

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

School of Music

FOREGROUNDING NARRATIVITY IN WRIGHT/MARIANELLI PERIOD DRAMAS

A Thesis in

Musicology

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

May 2018

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis will explore narrativity through leitmotivic technique and semiotic codes in Dario Marianelli's scores for three literary adaptations: *Anna Karenina* (dir. Joe Wright, 2012), *Pride and Prejudice* (Wright, 2005), and *Atonement* (Wright, 2007). As collaborators, Wright and Marianelli problematize the period drama as escapist entertainment. Traditional period dramas' overwhelming preoccupation with the portrayal of literary themes (most notably, romantic love), forces filmmakers to gloss over character development and social commentary. With their often flat, poorly drawn characters, period dramas emphasize the progression of dramatic action rather than the realism of the characters' emotions and motivations. Wright and Marianelli avoid these pitfalls by highlighting the perspective of the narrator in the storytelling. The level of artifice they employ produces a self-reflective quality that continually develops and reexamines characters' inner workings. Wright and Marianelli remind viewers that they are not experiencing events, but rather a mediated narration. Wright's characteristic mannerisms (such as extended tracking shots, visual blending of the diegetic and non-diegetic) consistently reinforce an outside narrative presence, centering the experience of watching a film as opposed to being engrossed in its diegesis, and forcing viewers to assess their own perceptions of the characters and situations. Marianelli's use of self-referential music likewise draws attention to his mediation of the characters' identity. Marianelli takes well-established semiotic codes (especially regarding gender) and uses them not only to reinforce their commentary on the character, but to establish music's critical presence in the narrative and its larger thematic implications.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, and most importantly, I would like to thank my parents for all of their support throughout the years. Papa, you have always been and forever will be, my biggest fan. I carry that in my heart always. Mama, thank you for being the support I always needed. You are the MVP of our family. To my siblings, Angie and Andrés, thank you for paving the way. Anita, gracias por todo tu amor y cariño.

To Dario Marianelli, thank you, thank you, thank you, for the gift of this music itself, as it lives and breathes in the films. But also, thank you for your openness, for sharing your scores with me and for being an incredible resource.

I would like to thank my wonderful thesis advisor, Dr. Charles Youmans, for his endless support and encouragement. Thank you for helping me sift through thoughts that had seemingly no orientation, for lending an ear when I just needed to talk in circles until I found a direction. I am eternally grateful for your guidance. Thank you to Dr. Eric McKee for providing a counterpoint to my ideas about film music, for educating me and expanding my horizons. Your classes were my favorites during my time at Penn State. Thank you, Professor James Lyon, for always giving me support and encouragement, for giving me freedom, and believing in and celebrating all of my endeavors.

Lastly, I would like to thank Aaron, my number one cheerleader, my companion, the best of friends and the most amazing of men. Thank you for all you are and all you do.

## INTRODUCTION

Joe Wright and Dario Marianelli's long-standing collaboration began as they were both at crossroads in their careers. After working in television, Wright had been entrusted with his first feature film, and Marianelli was hoping to transform his success in smaller projects into a successful career in feature films.<sup>1</sup> Their first collaboration was for Working Title Films' *Pride and Prejudice*, a new take on Jane Austen's classic novel. In their first conversation about the film, Marianelli recalls discussing truth and objectivity, a conversation that would go on to be revisited and influence their subsequent collaborations. Marianelli mentions Elizabeth and Darcy's first dance from *Pride and Prejudice* in discussing this thematic preoccupation. Of the interplay between the diegetic violin and non-diegetic underscoring, he says: "It created a little bit of tension, and a split between the room, and a more interior introspective sound."<sup>2</sup> In another interview, while discussing his favorite moment from their films, he expands on the effects of this approach:

It's when Elizabeth and Darcy dance for the first time. There's a lone violinist playing an aria by Purcell. After a while, we hear the sound of a distant orchestra seeping into the room, merging with the Purcell aria but going at a different tempo. This is the place where we started experimenting with that blurring of boundaries between what the characters

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<sup>1</sup> David Ehrlich, "'Darkest Hour Composer' on Helping to Bring Joe Wright's Thunderous Vision of Churchill to Life," IndieWire, last modified November 29, 2017, <http://www.indiewire.com/2017/11/darkest-hour-composer-dario-marianelli-interview-winston-churchill-joe-wright-gary-oldman-1201901840/>

<sup>2</sup> Miguel Mera, "Interview 2: Reality and Representation- An Interview with Dario Marianelli," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Sound Design and Music in Screen Media*, ed. Liz Greene and Danijela Kulezic-Wilson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 139.

hear and what the audience hears. It's when I knew that music can embrace the narration not as a decorative device, but as another character.<sup>3</sup>

This concern with the fictive realities of film became the idée fixe of Wright/Marianelli films. In their films, Wright and Marianelli have continually explored the boundaries between fiction and reality, creating a self-reflexive style that draws attention to their craft. This stylistic imposition forces viewers to examine the constructedness of Wright/Marianelli films, and the filmmakers' commentary on the narrative.

*Pride and Prejudice* (2005) represents an early prototype of the imposition of Wright and Marianelli's narrative voices. To assert his narrative presence, Wright relies particularly on lengthy tracking shots. Marianelli then pairs these tracking shots with extended overlaying of diegetic and non-diegetic music (as for example in the opening, where diegetic music for piano impinges on a non-diegetic cue also for piano). In addition, Marianelli restricts himself to a small number of themes, which he reuses frequently in a wide variety of settings, some of them diegetic. Thus, music that was initially non-diegetic and clearly outside of the sonic world can unexpectedly appear in a diegetic setting, played by one of the characters. Because these pieces do not belong in the time period of the story, the viewer is confronted with an ostentatious anachronism, which reinforces Marianelli's presence and the construction of an artificial space. Although these techniques may seem limited in comparison to the artifice in *Anna Karenina*, they exhibit a clear first step in developing the techniques that Wright and Marianelli employ in more mature guises in the later films.

In *Atonement* (2007), Wright's mediated narration conveys Briony's manipulation of the story. This blending of Wright's perspective with the demands of the source material distinctly

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<sup>3</sup> Ehrlich, "'Darkest Hour Composer' on Helping to Bring Joe Wright's Thunderous Vision of Churchill to Life."

differs from the extra-diegetic imposition of the techniques used in *Anna Karenina*. However, this earlier film suggests Wright's growing interest in mediated narration as a concept and narrative device. Wright highlights Briony's importance by focusing on the character's eyes and her perspective. Editing frequently connects Briony's obsessive observation with scenes happening outside of her control or her actual physical presence. Marianelli reinforces Briony's importance by accompanying her visual appearances with her distinct aural theme, which is built of both music and sound effects (the most notable being the typewriter). He also draws attention to the self-awareness of the narration by frequently ending musical sections with exaggerated stinger chords, compelling the audience to notice and remember the music's presence. In these respects, Marianelli's scoring for *Atonement* prefigures his scoring for *Anna Karenina*.

In *Anna Karenina* (2012), Wright highlights a narrative presence by shooting the film as a stage play. The frequent use of the proscenium arch constantly reminds the viewer that they are watching a story, making it impossible to be lulled into complacency by the aesthetic pleasure of the costumes and scenery. Rather, this self-reflective obstruction of the fantasy elements positions the viewer as a voyeur, and in doing so, forces criticism both of the characters and the self as a spectator. With this heightened awareness, the visual elements transcend beauty, and become pointed symbols for the various characters' societal stations and accompanying emotions. By the same token, Marianelli uses his musical themes to reinforce the subtle commentary of the visual image, deepening viewers' understanding of the social norms and expectations of the diegetic universe. His scoring and his manipulation of thematic material clearly delineates the society's alternatives to Anna (Kitty as a virtuous woman, Stiva as a lovable philanderer). By using well-established semiotic codes, Marianelli comments critically on the society's perception of Anna.

Scholarship on Wright/Marianelli films is limited, with most of the attention focusing on *Atonement*, potentially as a result of its score winning the Academy Award. Describing the use of *La Bohème* in *Atonement*, Alexandra Wilson traces the established associations of opera in adaptation, concluding that “*Atonement* appears to invite us to recall the *La Bohème* love duet’s pre-existing filmic associations, which are then in turn compounded afresh in a new cross-class erotic fantasy.”<sup>4</sup> In an article for *Music and the Moving Image*, Danijela Kulezic-Wilson explored the use of silence in three films, including *Atonement*. She examines how silence joins with sound editing and shot length to create rhythm: “Particularly in the example from *Atonement* the kinetic network—camera movement, movement within a shot, editing rhythm, sound effects, and music—is so complex and so carefully composed that silence indeed becomes an accented rest of audiovisual music.”<sup>5</sup> Most recently, Joakim Tillman discusses Marianelli’s use of solo instruments to create internal focalization, examining both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Atonement*.

Ultimately, this thesis will trace Wright and Marianelli’s emphasis of their narrative presence within their period drama films. When exploring this practice in *Pride and Prejudice*, the two discovered the effects of inserting an outside voice without recrafting the entire story. Subsequently, the selection of a self-reflexive text like *Atonement* allowed them to develop this imposition with a clear dramatic justification and a clear sense of the structural implications. Finally, with *Anna Karenina*, Wright and Marianelli fully embrace their idiosyncratic artifice to

<sup>4</sup> Alexandra Wilson, "Unreliable Authors, Unreliable History: Opera in Joe Wright's Adaptation of *Atonement*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 27, no. 02 (2015): 155-74.

<sup>5</sup> Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, "The Music of Film Silence," *Music and the Moving Image* 2, no. 3 (2009): 1-10.

tell a classic story in a deeply personal and unique manner. Here, this self-referential narrative style finally becomes a fully developed artistic choice. This use of artifice directly contrasts with the directorial approaches of most period filmmakers, who strive for verisimilitude and the audience's assimilation into the story. Instead, with *Anna Karenina*, Marianelli and Wright make every effort to pull audiences out of the diegesis and force them to confront the themes of the narrative.

## CHAPTER 1

### *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* (2005): THE ORIGIN OF WRIGHT/MARIANELLI SELF-REFLEXIVITY

#### Introductory Sequence

Wright establishes his authorial involvement by seamlessly covering all expository material through an extended introductory tracking shot. This shot provides the basic information for the differentiating characteristics of all of the Bennett family members. The camera initially tracks Elizabeth as she traipses around the outside of the house. Behind her, maids work on the laundry, and various animals run around. Wright begins the film with Elizabeth, and also returns to her perspective in the final moments of this extended shot. She first appears returning home from a walk carrying a book. Her enjoyment of literature and the outdoors will be recurring characteristics that differentiate her from her sisters. By focusing first on Elizabeth, and not the household itself, Wright prioritizes her and frames her as the protagonist of the story. Elizabeth's distance from the house does not reduce her relevance; rather, her perspective leads the viewer into and through the house. This distance also serves to establish her as distinct from her family, a positioning that influences later events. Devoting this time to Elizabeth, in comparison to her sisters' more fleeting introductions, privileges her perspective and creates a sense of order for the tracking shot.

Detaching the camera from Elizabeth introduces the camera's role as an outside entity. In doing so, Wright draws attention to the cinematography, untethering the camera from any specific character and instead portraying the household. Jane walks into the frame, carrying embroidery and ribbons. Her gentle admonition of her younger sisters establishes her character as the soft-spoken, tender, eldest sister. The flighty younger sisters fittingly fly in and out of

frame, in a mess of ribbons and giggles. Then, the camera dollies towards the middle sister, Mary, seated at the forte piano, diligently practicing scales. As the camera focuses briefly on Mary, the sound of her scales intrudes slightly into the non-diegetic underscoring. This brief instance introduces Wright and Marianelli's characteristic blending of the diegetic and non-diegetic.

The combination of this overlaying and the use of a tracking shot draws attention to cinematic techniques and prevents the complete immersion of the viewer. With the entrance of the diegetic piano, the imposed presence of the non-diegetic music becomes startlingly obvious. Reinforcing this effect, the camera remains trained on Mary for longer than the scales are heard, which directly contributes to the perception of the scene as a manipulated mediation. Although other sounds later interact with the music (e. g., the dog's padded footfalls), no other sounds interfere with the immersion in the diegesis in the manner of this juxtaposition of two distinct musics. In overlaying a forte piano with a modern instrument, the anachronism of the modern piano begins to suggest stylization. The conscious choice to juxtapose these two particular instruments reinforces the importance of this blending technique in Wright and Marianelli's narrative style.

