloden, after the rebel soldiers were completely dispersed and royalist soldiers returned to England, a certain regiment was quartered in the county of Nottingham where, at the town hall, this military motto was erected. See Ray, *A Compleat History of the Rebellion*, 371.

defeated him. On one hand, these are statements of victory, while on the other, they are stories that inform us as to what was fought for and who was responsible.

The libretto divides into three parts, each encompassing one or two affects, or emotional states. In the first act, the Israelites mourn the death of their leader Mattathias, an elderly priest who had made a reputation for his defiance of the pagan practices of Rome. His people regarded him as a holy man and representative of their fight for faith. In his place, Mattathias' son, Judas Maccabeus, assumes leadership, promising that, through war, the Israelites will gain deliverance from their religious oppression. The second act reflects upon Judas' early victories against Israel's enemies. While its initial arias express jubilation, this soon shifts to mourning when the battle is brought to the steps of Jerusalem with foreign allies of Rome enacting revenge. At this point, the lesson is not about the retribution taken, but rather the consequences of pride; Judas believes continued strife has derived from the people's vanity in victory. The third act returns to a state of jubilation, with Rome conceding the power of a liberated Judea once more.

The politics of the oratorio's librettist, Thomas Morell, are unclear. Evidence exists to suggest ties to the Patriot oppositional movement, especially in some of his writings from the 1730s.[69] However, affiliations with court Whigs suggest the appearance, whether feigned or real, of opposing political leanings. This was particularly evident in the latter half of the 1740s, when he wrote librettos such as *Judas Maccabeus*. Still, while suggesting Morell's affiliation with Patriot ideologies may be hasty, there certainly existed a shared distaste for Robert Walpole (1676-1745). In an investigation of the librettist's politics, Ruth Smith references one ballad

[69] Patriot politics were about concerns with the court Whig establishment. For the purposes of this thesis, there are issues with taxation, Britain's standing army following the rebellions, and a general anti-sentiment towards Prime Minister Robert Walpole, who was responsible for such reforms. The most memorable proponent of Patriot doctrine was Prince Frederick, son of George II and brother of William Augustus, his contrary politics would lead to his exile from court.

excerpt that would have clearly been understood to reference Walpole's political practices, particularly his tax proposals in the form of excised commodities:

> For a Scheme he has laid with his politic crew,
> To excise your Tobacco, your Sugar, Wines too;
> And so on; to excise all exciseable Ware,
> Til' nothing be free, but the pure vital Air.[70]

As I previously noted, however, there were other ties that still linked Morell to Hanoverian government, particularly when it came to a question of income and patronage. Morell did not necessarily identify as a court Whig, but relied on the finances to supplement his income, which had been severely reduced due to his dismissal as sub-curate of the Chapel of St. Anne at Kew Green in 1745.[71] Up until that point, Morell's positions had been akin to the oppositional politics of the expelled Prince Frederick – they even lived near one another once the prince took up residence at Kew House – yet the dedication of *Judas Maccabeus* to Cumberland, instead of Frederick, seemed an action contrary to Morell's values. More puzzling was Handel's own suggestion that the work be dedicated to Frederick in the first place.[72] The basic social paradigm of the oratorio's narrative contains the premise that military action secures the values of a nation, these values being unification. In this case we observe a hegemonic power focused in religious governing interests.

## Idea into Ideology

As an institution, Judea was unique in its religious conviction, individuating itself from those foreign powers which had conformed to the pagan beliefs of Rome. This aspect is important, for without the sacred context which shaped civic policies that paralleled Rome's, Judea's cultural identity would likely have been completely overshadowed. Ultimately, this is

[70] Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 196.
[71] Ibid., 195.
[72] Ibid., 198.

less about religion's role in the civic policies of a nation, and more about whether that nation defines itself *by* religion. The reification of ideas as a means of forming ideological practices aids in perpetuating conformity to those practices in a culture. In *Judas Maccabeus,* we observe the creation of an imaginary collective exemplifying a *zealous* Judea. While certainly not a rare word in sacred music, zeal's synonymous ties to patriotism make it somewhat unique in the context of this oratorio.

