

When Dylan Met the Bard:

Fragments of Screen (Sound) in Michael

Almereyda's *Hamlet*



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Michael Almereyda's Hamlet (2000) offers a stunning contemporary vision of Shakespeare's Hamlet set in a sleek urban world of New York City that is plagued by claustrophobia, conspiracy, and global corporate power. The film radically shifts the original period and milieu of Hamlet, and drastically edits and fragments Shakespeare's playtext. To counter the film's temporal brevity and drastic cuts, Almereyda employs numerous intertextual and popular culture references, as well as eclectic musical cues, in order to quickly and succinctly convey mood, tone, and significant textual information that have otherwise been excised from his film. Musical quotation is in particular, a potent signifier in Hamlet. A fragment of the Bob Dylan song 'All Along the Watchtower' (1966) is used as a filmic shortcut to translate Shakespeare's iconic 'Gravedigger scene' between Hamlet and the Gravedigger from playtext to screen. 'All Along the Watchtower' encapsulates certain ideas about mortality and the worth of life from the 'Gravedigger scene' and demonstrates these issues still resonate in the contemporary urban world the film is set. Dylan's lyrics are a deliberate modern translation of Shakespeare's poetry that casts Hamlet as the used and abused Joker struggling for meaning in his life, and Claudius as both Businessman and Thief, who robs Hamlet of the possibilities of succession.

In his cinematic adaptation of *Hamlet* (2000)¹ director Michael Almereyda transplants Shakespeare's story into the corporate world of New York City at the end of the twentieth century. While acknowledging the iconography and canonical status of both Shakespeare, and more specifically of *Hamlet* on stage and screen, Almereyda offers a stunning contemporary vision of the Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The radical shift of period and milieu, massive edits to the text, numerous intertextual references to other films and popular culture, and eclectic musical cues, all emphasise that Almereyda's film is a more popular version of *Hamlet*, as opposed to (or at least equivalent to) a canonized version. Criticized for its heavy edits, rearranging, and (over)use of imagery, Almereyda's millennial film adaptation *Hamlet* is a film that literally does not have enough time to get across all of Shakespeare's words. Its running time of 112 minutes is relatively brief when compared with other major film adaptations of *Hamlet*.² To combat this temporal brevity, Almereyda creates an Impressionist *Hamlet*. The screen space is bombarded with visual information, Shakespeare's playtext has been significantly edited and visually and aurally fragmented, displaced, and rearranged, and other filmic short cuts, such as intertextual and popular culture references, as well as musical cues, quickly and succinctly convey mood, tone, and significant textual information that have otherwise been excised from his film.³ Musical quotation is in particular, a potent signifier in *Hamlet*.⁴ Almereyda uses Bob Dylan's song 'All Along the Watchtower'⁵ in lieu of the 'Gravedigger scene' of Shakespeare's play (*Hamlet*, V, 1).⁶ 'All Along the Watchtower' was written by Bob Dylan at the time of several major turning points in his musical and personal life; the ideas that Dylan was struggling with in this tumultuous time in his life, including issues of (his own) mortality and the worth of human life, are subjects that are raised in Hamlet's conversation with the Gravedigger, and with which Hamlet also struggles throughout the film. Almereyda recognises these issues are far too important to be left out of his film, and endeavors to include them in the form of a tiny musical fragment, which whilst short and almost unnoticeable, mirrors Hamlet's own inner turmoil and has great reverberations

throughout the film.⁷ 'All Along the Watchtower' becomes more than what Douglas Lanier claims is a 'throwaway allusion'⁸; Dylan's lyrics are a deliberate modern translation of Shakespeare's poetry that casts Hamlet (Ethan Hawke) as the used and abused Joker struggling for meaning in his life, and Claudius (Kyle MacLachlan) as both Businessman and Thief, who robs Hamlet of the possibilities of succession.

