

Musical Narrative Transcendence

Elizabeth Bennet's Theme as Narrative Device in Joe Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005)

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Introduction

Jane Austen's "rags-to-riches love story" (Jones viii) continues to captivate readers of her romantic fiction novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) in the early twenty-first century much like it did in its contemporary time. Its appeal comes not only from its romantic fantasy but also its "articulate and independent-minded heroine," Elizabeth Bennet (Jones viii). The novel has consequently been adapted in many tv series and films (Cartmell 5; Allen 207), and in 2005, Joe Wright's adaptation *Pride & Prejudice* was released and enthralled audiences. Indeed, the film's visual and aural singularity was rewarded with nominations and awards inter alia for the performance of Keira Knightley in the role of Elizabeth Bennet, the film's art direction, its costume design, and its music.¹ The latter is inherently connected to our heroine, as composer Dario Marianelli has stated: "the piano became very much her voice ... the voice of her feisty and independent soul, strong minded and passionate, but also gentle and caring" (qtd. in Tillman 157).

Literature Review

In this research I will investigate the narrative qualities of the music written by Dario Marianelli for Joe Wright's adaptation. The fields of study that are relevant for this are film studies, musicology and adaptation studies.

Research into the way music interacts with film seems to be a niche in both film and music scholarship (Donnelly 1; Neumeyer & Buhler 16). Film studies is grounded in literary theory as it uses similar knowledge and terminology (Neumeyer & Buhler 17) - based in semiotics - and thus has a tendency to focus on what is tangibly heard (in terms of dialogue) or seen. A semiotic approach focuses on cultural coding - "recognizable elements within certain contexts" (Donnelly 2) - and examines what this coding communicates to the audience.

¹ The film was nominated for several awards at the 2006 Academy Awards, Golden Globes, BAFTA Awards, and others; in the categories of (among others): Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role/Motion Picture; Best Achievement in Art Direction; Best Achievement in Costume Design; Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures, Original Score ([IMDB.com](http://www.imdb.com)).

Within musicology - the language required to understand musical signification - music has long been treated as an independent entity and often relied on notation-based analysis (Donnelly 2). It thus focuses on purely musical aspects such as instrumentation, rhythm, harmony, and melody, as well as the “[the music’s] production and relations to traditions of orchestral music in the classical concert hall” (Donnelly 2).

Even though no solid or single accepted approach has been developed for the discussion of film music and film and music scholarship have long been “failing to collaborate” (Donnelly 4), both of these “principal descriptive tools” - semiotics and musicology - are used in film music criticism (Donnelly 1).

The existence of such different approaches is understandable considering both music and film have their own language and structure. Film follows a narrative structure with its own demands for e.g. pacing, development and spatiotemporal structure (Gorbman 2). Music is often subordinated to these demands, by which it loses its “purely musical signification” (Gorbman 2) that musicology would look for.

Indeed, film music resides in the realm of programmatic music and music for the stage as opposed to absolute music (Neumeyer & Buhler 18-9): it is written with the film and story in mind and edited to fit the film’s system (Gorbman 12). In this way, it gains a fragmentary character that holds meaning not in and by itself, but in interplay with the image-track (Kalinak 15; Tillman 180), narrative context (Buhler 39), and the other elements of the soundtrack: dialogue and sound effects (Buhler 58).²

An often used phenomenon of music-film interaction is the leitmotif: a Wagnerian principle in which a musical motif is associated with a character, place, object, situation, idea, or emotion (Gorbman 3; Neumeyer & Buhler 28-9). It is a symbolic device which can recur, be elaborated, and be transformed (Neumeyer & Buhler 29), thus “evolv[ing] and contribut[ing] to the dynamic flow

² A soundtrack consists of three elements: the dialogue, sound effects, and the music (Stilwell 167).

of the narrative by carrying its meaning into a new realm of signification” (Gorbman 3). Though often connected to an on-screen element, it has the transcendent power to “grant[] insight into what must otherwise remain unseen and unsaid: psychology, mood, motivation” (Buhler 47).

Noteworthy is the fact that *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) is an adaptation, which significantly differentiates it from ‘original’ films as a case study. One of the significant elements of adaptation theory is that it sees the adaptor not just as creator, but as interpreter first (Hutcheon 18). Thus, contrary to Barthes’ reasoning for the ‘death of the author,’ the inspiration and vision of the author - in this case, adaptor - is crucial in understanding the artwork in its context (Allen 69). It is, in fact, previous adaptations that inspired director Joe Wright’s vision for his own. He states,

I think it’s terrible the way people say ‘the Laurence Olivier version,’ or ‘the Colin Firth version,’ ... It’s a story about a young woman falling in love. Why do you always call it the ‘male-lead version’? So this is the ‘Keira Knightley version.’ ... we’re very careful to put Keira, to put Lizzy, at the center of the film. It’s a story told from her point of view.

(Wagner)

Wright’s focalization of the main character is mirrored in the music. In various interviews, Dario Marianelli affirms that the piano and the character of Elizabeth Bennet are directly linked (Koppl; Tillman 157). There are two themes significantly carried by the piano, “Dawn” and “The Secret Life of Daydreams.” They are the most important themes, since they constitute the basis of about half of the cues in the film (Tillman 158). Marianelli refers to the music in the opening scene of the film, the cue called “Dawn” in the OST,³ as “Lizzie Bennet’s theme” (Reesman).

³ OST is an abbreviation commonly used to signify a film’s ‘original soundtrack,’ and is usually applied to published versions of the film’s music, such as a CD. The OST for *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) can be found on CD as well as streaming services such as Spotify and YouTube.

Research Question

Clearly, the aim of the researcher of film music is to acknowledge film music's fragmentary character, its interplay with the visual, and the way its logic thus does not rely on an "organic part of the music, but is a negotiation between the logic of the film and the logic of the music" (Donnelly 3). Therefore, with my research, I hope to contribute to the fields of film and musicology by improving the understanding of the way in which these respective languages interact to create a unique work of art.