Figure 3-2. Libretto Excerpt from *Judas Maccabeus*, "Arm, arm, ye brave! A noble cause…"

*Simon*
Arm, arm, ye brave! A noble cause,
The cause of Heav'n your zeal demands.
In defence of your nation, religion, and laws,
The Almighty Jehovah will strengthen your hands. (Judas Maccabeus, Act I, Sc. 1)

Simon's aria not only incorporates zeal into a discourse of religious action, but also attaches those actions to the identity of Judea as a collective. By doing so, these actions produce an ideology of religious unification, effectively demonstrating the causal relationship between military practice and Judea as a liberated nation. To identify Judea by its alternative belief system first requires its liberation from Rome's pagan influence. Proof of that liberation is only fully demonstrated once the complete religious unification of Judaism occurs, because only a *collective* zeal is capable of freeing the Israelites from their religious oppression. In other words, to achieve freedom externally, they had to forfeit it internally, making conformity a justification for liberty. One cannot discuss liberty without acknowledging its binary opposite: oppression. From their relationship with one another, the discourse of defence, and by proxy, war, become part of the narrative. From here, martial action – under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus – confirms the ideology, affording power to those who govern it; acknowledgement and praise of that action evidences the continued value of the ideology to the people, the Israelites.

## The Libretto: A Social Paradigm

There are a number of textual elements that contribute to the aforementioned social paradigm. Figures 3.3 through 3.6 demonstrate points of intersection where the libretto expresses different ideas. Blue reflects indicators of military presence and identity. Those indicators in green represent civic identity and its values. Finally, red indicates the results of military action. As long as these results remain positive and relevant to the circumstances in place these conditions can be met, the system continues to be accepted by the collective.

Figure 3-3. The Military Aspects Pertinent to the Social Paradigm in *Judas Maccabeus*

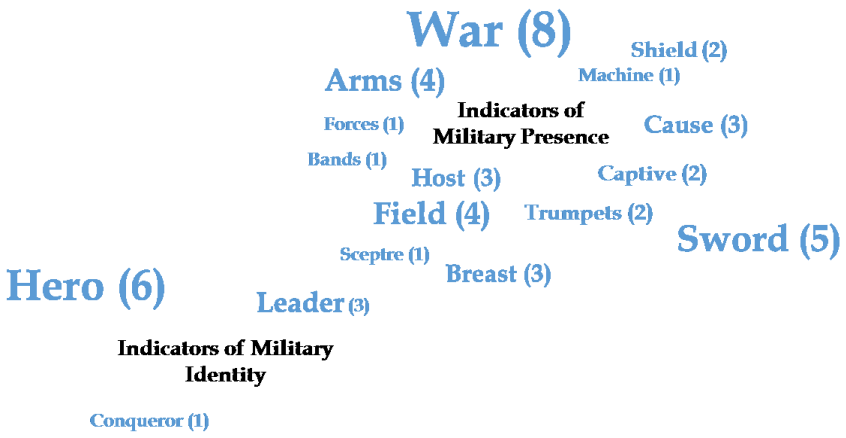



Figure 3-4. The Civic Aspects Pertinent to the Social Paradigm in *Judas Maccabeus*