This juxtaposition between the diegesis and the underscoring creates a heightened awareness for the viewer that persists through the end of the tracking shot. After moving on from Mary, the camera becomes fully disembodied once again. It searches for Elizabeth, then traces the end of her walk as she climbs the stairs outside the window of her father's study. As Wright ends the tracking shot by returning to Elizabeth, Marianelli ties the activity in the underscoring to her movements or lack thereof. When Elizabeth stops on the stairs, the underscoring briefly loses momentum. Then, it restarts with decreased rhythmic activity. This mirroring begins to tie

Elizabeth's presence to the underscoring. The constant eighth-note activity in the accompaniment directly matches her walking, even in the moments when the camera does not focus on her. As Elizabeth ends her walk and begins to interact with her family, the activity decreases and the underscoring eventually fades out. These connections between the visual and auditory might ordinarily go unobserved. However, the previous blending between the diegetic and the non-diegetic asks the viewer to listen for the music's function and the extra information it provides for the narrative.

### Preparation for the Netherfield Ball

As the women prepare for the Netherfield ball (33:17), Wright uses a tracking shot to convey the general atmosphere of excitement, and he uses Betsy, the maid, as a realistic device for portraying this action. The tracking shot provides the viewer with spatial information, and Betsy serves as a vehicle to lead the camera back to Elizabeth. Carrying linens, Betsy walks by Lydia and Kitty helping each other get dressed. As she passes a hallway, Mary walks in the background, clearly not dressed for the ball or engaging with any of her sisters. Betsy walks into another room and delivers clothing at the foot of the bed, and as she turns, the camera reveals Jane styling Elizabeth's hair. In less than a minute, and despite their spatial separation, Wright situates all of the sisters and communicates their feelings about the impending event. First of all, Mary continues to be a separate entity from her sisters, engaged in intellectual pursuits, as she walks through the frame reading a book. Through her detachment, she actively exhibits the clear lack of interest in social events that she previously spoke about. Lydia and Kitty seem just as shrill and frivolous as before, and Betsy ignoring Lydia's calls provides a humorous perspective on how members of the household perceive the two younger sisters. Elizabeth and Jane discuss

Mr. Wickham and Mr. Darcy, establishing their anticipation of the social dramas that will potentially take place that evening, and displaying maturity in their concern with greater issues than just their own personal experiences or enjoyment.

During this tracking shot, Wright and Marianelli once again blend diegetic sound with non-diegetic underscoring. A sound bridge from the previous scene moves the action from the house's exterior to its interior, eliding time by a few hours. Before the picture changes, a meandering piano theme associated with Elizabeth enters, followed very closely by Betsy's voice, mixed to be diegetic despite not having simultaneous visual confirmation. Soon after, the frame changes to focus on Betsy's face as she moves throughout the house, delivering linens and clothing to the girls as they get ready for the ball. As she travels, Betsy sings what was previously heard as a country dance at the Meryton ball, a considerably less sophisticated event than the forthcoming Netherfield ball. In the underscoring, the piano plays a more sophisticated theme, previously associated with Elizabeth and reflective of her inner monologue. Overlaying the two reminds the viewer of the purposeful stylization of the film, as well as subtly referencing Elizabeth's engagement with two vastly different social spheres.

Although this tracking shot serves clear narrative purposes, it also draws attention to stylization and artifice. If information were the sole priority, this tracking shot could function just as effectively if Betsy sang throughout the house with no underscoring. However, the use of a tracking shot already introduced artifice by creating the feeling of being led around the house. This leading becomes even more apparent when the camera finally lands on Elizabeth, especially given the importance of her dialogue with Jane. In other words, the tracking shot has structure and a clear purpose: to convey a narrative presence — a sense that the story is being told in a particular way for a particular reason. Complementing the visual establishment of that narrative

presence, Marianelli uses music's powers of emotional connotation to orient the tracking shot towards Elizabeth's perspective. Tellingly, the music stops, its function having been served, once the camera finally returns to her. Although Wright uses these tracking shots to provide general information on the household, there is always an expectation that the shot will eventually lead back to Elizabeth, the viewer's avenue into understanding the film.

The film prioritizes Elizabeth's perspective, and the way she encounters and processes information informs the viewer's knowledge. The underscoring in this scene first appears in an earlier one (16:56), as Elizabeth walks to Netherfield after Jane becomes ill. In that scene, this theme communicates Elizabeth's internal emotional state. In the key of D-flat major, the right hand alternates between the tonic and the subdominant, and finally ends with a melodic emphasis on the dominant scale degree (Ex. 1).<sup>6</sup> The harmonic stasis paired with highly rhythmic activity conveys that Elizabeth engages in contemplation, but of a distinctly ruminative variety. The constant eighth notes in the left hand mimic her circling, inconclusive thoughts; the lack of resolution implied by landing on the dominant also reinforces this feeling of aimless, exploratory thoughts. Marianelli first sets this theme in 12/8 time, but creates ambiguity by constantly interplaying two against three between the left and right hand. He uses the tempo marking *calmo* and later, on the right hand's displaced entrance, the expressive marking *dolce*. The pastoral quality of the mise-en-scène, and the expressive marking of *dolce* combine with the activity to make clear that Elizabeth enjoys this contemplative mood, rather than feeling overwhelmed or melancholy. These musical nuances serve to paint the complexity and depth of her character, as opposed to the often flat portrayals of her sisters.

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<sup>6</sup> Dario Marianelli, *Pride and Prejudice*, film, dir. Joe Wright (2005; Universal City: Focus Features, 2006).

The musical score for piano, page 11, shows the following details:

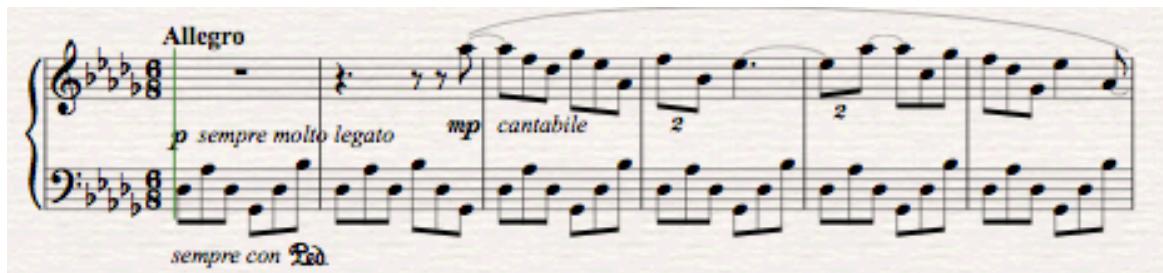
- Measure 1:** Key signature of B-flat major (two flats). Time signature 6/8. Dynamics: *pp*, *sempre molto legato*. Performance instruction: *con 2d.*
- Measure 2:** Dynamics: *pp*, *dolce*.
- Measure 3:** Dynamics: *pp*.
- Measure 4:** Dynamics: *pp*.
- Measure 5:** Dynamics: *pp*.
- Measure 6:** Dynamics: *pp*, *cantabile*.
- Measure 7:** Dynamics: *pp*.
- Measure 8:** Dynamics: *pp*, *poco rit.*, *diminuendo*.

Example 1. Elizabeth walks to Netherfield.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Pride and Prejudice*, "Liz Walks," 2005.

The slight changes in the theme for the preparation for Netherfield shot reflect emotional changes in Elizabeth. After making a great show of being generally uninterested in men, Elizabeth notices Mr. Wickham. In this second iteration of the theme, Marianelli sets it in 6/8 and marks it *allegro*, giving it a distinctly livelier air. Instead of the *dolce* expressive marking, he now uses *cantabile* (Ex. 2). The constant struggle of two against three has eased, and the two hands move with greater accord. Besides the change in tempo, this second iteration starts in the same way as the first. However, the lyrical melodic content in the higher register points to

Elizabeth's youthful, girlish infatuation with Wickham. It points to a lightness of heart, an ease and giddiness that comes with the anticipation of the ball. Mirroring Elizabeth's greater conformity with the expectations of a girl her age, the conflict between the hands ceases, and they move together in a steady triple meter. To contrast the previous iteration of this theme, Marianelli ends this iteration more conclusively, finally arriving back at the tonic. This arrival mirrors Elizabeth's greater conviction in her opinion. She now firmly sides with Wickham and feels completely opposed to Darcy. Her thoughts and feelings are more settled than in the past, and the underscoring reflects that.



Example 2. Netherfield ball preparation.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Pride and Prejudice*, "Maid Singing," 2005.

### The Netherfield Ball

The dance sequence between Elizabeth and Darcy at the Netherfield ball (38:49) begins to frame their romance as a driving force for dramatic tension. Wright and Marianelli use important details to make their dance a constructed, rather than a realistic space. In stark contrast, all of the other dancing in the film is highly naturalistic. To infuse Elizabeth and Darcy's first intimate moment with tension, Wright and Marianelli use a variety of techniques to mediate the event.

Characteristically for Wright's narration, he uses extended takes in this scene. The scene can be divided into two parts: the first continuous take, with the realistic surrounding, and the second take, with Elizabeth and Darcy alone in the ballroom. Constantly building toward a climax, the properties of the scene operate as if Elizabeth and Darcy are alone from the start. First, the camera focuses on the two of them, and consciously ignores the dancers behind them through a shallow focus. Although the dancers continue to move behind them, Wright makes clear that they and the crowd play no significant role in the scene.

The soundscape of the first take also contributes to a sense of unreality. Although out of focus, the solo violinist can be seen through the gathering of dancers, making the violin solo diegetic music. However, the mixing situates the solo neither in the foreground or the background, but instead in an intermediate space purposely intended to maintain tension until the non-diegetic accompaniment joins it. Instead, the crowd noises serve as the diegetic grounding element of this soundscape. However, they too join with the dramatic arc of the scene to convey the feeling of unreality. Through the dance, even when physically separated by a considerable distance, Darcy and Elizabeth speak to each other at a very normal volume. Neither of them ever raises their voice, even as they dance with their adjacent partners in the pattern of the dance. With instrumental accompaniment, and the boisterous crowd, the kind of tense and banter-driven conversation they hold could never occur. By creating an unrealistic space, Wright and Marianelli prepare the viewer for the true break from reality, their dance alone in the ballroom.

Throughout the first take, Marianelli foreshadows the second take by interjecting the dialogue with restrained swells in the underscoring.<sup>7</sup> By doing this, he creates a conversation between instruments that can later be understood to reflect the conversation between Darcy and

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<sup>7</sup> Dario Marianelli, *Pride and Prejudice*, film, dir. Joe Wright (2005; Universal City: Focus Features, 2006).

Elizabeth. His feelings for her already changing, Darcy holds considerably more to lose at the beginning of their exchange, and the underscoring's subordination highlights this. Elizabeth, with the moral righteousness afforded to her by her sympathy for Wickham, holds the power in their current dynamic. The solo violin provides Elizabeth with a musical voice. Every other dance in the film features distinctly rustic, lively music, but here, Marianelli chooses to score Elizabeth with an inherently dark, dramatic melody. Strikingly, this is the only dance music in the film to be in a minor mode. These musical differences communicate the importance and the weight of this moment.

The solitary violin reinforces this exchange as an intimate moment, and the use of a string duo in conversation connects to semiotic associations of romance in film music. To provide a counterpoint to the incisive violin solo and Elizabeth's accusatory, disdainful attitude, Marianelli uses the small orchestral swells to communicate Darcy's distress. The first of these swells occurs after Elizabeth mocks Darcy, telling him that they can "remain silent." Because of her preconceived notions of him, she receives everything he says as a rebuke, and so she returns his overtures in that spirit. However, Darcy genuinely desires a connection with her, and her flippant attitude begins to distress him. The second swell happens after Elizabeth belittles him again, by accusing him of being "taciturn" and therefore making the dance less enjoyable. Although Darcy's feelings remain unknown to her, this comment causes him pain, as she essentially tells him she does not enjoy his presence. The third swell happens after Elizabeth deliberately taunts him by bringing up making Wickham's acquaintance. This comment particularly angers him. Since he knows Wickham's true character, Darcy feels particularly undeserving of this final taunt. Marianelli uses each of these swells to convey Darcy's growing

desire to assert his voice. He also foreshadows the duet between the violin and cello, representative of Elizabeth and Darcy, respectively.

As the sequence continues, the sense of unreality becomes more and more pronounced. When Elizabeth levies her final challenge by bringing up Wickham, and the two stop dancing, the rest of the activity continues behind them. Throughout this dance, and any other in this film, couples always interact with the adjacent couples. Therefore Darcy and Elizabeth ceasing their dancing should influence and likely derail the whole arrangement of the dance. However, in the constructed space of this moment, the other couples continue dancing, taking no notice of Elizabeth and Darcy. When they pause, the music subtly shifts in emotional tone to grow in intensity. Marianelli synchronizes the moment they pause with the violinist restarting the melody with double stops, the strident sound giving Elizabeth an even stronger voice. This final harmonized return leads into the non-diegetic music and the constructed unreality of the second take.