Moreover, it has been established that when we are watching an adaptation, we are seeing the interpretation and creation of the adaptor(s) rather than that of the original author(s), which in this case are Joe Wright and Dario Marianelli. Effectively, the question arises how Marianelli's music for *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) embodies Wright's vision for the adaptation of Jane Austen's novel as one that specifically focalizes Elizabeth Bennet's experience, both musically and semiotically. In order to research this and in light of the importance of the adaptor's view, I will take Marianelli's statements - that the piano embodies the voice of Elizabeth and of her soul as well as that the opening cue is specifically her theme - as a starting point. Following the idea of the musical motif as a transcendent, evolving, and narrative entity within the film, the question I aim to answer now becomes: how does Elizabeth's musical theme in Joe Wright's film adaptation of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* narrate Elizabeth's story, emotions, and character development?

Methodology and Theory

I am interested in the visual qualities of the film and the narrative and musical qualities of its music. Therefore, I will use the film on DVD and the sheet music for solo piano as primary sources and points of reference.

The first step in my research will be to identify Elizabeth's theme and take stock of the moments in which it appears throughout the entire film. I will use interviews with the director and

the composer as well as the director's commentary with the film to provide insight into the adaptors' views as well as the meaning-making process for these specific instances. Furthermore, I use previous scholarly analyses to contextualize the musicological characteristics of the (variations of) the theme.

Next, I will separate the identified moments into three subjects and study them in greater detail, by use of leitmotiv analysis. Neumeyer and Buhler state that there are two modes of leitmotiv analysis: one deals with "technical analysis of musical detail," whereas the second focuses on "how the recurrence of a motif marks shifts in character and articulates large formal spans in the film" (Neumeyer & Buhler 29). The first is based in musicology whereas the second shows a theme's narrative significance and is more closely related to semiotics. They are not mutually exclusive and I will be using both.

A leitmotiv analysis does produce a problem in this particular case study. Specifically, a leitmotiv constitutes a musical motif that is connected to a specific element in the film and recurs, expands, and transforms throughout the film to give the narrative extra or other meanings (Neumeyer & Buhler 29; Gorbman 3). Contrarily, Marianelli has, in various interviews, shown to be in favor of a film's music that shows that which is unseen rather than already present in the film itself.⁴ However, the musical theme's connectedness to Elizabeth and the fact that it recurs several times throughout the film suggest a leitmotiv analysis is applicable. Ultimately, my investigation will then naturally show whether or not Elizabeth's theme can be seen as a leitmotiv specifically.

My technical analysis for Elizabeth's theme will be focused on many of the basic elements of music analysis: instrumentation, tonal design, tempo and rhythm, harmony/pitch relations,

⁴ In an interview with Miguel Mera, Marianelli says, "A lot of what music does, at its best, is to give a sound or body to some abstract feeling or idea" (140). In addition, he aspires to "try and go deeper" in his music (150). Likewise, he states in an interview with Lindsay Coleman that he "generally strive[s] to continue a musical idea, rather than interrupt it in response to some event in the movie ... This reflects [his] ambition ... that the music should as much as possible go under the visible skin of the movie, and address deeper layers of narrative." Moreover, he is "always struck by movie scores that don't pay too much attention to the detail of what happens locally in a given scene" (146).

consonance/dissonance, melodic motion, register/range, dynamics, articulation, loudness, timbre and form. I will use Neumeyer & Buhler, Nelleke and Burkholder et al. as works of reference for this.⁵

Burkholder et al. also provides me with the necessary background information, terminology and tools to connect my musicological findings to the dialogue and elements of *mise-en-scène* - such as facial expressions and posture - and cinematography - such as camera position (131-40, 187-94).

I divide the appearances of the theme along the following subjects: Elizabeth's theme in solo piano occurring non-diegetically, Elizabeth's theme in solo piano occurring diegetically, and Elizabeth's theme in piano and orchestra occurring non-diegetically. My reasoning for this specific division is the following. Firstly, this order of subjects is largely chronologically aligned with the film. Secondly, "Dawn," which is the original piece for Elizabeth and holds her theme in its entirety, is in solo piano (Reesman; Wright). In addition, the theme occurs most often in solo piano. This makes it valuable to treat in-depth in a separate chapter. Thirdly, diegetic music has a different significance and impact from non-diegetic music. Non-diegetic music refers to the music that "speak[s] from a transcendent realm beyond the image" (Buhler 51) and which only the audience hears. Contrarily, diegetic music occurs within the narrative of the film and interacts with both the characters and the audience. The dualistic level of meaning the diegetic occurrences of Elizabeth's theme thus create, require a separate chapter devoted to their analysis. Fourthly, the orchestration was added later to the theme and is not fundamental to it (Coleman 150). Therefore, it has its own significance that can be treated in a separate chapter.

⁵ Apart from the leitmotiv, Neumeyer & Buhler identify tonal design, pitch relations, consonance/dissonance, timbre, and form among important parameters of analysis (19-36). Nelleke explains the theory and signifiers of instrumentation, tempo and rhythm, harmony, dynamics, and articulation (15, 29-36, 77, 94). Burkholder et al. recognize loudness, pitch, and timbre among the most important analytical parameters in a soundtrack (267-70).

Structure

In the first chapter I will identify Elizabeth's theme and establish where it appears throughout the film in chronological order. I will describe every instance briefly, musically and visually, and will include time stamps and duration in seconds to signify its form. In addition, I will contextualize the theme and its occurrences with the views of composer Dario Marianelli, director Joe Wright, and results from analyses by other musicologists.

In chapters 2, 3, and 4, I will analyze every occurrence of the theme in-depth by the use of leitmotiv analysis. Specifically, chapter 2 will discuss the use of Elizabeth's theme as non-diegetic music in solo piano. It occurs as such for four times: in the opening scene, after the news Mr. Bingley is attending the ball at Meryton Hall, when Elizabeth paces outside of her father's study at the end of the film, and at the end credits.

In chapter 3, I will look at the diegetic use of the theme in the film. The theme is played on the pianoforte by Elizabeth Bennet at Rosings Park and by Georgiana Darcy at Pemberley. I will thoroughly examine the conditions in which they play in addition to the way in which they play it in order to uncover what the theme conveys to the story's characters as well as to the audience.

Subsequently, chapter 4 will encompass a study of the non-diegetic appearances in piano and orchestra. These occur two times: when Elizabeth and Jane talk under the bed covers after the ball at Meryton Hall, and in the last scene of the film.