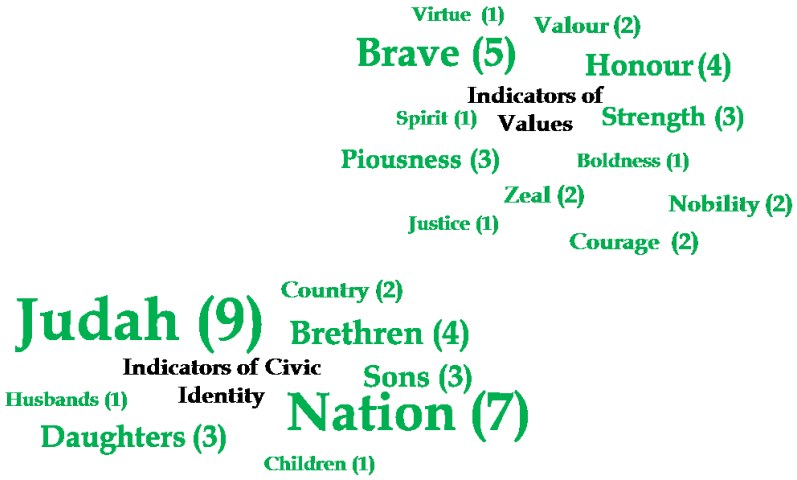
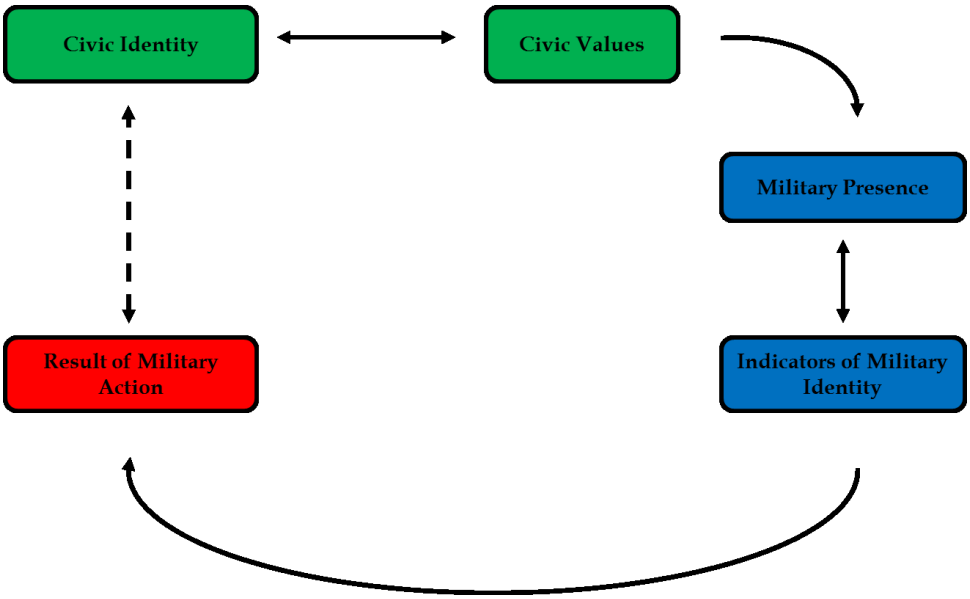


Figure 3-5. The Ideological Aspects Pertinent to the Social Paradigm in *Judas Maccabeus*


Figure 3-6. A Graphic Representation of the Social Paradigm as a Whole in *Judas Maccabeus*




Aside from the dedication to Cumberland by the librettist, what draws such a striking parallel between Judas Maccabeus and Cumberland is the power dynamic that both parties share: Britain's struggle over the right to succession and the political struggle between Judea and Rome, both religious conflicts. As illustrated in Figure 3-7, the primary Hanoverian interest was to expand its external influence through the concept of empire. I argue that, in order to do so, they produced a sort of imagined collective, or public opinion, that formed an implied presence through the values of patriotism. While the British Empire encompassed many lands across great distances, the mindset of *nation* became a strong undercurrent in reifying an ideology of a unified Britain.

Figure 3-7. Perpetuation of Hanoverian Interests through the Legitimization of *Empire*