In the second take, Wright and Marianelli fully suspend disbelief by creating a new reality inhabited only by Elizabeth and Darcy. After the challenge of the harmonized melody in the violin, a musical response from Darcy follows. As Darcy says “I hope to afford you more clarity in the future,” an entirely non-diegetic sound effect of a gust of wind joins the cinematography to lead into the desolate ballroom, empty but for Elizabeth and Darcy. This pointed use of sound clearly moves the sequence into a different realm of reality. No other outdoor sounds are ever heard during the entirety of the Bingley’s ball scenes. By self-consciously using sound effect, both as a device, and as a sound bridge for the change in shot, Wright and Marianelli bring attention to the mediation of this moment between Elizabeth and Darcy. Finally, the underscoring fully inhabits the foreground, and the solo violin joins it. The

crowd noises fade entirely, the change in mixing helping to create an entirely new soundscape. A cello solo enters, representing Darcy's voice, and the greater equilibrium of the moment now that Darcy has caused Elizabeth to doubt herself. By cutting to a close-up on Darcy's face as the cello enters, Marianelli connects the presence of the instrument with Darcy's previously muted inner voice. In conjunction, the camera also prioritizes Darcy, showing the inscrutability of his emotions, and does not return to Elizabeth until the end of the dance, registering her shaken confusion. With its intense emotional honesty, this moment functions not so much as a fantasy sequence but as a technical cinematic device meant to capture intimacy and interiority and further mythologize the Elizabeth/Darcy love story.<sup>8</sup>

### After Bingley's Proposal

In the third act of the film, Wright uses another extended tracking shot (1:45:36) to show the disjunction between Elizabeth's emotional state and the household's general contentment. This tracking shot displays the household at rest after a particularly happy day. Mr. and Mrs. Bennett lie in bed and discuss Mr. Bingley's proposal. In another room, Kitty sits at the window ledge, petting a cat, while she endures Mary reading aloud to her. On the adjoining staircase, Betsy sings a short tune as she climbs the stairs. Finally, Elizabeth and Jane engage in sisterly confidence about Jane's engagement.

By tracking along the exterior of the house, Wright makes the viewer acutely aware of the camera's intrusion on the intimacy of these moments. Wright approaches the tracking shot by first using an establishing shot of the house, then dollying closer and closer to its exterior wall. The tracking starts as Wright approaches Mr. and Mrs. Bennett's room, clearly showing the

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<sup>8</sup> In this context, I use "mythologize" to convey how within the film, the power of Darcy and Elizabeth's attraction is strong enough to create/deserve an unreal space. In other words, this sequence elevates Darcy and Elizabeth's love above all other pairings in the film.

outside of the window. This positions the viewer as a voyeur in a particularly literal way and creates a distance that reminds the viewer that they are not inside the story, but watching a story. Moreover, the feeling of being led by the tracking shot also reminds the viewer of the director's perspective and his external narrative influence. The camera's position in the exterior of the house combined with the tracking reinforces our sense of a mediated perspective. In the aftermath of one of the happiest moments of the film, Wright successfully creates distance from the characters by drawing attention to narrativity.

Marianelli's scoring for this sequence bridges the gap between the viewer's emotional connection to Elizabeth and the distancing effect of Wright's techniques. The change from the absence of music on Jane's close-up to the entry of the piano on the shot of Elizabeth under the tree indelibly ties the underscoring to Elizabeth's emotion. The shots of Darcy, also with this same underscoring, operate in conjunction with the emotional affect of the music. However, the scenes with the other members of the household detach the music from the picture, portraying the contrast between Elizabeth's unhappiness and the general joy of the household. The use of Betsy singing again reinforces the presence of an outside narrative voice in the underscoring. The juxtaposition reminds the viewer that the sonic universe of the characters is not the same as the sonic experience of watching the narration. These distancing techniques serve to remind the viewer that despite the general tranquility of the household, not all of the conflict has been resolved. Elizabeth remains the heroine, and her arc still needs to be completed. Therefore, while the underscoring somewhat disconnects the viewer from the other Bennetts, it sustains and enriches the connection between the viewer and Elizabeth. The overall sequence also prioritizes the connection to Elizabeth. The music starts with a shot of Elizabeth, and it ends as the camera crosses from the exterior into the interior of Elizabeth and Jane's room. In this scene, Elizabeth

wants to be happy for her sister and clearly tries to quiet her internal turmoil, and the synchronization of the underscoring's fadeout reflects that desire. Marianelli's narration through the music therefore clarifies for the viewer the intended emotional state.<sup>9</sup>

With Marianelli's underscoring, the narrative sequence of the scene begins before the tracking shot. After a close-up of Jane's tearful happiness, an ellision in time leads to a shot of Elizabeth sitting under a tree, her body language conveying clear unhappiness. With this shot, the music begins, signifying the union between the underscoring and Elizabeth's unhappy state. After Elizabeth, a shot shows Darcy looking back at the Bennett house with an inscrutable expression. A close up on his face then fades into a time ellision that leads to nighttime. This theme portrays Elizabeth's ruminative interior mood, now infused with a distinctly melancholy air. The constant eighth-note accompaniment reflects her circling thought patterns, while the repeated figure in the bass creates a sense of stasis, connected with her feeling of helplessness (Ex. 3). Even with the constant activity of the running eighth notes, the harmony's circling avoids resolution. Her preoccupation cannot be shaken, and she sees no way of resolving her internal conflict. Coupled with suspensions over almost every bar line, the long phrases in the right hand create the melancholy character of the theme. The use of this music during shots of both Elizabeth and Darcy foreshadows the growing emotional connection between the two. Their emotional states mirror each other because they both experience unhappiness at being apart.

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<sup>9</sup> Marianelli on his approach to portraying interior conflict: "For me, as a working method that helps me to write music, it is more useful to think of thematic material AND characters as manifestations of something deeper, less obviously visible." Email to the author, March 23, 2018.

A musical score for piano, featuring four staves of music. The key signature is three flats. The tempo is marked as  $J = \text{ca. } 60 - 70$  and the dynamic is *Andante con rubato*. The first staff begins with *ppp*, *poco cresc.*, *sempre legato*, and *col Pianissimo*. The second staff starts with *dolcissimo* and *PP*. The third staff continues with *PP*. The fourth staff begins with *pp*. Measure 8 starts with a wavy line above the staff, followed by *pp*. Measure 12 starts with *ppp*.

Example 3. Elizabeth's sadness.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Pride and Prejudice*, "Windows," 2005.

### Self-Reflexive Narrative Influence

Marianelli and Wright make use of self-reflective techniques throughout the film, to varying ends. The first of these is the anachronistic mechanized doors (5:03) that open of their own volition. Wright first uses this technique as the transition into the first shots of the Meryton ball, the opening of the first act of the film. An establishing shot shows the door handles, and then the doors open outwardly towards the camera. In a naturalistic setting, Wright might have chosen to have doormen right inside the room to connect to that movement. However, no one inside the doors stands close enough to have opened them, and further, no one seems to notice that the doors have opened. Subtle as this moment might be, it introduces Wright's pointed manipulation of the narrative and mise-en-scène. Although all directors manipulate their films, Wright chooses to make the viewer aware of his manipulation. Therefore, the mediation of the narrative becomes an inseparable part of the experience of the film.

Wright uses this mechanized door visual once again (51:49) to close the first act of the film, when Bingley leaves Netherfield. As the Netherfield servants prepare the house for its impending disuse, the camera slowly dollies outwards, pushing the viewer farther and farther from perceiving Netherfield. Then, the double doors close, accompanied by an exaggerated creaking sound effect. This visual's insertion at this moment in the narrative clarifies its purpose. First, it precedes the event where Jane and Bingley first meet (as well as Darcy and Elizabeth) and then it closes the event that supposedly separates them for good. Of course, the denouement of the plot reunites them, but as the reality of the characters stands, their relationship has been cut short. The idea of pushing the viewer out of Netherfield and therefore away from Bingley also foreshadows Bingley's absence from the entire middle act of the film. This simple sequence serves to foreshadow much of the middle act, especially its main conflict. Marianelli portrays

this crucial conflict by returning to the Purcell theme from Elizabeth and Darcy's first dance together, revealing Darcy's influence in Bingley's departure.

Marianelli also makes self-referential use of the non-diegetic scoring for the film, an important contribution to the mediated narrative style of the film. The music tied to Elizabeth in the opening tracking shot of the film returns diegetically (1:03:10) played by Elizabeth during a gathering at Lady Catherine de Bourgh's. With Elizabeth's limited ability, the tune loses much of its whimsical charm. More minutely, Elizabeth's relatively poor performance draws attention to the socioeconomic differences in the film. In the opening tracking shot, the deliberate contrast between the non-diegetic and the diegetic draws attention to the sound of the Bennett's forte piano. Compared to the brassy sound of their piano, Lady Catherine's proves to be a much better instrument even under the hands of an inexperienced player like Elizabeth. The better tone quality of the instrument in turn reveals just how poorly Elizabeth plays, drawing attention to her technical limitations and repeated mistakes.

Another self-referential use of the opening theme provides a stark contrast to Elizabeth's playing. Elizabeth finds herself lost at Pemberley and hears the opening theme played diegetically by Georgiana Darcy (1:25:08). In contrast to Elizabeth's earlier version, Georgiana plays the theme fluidly and without mistakes. In her rendition, the theme resembles the non-diegetic version much more than Elizabeth's earlier stilted attempt. More importantly, the presence of non-diegetic music in the diegesis functions as a narrative sleight of hand by Marianelli. In the opening sequence, the theme in the piano represents Elizabeth and her inner life. It musically comments on Elizabeth and her surroundings, but it does not exist within the world of the characters. By crossing the line and placing it in the film, Marianelli raises some questions. At first, the viewer might wonder if this theme was existing music of the time, used

indiscriminately by Marianelli for various effects. Marianelli even uses this technique in reverse order, by having Georgiana's diegetic playing precede the non-diegetic use of the music for the comedic scene preceding Bingley's proposal. The knowledge that these particular themes were originally composed for the film, and therefore impossible for the characters to know, points to a clear insertion of Marianelli's voice not only into the experience of the film, but into the diegesis itself. In addition, Marianelli reinforces the socioeconomic contrasts by using the sound of a modern piano in order to make the theme sound more sophisticated when Georgiana plays than when Elizabeth did. Just as Wright uses certain visual moments to reinforce the presence of his mediation, so does Marianelli join him with musical commentary.

## CHAPTER 2

### *ATONEMENT* (2007): MEDIATION AS A NARRATIVE ELEMENT

#### Briony

##### *Briony and the Typewriter*

###### Introductory Sequence

Wright purposefully begins the narrative with a depiction of Briony writing, foreshadowing the final revelation of the film. The film centers around Briony falsely accusing Robbie of raping Lola, a vindictive action that has repercussions for all of the characters in the film. Her false accusation happens after she witnesses a series of events between her sister, Cecilia, and the housekeeper's son, Robbie. In the coda of the film, an elderly Briony confesses her crime and reveals the second and third acts of the film to be a fictional fabrication, a novel she wrote in an attempt at atonement, as a way to give Robbie and Cecilia their "happiness." This confession changes the experience of watching the film, suggesting that Briony's influence has carefully manipulated and mediated all of the events. Artifice permeates the entire film, challenging the veracity of even the supposedly factual first act. By introducing Briony first, Wright frames the entire film as unfolding through her eyes, and by extension, through a mediated perspective.

Characteristically, Wright uses an extended expository sequence to provide the establishing details for *Atonement*'s story world. This introduction centers Briony as an integral part of the narrative, while also revealing her place within the society of the film. The camera's coverage of her room and surroundings provides information about her societal station and the family she belongs in. Without leaving Briony's room, Wright informs us about the exterior space by showing a replica of the Tallis house. Grand and imposing, the manor clearly belongs to

an upper-class family, the kind of family that would support and encourage the imagination of a child like Briony.

By showing Briony's carefully organized toys, and her deep concentration as she writes, Wright begins to expose Briony's conflicted interior. Briony's solemnity betrays a precocious interest in appearing more mature or accomplished than she is. In contrast, her all-white outfit establishes her innocence and naivete, supported by the portrait of a praying angel above her writing table, and contradicting her intellectual self-image. Briony's attire, as well as the decoration of her room, infuse her with a girlish youthfulness, so that despite her projected maturity, her later choices will be better understood as the fanciful extremism of a precocious, overactive imagination.