Lastly, in the conclusion I will try to give a conclusive answer to the question of how Elizabeth's musical theme narrates her story, her emotions, and her character development.

Chapter 1: Mapping Elizabeth's Theme

Joe Wright's vision for his adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was to "make it as subjective as possible." Consequently, we are "constantly seeing the world through [Elizabeth Bennet's]

eyes” (Wright). The music was written accordingly: it is used not to “characterize Elizabeth from an external point of view,” but to “convey [her] different mental states” (Tillman 158). For this purpose, the instrument that is associated with Elizabeth and her perspective is the piano (Coleman 150; Tillman 157), and it is effectively linked to her from the very first moments until the ending of the film. In fact, it is the first cue we hear that is understood to be Elizabeth Bennet’s theme (Reeman).

The first cue of music in the film is called “Dawn” and contains Elizabeth’s theme in its entirety, in solo piano. It is divided into three statements, excluding the final cadences. Subsequently, there are seven moments in the film in which variations of the various statements of the cue appears. Consequently, “Dawn” can be seen as the foundational, original theme for Elizabeth. This is reinforced by the fact that the piece was written before the filming had started, with her in mind (Wright; Coleman 150). Indeed, it is a theme that, “reflects her strong, passionate and caring character,” according to Marianelli (Coleman 150).

Moreover, Marianelli used Beethoven’s early piano sonata’s as a point of reference, and “[his] understanding of [their] spirit” became the starting point for Elizabeth’s theme. Not only is Beethoven is appropriate for the time in which the story is set, his singular, innovative and independent character also befits Elizabeth’s forward-thinking character, according to Marianelli (qtd. in Tillman 158). However, contrary to the progressive traits Beethoven’s early music possesses, Elizabeth’s theme is “harmonically very simple” (Tillman 158).

Having introduced and contextualized Elizabeth’s theme concisely, I will now map where it occurs throughout the film. I will describe every occurrence briefly and contextualize it with the director’s and composer’s views. This chapter is purely descriptive and I will dive into the analysis of the particular instances in the following chapters.

Mapping Elizabeth's Theme

The first scene of the film starts in a meadow in the morning. The moment the sun appears from behind a line of trees, the first notes on the piano are played (0:51). A medium close-up shot of Keira Knightley introduces us to the main character of the film: Elizabeth Bennet. She walks through the meadow while absorbed in a novel. Specifically, she is reading the last page of *First Impressions*, the first unpublished version of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* written in 1796-7 (Tillman 159). As she closes the book, caresses the back cover, and walks on, the first statement ends and the second one begins (1:32-1:36). What she is reading is a sign of what is to come as well as an indication of something she holds dear: the idea of (marrying for) true love. Indeed, Wright states, "This is a story about a girl who falls in love.... What she's doing here, is reading the story that's about to happen to her."

As the shot changes, we see her make her way to her family's home, Longbourn. The shot of the house and the family, starting from the moment Elizabeth walks in between the laundry outside, is a long steady camera take with only one single, seamless cut when the camera passes a white sheet of laundry (Wright). In fact, everything after the cut was filmed to Marianelli's piece of music, causing music and film to blend smoothly (Wright). As Elizabeth walks by the side entrance of the house the camera leaves her and makes its way inside. We are introduced to the members of the Bennet family: Elizabeth's sister Mary practices piano; Jane is in the hallway; Lydia and Kitty come running and giggling down the stairs and through the dining room - as they do, the third statement starts (2:17) - and the parents Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are talking in Mr. Bennet's study. The slightly shaky long take leads us into Elizabeth's living environment, which Wright describes as a "mess" and "a house full of hormones, basically" (Wright).

When the camera arrives at the main entrance of the house it reunites with Elizabeth herself, who walks towards the steps to the house. She briefly stops and overhears her parents in Mr. Bennet's study. As Elizabeth stands on the steps, the final statement starts (2:52) and we hear the

closing chords of the theme: three authentic, purely chordal, cadences (Gillespie). Elizabeth enters the house and the moment she starts to scold her younger sisters who are listening in on their parents' conversation, we hear the final chord (3:10). We have now heard the full three movements of the piece in solo piano, for a total of 2:20 minutes (0:51-3:11).

The second time we hear the theme occurs shortly after the first. The Bennet women hear from Mr. Bennet that the new occupant of the nearby Netherfield Park, Mr. Bingley, will be attending that night's ball in Meryton Hall. As the family shares their excitement at this prospect amongst each other, Elizabeth's theme enters (4:23). As the camera shows a smiling Elizabeth looking at her sisters from the couch, the music takes over the soundtrack, pushing the dialogue to the background, until the end of the scene (4:55). What we hear is a reprise of the third movement of the piece in solo piano, for 32 seconds.

Shortly afterwards we hear the theme a third time, after the ball at Meryton Hall. Elizabeth and Jane are excitedly talking about the night's events under the bed covers. They mention meeting Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy, and discuss their opinions of them, of love, and of marriage. Right after Elizabeth says, "I doubt we shall ever speak again" regarding Mr. Darcy, her theme begins to play (13:44). She and her sister giggle under the covers and the camera moves away from them towards the window, showing a full moon outside. The music develops further and it turns out to be the first statement, now supported by the orchestra. As Marianelli states, "[T]he orchestra is there mainly as support and amplification, more than as a dialoguing partner" (Coleman 150). The music overlaps with the next scene, in which the family sits at the table for breakfast the next morning, discussing the previous night's happenings. It has played for 36 seconds at that point (13:44-14:20).