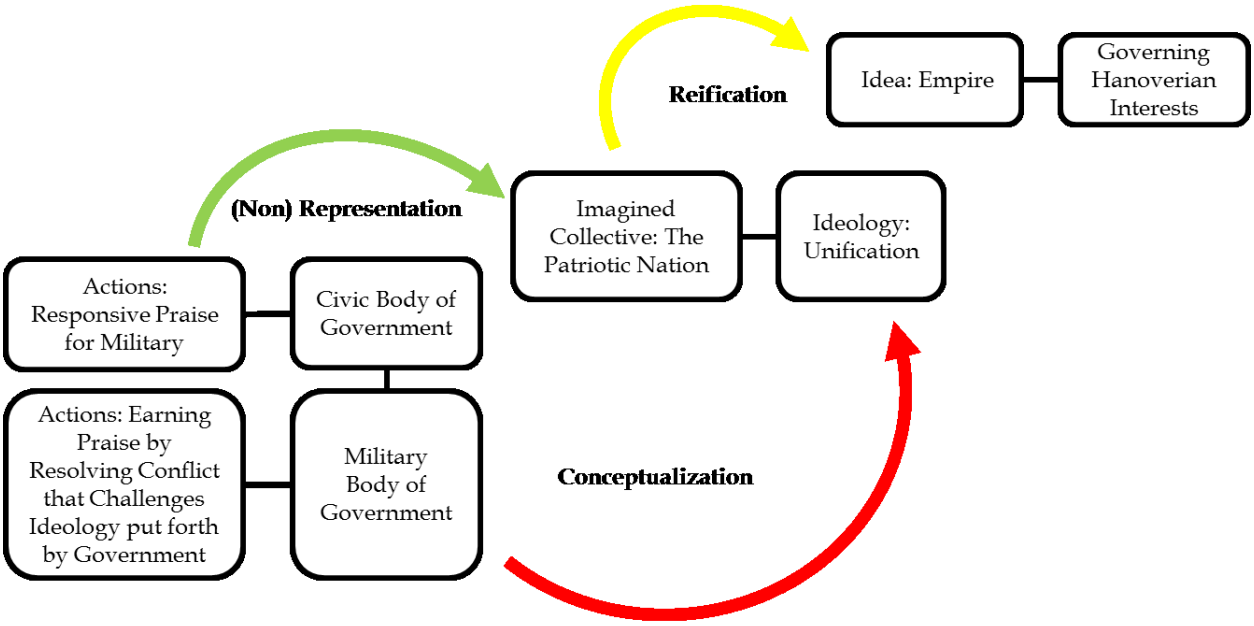
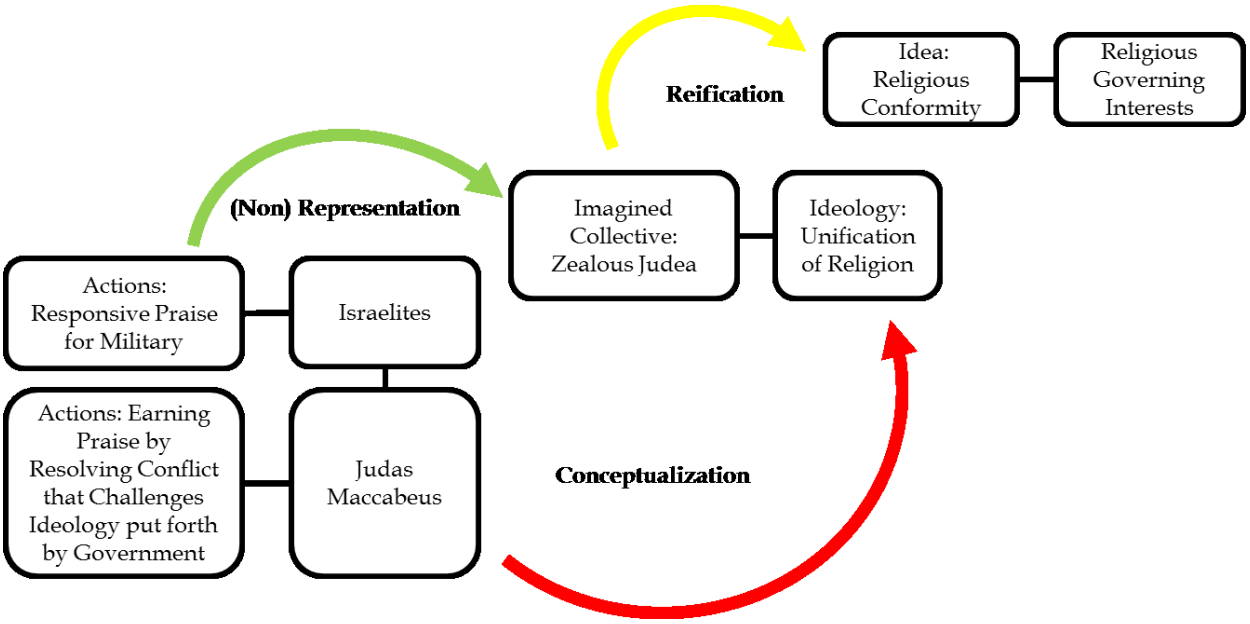



Figure 3-8 shows how the ideology of unification integrates itself into the social circumstances found in Judea; religion and politics are two concerns that have become indistinguishable from one another. The zeal of Judea represents the pride of Britain because, under the Hanoverian dynasty, it formed a unified nation built on the values of Protestantism. Similarly, the Jacobites and their allegiance to the Stuarts were represented by a pagan Rome, not only because they were observed as being religiously misguided, but because they threatened the internal unity of a chosen people. This connection is made even stronger by the fact that Rome carried relevance both in the libretto and as a papal symbol of Catholicism.