Almeryda's film *Hamlet* has generated two soundtracks, the score by renowned composer Carter Burwell, and the soundtrack, featuring some of the popular music used in the film.⁹ Unlike the way in which musical choices in film are heavily influenced by and marketed for a particular audience, for example in Luhrmann's highly commercially successful soundtrack from *Romeo + Juliet*¹⁰, and the use of music in Gil Junger's teen film adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* as *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999)¹¹, music in *Hamlet* is deliberately chosen in order to emphasise the schizophrenic and fragmented mood of the film rather than as a slick marketing tool. Almeryda explains his approach regarding musical choice in the booklet accompanying the soundtrack of the film:

The idea was to layer in music that could highlight the play's up-to-the moment tensions, textures and contradictions. Music as jagged and out of joint, restless and rich as the thoughts buzzing in Hamlet's brain. (Rykodisc)

Music in *Hamlet* sets the rhythm and the mood of scenes, and conveys what Simon Frith refers to as 'emotional reality'¹²: the underlying thoughts and nature of a character. Frith astutely observes that in film:

Music, it seems can convey and clarify the emotional significance of a scene, the true, 'real' feelings of the characters involved in it. Music, in short, signals what's 'underneath' or 'behind' a film's observable gestures.¹³

Building on Frith's idea of emotional reality, recent film theory in its discussion of music argues that audiences are invited to establish a relationship with screen characters based on:

... a reliable access to the character's state of mind, on understanding the context of the character's actions, and having morally evaluated the character on the basis of this knowledge.¹⁴

The 'chop-and-change' nature of the genre of musical choices in Almereyda's film matches the fragmentation of language and image within the film, and emphasises for the audience the fractured nature of Hamlet's character and state of mind. A prime example in the film of the fragmentation of Hamlet's thoughts and character is Almereyda's decision to split Hamlet's iconic 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy into three separate parts. Each is delivered at a different time in the film, runs for a different length of time, and is presented in a different way. The soliloquy is first delivered not by Hawke's Hamlet, but by Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, peace activist, and author. Nhat Hanh offers an adaptation of the soliloquy, when he appears on a television screen in Hamlet's room at Elsinore speaking about the act of 'inter-being' with others. The second instance of the soliloquy is a truncated repetition of the opening 'To be, or no to be' line, delivered by Hawke's Hamlet in replayed footage from his video diary. Hawke finally delivers a full uncut version of the soliloquy in the scene where Hamlet stalks up and down the aisles of a Blockbuster video store.¹⁵

The soundtrack of Almereyda's film adaptation of *Hamlet* is littered with several styles, genres and samples of music. There is hardly a moment in the film where some sort of music is not heard: from the score by Carter Burwell to the soundtrack featuring eclectic musical artists such as Primal Scream and The Birthday Party. Of particular interest and the focus of this article is Almereyda's use of a fragment of the Bob Dylan song 'All Along the Watchtower', heard during the 'Gravedigger scene' of the film. The song is absent from both soundtracks released in conjunction with the film, a decision likely influenced by the cost associated with licensing such a well-known and popular song. The use of Dylan's 'All Along the Watchtower' is one of the most economical ways a musical cue is used in the film to convey emotion, rhythm, mood and textual information in the film. Almereyda uses a now iconic song— so memorable that he does not have to use the whole song, only

a fragment —to replace an equally iconic scene from *Hamlet*, the ‘Gravedigger scene’ where Hamlet contemplates Yorick’s skull.¹⁶

Any discussion of the song ‘All Along the Watchtower’ and the album the song comes from, *John Wesley Harding* cannot begin without some background on Bob Dylan’s life before the album’s release. This includes Dylan’s action of ‘going electric’ as well as his motorcycle accident of July 29, 1966; both of which are seen by critics as major events in Dylan’s life, and influential to the production of the album *John Wesley Harding*. After years of releasing simply-arranged acoustic albums and basic solo performances, singer-songwriter Dylan became the subject of controversy when he ‘went electric’ during his performance at the Newport Folk Festival in July 1965. At this festival Dylan performed with an electric blues band in concert for the very first time. His first album of electric rock music, *Bringing It All Back Home* was released in March 1965, with two others *Highway 61 Revisited* (August 1965) and *Blonde on Blonde* (May 1966) following shortly after. This controversial and now iconic performance at the Newport Folk Festival has been the focus of several documentaries, including the critically acclaimed *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*¹⁷, which includes footage from the festival, as well as newly-discovered footage of Dylan’s famous Manchester Free Trade Hall concert in May 1966. Dylan’s performance with his electric blues backing band was met with both cheers and jeers from the audience, as well as criticism from renowned singer Pete Seeger, a key figure in the mid-twentieth century American folk scene, who was backstage during Dylan’s performance.¹⁸ Dylan’s electric set at Newport made him very unpopular in parts of the folk community (most likely influenced by Seeger’s opinion and reaction during Newport), and also alienated fans, who saw his embracing of electric rock music as an abandonment, or outright rejection, of his acoustic folk roots. These fans became more critical and even openly irate when in concerts in 1965 and 1966 Dylan would play half the set acoustically, and half electrically. Such is the case of Dylan’s performance at Manchester Free Trade Hall in 1966. One fan, angry with Dylan’s electric sound, shouted towards Dylan in