The next time the theme occurs, it does so diegetically. Considering the piece was inspired by Beethoven's early work and includes multiple Classical elements - such as an Alberti bass,⁶ a

⁶ The Alberti bass is a figure of left hand accompaniment which gained popularity in the Classical period. It consists of a succession of a specific type of broken chord, in which the notes are presented as lowest, highest, middle, and highest.

strong emphasis on the harmonies which consist mostly of tonic, dominant and subdominant, and a strong sense of conclusion at the end (Gillespie) - it is not out of place in the time period of the story. Elizabeth is at Rosings Park, the residence of wealthy and high-classed Lady Catherine de Bourgh. She, Mr. Collins and her friend Charlotte Collins were invited for tea by the Lady. Among the party are also Colonel Fitzwilliam and Mr. Darcy. Upon Lady Catherine's insistent request, Elizabeth plays a piece on the pianoforte after tea (1:00:45). It is Elizabeth's theme and even though she plays it poorly, Tillman suggests the non-diegetic music that expresses her emotions now is "music that she herself uses to give expression to her feelings" (159). Moreover, Joe Wright appreciates the fact that she is such a bad pianist in this scene, as it "makes her human" (Wright). Elizabeth plays until she is interrupted by conversation from Mr. Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam (1:01:33). The part of the theme she played is a shorter version of the second statement, for 48 seconds (1:00:45-1:01:33). Their conversation is short and she resumes playing afterwards (1:02:04). However, she is interrupted shortly afterwards again, by a confession from Mr. Darcy (1:02:05). She gives him a slightly jabbing response, and then continues on with a simplified version of the third statement (1:02:16). The music overlaps into the next scene (1:02:33) until it is fully faded out (1:02:40), and has played for 24 seconds. Interestingly, it is not revealed what the piece is called in the narrative of the film.

Similar to the previously described scene, the fifth scene that harbors Elizabeth's theme does so diegetically, too. This time, it is Darcy's sister Georgiana who plays it. In the scene, Elizabeth is on a guided tour at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy's estate, with her aunt and uncle. When she loses her aunt and uncle and wanders through the place, she hears piano music coming from an adjacent room (1:21:45). We hear a shortened variation of the second statement of the theme, which moves into a shortened version of the third statement at the moment Elizabeth curiously peeks through the door that is left ajar (1:22:19). Joe Wright notes that, "Georgiana, who we've had built up by Caroline Bingley as this woman of great culture and sophistication and the rightful bride of her brother

Bingley, is revealed to be a child” (Wright). Mr. Darcy interrupts Georgiana when he unexpectedly comes to stand beside her and she excitedly gets up to hug him (1:22:43). Elizabeth does not immediately pull away after seeing Darcy and as Wright mentions, “Here we really understand Darcy as well. His values. And his primary value is his sister, the love of his sister, whom he protects.” Georgiana has played the piece for 58 seconds at that point (1:21:45-1:22:43). The choice for the piece we first heard in Longbourn was significant to Joe Wright, “because it would remind [Elizabeth] of home.” Moreover, illustrating his view of *Pride and Prejudice* as a love story first and foremost, he says, “In a way finding the person you are supposed to be with is like coming home,” which Tillman argues is “a key to the significance of the theme” (159).

The remaining scenes where the theme occurs are near the end of the film. At the very end of the scene in which Mr. Darcy confesses his love to Elizabeth and they move closer to each other to touch foreheads,⁷ we start to hear notes of Elizabeth’s theme once more (1:51:16). It is just a slight overlap that introduces the next scene, in which we see Elizabeth pace outside Mr. Bennet’s study. The music is revealed to be the second statement in solo piano, slightly faster than we are used to. Elizabeth and Darcy wish to talk with Mr. Bennet to ask for his consent for their marriage. Elizabeth enters the study after Mr. Darcy exits, and the music ends at the moment she closes the door (1:51:54). She lingers at the door before she does that however, of which Joe Wright says: “... this is the last moment they look at each other in the film... as their former selves. And she can’t keep her eyes off him.” We have now heard the statement for 38 seconds.

Mr. Bennet gives his consent for the marriage after his conversation with Elizabeth and as she moves to hug him, we hear the second statement of the theme again, this time supported by orchestra (1:54:36). After Elizabeth runs out the door, an emotional last moment with Mr. Bennet is scored with a lingering dominant chord played by strings. Joe Wright notes, “We had big ideas of

⁷ The full scene is scored with a specific cue called “Your Hands are Cold.”

how to end the film ... But really at the end of the day what's important is the tender, honest emotions" (Wright). Ultimately, it is these the film ends with.

When the screen turns black and the end credits start, the music moves into a rich rendition of the third statement in solo piano (1:55:20), bringing Elizabeth's theme full circle (Tillman 161). The piece lingers on the dominant and does not come to a full close after these 53 seconds (1:56:13). Instead, the piece starts anew: we hear a reprise of the first movement, also in solo piano (1:56:14). This also ends on the dominant, after 37 seconds (1:56:51), and leads into a piece specifically written for (the rest of) the end credits, named "End Credits" (1:56:52).

Chapter 2: Elizabeth's Theme in Solo Piano

In this chapter I will analyze Elizabeth's theme as it occurs non-diegetically in solo piano. It does so for four times: in the opening scene, after the news Mr. Bingley is attending the ball at Meryton Hall, when Elizabeth paces outside of her father's study at the end of the film, and at the end credits.

"Dawn"

The opening scene of the film embodies the experience of waking up gently in the countryside, early in the morning. While looking at a black screen, the audience first hears birds chirping. Then, a view of a meadow lined with trees and bushes, still in a misty haze of dusk, fades into view. As the sun rises and peeks over one of the trees, the first notes of the piano, a repeated but freely played E5⁸, are heard. Pianissimo and ad lib in tempo at first, it accelerates and grows in loudness slightly before the left hand takes over the E5 and moves down in a broken triad. The right hand starts to play the melody in twos against the thirds in the left hand. The theme is in 6/8 measure, C major, and played moderately slowly and expressively - *larghetto* - with pedal throughout.⁹ The harmony moves mostly between tonic (C) and dominant (G⁷) with an occasional subdominant (F). This firmly sets the key, evoking a comfortable feeling for the audience, and immersing us in a calm, perhaps dreamy, atmosphere. A certain inquisitiveness and liveliness can be found in the sparkling presence of the melody however: it ascends disjunct,¹⁰ no longer in a rhythm of twos, and uses chromatic leading tones on which it lingers before resolving into the top notes of the melody. During this statement, the title of the film, "Pride & Prejudice," is in view. The left

⁸ I have chosen to use Scientific pitch notation (SPN) rather than the more traditional and European Helmholtz pitch notation, as the former proved to be clearer and more legible for the purpose of this thesis. The Helmholtz equivalent of E5 would be e".

⁹ For all musical details of "Dawn," see appendix 1.