Figure 3-8: Integration of Governing Judean Interests through the Ideology of *Unification*




The historical accounts of the Battle of Culloden have already outlined the relationship between the civil government's peace of mind and Cumberland's victories in war; these actions, and the values of liberty they are intended to reinforce, perpetuated a system of power that promotes Hanoverian interests.

In eighteenth-century Britain, there were times that political thought and enacted policy carried no connection. This explains why it can be so difficult to define terms such as Whig, Tory, Jacobite, and Patriot; with the Great Rebellion, language was a package disguising manipulation. Glib references to liberty, freedom, and prosperity served as the propaganda and counter-propaganda tools of partisan politics. We come to realize that as part of civic humanist ideology these ideas stand in as objects to be attained through revolution or protected from corruption.

> In vain of your old English Freedom you boast,
> The Freedom, which many a year has been lost
> E'er since Quart'ring and Pensions, and Bribes came in Fashion
> And a d[ea]d Standing Army, to eat up the Nation.[73]

The preceding Patriot quote, penned by Morell himself towards Walpole, demonstrates the rhetorical use of freedom to indicate a dissatisfaction for what he views as underhanded governmental policies. What Morell communicates to the reader is that the liberty about which Walpole boasts is an empty one built on values contrary to what the nation stood for.

The final point I wish to briefly address in this chapter is Morell's motivation in the libretto. I inquired earlier as to whether the motivation was to paint Cumberland in a positive or negative light. No definitive answer may be provided, but perhaps that *is* the answer. A survey of writings in any form during the eighteenth century reveals that poets, playwrights, lawyers, essayists, and preachers all worked on behalf of ministerial interests at one point or another, but it was understood overall that – whether satirical, allegorical, or plain – the pretense of liberty did not preclude free thinking. When Morell dedicated his work to Cumberland, I am sure there were financial concerns at play, but despite the librettist's anti-Walpole position, that did not necessarily mean he carried contempt for Cumberland's actions at Culloden, nor for the prince's support of a Hanoverian Britain. A major concern for Morell might have been the implications of a standing army once the conflict was over; as the earlier quote suggests, Walpole's continued support of a standing army challenged, or at least potentially challenged, the civil liberties of the British people. If the Catholic threat was what justified military action, it was expected that such actions would cease when that threat was removed. With this in mind, we have the opportunity to re-evaluate the oratorio's narrative: is the *pagan threat* a signifier of Catholicism, or might it

[73] Ibid., 196.

simultaneously represent that a continued military presence truly threatened Britain's sense of freedom?

# 4. Conclusion

As I come to a close in this thesis, I formulate my conclusion along two avenues: first, to summarize how its content lends certain insights into addressing how fictional narratives such as those in Handel's oratorios outline both an eighteenth-century framework for identity in Britain and allegorically parallel modes of historicism typical to the period; and second, to consider some of the implications the project has carried towards the prospects of future research. Examining my findings retrospectively, my expectations underwent extensive revision as my work progressed. I think it would be helpful to the reader to gain a wider context as to why this project interested me and where it is likely to lead.