derision: 'Judas!' to which Dylan responded: 'I don't believe you ... You're a liar!' In an act of defiance against the audience's bitter response to his set, Dylan turned to his band and said: 'Play it fucking loud!' before launching into thunderous performance of the song 'Like a Rolling Stone'. Footage from this performance, including the 'Judas incident' is included in *No Direction Home*. Dylan's work transitioning in style, genre, and mode reflects on Almereyda's own process of adapting *Hamlet* for a twenty-first century screen. Almereyda takes Shakespeare's well-known revenge tragedy and transitions *Hamlet* out of what the public might want or expect and into something novel. Almereyda's film takes the early modern *Hamlet* and twists and turns it into a postmodern space that is technologically up-adapted and potentially unpalatable to many—effectively Almereyda's moment of 'going electric.'

In June 1966 Bob Dylan returned exhausted from a gruelling nine-month world tour, where he was constantly met by hostility from his audiences. Writer Tony Scherman notes that Dylan was also under pressure from other commitments, including looming deadlines for his novel *Tarantula* (1971) and a documentary about his just completed world tour.¹⁹ On the morning of July 29, 1966 Bob Dylan crashed his motorcycle near his home in Woodstock, New York, allegedly breaking several vertebrae in the accident. While mystery still surrounds the exact details of the accident,²⁰ the crash would profoundly affect Dylan. He withdrew from public life and it would be eight years before he toured again. In an interview in *Rolling Stone* magazine Bob Dylan later expressed concern about where both his career and private life were headed up until the point of the crash:

Then I had that motorcycle accident, which put me outta commission. Then, when I woke up and caught my senses, I realized I was just workin' for all these *leeches*. And I didn't wanna do that.²¹

This dissatisfaction and resentment and also the sense he was being used by those he was working for, such as record company executives, is evident in the song 'All Along the Watchtower' from the album *John Wesley Harding*, recorded after Dylan recovered

from his accident. This questioning of self-worth, and the realisation of, and frustration and anger with, the idea of how people are used by figures of authority plays a significant part in Almereyda's filmic interpretation of *Hamlet*, and is the likely reason for the song's inclusion in the film. Furthermore, the 'leeches' Dylan mentions, feature prominently in *Hamlet* (Claudius, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in particular) and domineer over Hamlet throughout.

The album *John Wesley Harding* is Bob Dylan's return to 'traditional' acoustic roots music and has been described as a quieter, contemplative record of shorter songs, which draws on imagery from both the Bible and the American Old West. This record marked a departure not only from Dylan's 'bluesy' electric work but from the escalating psychedelic feeling of music from the 1960s.²² 'All Along the Watchtower' is the fourth song on side one of the album *John Wesley Harding*. The lyrics of the song are derived from the Old Testament of the Bible, in particular the Book of Isaiah (21:5–9), which deals with the fall of Babylon (Isaiah is told to set a watchman who reports to him about the fall of Babylon and all her gods). 'All Along the Watchtower' is an unusual song, in that the conventional starting point of the lyrics, the line: 'All along the watchtower...' is actually in the middle of the song. As a result the song seems to repeat indefinitely. This sense of repetition and inescapability is later reflected in Almereyda's *Hamlet*. The complete lyrics of 'All Along the Watchtower' are as follows:

'There must be some way out of here,' said the Joker to the Thief,
'There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief.
Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth,
None of them along the line know what any of it is worth.'