¹⁰ The terms 'ascending' and 'disjunct' describe the music's melodic motion. Melodic motion refers to the way a melody moves and the distance between the melody's successive notes. 'Ascending' means the melody moves upwards in pitch, and 'disjunct' means it does so in steps bigger than a whole tone.

hand now temporarily takes over the twos in contrary motion to the melody, which makes its way down in chromatic steps of two from E6 to C6. It is then that Elizabeth Bennet first comes into view. The downward motion is repeated, but with the twos in the right hand and thirds in the left again. This drives the music forward, and we see Elizabeth bring her hand to her lips as she reads, hiding a smile. Finally, as the camera shows us the last page of the book she is reading before she closes it with a fond smile and caresses the back cover, the right hand moves from an E6 back down to a G5 - simultaneously, the left hand plays broken triads in parallel motion - where it stays, repeating the G5 multiple times, ritardando, and bringing the first statement to a close.

The second statement picks up where the first left off, but in a 3/4 measure and with the melody in the left hand, while the right hand keeps pulsing the G5. The music is thus driven forward more, which is amplified by the fact that it is played faster than the first statement. At this moment, Elizabeth is making her way to her family's home. When she passes the side entrance of the house, the right hand takes over the melody again, and the left hand plays Alberti bass. As the melody ascends to its highest point (E6), the camera takes us inside the house. Apart from a few particular high and low notes, the melody is relatively registrally constricted. Then, for a few measures, the right hand lingers around the G5, alternating between the Ab5, G5, and F5, and offering no tonic harmony. It is played decrescendo and ritardando and ends with a fermata until the third statement picks up.

The quietness of the end of statement two brings great contrast to statement three, the richest and liveliest statement out of the three, which starts as Elizabeth's youngest sisters Kitty and Lydia are running through the house. It is as if the theme breaks free: both left and right hand soar up and down the piano's keyboard in similar rhythm and motion, covering a much broader register than statement two. The right hand plays the melody and an accompaniment of dominant and tonic broken triads while the left hand plays arpeggios that cover three octaves. Both play quarter notes continuously, giving the statement energy and flow. Although its vibrant energy suggests otherwise,

this statement is played slightly slower than the last in terms of tempo. The theme dies down as the camera moves towards the main entrance. The melody first descends, and then ascends again when we see Elizabeth, in decrescendo. We can feel the theme coming to an end. As the camera takes on a point-of-view shot from Elizabeth's shoulder, we hear the final chords being played, softly and slowly. They are three authentic cadences,¹¹ of which the second is played ottava and the third is shorter, ritardando, and finishes on a fermata.

The full theme seems to fit seamlessly to the shots and rhythm of the opening scene, while at no point being too obvious. It flows effortlessly with the on screen dynamics, which is undoubtedly the result of the take being filmed to the music. In other words, the visuals follow the music, instead of the more common other way around.

After having identified the three statements and closing cadences, it becomes clear that they all have a different spirit to them. The first statement is calm, lyrical, and dreamy, while also harboring a curious character. The second theme is registrally constricted and builds tension and drive, which gives it an impatient character. Finally, the third theme, is wide, rich, eventful, and vibrant.

Mr. Bingley is Coming to the Ball

It is not surprising, then, that it is a reprise of the third statement we hear when the Bennet women react with exhilaration at Mr. Bennet's news that Mr. Bingley will attend the ball at Meryton Hall. This rendition voices the statement in a quicker tempo and higher octave. As the girls, with the exception of Elizabeth and Mary, discuss what they will wear and need for the ball, the music is in balance with the dialogue in terms of loudness. However, when the camera focusses on Elizabeth, who leans with her arm and face on the back of the couch and laughs heartily with her sisters'

¹¹ Cadences are harmonic progressions that bring a piece, phrase or section to a close. An authentic cadence progresses from V (i.e. dominant) to I (i.e. tonic).

excitement, the music takes centerstage in the soundtrack and the dialogue is pushed to the background. The excitement and happiness of the girls is tangible when the music rises and takes over. Moreover, combined with the shot of a smiling Elizabeth, it is as if we hear her happiness at seeing her sisters this way, through the music. Then, a shot of the family house that slowly zooms out cues a bright ascending line of melody. It subsequently descends, right hand and left hand parallel in motion, and softly ascends again to find its closing chord in C.

Elizabeth Waits to Talk with Mr. Bennet

The third non-diegetical appearance of the theme in solo piano occurs in a scene near the end of the film. In the scene just before, Elizabeth and Darcy realize they are both in love with each other and she finally accepts his hand. As they lean their foreheads together, the final notes of the cue “Your Hands Are Cold” - a repeated E4 note - is followed by the first notes of statement two of Elizabeth’s theme - a repeated C#4 note - in A major. Had the theme been in its original C major, the introductory note would have been an E as well. By transposing the theme, the created key difference between the “Your Hands are Cold” and Elizabeth’s theme makes for a better contrast between this scene and the next scene. In this way, both the intimacy of this scene and the eager, nervous character of the next scene are preserved, and amplified.

In the new scene, Elizabeth paces back and forth in front of her father’s study, where Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bennet are having a conversation. She waits impatiently for Mr. Darcy to come out of the study, after which she can talk to her father herself. The relatively small melodic range of the second statement and the pulsing E5 in the right hand, combined with a slightly faster and less legato performance of the statement, conveys her eagerness and nervousness well. Moreover, there is a loving quality to the music here, which is evoked by the naturally rising and falling dynamics and the slight softness in the way the notes are pressed. It is as if we hear Elizabeth’s heart beating impatiently, eager, and lovingly, while her nerves rise and fall. The music decreases in loudness

when Mr. Bennet says, “Shut the door, please, Elizabeth.” Elizabeth slowly closes the door while never taking her eyes off Darcy, during which the last four measures of statement two are played *ritardando*. The music ends on an unresolved F5, leaving us expectedly waiting for what comes next.

End Credits

After a last moment with Mr. Bennet, strings linger on a dominant G⁷ chord before the screen goes black and the music fades out. After a short breath, the vibrant third statement of Elizabeth’s theme begins to play in solo piano. At this point, music is the only element present in the soundtrack. Since the film has ended, the theme does not hold a narrative significance here as much as it brings the film to a close and lets the theme come full circle.