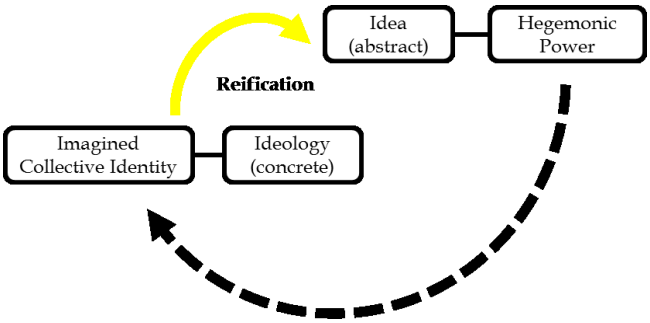
## The Collective Opinion

As a summary to the more theoretical elements of the project, the major theme has been that of collective opinion and how it is enforced both historically and allegorically through narratives such as the oratorio. A nation's capacity for a shared opinion may be a fabrication, however, it is one that is undeniably accepted as evidenced in a culture's need to establish a system of law which measures the permissibility of one's actions. The degree with which shared opinion operates as an active force in a society calls for a longer discussion, but, at the very least, acknowledging the existence of normative cultural precedents set out by pre-established systems of power is one argument that most readers can accept. The system I describe really comes out of Jürgen Habermas' theories on *public opinion*, a rationalization that powers utilize an imagined collective as a means of establishing an ideal, or series of ideals, to serve their governing interests.[74] The collective is not a physical group of persons but the personification of ideas,

[74] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. T. Burger (Cambridge: Polity, 1989 [1962]), in Luke Goode, "Excavations: The History of a Concept," in *Jürgen Habermas: Democracy and the Public Sphere* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 4.

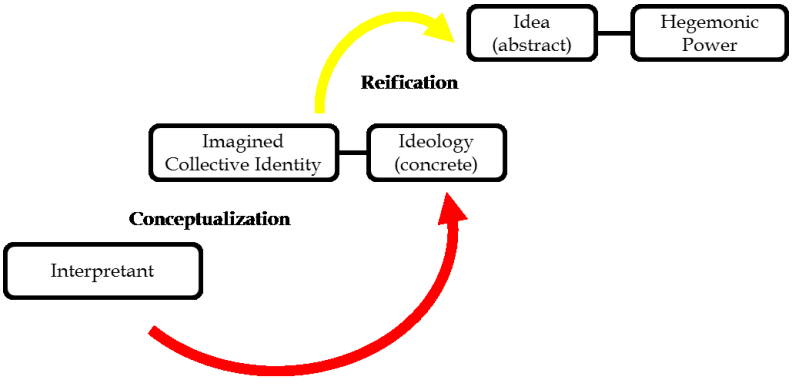
standing in for the ideas themselves – in Figure 4-1 the broken black arrow acknowledges the relationship between the hegemonic power and the collective identity it constructs, while the yellow arrow indicates the collective's role in concretizing the ideas that power values.

Figure 4-1. The Reification of Ideas into Ideologies through the Use of an Imagined Collective Identity




Despite the collective being nothing more than a structure standing in for another structure, the practices enacted by this discursive identity are what legitimize an idea within a social group, which in turn shapes the opinions and actions of the individual. As illustrated by the red arrow in Figure 4-2, the individual acts or reacts in accordance to its subjective perception of the signified conditions imposed by its social environment.

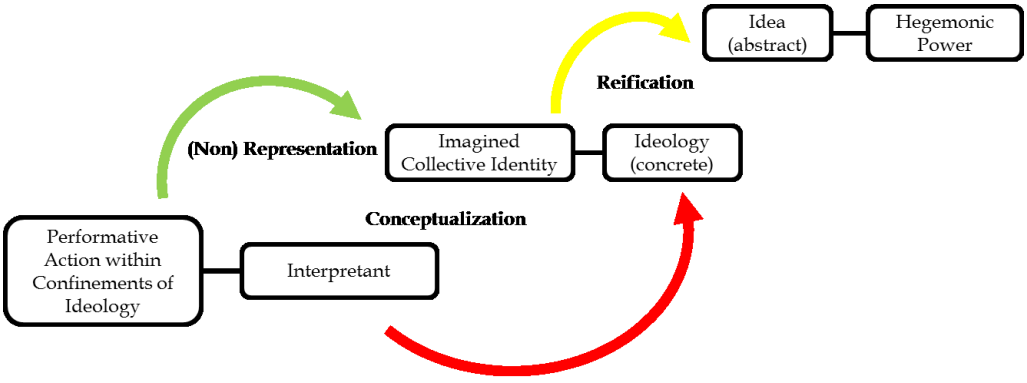
Figure 4-2. The Conceptualization of Ideologies within the Established Paradigm




Synthesizing an identity for the ideas serves as a covert means of legitimizing them. In practice, society allows governmental interests to be regulated without the system of government being

challenged; performative actions are seemingly measured by the standard of public opinion rather than hegemonic power directly, as demonstrated by the green arrow in Figure 4-3.