Marianelli establishes Briony's mediation by using the typewriter as a musical device. At first, the typewriter sounds align with Briony's typing and therefore exist within the diegesis. But when Briony stops typing, the typewriter tapping persists, transitioning from diegetic sound effect to non-diegetic musical symbol. By imbuing a sound effect with musicality, Marianelli draws attention to the presence of the music in the narrative. He uses specific and precise rhythms for the typewriter, rhythms wholly unnatural to actual writing patterns. First beginning with simple quarter notes, the note durations steadily decrease, and Marianelli frequently changes the placement of the strong beat. This constant fluctuation separates the typewriter from the other musical elements, casting it as its own uncontrollable force. At first, the rhythms in the typewriter seem to be intended to resemble walking, because they coincide with Briony getting up and moving about the house. However, as the rhythm becomes more irregular, manipulated, and artificial, it evolves into a musical representation of Briony's mediation. With this molding of the typewriter, the choreography and artifice of the story draw attention to themselves. Just as

Briony uses her writing to craft a particular narrative, Marianelli manipulates musical elements to provide commentary on the experience of the film. In this way, Marianelli's scoring functions as a sleight-of-hand, a commentary that reveals Briony's manipulation before she does so herself. The narrative then functions on three levels: the story as it is presented to us, the story as it is altered by Briony's confession, and the commentary of the filmmakers on Briony's presentation of the story.

In order to fuse the typewriter to Briony, Marianelli notably removes the typewriter whenever Briony speaks to anyone, situating these moments as neutral and real rather than belonging to Briony's interior world. First, Briony's brief exchange with the household staff quiets the sound of the typewriter. Then, when Briony gets distracted by Robbie, the insistent rhythm of the typewriter disappears, its absence creating the most emotionally relaxed moment in the sequence. Given how driven the rhythm previously was, conveying Briony's desire for praise about her play, Briony's choice to deviate subtly hints at her deeper feelings for Robbie: it reveals how Briony's crush allows her to briefly relinquish her neuroses and feel her more natural girlish desires. As Briony walks away from Robbie, the rhythm in the typewriter recovers its tell-tale patterns, returning to Briony's self-serving preoccupations.

Through the prominent removal and insertion of different musical elements, like the typewriter, Marianelli draws attention to the underscoring. Likewise, Marianelli uses exaggerated stinger chords to punctuate this self-conscious musical presence. The first of these concludes this sequence, coinciding with Briony closing the door of her mother's parlor (3:02). These draw the viewer's attention to the underscoring's entries into and exits from the narrative, reinforcing the music's narrative and manipulative power on our perception of the diegesis. The

use of the stinger chords continually reminds the viewer to stay attentive to the extra information that the music layers upon the picture.

Marianelli crafts a purposeful musical structure for the introductory sequence, mirroring Briony's fastidious personality and once again hinting at her control of the storyline and events. As the musical content of the sequence begins, a repeated b-flat in the piano emphasizes the tonic. The piano pedals the tonic for nearly six measures, creating a sense of complete stasis. This stasis functions as the exposition to the sequence. It creates a sense of anticipation for the inevitable change, serving as a tantalizing prelude and separating the continuing action from the establishing shots of Briony's room. Once Briony finishes the play and begins moving throughout the house, the stasis is broken. The breaking of the stasis denotes a clear move between the exposition and the actual action of this sequence, although the sequence as a whole should still be considered expository (Fig. 1). After Wright visually breaks the stasis, Marianelli accompanies Briony's movement with the typewriter and the triplets in the piano, following that with careful choreography, inserting and removing voices to represent Briony's journey throughout the house and her interactions with her surroundings. This kind of micro-structuring foreshadows the final revelation of the film, and introduces the viewer to Marianelli's approach of infusing the whole film with Briony's voice. Marianelli carefully crafts and constructs, and does not hesitate to draw attention to the presence of the music, and to its effect on the diegesis.

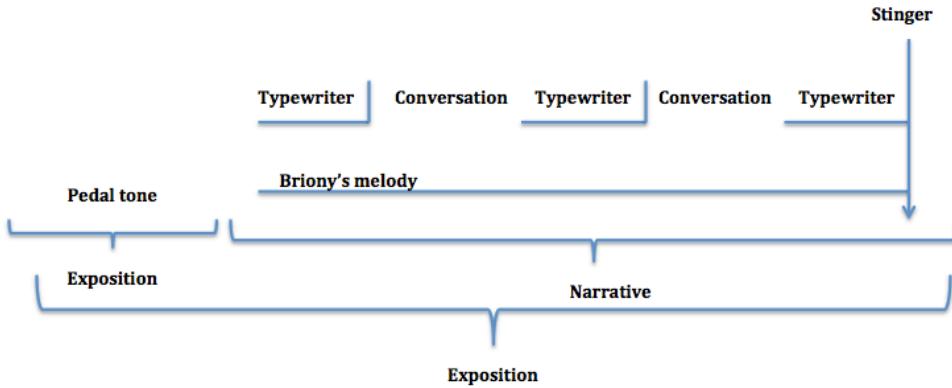


Fig. 1 Exposition structure

The delicate melodic content of Briony's theme reveals the vulnerability of her character.

After moving on from the pedaled tonic, the right hand of the piano offers the sequence's melodic content (Ex. 4). Sometimes in conjunction with the typewriter, and at times independently, this contemplative melodic theme represents Briony outside of her identity as the mediator. It represents her introverted, and sensitive character; her delicate feelings and easily wounded nature. Marianelli called this the “faulty brakes” idea, describing “the relentless quality of Briony's imagination, which is constantly on overdrive but which can get stuck in an obsessive loop.”<sup>10</sup> The many voices of this theme, such as the initial triplet ostinato and the strings’ scalar patterns, connect to the idea of a mind in overdrive. Essentially, the theme continually circles itself, moving through four different key areas before reaching any sort of resolution.

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<sup>10</sup> “Dario Marianelli,” Focus Features, last modified August 6, 2008, accessed March 2016, [http://www.focusfeatures.com/article/dario\\_marianelli](http://www.focusfeatures.com/article/dario_marianelli).



Example 4. Briony's theme.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Atonement*, "No brakes," 2007.

### Robbie's Note

Marianelli reintroduces the typewriter as Briony reads Robbie's inappropriate note (27:56), centering this moment as pivotal to the mediated history that Briony creates. Although the moment at the fountain between Cecilia and Robbie incites Briony's jealousy, setting the basis for Briony's later actions, Briony reading Robbie's letter serves as the true catalyst for the rest of the story. As Briony runs into the house, shaking, the typewriter and strings mirror her agitation. She shakily and greedily opens the envelope, in a desperate eagerness to read the note. The typewriter becomes more and more rhythmically frantic, heightening the impression of her unbridled curiosity. Strident violin pizzicati accompany the typewriter, while the lower strings play relentless triplets akin to the opening sequence's piano triplets. Finally, consistent sixteenth notes lead to the climactic spelling out of the most offensive of Robbie's words. All of these highly active components join together to form the strongest tension in the narrative so far. The focus on the sounds of the actual typewriter, as the word is spelled out on the screen, connects to the act of writing as a central element of the conflict. The events of the story all connect back to writing, with Briony's play as the genesis. Although Robbie only uses the typewriter in one

scene, this act of writing ties him and Briony together, and pivotally changes the course of the entire story.

Marianelli purposefully uses highly rhythmic elements in the underscoring of this scene, producing tension and communicating the importance of this scene in the overall narrative. Altogether, the underscoring becomes essentially a percussive sound effect for Briony's interior rather than thematically significant musical material. The music/sound continually pushes forward, building tension until the full weight of the letter sinks in. At the sound of the typewriter's carriage — by now a sort of stinger — the camera closes in on Briony's face and all the other instruments stop. Ending the underscoring in this way once again draws attention to its presence in the narrative, and the close up on Briony's face subtly foreshadows her role as the mediator.

The focus on Briony's eyes also prioritizes her perspective. Once she finishes reading the letter and looks up, her face shows preoccupation, as she puzzles over its meaning. Although she understands the word to be vulgar, as a young thirteen-year-old, she has no connection to or understanding of the sexual desires of the adults around her. Wright expands on this unmooring of Briony's understanding by following the close-up of the letter with a long shot of Briony in the manor's dark, imposing foyer. He positions the camera symmetrically to the manor's structure, but casts Briony off-center, showing her emotional imbalance as she struggles with adult interactions she does not understand. In previous shots, Wright intentionally uses brighter and more feminine mise-en-scène around Briony's character, like the floral wallpaper and large windows in her bedroom. However, with this shot, Wright situates Briony as lost in an adult, confusing world, wearing all white in distinct separation from her darker environment.

### Briony's Interrogation

Marianelli uses the typewriter again after Briony's interrogation to convey the importance of her testimony to the overall story (44:15). Here, the typewriter comes back in precisely the same configurations as the opening sequence. After Briony declares that she saw Robbie with her own eyes, the typewriter makes clear the influence of her manipulation. Driven by jealousy, her childish selfishness blinds her to the severity of the accusation. At first, the camera naturally follows the interrogation by alternating between the detective and Briony. However, as she commits to her lie, the picture cuts to a close-up of her face, once again connecting the unfolding of the story to her perspective. Briony's eyes serve as the visual equivalent to the sonic typewriter. The combination of the two, as Briony makes defiant contact with the camera, solidifies Briony's complete control of the story's path. She has rewritten Robbie's history, and that accusation will follow and control the rest of his life. The final seconds of the first act fully connect Briony's seeing with Briony's influence. As Briony sits, looking out the window at Robbie being arrested, the typewriter enters quietly as the camera dollies in to capture just her unblinking eyes. This inseparably connects Briony to Robbie's ultimate misfortune. With the music growing louder, the camera dollies closer and closer, positing Briony as the most important character in the events that just unfolded.

### Third-Act Establishing Sequence

The expository sequence of the third act (1:20:00) uses parallels to the first act to demonstrate how the repercussions of Briony's accusation have changed her character. Marianelli opens the third act with another iteration of Briony's theme with the typewriter, once again connecting Briony to writing and to mediation. This sequence mirrors the opening sequence almost identically except for its ending in a different tonal area. The typewriter's

rhythms follow the same patterns, once again connecting to fast-paced walking and a flurry of activity in a fairly confined space. The depictions of Briony differ radically. In the first act, Briony has all the confidence of a precocious and intelligent child; she knows herself to be special, and expects to be treated as such. Therefore, the camera focuses on her and her movement, prioritizing her above all others. In the third act opener, Briony blends into the crowd of nurses for the entire iteration of the theme, emerging only when all the other nurses step away, her appearance coinciding with a stinger chord. This shows how Briony's personality has become subdued, internal, and small as she has attempted to atone for her secret crime.

As the third act begins, the diegetic sounds are placed in the foreground, holding greater weight and reinforcing Briony's diminished control. In the first act opening sequence, Briony's footsteps blended into the music to the point of inaudibility, showing how Briony's perceptions and her internal self were more important than the actual world she inhabited. In the third act, the footsteps of the nurses feature prominently, grounding this sequence as belonging more in the real world rather than in Briony's private internal self. The music communicates Briony's presence, but the camera does not reveal Briony visually until the very end. When Briony is seen, she looks extremely unsure of herself, her established sensitivity now tinged with self-doubt. Her nurse's uniform, so precisely identical to those of the other women, reinforces the change in Briony's status and self-image. By devoting herself to something outside of herself, she has accepted that she is not as special as she believed as a child. Her subsequent exchange with Sister Drummond underscores this sense of subsumed identity, as she reminds herself that "there is no Briony."

Just as the other women conceal Briony until the end of the sequence, the visual image subverts the expectation of actually seeing a typewriter. This disconnect between Briony and her

main identity reinforces Briony's changed personality, influenced by the burden of her misdeeds. Essentially, Briony has lost her power, her belief in herself and her worthiness. The act of writing has brought misfortune so great that Briony tries to dissolve herself—but in vain, because she will always be inseparably connected to that fateful evening. The music's very sameness reinforces the point: it reveals Briony has never been able to fully move on from those events, that she carries part of her childhood immaturity and its tragic consequences with her at all times.

### Briony's Confession

The final iteration of the typewriter variant (1:36:20) depicts Briony's eventual admission of guilt. Fittingly, the realization of the weight of her actions takes place inside a church, during Lola and Paul Marshall's wedding. As Briony sits in the farthest pew, the typewriter quietly and slowly creeps in. This time it becomes more frantic in its rhythm, and the rhythm of the shots keeps a corresponding pace. This scene focuses entirely on Briony and the act of seeing, the admission of what she witnesses. Of anyone in her family, only she knew the truth, and as she sees Lola marry her abuser, she realizes the costly price of her lies.