'No reason to get excited,' the Thief, he kindly spoke,
'There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke.
But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate,
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.'

All along the watchtower, princes kept the view
While all the women came and went, barefoot servants, too.

Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl,
Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl.²³

The middle part of the lyrics, the line: “‘There must be some way out of here” said the Joker to the Thief’ appears at the beginning of the song. This gives the listener a sense of claustrophobia as they both come into and leave the song in the middle. The final line of the song: ‘Two riders were approaching’ can be inferred to be the Joker and the Thief, and so logically the line would be followed by the repetition of: “‘There must be some way out of here” said the Joker to the Thief.’ This inference is confirmed by Dylan, who in recent years when performing the song repeats the first verse again at the end of the song.²⁴ The third verse of ‘All Along the Watchtower’ goes straight into the first verse, and the song therefore forms an inescapable loop.²⁵ Along with the lyrics, the chord structure of song is equally repetitive and looping. The chords simply move back and forth between A minor and F major, via the G major chord: ‘Am G F G Am.’ The G major chord is transient and therefore the song spends about half of its time in the minor mode, the other half in major.²⁶ The song does not use any form of conventional cadence.²⁷ There is no way out of the song; it goes on and on, shifting back and forth, major to minor until the song ends on the minor chord, the key’s tonic chord.²⁸

The repetitive, inescapable nature conveyed in the song ‘All Along the Watchtower’ mirrors the nuance and mood of various scenes in *Hamlet*. Both Hamlet and Ophelia (Julia Stiles) struggle throughout the film with a need to escape the corrupt commercial world they live in. Almereyda’s Denmark is an urban Watchtower, or Panopticon, a place where each person is constantly visible, constantly watched, and contained.²⁹ Certain spaces occupied by both Hamlet and Ophelia are therefore seen as a maddening prison. In these spaces both Hamlet and Ophelia’s actions are severely restricted. For example is Ophelia is forced by her father Polonius

(Bill Murray) to wear a hidden microphone to her meeting with Hamlet, therefore unwillingly betraying him. Carter Burwell's score for the film, while not the focus of my analysis in this article, is also influential in conveying this sense of repression and inescapability and madness.³⁰ The score is both stark and minimalist, only employing strings and woodwinds, and dark and moody, epitomizing the tempo and environment of the film. The looping nature of Burwell's score combines with the film's visual representation of repetition, the spirals that are constantly present throughout *Hamlet*, in signalling these places of repression.³¹ Spirals are dominant in both the Laundromat (the spinning interior of the washing machines), where Hamlet retreats to wash Polonius's blood from his clothes, and is also confronted and physically abused by Claudius, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim museum (the interior viewing gallery forms a helical spiral from the main level up to the top of the building) where Ophelia dissolves into madness. Spirals also adorn the box in which she keeps the remembrances given to her by Hamlet. This box is with her when she drowns. Even Elsinore itself contain spirals: the Hotel's doors endlessly revolve in the film's opening sequence; like The Eagles's 'Hotel California', Elsinore is a place you can always enter, but once inside you are entrapped and are never allowed to leave.

In Almereyda's *Hamlet* an excerpt of 'All Along the Watchtower' is heard briefly during the 'Gravedigger scene' where Hamlet has returned from England to find that Ophelia has died. Initially director Almereyda had filmed Hamlet's conversation with the Gravedigger as an extended scene in the Cypress Hills graveyards in Brooklyn, New York. All that remains of this scene in the final cut of the film are the lyrics that the Gravedigger (Jeffrey Wright) sings as Hamlet and Horatio (Karl Geary) pass him on the way to Ophelia's funeral; the lyrics are the opening lines of 'All Along the Watchtower.' Almereyda's comments in the published screenplay for the film elaborate on his decision to cut back on the 'Gravedigger scene.' He explains that, the 'tone and timing were off, and the whole episode seemed to sidetrack Hamlet's response to Ophelia's death.'³² In an interview about the film Ethan

Hawke goes on further to critique the logistics of filming the scene in a modern setting: 'How do you find a skull in a modern day cemetery?'³³ (Anderson).