Figure 4-3. Representing One's Adherence to Ideology through Performative Action in the Established Paradigm




Momentarily reflecting back on Handel's *Solomon*, one position taken might prescribe music as the representative medium through which political and economic capital might be exercised. In this respect, we observe music acting as an influential tool for disseminating ideological practice. However, when we take into account the subjective position that the collective majority is a formulated structure intended to represent a less tangible ideological one, and that the same is true in the usefulness of the musical medium, does this not additionally suggest that collective majority and music as media can carry the same symbolic function? Based on these conclusions, I argue these musical analyses signify yet another manifestation of the historical narrative. From an objectivist standpoint, because music as a medium represents the fundamental principles of its social environment, its organization also reflects the same representative principles that we have come to observe in the historical narrative – admittedly in a more abstract form. Ultimately, by examining the musical structure alongside the text, further insights may be drawn.

## The Last Oratorio

I cannot think of a more appropriate way to finalize my discussion than by considering Handel's final oratorio, *Jephtha* (1751). Not only does the work exemplify the same political and social concerns as the other case studies discussed, but its literary allusions also create a rich exposition of British historical narrative.

Figure 4-4. Libretto Excerpts from *Jephtha*, "Happy, Iphis shalt thou live" and "'Tis Heav'n's all-ruling pow'r"

*Angel*
Happy, Iphis shalt thou live,
While to thee the virgin choir
Tune their harps of golden wire,
And their yearly tribute give.
Happy, Iphis, all thy days,
Pure, angelic, virgin-state,
Shalt thou live, and ages late
Crown thee with immortal praise. (Act III, Sc. 1 in *Jephtha*)

*Hamor*
'Tis Heav'n's all-ruling pow'r
That checks the rising sigh;
Yet let me still adore
And think an angel by,
While thus each charm and beauteous line
With more than human lustre shine.
'Tis Heav'n's. . . *da capo.* (Act III, Sc. 2 in *Jephtha*)

The preceding excerpt paints a florid climax to Morell's telling of the biblical story of Jephtha from the Book of Judges. Iphis has accepted her fate as a promissory sacrifice to the Lord, but amidst the aggrandized clangor of harps and angelic voices, an angel intervenes, recognizing the value of her self-sacrifice and devotion. The glib manner by which I describe the moment is purposeful, because at this point Morell truly is spinning a tale for his audience. Being able to recognize how the author edits a narrative to serve different ends has been the underlying theme to the thesis. Understanding those aspects which aid in structuring the narrative will

communicate to the present-day reader what eighteenth-century British audiences valued in terms of identity, both on an individual and collective level.

What then proves exceptional at this point in the oratorio? I chose this section specifically because the transformation the narrative underwent from the biblical account to the libretto is nothing short of alarming – Morell describes an event that, within the parameters of the biblical narrative, did not exist.[75] While biblical scholars disagree as to whether or not the original account affirms or denies the sacrifice of Jephtha's daughter, the English translation certainly affirmed it: "And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephtha the Gileadite four days in a year."[76]

Realizing that this point of the narrative has been heavily edited, one must consider what sort of intentions might be behind these revisions. Since the purpose of the oratorio as a medium is to present a sacred dramatization reflecting religious and, by extension, moral values, how do the characters fit into this goal? In this case, the allegorical value of the religious narrative in dramatized form carries more sacred value to contemporary British audiences than the original biblical narrative. To have fictionalized biblical characters so effectively impart religious values demonstrates just how far deist views had developed by the latter half of the century. Evidence of good works had far outweighed the presence of divine acts. The character of the angel plays a

[75] At least from the perspective of the King James translation of the text.
[76] Judges 11: 39-40, *KJV*. Deborah Rooke alludes to one scenario in which the translation of the narrative from Hebrew could have been problematic citing rabbinic commentator David Kimchi who points out a potential error regarding the conditions of the vow. If the reader is interested in the details behind Kimchi's argument, Rooke goes into greater detail in Rooke, *Handel's Israelite Oratorio Libretti*, 220.

strong part in grounding the work in a human perspective; his role as emissary provides an indirect means of God's intervention as opposed to a direct one.