Since the music does not share the soundtrack’s space with another aural element anymore, the full frequency spectrum as well as volume of the soundtrack is now dedicated to Elizabeth’s theme, causing it to sound prominent and full. In addition, the only visual element is the film’s credits that fade in and out of view against a black background. These aspects in the music and the visuals create an encapsulating experience at the end of the film. The delighted, loving spirit of the last scene of the film is thus maintained. This spirit is reinforced by a few alterations in the third statement. Firstly, the statement is played faster here, embodying joyfulness. Secondly, 18 measures into the statement, the theme is played *ottava* until the closing cadences, giving it a more tender character.

The statement seems to come to a close when the authentic cadences are being played. However, the final tonic is never played. Instead, a reprise of statement one starts. Whereas the original first statement lingers on a repeated E5 at the beginning, this reprise starts with a repeated G4. Since the previous statement ended on the dominant G⁷, the repeated note of G makes for an easy transition into the main melody of the first statement in C. The statement is played softer than

we have heard before and without pedal, giving it a clear, delicate, and precious character; bringing the film gently to a close. Interestingly, this statement also ends on a dominant: even though the music seems to be brought to a close when the statement comes to a G^7 with a prominent D note that desperately wants to resolve to a C, the chord never resolves. Instead, we hear a repeated G^4 again, which this time leads into the cue called "End Credits." The repeated dominant G^7 endings make for perfect transitions between the different statements, since they are all in C. In this way, the music can keep flowing gracefully as it moves through the different statements.

Chapter 3: Elizabeth's Theme as Diegetic Music

In this chapter I will investigate the specifics of the diegetic occurrences of Elizabeth's theme. The theme is played twice on a pianoforte: once by Elizabeth herself and once by Georgiana, Mr. Darcy's sister. Both times it is played with other people present, meaning the theme is not only played in the narrative, but also heard by others in the narrative. Thus, the music becomes a living, interacting thing within the story. What I will explore, is the conditions in which the piece is played, the way it is played by the respective characters, and its possible meaning within the identified context as well as the story in its entirety.

Elizabeth at Rosings Park

The first time we hear the theme in a diegetic fashion is about halfway in the film. Elizabeth is visiting her recently married friend Charlotte Collins and husband Mr. Collins when the three of them are invited by Lady Catherine de Bourgh for tea at the Lady's residence of Rosings Park. Among the party are Lady Catherine's sickly daughter Anne, Colonel Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Darcy, who is Lady Catherine's nephew. It is a rather tense, awkward event, due to the stiff dynamics caused by the necessary etiquette in the company of the high-classed Lady. During tea, Lady Catherine implores Elizabeth to play something on the pianoforte. Elizabeth assures her that her skills on the piano are wanting; however, the Lady insists, and Elizabeth hesitantly starts playing. She plays the second statement of the theme here, but it is a shorter variation. She starts about nine measures into the statement and adds two leading notes - a G4 and C5, clearly setting the chord and key to come - as introduction into the subsequent melodic phrases. In addition, she includes two notes in the bass clef - the fifth and tonic of the chord - after every phrase. In "Dawn," this happens only after every other phrase. Furthermore, she plays without the pedal, giving the piece a rather jagged character.

While Elizabeth plays, Lady Catherine inquires how Georgiana, Mr. Darcy's sister, is getting along with her playing. According to him, she plays very well. The Lady then goes on to state that, "No excellence can be acquired without constant practice." When the melody ascends, disjunct and with a chromatic leading tone to every top note, Mr. Darcy comes to the pianoforte to talk with Elizabeth. Even though Elizabeth claims she will not be fazed by his presence and Mr. Darcy answers he does not believe he could, she hits a wrong, dissonant note, twice: when she briefly looks up as he puts his hand on the piano, and when she says, "You mean to frighten me, Mr. Darcy." Nevertheless, she seems to play on well, due to the continuous Alberti bass in the left hand, which keeps the music flowing. When listening closely however, we hear her right hand plays the melody differently from the original writing. Then, just as she enters the last measures of statement two, Colonel Fitzwilliam joins the conversation, and asks Elizabeth about her experience with Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth stops playing and relays Mr. Darcy's "dreadful" behavior at the Meryton Hall ball to him, where Mr. Darcy refused to dance and did not socialize.

Shortly afterwards, Colonel Fitzwilliam is called by Lady Catherine and Elizabeth resumes playing the alternating E4 and G4 in right hand and accompaniment in the left. She does this for only two seconds before Mr. Darcy confesses he does not speak easily with strangers and she stops to look at him. Elizabeth responds he should perhaps "take [his] aunt's advise and practice," and continues to play on. She plays louder and harsher than before; perhaps to underline her jabbing remark towards Darcy. It is a simplified variation of the lively third statement, with chords in the left hand rather than arpeggios. Played as this and without pedal or dynamic nuance, the theme receives a blunt character, not unlike the way Elizabeth has expressed herself throughout this scene. While she plays on, Darcy moves away from her. As he does, he gives her a wistful look over his shoulder, which she is oblivious to.

Elizabeth's playing seems to be quite poor indeed: she is clearly looking for the right keys, her articulation is rough, - unintentionally - *marcato*,¹² and she plays rather slowly and inconsistently in tempo. This is understandable considering the fact that Elizabeth does not practice often, as she mentioned at the dinner table just before this scene. However, for the viewer, her rigid playing befits the situation she is in for other reasons as well. The conversations in Lady Catherine's presence are rather curt, the persons present limit their movements greatly so as to adhere to etiquette, and there is very little warmth to the atmosphere. Indeed, the atmosphere is quite uninviting and Lady Catherine's behavior is condescending throughout. For example, the Lady indirectly scolds Elizabeth for not practicing enough, suggesting she is short of excellence. Moreover, Elizabeth is forced to play rather than doing it of her own volition. In other words, in addition to her lack of practice, there are other aspects that influence her playing in this scene: a perhaps begrudged and tense state, her own bluntness of character, and the rigid atmosphere of the gathering at Rosings Park, of which her rendition of the theme is most illustrative.