Throughout this sequence, the focus on Briony's eyes crosscuts among three moments: Briony as she sits in the church, Briony during her interrogation, and Briony when she sees Marshall raping Lola. After Briony sits down inside the church, the camera narrows into a medium shot. After an establishing shot of the altar, the camera depicts not the wedding, but the act of Briony watching the wedding. The first shot of Briony's interrogation comes with a faster rhythm in the typewriter, as the scene begins its gradual crescendo to the climax. The camera continues to alternate between Briony's quietly horrified expression in the church, and her

impetuous lie many years ago. The strings sustain and crescendo in octaves, growing louder and louder (Ex. 5). Finally, after one last shot of the altar, Briony's face appears again, as she sees Marshall attack Lola. A gasp cuts off the non-diegetic music, and cues the diegetic recessional of Lola and Marshall's wedding. As the music changes, a quick succession of shots takes place. These successive shots coincide with the unsettled, disturbed atmosphere of the music, and they finally make clear exactly how much Briony has influenced the story. Although, the break in the music lasts for only a few seconds, Briony's realization in the church and the shot of Marshall attacking Lola happen with complete silence. This situates Briony's eventual realization as the final moment of truth in a story that she has manipulated and mediated with willful disregard. In this moment, the effect of silence in combination with the image track becomes just as expressive as the typewriter's combination with the image. The end of the film leaves many questions about what moments, if any, contain absolute truth. This brief moment of silence communicates that here, at last, Briony's artifice falls away.

Example 5. Briony's admission of guilt.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Atonement*, "Walk to Church," 2007.

### *Briony's Fictional Memories*

#### The Fountain

Depending on the inclusion or absence of certain elements, Briony's music functions in three ways: with the typewriter, as a symbol for mediation; with the extended pedal tone, but without the typewriter as a prelude to fictional memories; and without either of these, as a representation of her internal self. All three unfold similarly, simply swapping out elements for different effects. Marianelli uses the fictional memory variant to prime the viewer for Briony's reconstruction of events she did not witness. This variant of Briony's theme first happens as Briony watches Robbie and Cecilia's encounter by the fountain. Without the incessant drive of the typewriter, the theme retains momentum, but changes in emotional tone. At Briony's mere thirteen years of age, the sight of her sister emerging from the fountain and being seen by Robbie scandalizes her. Obviously, in the social conventions of the time, this encounter lacks propriety. Yet, Briony does not fully understand the context of the moment, and because her perspective mediates the story, the viewer does not either. To alleviate this lack of context, the perspective travels back in time.

The stasis of the extended pedal tone (7:54) reinforces that the story stays grounded, with no forward progress. But it also connects to Briony's seeing, as she looks at herself in the reflection of the window and back to Cecilia before the fountain encounter. Briony's exploration of her face in the mirror therefore becomes metacognitive, as she observes herself mediating a part of the story that she never observed in the first place. This contributes to the sense of unreality in the narrative: just as time cannot actually wind back, Briony could not possibly have witnessed the events that she mediates. As Cecilia places the flowers in the vase, the music dies down, seemingly conveying a more natural end than the carefully choreographed stinger chords

associated with Briony. Yet, the music restarts, and ends with a stinger as Cecilia plucks an A, matching the last note played by the piano. In this moment, the lack of reality asserts its presence, to the point of near absurdity. Later, the pedal tone returns (13:01) with the same shot of Briony's reflection to close this fictional memory sequence, situating Briony in the exact same place as before the flashback and ending her mediating reverie.

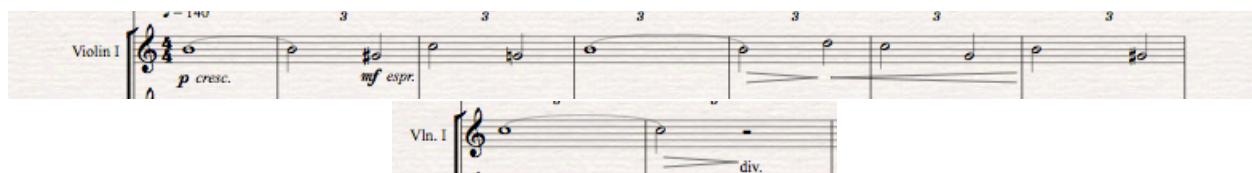
### **Robbie's Note**

The fictional memory variant appears as Robbie gives Briony his note for Cecilia (27:06), once again communicating an impending flashback to images Briony could not have seen. The pedal tone accompanies shots of Briony running back towards the house. However, shots supposedly from Robbie's perspective follow, as he mentally retraces his steps and realizes he packaged the wrong letter. Although Briony clearly read the letter, she has no idea how it came to be, nor did Robbie ever have a chance to tell her. These sequences try to elucidate the events of the past through adult Briony's eyes, with the greater understanding that she has about the actual events. However, Briony never witnessed these moments. They stem entirely from her imagination, absurdly making the contextual and explanatory moments the most false of them all.

### ***Briony's Theme***

Removing the typewriter and the extended pedal, Marianelli uses the simplest variant of Briony's theme as an exploration of her character and her emotional states. As Briony sits in the garden writing, an iteration of her theme begins rhythmically with pizzicato in the lower strings, while the upper strings play the melody that the piano first introduced in the opening sequence

(20:19) (Ex. 6). Later, the clarinet also takes a turn at Briony's melody. This warmer instrumentation mirrors the romanticized fiction that Briony is writing. It also softens the characterization of Briony as a selfish child, rounding out her character to be more complex and not just defined by her crush on Robbie. This moment reveals just how much her writing helps her, how she processes her emotional troubles with fiction without manipulating or hurting anyone.



Example 6. Briony writing.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Atonement*, “Writings,” 2007.

The visual aspect of Briony writing in the fields holds pastoral connotations, but its combination with Briony's theme darkens the tone of the scene. Despite Briony's enjoyment of her writing, the heightened rhythmic activity of the music reflects the neuroses of her internal self, and contradicts the placid nature of the pastoral mise-en-scène. The activity also comments on the emotionally overwrought nature of the fiction that she writes, showing that despite her impressively expansive vocabulary, she lacks the life experience to convey truth or real feeling in her writing. This connects to the earlier scene of her attempted rehearsal with her cousins, in which the twins call plays a form of “showing off.” Briony’s language in the prologue of “The Trials of Arabella” clearly establishes her writing as excessively florid with no apparent benefits, and the voiceover as she writes builds on that characterization.

The presence of Briony's voiceover reinforces her role as the narrator. As she writes, her voiceover blends into the following scene, depicting Robbie at his own typewriter. This carrying over of Briony's voice implies her romanticization of Robbie and Cecilia's brief romantic connection.<sup>11</sup> Even in the seemingly independent depictions of other characters, Briony's presence asserts itself, foreshadowing the final revelation of Briony as the narrator and one who narrates and mediates events she could never have seen. Her version of events is not necessarily untrue but her naive perspective always tends towards embellishing the reality of the actual events.

Marianelli uses Briony's theme in the third act (1:24:03) to convey her regrets for the mistakes of her childhood. Fiona, one of Briony's fellow nurses, sees Briony's manuscript and asks to read it. Briony denies her request, saying she has not completed the story. She exhibits a moment of self-awareness as she explains the plot of the story, calling herself a "young and foolish girl who [saw] something from her bedroom window which she [did not] understand." The use of upper strings and high register piano creates a delicate, sacralized atmosphere for hinting at Briony's desire for growth and redemption. This scene connects not to Briony's manipulation, but to the guilt she feels from her present vantage point. Her declaration that the story is not finished also conveys her desire to alter the story further— to contact Cecilia and right her mistakes.

Briony's theme returns as the underscoring of Briony writing Cecilia a letter (1:25:15), once again accompanying her efforts at repentance. The emotional character of the music remains the same as in the previously discussed scene. This time, however, shots of Briony's attempts at atonement accompany it. Briony cleans bedpans, vigorously mops floors and explains

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<sup>11</sup> Alexandra Wilson, "Unreliable Authors, Unreliable History: Opera in Joe Wright's Adaptation of Atonement," (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 27, no. 02, 2015) 155-74.

to Cecilia that she declined her attendance at Cambridge to “make herself useful, do something practical.” As she describes how her past action haunts her, the camera focuses on her frantically scrubbing her hands with a hard brush. This vigorous scrubbing has its obvious practical implications, but the extended focus on it also symbolizes how she cannot wash away the effects of her past decision, or their stain on her character.

### Robbie

#### *Robbie's Isolation Theme*

Marianelli uses the harmonica to situate Robbie in wartime. He also makes self-referential use of Robbie’s theme by first introducing it diegetically, then utilizing it in the underscoring. The first iteration of Robbie’s theme (49:25) takes place in the sonic universe of the film, when one of his comrades plays the harmonica as they rest for the night (Ex. 7). Starting directly at the end of Briony’s typewriter theme, the instrumentation suddenly shifts from lush and abundant to small and isolated. The absence of a break between the two themes connects Robbie’s isolation with Briony. Because of her, he now faces the loneliness of war. This abrupt shift in the music shows how radically Robbie’s life has changed. First appearing in A minor, the theme goes on for a mere four measures before it stops. This short introduction portrays how little luxury Robbie can enjoy in the war. This access to music could never compare to his gramophone, and he enjoys it only briefly before the realities of war sink back in. In wartime, Robbie has no time for the frivolities of his previous life spent straddling the class divide. Now, Robbie has fallen back to the place he would have occupied without the patronage of the Tallises.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled "Harmonica" and has a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 37$ . The middle staff is labeled "Harm." and the bottom staff is also labeled "Harm.". The score isorchestrated by B. Wallfisch. The music is in common time (indicated by a '4') and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The harmonica part begins with a series of eighth-note chords and eighth-note pairs. The middle staff continues this pattern, while the bottom staff begins with a sustained note followed by eighth-note pairs. Measure numbers 5 and 9 are indicated above the middle staff.

Example 7. Robbie at war.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Atonement*, “Frogland,” 2007.

The next iteration of Robbie’s theme in the harmonica (57:03) serves to remind us of the reality of war, after seeing Robbie’s reminiscing on his goodbye with Cecilia. It accompanies the revelation that Robbie has been wounded, showing his continued isolation and the tenuousness of his life. In this second iteration, the theme occurs outside of the diegesis, allowing the music greater expressive freedom to comment on the narrative. Unencumbered by action within the diegesis, the theme expands to eight measures but still remains brief. Throughout the second act of the film, Marianelli and Wright carefully balance Robbie’s new reality with his yearning for Cecilia and his past life. The use of a solo instrument, especially one as unique in timbre as the harmonica, serves as a jarring indicator of the return to wartime. Robbie gazes at the picture of the cottage by the sea, then examines his wound, creating an incongruous reality that foreshadows Robbie’s death and casts the cottage as an unattainable fantasy. The entirety of the

second act trades in these incongruities, as Robbie faces the reality of war's conditions while hoping for a return to home.

As Robbie's wound begins to take its toll (1:12:02), the theme in the harmonica returns. Here, its rhythm becomes less steadfast, altering without any sense of purpose. Marianelli once again uses the theme to return to the more grim character of war, after scenes of Robbie watching a romance film. Although we never see the source, the harmonica appears to be mixed diegetically. The harmonica morphs into solo piano, as Robbie sees a hallucination of his mother. Although different in timbre from the harmonica, the piano conveys the same lonely, melancholy air, while also adding a depth of sound that evokes mournfulness. Robbie's hallucination places him ever closer to his death, and the piano's somber take on his theme reflects this proximity.

### *Robbie's Expanded Fantasies*

Marianelli uses Robbie's theme with expanded instrumentation to represent his fantasies and dreams of a better life. The next iteration of Robbie's theme happens after a brief return to wartime. As Robbie goes back to reminiscing about his goodbye with Cecilia, the cello plays his theme in its most dramatic setting so far (55:30). The richer instrumentation depicts Robbie's last moment of true happiness, a moment when he bonded with Cecilia and briefly escaped his isolation. Both the cello and the clarinet take turns with his theme, while the upper strings accompany with extended held notes and the piano plays a repeated pattern. After Robbie says, "I love you," he has a moment of realization that he may never see Cecilia again. Longingly, he runs after her bus and the violins take over theme, allowing it to reach its emotional climax.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Frank Griffith and David Machin. "Communicating the ideas and attitudes of spying in film music: A Social semiotic approach." *Sign Systems Studies* 42, no. 1 (2014): 78.

Marianelli draws on convention to create a moment of romantic congress between Robbie and Cecilia. Placing the theme in the cello and later the violins, entwines with the established clarinet to signify a romantic and sexual union between Robbie and Cecilia. This pointed use of instrumentation, and the theme's position outside of the diegesis, allows Marianelli to provide an extra layer of meaning to the theme in this climactic presentation.