Along with the angel, Hamor, Iphis' fiancé, demonstrates an additional fictional element. Not only does his presence add a love interest to the story, but, in the process, it also enhances Iphis' sacrifice. Her life may be spared, but her opportunity to live it is not. She must forfeit her womanhood, instead fully dedicating herself to the Lord. In much the same way that Deborah is relished for her transcendent beauty in the eponymous 1733 oratorio, Iphis also appropriates a position of separation through her virginity.[77] Hamor acknowledges this divine connection and elevates his own sense of virtue by transcending his carnal nature.

Iphis offers a new direction for the narrative when Morell names her; the biblical account affords her no name, simply referring to her as "Jephtha's daughter." The name of Iphis would have been significant in many ways to eighteenth-century British audiences. First, it *nationalized* the narrative, as it would have been clear that the librettist was borrowing elements from the tragedy *Jephthes* by the sixteenth-century Scottish historian and dramatist, George Buchanan (1506-82).[78] This work also contained much in terms of allegorical potential, taking the Old Testament narrative and linking it back to similar themes in the Greek myth of Iphigenia and Agamemnon, while simultaneously having Iphis foreshadow New Testament doctrine in the process. The precise theological polemic behind the work is subject to debate, but one quality that is particularly relevant is the sense of civic morality infused in the work. The collective lamentation reflected in the chorus of Israelites both acknowledges the value placed on Iphis' virtue, and the impact such virtue may have on a nation's prosperity. As scholar James McGregor alludes to, in this way, her sacrifice becomes a *messianic* testament to contemporary

[77] *Deborah*, Act I, Sc. 1, "How lovely is the blooming fair."
[78] Rooke, *Handel's Israelite Oratorio Libretti*, 207.

ideas regarding Christian faith: “He who drinks the river Nile at its source, and he who does not fear to pass through frozen Ister in his Sarmatian car will sing you in days to come. Not shaken by the cowardly fear of death, swift to donate to your *country* years which Nature gave you.”[79]

In this way, not only do the narratives discussed act as allegories of eighteenth-century British social thought, but they are effective because these ideologies in their very nature were structured as allegorical narratives, both in the way they historicized and contextualized themselves within the institutions they operated. What we have observed is that Handel’s Israelite oratorios have provided a vantage point for seeing how Britain unified itself under the identity of the *collective nation*. The common theme of the British Israel acted as a paradigm through which Britain might (re)claim itself as a chosen people.

## Final Remarks

To conclude, I would like to propose future directions in my work. When I originally began this project, my intention had been to promote an investigation of the vocal literature of George Frideric Handel as a platform for issues of *masculinity* in early eighteenth-century Britain. As I progressed, I realized that, before I could examine identity and its enactment in the period, I needed to understand something deeper about the construction of identity in the eighteenth century. It is one thing to argue that elements of narrative were signifiers to identities in the real world, but it is another thing entirely to understand how such an interrelationship played an active role in the social polemics of the period. Realizing that the allegorical narrative was just as active in historicizing Britain’s national identity added an entirely new dimension to understanding the social role of the oratorio.

[79] This translation of the text from *Jephthes* (p. 221, 13-16) can be found in James H. McGregor, “The Sense of Tragedy in Buchanan’s ‘Jephthes,’” *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 31 (1982): 133–4.

As I move forward, my future research aims are to reveal how the composer's own musically-embodied representations of masculinity in his Israelite oratorios engaged distinct constructs of British *masculinity*. I feel this endeavor is an important one as there are many opportunities to examine the topic of masculinity and its intersections with the disciplines of music, history, and gender studies. A recurring element in this project has to demonstrate how institutions use an imagined collective opinion to concretize ideas into practiced ideologies. If masculinity is both a reified concept and an action that constantly perpetuates the nature of its identity as a discourse, what does that tell us about its manifestations in the fictional narrative and their connection to early eighteenth-century British society? I intend to explore the potential expansion of music's role beyond a passive medium that reflects the (gendered) expectations of a collective nation to a self-possessed entity that actively carries, in its own right, the capacity to construct discursive identities.

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