If we regard the fact that the piano and Elizabeth's theme are meant to be Elizabeth's voice, another potential aspect becomes worthy of consideration. By playing it herself, Elizabeth now takes the piece into her own hands, and thus claims agency over her music and voice. We hear it directly from her fingers, and it is as if she now speaks to us, the audience, directly. Moreover, considering the setting she is in at that moment, this is striking. Indeed, there is very little space to claim in an environment so cold and condescending. The clumsiness of her playing then gains another level of meaning. Namely, that her voice is interrupted and caged in rather than flowing and free; and, most importantly, that she, nonetheless and stubbornly, insists it is heard.

¹² Articulation refers to the way tones succeed each other; for example, whether they are played tied or separate. *Marcato* means that every note is emphasized separately (Nelleke 35).

Georgiana at Pemberley

The second time the piece is played on the pianoforte in the film, it is played at Mr. Darcy's estate by his sister Georgiana. Elizabeth is visiting Pemberley with her aunt and uncle to admire its sights, among which is a sculpture gallery. She loses her aunt and uncle when she is lost in thought and emotion looking at a bust of Mr. Darcy. In her search of them, she finds a large and lavishly decorated room where she pauses to look out of the window. As she looks into the gardens, she becomes aware of the sound of a piano. The door towards the room with the pianoforte is slightly ajar and the sound becomes louder as Elizabeth moves carefully, curiously, towards it. She sees a young girl playing the pianoforte. What she and the audience hear is Elizabeth's theme, played exquisitely. The girl is playing the same part of the theme as Elizabeth was playing in Rosings Park, the second statement, without pedal as well.

Whereas Elizabeth stopped playing before the second statement was over, the young girl plays on: as Elizabeth looks through the space left by the slightly opened door and sees the girl playing in the reflection of a mirror, we hear the third statement of the theme. As this statement starts, the music takes over the full soundtrack and we are encapsulated by the theme. The girl plays most of the third statement until she is interrupted by Mr. Darcy, who enters the room and stands beside her. When she notices him, she hits a few dissonant keys in her hurry to get up and hug him; simultaneously reflecting Elizabeth's startle at seeing Mr. Darcy. It is now clear she is Georgiana, Darcy's sister. As they hug and Darcy swirls Georgiana around in their embrace, Elizabeth does not turn away, but instead looks on in wonder. Darcy and Georgiana spot her in the mirror however, and with a shocked gasp, Elizabeth turns around and runs out of the house.

Interestingly, even though Georgiana does not play with a pedal and it thus does not sound as graceful as the non-diegetic version of "Dawn," the theme has a lot of flow. Melodic phrases are connected elegantly, the dynamics vary naturally and with feeling, and the piano's keys are pressed quite lightly and with care. She plays it in a slightly faster tempo than we originally heard it in, and

contrarily to Elizabeth's rendition and "Dawn," she does not emphasize the notes in the bass clef as much. In fact, she puts emphasis on the high notes, by decelerating at the top notes of the melody and holding the notes for longer, which makes them sound broader and more prominent. These aspects, playing it slightly faster and with a stronger emphasis on the high notes, gives the theme a younger character. This quite befits the context of Georgiana, a sixteen-year-old girl, playing the theme.

After Georgiana's talent has been mentioned several times throughout the film, Elizabeth and the audience now experience it. Elizabeth watches and listens in wonder. Especially as the third statement starts and the music becomes immersive by taking over the full soundtrack, Elizabeth looks on in amazement. Perhaps this is due to Georgiana's talent; however, Elizabeth's familiarity with the piece cannot be ignored. The piece that she herself has played with her own fingers, is now being played in the house of the man she has recently realized she loves. Whereas the estate, in all its grandeur, was alien to her at first, she now finds something intimate and familiar there which undeniably fuels her feeling of connectedness to him.

For the audience, this moment signifies Elizabeth's and Darcy's connection on a different level as well. Throughout the film, we have heard Elizabeth's theme in context with her family, home, and character. Now, the theme is introduced in Darcy's home. It evokes the feeling that Elizabeth's spirit lives here too, or perhaps that she is meant to be there.

Chapter 4: Elizabeth's Theme and the Orchestra

In this chapter, I will explore when and how Elizabeth's theme in piano interacts with other instruments. The orchestra provides a different voice, that can provide support, expansion, or even contrast to Elizabeth's theme, and can change its timbral quality. There are two such occurrences, and the last moves into another rendition in solo piano, which has been discussed in chapter 2.

Under the Bed Covers after the Ball

The first time we hear Elizabeth's theme combined with other instruments is the night after the ball at Meryton Hall. Still excited from the ball, Elizabeth and Jane are discussing the night's events under the covers. Jane speaks favorably of Mr. Bingley and wonders if he likes her too. When they come upon the topic of marriage, they both agree it "should not be driven by thoughts of money." More importantly, Elizabeth states: "Only the deepest love will persuade me into matrimony." Not believing she could actually find that, she notes, "Which is why I will end up an old maid." Circling back to the ball's attendees, Mr. Darcy's disagreeable behavior - especially a lowly remark he made about Elizabeth being "perfectly tolerable ... but not handsome enough to tempt me" - is met with indignation from the sisters. After Elizabeth says, "But no matter, I doubt we shall ever speak again," and a short intake of her breath, finally, a softly played - pianissimo - B5 answers her while the camera is still with them under the covers. The note is repeated six times before the melody picks up - simultaneously, the girls giggle and laugh in their bed and the camera moves towards the window - and we hear the first statement of her theme, in G major; a fourth below its original C major.

After the first melodic phrase, the clarinet joins the piano in the melody. At the end of the second phrase, the clarinet holds the fifth (D) while the right hand in the piano ascends. The moment the piano plays the four consecutive ascending chromatic notes in the melody, the girls' giggles are pushed to the background as the strings come in, accompanying the piano by laying

down chords and thus adding texture and depth to the theme. Especially in the second chromatic line in the melody, when the contrabass plays and holds a B in its low register, the music's register is expanded and the theme seems to widen. The strings' timbre add warmth to the piano's clear and lyrical voice.

The strings and piano move in parallel motion. The melody reaches its peak and when it descends in steps of two, crescendo and while the camera shows a full moon outside, the piano and strings swell as if in canon with the sisters' elation. Then, a decrescendo signals a conclusion to come. Before the theme can fully die down however, we hear Mrs. Bennet's voice, in an overlap with the next scene. The music takes a back seat as we see the family sitting at the table for breakfast, and finally, the statement comes to a close on the tonic, a G chord.