Preceding Robbie's death, Marianelli once again uses Robbie's theme to portray his fantasies of a different life. This iteration of Robbie's expanded theme accompanies a sequence that rewinds the events of the first act (1:17:19), and ends with Cecilia and Robbie standing together before the police arrest Robbie. Robbie lights a match to look at the picture of the cottage, and his theme returns in the clarinet, just as it did when he said goodbye to Cecilia. Then, three rewound shots occur: the vase breaking, Robbie handing Briony the letter, and Robbie typing his fateful note. The sequence becomes slightly incoherent as it merges with Robbie's dreams. He sees himself walking through a field of flowers, a pastoral composite that situates him closer to death as a reprieve. Finally, he stands in front of a movie screen while it depicts a romantic scene. This romantic image restarts the rewinding sequence as Robbie's journey from the estate into the police car plays out backwards. Inside the movie theater, Robbie's music becomes subordinate to the singing of his fellow soldiers. Yet as his narration starts, and he declares his intention to live the life he envisioned, his theme gains strength. Once more, the clarinet and the violins join to signify the union between Robbie and Cecilia. Just as Wright manipulates the picture, as well as the events by portraying them backwards, Marianelli expands and grows the theme, crafting it into its most sensual iteration yet.

## CHAPTER 3

### *ANNA KARENINA* (2012): THE ZENITH OF WRIGHT/MARIANELLI SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Wright's *Anna Karenina* adapts Leo Tolstoy's classic, revered novel. A realist depiction of Russian aristocratic society, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* depicts the downfall of its protagonist as she chooses to have an affair with a young army officer. Her husband, a respected statesman, refuses to grant her a divorce, and chooses to deny her contact with her child. Anna's story contrasts with that of Levin, a young man who eschews city society for a simpler rural life. After a visit to Moscow to help repair the marriage of her brother Stiva, Anna meets Count Vronsky. Paralleling Anna and Vronsky's romance, Levin proposes to Kitty, Stiva's sister-in-law, but she rejects him. Anna eventually becomes pregnant with Vronsky's child, leading her to leave her husband and forfeit contact with her son, Seryozha. The Russian aristocratic society becomes increasingly hostile to Anna, eventually leading to her suicide. Anna's tragic fall from grace contrasts with Levin's happier ending. After he proposes to Kitty a second time, she accepts his proposal. The morality of the novel therefore rewards Levin's self-effacing, "purer" love over Anna's effusive passion.

#### The Introductory Sequence

Characteristically, Wright uses an elaborate introductory sequence to reveal the conceit of *Anna Karenina*'s filmic language. By crafting the narrative as a stage play, Wright creates a heightened sense of self-awareness. Before its formal beginning, Wright mediates the experience of the film by inserting the sounds of crowd and an orchestra tuning. This primes the viewer for an experience reminiscent of a staged work. However, Wright subverts this expectation by

combining theatrical and filmic conventions. He begins to establish this by starting the film from the vantage point of the audience; the first shots look like they could be a recorded stage production. In accordance with theatrical convention, a winch mechanism lifts the curtain, accompanied by a purposefully loud creaking sound effect. The curtain reveals an intertitle, providing the location and time period of the film, a distinctly filmic convention. Slowly, the camera dollies towards the stage, culminating in a dissolve that reveals Stiva. This juxtaposition between theatrical and filmic conventions establishes the presence of Wright's hybrid film language. These brief opening moments prepare the viewer for the film's style, a self-conscious approach that will continually draw attention to itself.

Throughout the opening sequence, Wright continues to blend theatrical and filmic language to firmly establish the film's style. When a servant comes to ask Stiva about a present he bought for Dolly, the mechanisms of a stage can clearly be seen in the background (1:58). However, in contrast to how one would experience a staged work, Wright uses a shot-reverse shot to portray this exchange. The scene then becomes an incongruous experience in which Wright reminds the viewer that the action takes place on a stage, but provides detail that could never be perceived from the audience of a theater. Next, as Dolly takes the children to see their grandmother, a door opens for them to access the exterior. In an actual theater, nothing would be beyond the door except offstage space in the wings. The characters would exit, and that gesture would be communicative enough for the audience to understand that they have gone somewhere else. Instead, Wright films the door, and through it reveals a horse-drawn carriage and heavy snowfall. Essentially, he takes advantage of the extended capabilities of film to portray a more authentic environment. However, right past the horse, he imposes a flat set dressing as a background (2:26). This adds a layer of absurdity to the approach, making it nonsensical to

include the carriage and snow only to juxtapose them with a clearly fake backdrop. Wright alternately flirts with verisimilitude and falseness, creating ambiguities that problematize the emotional and human content of the story.

The blending of theatrical and filmic language creates an unreal space. After introducing Stiva, Wright alternates between shots of Stiva and shots of Anna reading his letter. He also shows Stiva backstage, as he ends his tryst with the governess, tripping over spare costumes and set pieces. Wright makes no attempt to address the fact that Anna and Stiva are in different cities, or that Anna reading the letter actually happens in real time, and the shots of Stiva are essentially a recreation. These violations of the theatrical language intensify a sense of unreality, of a constructed space, inhibiting the complete immersion of the viewer. This fluctuation comes to a peak after Anna finishes getting dressed (3:48). As a transition between two interior spaces (from Anna's chambers to Karenin's office), Wright deconstructs the scenery to create an entirely unreal space. He lifts the wall of Anna's chambers by using a winch, and has her descend the stage stairs and walk out of the frame. Then, he shows various unrelated characters, portraying a space that exists within the world of the film but not that of its characters. Finally, the winch lowers a new wall to represent Karenin's office, and two extras bring his desk onto the stage. Anna emerges from a door in the new wall and resumes a conversation with Karenin that clearly started offstage. This constant alternation between filmic and theatrical transitions creates an immense distance between the viewer and the story. Seeing the operation of all these mechanisms draws attention to the artifice, and therefore reminds the viewer that the actors are indeed acting, that they are not inhabiting the character they portray.

The artifice and choreography of the actor's movements enhance the theatricality of the story, widening the distance between the viewer and the characters. Stiva's barber introduces this

choreographed style (1:28). He enters the stage with a red drape, intended to protect Stiva's clothing. Before he begins the process of shaving Stiva, he uses the red cloth like a Spanish bullfighter. He moves his feet and waves the cloth, creating a presentational ritual for Stiva's grooming. Then, he circles Stiva as he sharpens his razor, and the camera traces him, focusing on his hands. In conjunction with his heightened movements, the sound of the blade is overemphasized in the sound mixing. He then shaves Stiva with only three exaggerated strokes, following that with a comical face massage.

Wright introduces Dolly and her children in a similarly constructed way. Instead of a relaxed show of affection or youthful exuberance, the demure children line up and each say hello to Dolly. All the while, the governess and nanny stand and watch, once again reinforcing the feeling of a performative ritual. Wright then cuts to Anna dressing for the day, her hand gracefully dancing before her maid adorns her finger with a ring. They then perform a practiced routine as she dresses, carefully moving in harmony with each subsequent step. In the transition between Anna's chambers and Karenin's office (3:45), the choreography becomes even more overt. A couple performs a stylized waltz, a singer passes through the frame with an accordion and a man dances with a broom. This hyper-stylized approach to movement thematizes the director's mediation: the embellished movements draw attention to the artifice of the characters, reminding the viewer that the actors are performing, and therefore creating an emotional distance between the viewers and the story.

Marianelli's scoring makes effective use of semiotic associations to establish characterization and emotional connection. He uses a playful iteration of the film's main theme to introduce Stiva (Ex. 8). The lower strings start the cue with a buoyant accompaniment, laying

the atmosphere for the trumpet. Here, the trumpet represents Stiva's male bravado, and the introduction to a male space and ritual.

Example 8. Stiva.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, “Opening,” 2012.

Stiva's barber approaches the grooming rituals like a bullfighter. Accordingly, the entrance of the counter theme in the trumpets takes on a distinctly Spanish air (not pictured in example). The

violin flourishes add another layer of playfulness and vitality to the theme, an energy that will be consistently associated with Stiva. Meanwhile, the accordion emphasizes the Russian influence of the folk song. As Dolly leaves, freeing Stiva from her gaze, the accompaniment becomes more brass-heavy, once again connecting to male expressiveness (2:30). After brief allusions to Anna, the theme regains its driven quality as Stiva begins to engage with the governess. Now, Marianelli emphasizes the accompaniment in the tuba, infusing the theme with a more playful masculine energy.

After Stiva's encounter with the governess, the infatuation theme enters (Ex. 9). In this first iteration, the violin solo gives the theme an overly sentimental air, clearly ridiculing the connection between Stiva and the governess. The overwrought slides make comedic commentary on the convention of schmaltzy strings to communicate romantic love.

Example 9. Infatuation theme.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, "Opening," 2012.

Marianelli's instrumentation comments on the gendered expectations for women in *Anna Karenina*'s society. To accompany Dolly, Marianelli switches from the brass associated with male brashness, to woodwinds, a more neutral instrumentation. The use of woodwinds neuters Dolly, foreshadowing Stiva's complaints about how motherhood has dampened her sexual appeal. Dolly, with her five children and her pregnancy, is in fact the picture of fertility. However, her fruitfulness does not elicit a conventional portrayal of sensual, romantic love,

usually expressed through lush, strings-driven accompaniment. The differing instrumentation between Anna and Dolly establishes them as foils to one another. The change of shot from Stiva to Anna changes the emphasis of the instrumentation, with the strings now brought to the foreground (2:35). Throughout the film, Anna will be associated with a lush, dark string sound, and this introduction to her character begins to form that association. Anna's instrumentation connects more strongly with ideas of femininity and romance, foreshadowing Anna's eventual surrender to a passionate, lust-driven relationship. In contrast, Dolly remains sterile throughout the film, always more closely associated with motherhood than with romantic love and Stiva.

Supporting Wright's fluctuation between the diegetic and non-diegetic, Marianelli establishes a flexibility between a more traditional approach and a self-reflexive one. In more traditional moments, Marianelli's scoring uses convention to bridge the distance imposed by the artifice in the visuals. To signal the move to an unreal space (3:45), Marianelli opts for a more balanced instrumentation than before, trading the theme between flute, voice and accordion. This greater balance clarifies the intentions of his previous emphases in connection with specific characters. In other words, it reveals the purposeful connections between characters and instrumentation. Although he uses convention, his expressive instrumentation makes clear and incisive commentary, providing characterization beyond what the dialogue and action communicate. Therefore, the music provides a window into the deeper interior conflicts of the characters, their relationships with one another, and their roles within their social sphere. Alternately, the diegetic accordion and voice briefly intrude on the underscoring, connecting to Marianelli's self-reflexive style. Here, the music he uses to comment on the characters clashes with music within the realm of the film. This overlapping of diegetic and non-diegetic echoes Wright's juxtapositions of filmic and theatrical techniques. The combination of this and the

morphing of the space therefore creates a quandary about the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic. Even though the diegetic accordion exists within the film, the unreal space that Wright has created means that none of the characters actually hear this diegetic music. Marianelli therefore uses this juxtaposition of music to intensify the artifice of the film's construction. Just as Wright straddles the balance between two dramatic languages, so does Marianelli alternate between a self-reflexive style, and a more understated convention-driven commentary.

### Anna

#### *Anna and Karenin*

##### Bedtime Rituals

Marianelli chooses silence to portray the sterility in Anna and Karenin's marriage. After Anna's first return to St. Petersburg, Karenin approaches sex by simply telling Anna: "Time for bed" (37:01). He makes his expectation clear, and she follows. They clearly have a routine, practiced ritual devoid of the excitement that Anna feels with Vronsky. Their exchange as they get ready for bed reveals that Karenin meticulously keeps his contraception in a small, metal case in its own special drawer. His delicate handling of their sexual activity starkly contrasts the passion and abandon Anna has already begun to experience with Vronsky. Evaluating Anna and Karenin's relationship becomes a continuous pattern of noticing the absence and presence of music. Marianelli crafts this narrative throughout the film, emphasizing the silence between Anna and Karenin by preceding or following it with music. Marianelli establishes this pattern by bookending this scene with music. Before, the love/lust theme plays as Anna connects with Seryozha; afterwards, the same theme accompanies a montage of Vronsky's efforts at courting Anna.