While Almereyda virtually eliminates the 'Gravedigger scene' from his film adaptation, he does not excise it completely. He includes a reference to the 'classical' performance of the scene earlier on in the film in one of the video clips Hamlet watches while working on his short film, *The Mousetrap*. This short film is Almereyda's filmic equivalent of the player's performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* in Shakespeare's playtext; the 'play-within-a-play' becomes a 'film-within-a-film'.³⁴ The video clip is an excerpt of a performance of *Hamlet* starring renowned Shakespearean actor John Gielgud, where Gielgud's Hamlet grasps the skull of Yorick. Pascale Aebischer identifies this clip as 'Sir John Gielgud's uncredited appearance as Hamlet in a clip from Humphrey Jennings's 1945 documentary *Diary for Timothy*'.³⁵ As Aebischer rightly notes, this clip pointedly bridges the gap between theatre and the medium of film, hinting both at Shakespeare's theatrical past and new place in the history of cinema. As is the case with 'All Along the Watchtower', the video clip of Gielgud is a stand-in for the truncated 'Gravedigger scene' and missing skull in Almereyda's film. Almereyda uses Gielgud's performance on screen to connect Hamlet's struggle over the nature of life and death (particularly that of his father) with his quest to prove Claudius's guilt. Thus, Hamlet not only enacts revenge for his father but also confirms the worth of old King Hamlet's life.

Almereyda's approach to this 'Gravedigger scene' is a significant departure from how other directors have chosen to present the same scene in recent major film adaptations of *Hamlet*. Franco Zeffirelli and Kenneth Branagh both set the scene conventionally in a graveyard, and contain Hamlet's contemplation of Yorick's skull. The difference between these two films is in the look of the graveyard and the way in which the scene is played by the actors, either downplaying or emphasising the humour. Franco Zeffirelli films the scene outdoors during the day and there is an emphasis on the green and natural looking surroundings. Zeffirelli begins the scene

at start of the Gravedigger's song (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 61–118) and includes no reference to the earlier humorous equivocal conversation regarding Ophelia's death (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 1–20). Actor Trevor Peacock plays the part of the Gravedigger as both straightforward and extremely literal. The Gravedigger is ignorant of the fact that he responds to Mel Gibson's *Hamlet* with double-entendres, puns and double-meaning. By contrast Kenneth Branagh sets the scene at night time, just before daybreak. The graveyard is obviously filmed on a soundstage, and what is emphasized most strongly is the artificiality of the setting. Unsurprisingly, Branagh's 'full text' film adaptation includes the Gravedigger's earlier comical equivocation 'proving' that Ophelia drowned herself sacrilegiously. Comedian Billy Crystal is cast as the Gravedigger, which falls in line with the 'star casting' of all other major roles in Branagh's adaptation, as well as emphasising the humour of the scene. Crystal accentuates the comedy in the lines; the word play with Hamlet is intentional. Crystal's Gravedigger is purposely playing a calculated and humorous game of words with Branagh's Hamlet, in attempt to win a battle of wits and words. This scene is also one of the select moments where cinematic flashback is used. As Hamlet recalls Yorick's life as court jester, Branagh literally visualises the scene with images of young Hamlet as a child being entertained by Yorick.

Almereyda's use of 'All Along the Watchtower' in lieu of including a complete 'Gravedigger scene' (and skull) is an interesting translation of ideas brought up in the conversation between Hamlet and the Gravedigger in Shakespeare's play, an exchange which is cut out of the film. The scene is important as here the Gravedigger is the sole character of the play who produces words that work to beguile Hamlet, and this scene is the only time within the play where a character is able to match wits with Hamlet.³⁶ Indira Ghose goes so far as to suggest the Gravedigger not only matches wits with, but is a far superior wit to Hamlet, who is now relegated to the role of 'straight man to the superior comedian [...] who outscores Hamlet in every single round.'³⁷ Through this interaction Hamlet comes to some understanding and

acceptance of death. As Catherine Belsey argues, in the graveyard Hamlet seeks to gain mastery over death. However, through his encounter with the Gravedigger, Hamlet 'relinquishes his desire for the closure of certainty and mastery over his own death', and comes to recognise 'death's [inevitable] mastery' over him.³⁸