In this scene, Elizabeth's theme seems to be in canon with her and her sister's exaltation. It starts after a breath escapes Elizabeth and seems to take over, carrying the warmth of the covers and sisterly camaraderie with it through the expansive quality and texture of the strings. In addition, the timing of the theme, right after Elizabeth's remark, seems significant: a previously calm and inquisitive first statement becomes filled with anticipation after the sisters' conversation about eligible men.

Mr. Bennet Blesses the Marriage

The second time we hear the theme with contribution from the orchestra is at the very end of the film. Elizabeth is in Mr. Bennet study to ask for his consent for her marriage with Mr. Darcy. They talk about her feelings for Darcy and as Mr. Bennet realizes she indeed loves the man, he eventually says: "I heartily give my consent." Elizabeth smiles broadly and just after her breath escapes her and she moves towards her father to hug him, the first alternating E4 and G4 notes of the second statement of Elizabeth's theme are heard. The introductory notes are played less often than the original before the melody comes in. As it does, we can hear a soft pedal tone played by

contrabass, bringing depth to the starting notes and evoking a feeling of anticipation as it keeps holding the tonic. When Elizabeth thanks her father, leaves out a breath and quickly, excitedly, moves to go outside, the melody moves into its first chromatically ascending line. It is here that the other strings come in, providing the theme with expansion and texture, and the music increases in loudness. The violins join the piano in the melody in parallel motion while the contrabasses provide ground notes in their low register.

A shot from the hallway shows Elizabeth opening and running out the door - the last shot we see of her in the film - and as she does, the second chromatically ascending line plays and the music increases in loudness in the soundtrack. As the melody reaches its top notes and subsequent descending line, we slowly see inside the study, where Mr. Bennet still sits in emotional disbelief. A next shot shows him in a medium close-up as he says his last lines, and simultaneously we hear the last alternating notes of statement two being played - Ab, F, and G - ritardando in piano while all of the strings hold the dominant G⁷ chord. The camera stays with Mr. Bennet in an intimate, dear moment in which he laughs heartily with tears in his eyes. This is scored with the G⁷ chord still held in the strings, which they hold until after the screen has turned black and the credits start to roll. Then, the third statement in solo piano takes over.

Conclusion

My aim with this research was to find out how Elizabeth's musical theme in Joe Wright's film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, written by Dario Marianelli, narrates Elizabeth's story, emotions, and character development, by use of leitmotiv analysis. There is much I have found out, which I will discuss for every one of the three elements consecutively.

In terms of story, Elizabeth's theme takes a clear form within the film's structure and even determines the film's structure in the first scene. Specifically, the theme occurs three times non-diegetically at the very beginning of the film, twice diegetically in the middle, and twice non-diegetically at the end. The instances at the beginning and end of the film are when we hear Elizabeth's theme the longest, and are the least interrupted by on-screen activity. Thus, it seems to frame the film, much like the frame of a picture or painting would, and symbolizes both our entrance and exit into Elizabeth's world. It becomes *her* story and thus very much embodies Wright's vision of making the film as subjective as possible, told from Elizabeth's point of view.

Moreover, the occurrences of the theme draw a thread throughout the film and if we put them in consecutive order, it tells us a story of love moving from a fiction, or dream, into reality. Indeed, when Elizabeth reads *First Impressions* and remarks to her sister she will "end up an old maid," being able to find and marry out of true love seems a mere fantasy, which is supported in the music by renditions of the lyrical, dreamy first statement. Then, in the first diegetic moment, she finds self-expression as she plays her own theme on the piano. It is poor, but nevertheless bold in the confining environment she is in, and she unknowingly impresses Mr. Darcy. In the second diegetic occurrence of the theme, it is the other way around: Elizabeth finds an unexpected, intimate connection to Mr. Darcy as she listens to her so familiar music being played in his home. Finally, at the end of the film and supported by an exciting, expanded second statement, followed by a loving, intimate, and exuberant third statement and subsequent gentle, delicate first statement; that which

was fiction for her, has become a reality: she has found true love with Mr. Darcy and they will marry.

In terms of emotion, the theme mostly amplifies Elizabeth's emotions as we see and hear them on-screen in her acting, posture and dialogue. However, it also provides other layers of meaning. Throughout the film, the theme seems to be in dialogue with Elizabeth. In the opening scene, we join her on a contemplative walk and are introduced to her family. It is not the camera but the music which takes the lead here, which means that as we follow Elizabeth and are in tandem with her and her movements, we witness truly a rhythmical dialogue between her and the music. In the next scene, as we see Elizabeth watching her family fondly in their exaltation, the music seems to tell us something else about her: she dearly loves her family. It is as if the music, as it swells, reacts to her love for them. After the Meryton Hall Ball, the music starts to play exactly after her remarks about Darcy, seemingly reacting to her. Significantly, the musical theme previously connected to the narrative themes of love and marriage on-screen or in dialogue, now answers her wary, negative remark. The music swells with the sisters' fun and joyfulness, but also seems to convey there might be something greater coming that Elizabeth is not aware of. In the diegetic appearances of the music, Elizabeth boldly takes the theme into her own hands, and expresses both herself in that moment as well as the state of the situation. With the music, she - perhaps not consciously so - speaks directly to the other characters present at Rosings Park as well as to the audience. In Pemberley, she is encountered with the music speaking to her directly herself, and she listens in surprise. Indeed, she is met with something she did not expect and Georgiana's playing of her theme leaves her to wonder. Lastly, the music is in duet with her as she sighs when she is waiting to talk with her father. Interestingly, as she leaves the frame in the last scene of the film, the music lets us hear her joy while she is already gone.

After having established what happens in story and emotion, Elizabeth's character development naturally becomes clear: she seem to move from boldness, to wonder, to love.

Moreover, Marianelli has been successful in creating music that in character aligns with, and follows, a now better understood, and cherished, character. He has given Elizabeth Bennet a softness, curiousness, liveliness and independence that we can now hear and feel as we hear her talk, walk, feel, love, and develop.

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