### After Betsy's Party

Following Betsy's party, a scene replete with music, Anna returns home to silence (47:17). Once again, she faces the lack of passion in her marriage with Karenin, as he reprimands her as a father would his adolescent daughter. Directly following this scene, Anna and Vronsky's first night of passion takes place, accompanied by a sensual cello solo. Bookended by expressive musical characterization, this scene of Anna's home life betrays the intense disconnection between Anna and Karenin. As Karenin lectures her about their marital bond and its relation to God, Anna's preoccupation with earthly and carnal pleasure draws her even further and further away from him and her marriage. This silence between them essentially acts as the catalyst that makes Anna's dreams a reality, as the editing blurs the relationship between dreams and reality with Anna and Vronsky's first sexual encounter.

### After the Race

The use of silence between Anna and Karenin also showcases Karenin's obsession with order and respectability. To Karenin, excessive displays of emotion should be avoided at all costs. After the horse race, when Anna makes clear to all of their society that she loves Vronsky, Karenin tries to keep her from pursuing this relationship further. As usual, Marianelli chooses not to score their interaction as they ride home in their carriage. Karenin's reprimands here are by now familiar—euphemistic reminders of their duty to God and Anna's rightful role as a woman and wife. Once Karenin starts to impart actual rules as to how Anna must conduct herself in the future, Marianelli uses low string tremolos to create anticipation and anxiety. This material

connects to the underscoring of Betsy's party scene, implying how dangerously close Anna is to complete ruin. When Anna finally returns home, after seeing both Vronsky and Seryozha, the silence with Karenin returns. He seems to think his cautionary rules have taken their effect, and once again initiates the ritual of their sexual activity by taking out his case of contraceptives. This time, Anna interrupts him, confessing that she will bear Vronsky's child. Karenin reacts without any sound except the cracking of his knuckles, and walks away from Anna. When she goes after him, she finds him sitting in an armchair, solitary on the stage, and he whispers: "Tell me what I did to deserve this." Karenin's quiet resignation suggests that Anna's descent happens because of her selfishness and wantonness. To see him as wounded, as devoted and steadfast, is to conclude that Anna "broke the rules" and made the wrong choices. If Karenin were a tyrannical husband, Anna's escape from her home would seem ethically justifiable. Wright also purposefully frames Karenin's distress as happening on the stage, reflecting how deeply he cares about their ability to perform respectability for their society.

### *Anna and Vronsky*

#### First Encounter

Marianelli first connects Anna to the love/lust theme when she meets Vronsky. Although this theme first occurs as the countertheme in the opening sequence, its first connection to her character suggests how subtly and gradually her descent unfolds (18:07). In this iteration, a clarinet plays the theme in A minor, solo, for only a measure and a half (Ex. 10). Marianelli uses this iteration as an exploratory glimpse at Anna's future. In terms of pre-established connotations, the clarinet carries less of the baggage that strings or brass typically shoulder, though in the realm of the film, woodwinds have already been connected with a neutered Dolly.

Using the clarinet situates this moment as neutral, veering neither into sensuality (strings) or infantilism (music box). Although brief, this moment holds significance because Marianelli assigns music to Anna's feelings toward Vronsky from the very beginning, indeed the very brevity shows the immediacy of the connection between Vronsky and Anna. In their first interaction Vronsky immediately makes Anna feel something that she does not feel with Karenin.



Example 10. Brief love.

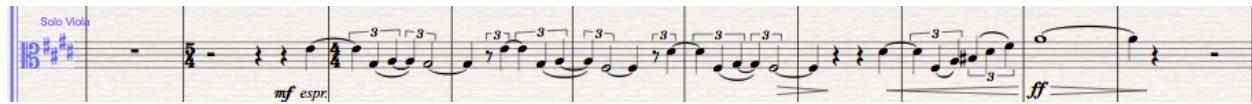
Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, "Anna Arrives," 2012.

### Betsy's Party

The overt mediation of Betsy's party represents the increased societal suspicion that Anna and Vronsky inspire. Although most sequences in the film feel tightly coordinated, Betsy's gathering makes the choreography overt, clarifying that Anna and Vronsky's desire for each other has not gone unnoticed. The elite gather to watch the opera, and the conductor starts a piece resembling the overture of a tragedy. A trumpet ostinato competes with scalar patterns in the strings. Yet as the curtain opens, time elides to Betsy's party. The guests all stand frozen in predetermined configurations. Coded throughout the film, handheld fans serve as a symbol for spectatorship. As Vronsky enters, the women reanimate and flutter their fans, landing on a stinger coordinated with the love/lust theme. To represent Vronsky, Marianelli places the theme in the clarinet and cello. The coordinated mise-en-scène suggests that the sole purpose of this gathering is to engineer the affair between Anna and Vronsky.

Betsy and her cohort's choreography suggests Betsy's facilitation of Anna and Vronsky's affair. The women laugh and sit down in sync, fluttering their fans in turn. Subtly, each woman pauses her fanning to speak, and then resumes as another takes a turn. This occasion seems to be entirely focused on the developing relationship between Vronsky and Anna. Betsy's social power becomes clear as she wordlessly communicates to the other women to leave her side, simply by shutting her fan. This codification of power adds to the impression that Betsy organized the gathering to make it easier for Vronsky and Anna to interact.

As Anna enters, Marianelli uses the underscoring to portray her internal turmoil. The French and English horns give the infatuation theme a dark timbre. Marianelli specifically uses brass in combination with Anna to reinforce her defiance of expectations and gender roles. In this moment, Anna decides to seek out contact with Vronsky, rather than simply allowing it to happen as she has done so far. The trills in the strings mimic her sense of anticipation as she looks around the party searching for Vronsky. As she stares through the skylight at the fireworks, a sensual viola melody represents her release as she fully decides to give into her infatuation with Vronsky (Ex.11). This motive will eventually represent sexual union between Anna and Vronsky. Upon Vronsky's return, the love/lust enters in the strings, in a conversation between the solo viola and the cellos, reflecting the developing connection between Vronsky and Anna. Finally, Vronsky pointedly asks Anna if he should accept the posting in Tashkent. With an extended preceding trill, Anna makes her final decision to carry on with Vronsky and tells him to stay.



Example 11. Anna's surrender.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, "Opera/Soiree," 2012.

### *Anna and Motherhood*

As the film progresses, Anna's mothering of Seryozha becomes increasingly more performative. In her first scene with him, they hide behind a curtain attached to a table holding Seryozha's toy train (5:05). This scene takes place on a stage, as do all the others, but the act of hiding behind the curtain creates a private space for the two of them. Furthermore, Anna's identity within the film has yet to take shape, and she has not yet been connected to the love/lust theme. The lack of music in this scene conveys Anna's lack of knowledge of herself and her desires. Although brief, this scene establishes the deeper connection shared by Anna and Seryozha, in contrast with the formal, detached way in which Karenin addresses his son.

After Anna's first visit to Moscow, Anna's mothering of Seryozha becomes more performative as she attempts to assuage her guilt. After her flirtation with Vronsky, Anna must redeem herself in the eyes of her society. Wright purposefully frames this moment in a way that reinforces its artifice (35:43). In contrast with the first scene, here their interaction takes place with an establishing shot of the proscenium arch. Because she can no longer wholeheartedly play the role of a virtuous wife any more, she now performs motherhood. In contrast to the first scene, the love/lust theme accompanies this interaction, played by the music box to evoke a childlike quality, and therefore portray familial love rather than lustful desire. This iteration's slower tempo mirrors Anna's contemplative mood, and reflects her clearer feelings when it comes to

familial love. Adding to the performative quality, the sound mixing of Anna's light brushing of Seryozha's skin makes her touch much louder than realistically possible. She tries to bridge the gap between her contemplation and Seryozha's presence through physical touch, but she still remains preoccupied. However, her theme stays in the music box, retaining its innocence. Anna has yet to commit to her downfall, and the music situates her in this pre-adulterous phase.

As Anna puts her relationship with Seryozha in jeopardy, a melancholy iteration of the infatuation theme accompanies her visit. Now the music takes a more plaintive turn, with the theme as a piano solo (1:07:18). Just as the contemplativeness turned to melancholy, the childlike innocence of the music box gives way to the darker timbre of the piano. Although Anna still feels bonded to Seryozha, every instance between them places her further and further away from him, a condition reflected by the more superficial infatuation theme. The piano's turn at the theme feels nostalgic, as if Anna were anticipating their separation, already cataloguing this memory for when she will need it to remember him.

Marianelli connects Anna to masculine instrumentation as she defies Karenin in order to see Seryozha. When Karenin tells her she cannot visit Seryozha on his birthday, Anna marches into her former home accompanied by the brass theme from the end of the ball sequence (Ex. 12). She makes a decision without thinking of the consequences; she behaves selfishly and independently. However, as she enters Seryozha's room and nears his bed, the music immediately changes to a plaintive solo violin that reinforces the vast depth of Anna's loneliness. Seeing Seryozha reminds her once more of the consequences of her choices. Finally, as Karenin enters and Anna knows she must go, the love/lust theme enters in a violin and viola duet. This

iteration of the love/lust theme with Seryozha restores the connection between Anna and her son, bridging some of the distance created by her overwhelming desire for Vronsky.<sup>13</sup>

Example 12. Anna as a danger.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, “Birthday,” 2012.

### The Ball

The Bobrischev’s ball sequence explores the opposition between Kitty and Anna.

Initially, the mise-en-scène establishes the contrasts between Kitty and Anna. Kitty arrives early, dressed angelically in white; Anna arrives fashionably late, clad in a black dress. When Kitty arrives, she shines with anticipation and innocence. Everyone believes Kitty and Vronsky will

<sup>13</sup> An alternate reading of this moment would be that the love/lust theme reminds Anna of the reason she lost the connection with her son, which is her unavoidable desire for Vronsky.

become engaged at this ball, but Vronsky's growing attraction for Anna derails the romance between Kitty and Vronsky. Kitty's white dress distinguishes her from the rest of the women at the ball, and upon Vronsky's entry, immediately connects her to him in his uniform. Throughout the ball, Kitty, Anna and Vronsky are visually portrayed as singular, establishing their short-lived love triangle. Kitty is the only woman wearing white, Anna the only one wearing black, and Vronsky the only man wearing pure white. This expressive mise-en-scène primes the viewer for the heavily mediated sequence to follow.

Marianelli infuses Kitty's entrance with youthful innocence, expressing her romantic hopes with an iteration of the infatuation theme. When Kitty greets the hosts, suitors immediately approach her: first, Boris, a young, overeager boy then a nameless stranger who sweeps her off to dance without asking. Marianelli punctuates her entrance with a cadence (26:22), then starts a new section of the waltz as she begins dancing. This emphasizes the constructedness of the dance, specifically written to dramatize the sequence. Essentially, the principal characters control the direction and momentum of the music, rather than the opposite. Therefore, despite placing an orchestra within the diegetic space, the music provides commentary that situates it outside of the diegesis.

Kitty's turn at the waltz focalizes her experience. Marianelli continues with the infatuation theme, moving the melody from the flute, to the violins and later the piccolo. This lighter instrumentation, in combination with arpeggios in the harp, creates an angelic sound referential of her introduction. Together, these instruments create a lighter and therefore less sensual sound than its previous iteration, during Stiva's indiscretion with the governess. Marianelli therefore characterizes Kitty's infatuation as more innocent, and devoid of a sexual undertone. In addition, Kitty dances a more traditional, less stylized waltz than the rest of the

attendees, highlighting her behavior as more guileless than the rest. Finally, Kitty's music culminates with a stinger chord as her nameless suitor lifts and carries her above the crowd, and the attendees clap and celebrate her in response (26:52). As Kitty stops dancing, the melody of the waltz goes away, the music instead highlighting her moment as she floats above the crowd. This overt focalization of Kitty and her desires once again indicates the constructedness of the sequence. Wright does not actually show any of the onlookers clapping, seemingly suggesting that the applause resides in the unreal space of the film that he has previously used. Essentially, the suitor lifting Kitty above the crowd and carrying her to Anna and Stiva is not an action that belongs in the normal story world, but rather a device to heighten the experience for the viewer.

As the sequence continues, Anna's influence and her accompanying music take over the ball, completely upstaging Kitty. As Kitty stands and talks to Anna, the oboe plays a tense ascending two-note motive (Ex. 13). The half-steps heighten the tension, as Anna tries to resist Vronsky's interest in her to protect both herself and Kitty. This small motive serves as a transition to Anna's focalization and perspective. The infatuation-theme waltz continues as Anna chooses to dance with Stiva in order to avoid Vronsky. Meanwhile, a distracted Vronsky asks Kitty to dance. However, with Anna's entry, the waltz's shift in instrumentation begins to change the atmosphere, darkening the mood and focusing in on Anna's voice. Marianelli emphasizes the lower strings and moves the violins to their lower register and the waltz takes on a more sensual and less airy feel. The romance of the dance grounds itself in reality, in the carnal desire that Anna and Vronsky have for each other, rather than in the fantasies that Kitty envisions.