As the Gravedigger goes about his work singing merrily, Hamlet mediates on the meaning of human life and the value of the life of people who have died. Wondering how the Gravedigger can sing during his work he asks Horatio: 'Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?' (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 65–6). Horatio responds that the man, having been a Gravedigger for some time, is so at ease with his work that it does not bother him (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 67–8).³⁹ As the Gravedigger roughly upturns two skulls while digging a new grave, Hamlet is horrified at the disrespect that he sees the Gravedigger showing to the remains of people who have died (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 89–90). Mortified by the Gravedigger's nonchalant attitude while grave-making, Hamlet confronts the very nature of life and death and goes to speak with him. Hamlet asks him whose grave he digs, to which the Gravedigger responds with equivocation:

<i>Hamlet:</i>	<i>What man dost thou dig it for?</i>
<i>First Clown</i> ⁴⁰ :	<i>For no man, sir.</i>
<i>Hamlet:</i>	<i>What woman, then?</i>
<i>First Clown:</i>	<i>For none, neither.</i>
<i>Hamlet:</i>	<i>Who is to be buried in't?</i>
<i>First Clown:</i>	<i>One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.</i> ⁴¹

The grave he digs is for neither a man nor woman, but a corpse. For the Gravedigger the people that have died are simply objects that need to be buried. The Gravedigger, in the opinion of Maurice Hunt, 'does not think that skulls and rotting bodies are identical with the characters who gave them life'⁴², and is able to differentiate the object from the person. The Gravedigger's assertion that Ophelia *was* a woman but is now a dead body is an example of how he does not insist 'that a past experience be

unnaturally superimposed upon the present.’⁴³ Hamlet on the other hand, ‘is anxious to individualize the dead, attaching name tags to the indistinguishable skulls scattered across the graveyard.’⁴⁴ He is unable to divorce the object he see before him from the person who it once was. Upon learning that a skull the Gravedigger has upturned whilst digging Ophelia’s grave is Yorick, Elsinore’s former court jester, Hamlet contemplates it as if Yorick were standing before him. For Hamlet the objects of skull and dead body are merged with the memory of people that he’s known, Yorick and Ophelia. As Hamlet grasps Yorick’s skull he is instantly reminded of memories from his past and how Yorick’s life, and the lives of others he has lost, such as his father and Ophelia had value and meaning. Similarly Hamlet later jumps into the grave containing Ophelia’s body, embraces her, and rants at Laertes about how much her life meant to him (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 250–289). Only towards the end of his contemplation of Yorick’s skull does Hamlet begin to seemingly come to the same sense of understanding and acceptance of the natural process of life and death as the Gravedigger. Looking upon the skull, Hamlet asks Horatio: ‘Dost thou think Alexander looked o’this fashion i’th’earth?’ (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 194–5). Shakespeare’s use of the figure of Alexander the Great (and later of Caesar) suggests that Hamlet’s personal reflection on death is now more congruent with that of the Gravedigger. Death transforms everyone, even great kings such as Alexander, Caesar, and subsequently Hamlet’s own father (and eventually Hamlet himself) into nothing more than trivial dirt. Thus Hamlet seems to draw the conclusion that no rank or money can change the equality of death, only to revert to his former system of knowing when he emotionally leaps into Ophelia’s grave and embraces her body.

Almeryda’s film adaptation of *Hamlet* does not have time for the inclusion of Hamlet’s lengthy, yet significant contemplation of the value of human life found in Shakespeare’s playtext. Realising the importance of the scene, and wanting to include it in some form, Almeryda chooses to briefly sample a modern song which considers similar issues about the value of human life. ‘All Along the Watchtower’ reflects Bob