Example 13. Transition to Anna.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, “Waltz 1,” 2012.

During the second waltz, Anna’s influence takes over in earnest with the love/lust theme.

Kitty dances with Boris, but the attention no longer centers on her. Although the second waltz starts with the love/lust theme, it transitions to a more generic waltz melody portraying Kitty’s muted voice (28:56) (Ex.14). Marianelli removes the music’s focalization function because Anna currently stands on the sidelines, and Kitty no longer holds the power. As Kitty endures Boris, Anna and Vronsky make eyes at each other until he finally approaches. Marianelli changes the perspective back to Anna’s voice as she agrees to dance with Vronsky. As they begin to dance, the love/lust theme emerges in its strongest and most sensual iteration. The strings play the melody along with the clarinet, creating a rich, dark sound with seemingly infinite depth.

Echoing, the flutes repeat snippets, creating a conversational sound with more levels of activity. Anna and Vronsky dancing takes on a kind of magic, halting and reanimating every couple they dance by. In a gesture mimicking Kitty being lifted above the crowd, Vronsky lifts Anna. But instead of provoking applause and approval, this becomes a moment of ultimate connection between Vronsky and Anna. They spin, and the crowd disappears until they dance alone in the ballroom.



Example 14. Generic waltz.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, “Waltz 2,” 2012.

Marianelli portrays this intimate moment by reducing the instrumentation to a solo violin. Here, the love/lust theme takes a simultaneously sensual and plaintive sound, as Anna fully connects with Vronsky. Wright creates an unreal space to portray the complexities of their impending affair. Their intimate moment of connection comes with the realization that their desire for each other also isolates them from their society. Notably, Marianelli does not use a duet to portray this moment. The solitude of the solo violin represents Anna’s voice, showing how she alone now lies outside of her society. It foreshadows that Vronsky’s behavior will be excused as a young man’s antics, while Anna’s reputation will be irreparably broken. The mise-en-scène also reflects this, as the contrast between their clothing suggests his innocence and her corruption. With the cut to a medium shot and the choreography concentrating more on arm movements, Anna’s left hand and therefore her ring finger remains centered, as a reminder of the implications of Anna and Vronsky’s connection.

Wright and Marianelli’s techniques join to portray the social agitation following Anna and Vronsky’s indiscretion. With the violin giving way to a softly creeping snare drum ostinato, the image returns to the crowded ballroom. The music becomes increasingly frenetic, with textural complexity reinforcing the dizzying effects of the editing and cinematography. The strings play an oscillating two-note pattern that codifies dizziness and disorientation (Ex. 15) as the love/lust theme continues to wind in and out and the accordion and snare become more

assertive. The violins climb further and further into their upper register, creating an air of panic and hysteria, emphasizing Kitty's distress at being upstaged by Anna. Wright alternates shots of Kitty's panicked face as she dances with several suitors, and Anna as she continues to dance with Vronsky, making clear that Anna and Vronsky dance together for several waltzes in succession. Growing more frantic along with the music, the camera quickly pans to different shocked spectators, alternating among them, Kitty, and Anna. Finally, Kitty breaks away from her partner and silently confronts Anna. This focus on the emotional implications of the dance clearly exhibits mediation. In a naturalistic setting, a waltz would not change in order to reflect the private conflicts of any of the dancers. The structure Marianelli imposes on the music encourages the viewer to examine the extra layers of meaning that the underscoring provides.



Example 15. Dizziness.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, "Waltz 2," 2012.

The entrance of the brass reaffirms Anna's status as a dangerous woman, a woman exhibiting traits more masculine than feminine. Here, she finally realizes just how much she has upset and embarrassed Kitty, and she ushers her onto the ballroom as she herself exits. As Anna exits the dance floor, the snare drum ostinato becomes louder and louder, overpowering all the other instruments (Ex.16). Anna stares at her reflection in the mirror as the snare drum begins to match the sound of the train, and the train's headlight appear in the reflection with her. This composite foreshadows Anna's descent, and it connects her societal downfall to her eventual

desire for death.



Example 16. Snare/train.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, “Mazurka,” 2012.

### Kitty and Levin

#### *The First Proposal*

In contrast with Anna, the music attached to Kitty changes often, with no music serving as a consistent identifier. In Kitty and Levin’s first encounter, a playful clarinet motive accompanies Kitty’s entrance (11:19). Eventually, this motive will become a signifier for both Levin and Kitty (Ex. 17). The rhythmic activity mimics Kitty’s quick dash throughout the house. In contrast with the themes already introduced, Kitty and Levin’s theme lacks melodic heft, serving more as mickey-mousing than a complete musical idea. Instead, the music seems somewhat undirected, and slightly improvisatory, just as Kitty’s identity has yet to fully develop. Kitty’s preening in front of the very intense and earnest Levin makes her childish selfishness abundantly apparent. Her introductory music captures her exuberance, but like her, it ultimately remains stunted and unmotivated.

A musical score for Example 17, titled "Kitty's introduction". The score consists of eight staves. From top to bottom: Clarinet in B<sub>b</sub>, Sousaphone in B<sub>b</sub>, Accordion (grouped together), Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The key signature is B<sub>b</sub>. The tempo is indicated as quarter note = 153. The Clarinet in B<sub>b</sub> and Accordion play eighth-note patterns labeled "mp leggiere". The Violin I and Violin II play sixteenth-note patterns labeled "mp leggiere". The Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass play eighth-note patterns labeled "mp leggiere". The Contrabass has a dynamic marking "p".

### Example 17. Kitty's introduction.

Source: Dario Marianelli, *Anna Karenina*, "Kitty," 2012

Marianelli creates a union between Kitty's motive and the love/lust theme, using it as a representation of Levin's voice. He augments the rhythm in the first violins, setting the theme in octaves. In addition, he overlays the accordion and clarinet in a faster rhythm (Ex. 18). This juxtaposition displays Levin's neuroses, his greater complexity in comparison to Kitty. It adds a frenzied air, clarifying the differences between Levin and Kitty as they are at this moment. Kitty experiences more superficial happiness at the idea of a pending engagement with a handsome officer; Levin worries not only about his love for Kitty, but about the difficult realities of life and society. Levin's voice therefore darkens the character of the music and their encounter. The inclusion of these inharmonious elements creates a feeling of discord, foreshadowing the failure of Levin's proposal.

The musical score consists of four staves: Clarinet (Cl.), Sousaphone (Sousa.), Accordion (Accord.), and Violin I (Vln. I). The key signature is B-flat major. The time signature is 16th note time. The Accordion part has a dynamic marking 'mf' in red ink. The Violin I part has dynamic markings 'div.' and 'pp' in red ink.

Example 18. Levin.

Source: Dario Marianelli, Anna Karenina, "Kitty," 2012.

The silence under Levin's proposal reflects the disconnection between Kitty and himself. Marianelli precedes this moment with music to show their distinctive voices, and the emotions they bring into the encounter. To emphasize the awkwardness of Kitty's hesitation, diegetic parlor music begins immediately after Levin's question and before she can answer. This use of unrelated diegetic music solidifies the lack of connection between the two in this moment, but it also situates them within convention. Despite the disappointment and awkwardness of the rejection, they enjoy the protection of societal convention in a way that Anna and Vronsky do not. Therefore, pairing their connected moments with music within the diegesis mirrors how they fit within their environments just as pairing Anna and Vronsky's illicit affair with music outside of the diegesis parallels how they do not conform.

### *The Second Proposal*

During Levin's second proposal, Marianelli similarly situates Kitty and Levin within societal convention. Marianelli uses the Levin/Kitty theme to signal Levin's entrance this time.

The roles here have switched, and Levin enters this fraught moment with much more levity and ease of heart than Kitty. As they briefly get reacquainted, no music accompanies their interaction, conveying their lingering disconnection. After dinner, Kitty and Levin get a moment alone. They communicate their regrets and feelings in a childlike way, using wooden blocks to spell out the things they find difficult to say. In the background, one of the women plays soft parlor music on the piano. This music too feels undirected, with no particular comment on the picture. It simply serves as a soft and almost entirely inconsequential background to their interaction. However, it reinforces the previous assertion that this diegetic music signifies Kitty and Levin's role within their society. Kitty has grown to appreciate the steadfast man who loves her, and she is prepared to leave behind her girlish fantasies. Levin, a virtuous man, graciously accepts her and continues to love her despite her past treatment of him. Essentially, Kitty and Levin act exactly as they should, and this conventional behavior does not merit extraordinary music, but the music of house and home, the music of a couple operating in concord with their society.

#### Russian Society

Marianelli uses folk song to accompany extended sequences dealing with aspects of Russian life and society. Most frequently, he uses the folk song "Bereza," ["Birch Tree"] which also becomes the primary leitmotif of the film. He uses this folk tune as the establishing theme for the film, during the extended sequence that introduces the main characters. Marianelli returns to this melody, deploying it as a sound bridge or as accompaniment to scenes depicting multiple characters.

Marianelli establishes the importance of this theme in an early sequence to depict Levin's alienation. Levin, unfamiliar with the city, experiences complete disorientation as he tries to

weave through the busy Moscow streets, and the complex layering of the music reflects that confusion. First, the diegetic and non-diegetic collide. As the supervisor blows the whistle and the men begin leaving their desks, a tuba player passes by the camera, his playing coinciding with what was previously non-diegetic music. Throughout the sequence, several diegetic players coincide with the non-diegetic underscoring. All together, the diegesis contains a clarinet player, an accordionist, a female singer with an accordion, and the tuba player once more. The use of an extended tracking shot, as well as the blurring of the diegesis, disorients the viewer in the same way that the city disorients Levin. The workers also whistle the folk song, tying it more closely to Russian folklore rather than the constructed soundtrack. This sequence exists in the unreal space that Wright previously constructed in the introductory sequence.

The next extended use of this folk song ties Levin to his country estate, and the slower pace of life away from the city. With its simplicity, this iteration of the folk song starkly contrasts with the previously discussed sequence. A single female singer presents the melody, accompanying shots of workers in the field (1:09:11). In this authentic space, the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic is clear, with no complex choreography or artifice imposed. These two sequences emphasize the strong contrast between the urban world and the pastoral, uncomplicated life that Levin prefers. In particular, the instrumentation reflects the reality of how people would consume music differently in a rural or an urban setting. Marianelli sets the theme simplistically, and it develops unencumbered by any extraneous elements.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout their collaboration, Wright and Marianelli have explored the constructedness of film. Their experiments with reality and mediation created a self-reflexive style that strongly contrasts that of most period film dramas. Marianelli approaches scoring with concerns about portraying subtext and interior conflict, enriching the narratives by providing an extra layer of meaning.<sup>14</sup> Wright surreptitiously introduces the director's viewpoint into the film with his characteristic introductory sequences and extended tracking shots, forcing the viewer to consider how reality can be constructed in film.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Marianelli first explored this mediated style by making self-referential use of music and juxtaposing source music with underscoring. These early experiments helped portray the interior conflicts that dialogue could not fully convey, and also created a rich, self-contained world for the characters to inhabit.

In *Atonement*, Marianelli aided the thematization of mediation by blending music and sound effect. He also used the absence or presence of music to suggest the varying levels of truth and artifice in the narrative. Together, the filmmakers created a self-reflexive style that comments both on the characters' actions but also on the perception of these actions by the viewers.

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<sup>14</sup> Marianelli on portraying thematic elements: "In Anna Karenina something very important connects Levin and Anna (even if they never share the screen): they both yearn to live a life without pretence; they both find uncomfortable to live like they are acting a part. So for me it is natural to think that this "truer" level of life, to which they aspire (and that by the way is not visible anywhere in the movie, or not explicitly described) should have its own musical theme. It is like a presence, like another character, which deeply affects (and is affected by) the actions of some of the "visible" characters." Email to the author, March 23, 2018.

*Anna Karenina* represents the peak of this self-reflexive style. Wright infused the film with theatricality by placing the events on a stage; the actors' choreographed movements reinforced his mediated style. Marianelli capitalized on this heightened approach and provided incisive commentary on the unspoken conflicts in the narrative. His scoring comments on the societal expectations and norms present in the world of the story itself, aiding the viewer in understanding the underlying preoccupations of the story and its moral.

These three films break from the tradition of superficial period dramas. Wright and Marianelli crafted films that force a distance between the viewer and the narrative, prompting the viewer to examine conflicts beyond what the characters present on the surface. Their films seek not just verisimilitude in portraying the period, but truth and universality in the narratives themselves, therefore focusing less on aesthetic experience and more on intellectual and emotional connection.

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