Dylan's sense of resentment of being used by record companies and others in his life at the time of his motorcycle accident, and his emerging belief in the importance of personal value compared with commercial value. What is valuable is human life, and what is not, are the more material things associated with a consumer society. 'All Along the Watchtower' opens with a conversation between the characters of a Joker and a Thief. The Joker tells the Thief why he wants to escape, that there is too much confusion in his life. This confusion arises from others (business men and ploughmen) benefiting from his labour, yet not understanding the worth (of his life) behind it. Thus, the opening verse of the song is about competing views on value; material possessions compared to the worth of a human life. This short sound-byte heard during the 'Gravedigger scene' in *Hamlet* illustrates certain ideas about mortality and the worth of someone's life, which director Almereyda considers important and relevant to a modern audience. In short, the 'Gravedigger's song offers a musical substitute for the material embodiment of Yorick's skull.'⁴⁵ Like the Joker, Hamlet believes lives have worth and importance. Hamlet's contemplation of Yorick's skull demonstrates his inability to completely embrace the Gravedigger's way of knowing, where dead bodies are divorced from the people they once were. For Hamlet, this value of a life transcends a person's mortal state.

The idea of Hamlet as joker, clown, vice, satirist, fool, sceptic, and malcontent is seen in his connection to the character of Vice, a staple of Medieval morality plays; the notion of Hamlet as Vice has been explored by several modern theorists.⁴⁶ In these morality plays, Vice is a fool-like character who resorts to crafty subterfuge, delights in ironic wordplay, and revels confidently in evil. Hamlet may refer to Claudius as a 'vice of Kings' (III.4. 96), and as a 'king of shreds and patches (III, 4. 99) —an allusion to the appearance of Vice in the morality plays (Vice was usually dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches)—however, the mantle of Vice sits just as comfortably on his own shoulders. Hamlet's attitude to life is sardonic rather than evil—he delights in responding to Claudius (I. 1. 65; IV. 3. 17–36), Polonius (II. 2. 168–214; III. 2. 367–75),

and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (III. 2. 288–363) with biting sarcasm and nonsense—and he also revels in wordplay with the Gravedigger (V. 1. 110–73). The cryptic, powerful, and parabolic use of words by Hamlet provides a line of connection to Bob Dylan, an extraordinary wordsmith in his own right. We also clearly see Hamlet adopting the fool-like mantle — an outward demonstration of Hamlet’s earlier revelation of his intention to ‘put an antic disposition on’ (I. 5. 170) — when he jests and sings before and after the performance of the play *The Mousetrap*, (III.2 110–28, 263–87). The foil to Hamlet’s Joker is then clearly Claudius’ dual role as Businessman and Thief. The idea of thieving in the Gravedigger’s song is a profound metaphoric, philosophical and literal interpretation of Hamlet’s family and political life. Claudius has wrested the kingdom of Denmark from its presumptive heir and now Hamlet is left without realm, title (although he does attempt to reclaim the crown of Denmark on his return from England, as seen when he announces himself as ‘Hamlet the Dane’ V. 1. 247), and most importantly father.

The Gravedigger’s song also ties in well with the nature and vulnerabilities of Hamlet’s subject-position in the corporate context in the film. As Douglas Lanier suggests, the allusion to the Bob Dylan song ‘epitomizes Almereyda’s desire to find “some way out” of the wraparound media system’⁴⁷ that Hamlet is subjected to. Throughout the film Hamlet is constantly surrounded by signs of money. Many trademarks and logos, mistaken by viewers as product placements, bombard the screen space, leading to a sense of commercial claustrophobia.⁴⁸ Hamlet declares to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that ‘Denmark is a prison’ (*Hamlet*, II. 2. 246), and this modern prison, as Almereyda notes, is ‘defined by the advertising, by all the hectic distractions, brand names, announcements and ads that crowd our waking hours.’⁴⁹ Elsie Walker goes so far as to suggest that in *Hamlet* the human is displaced with signs of money⁵⁰ a sentiment that is shared by the Joker in the lyrics of ‘All Along the Watchtower.’ The Joker explains to the Thief his anger that money is valued over human lives. Reflecting his own dissatisfaction with the commercial exploitation of

his talent, Dylan uses wine and earth as symbols of the material value of a person's life. The Joker (and Dylan, and Hamlet's father) has worked hard and now others profit from his labour. Those who profit do so without any consideration for the life of person who has provided these material things; they do not know the true worth of what they are taking. In *Hamlet* money is not only valued over human life but is also considered by some as worth killing for. Hamlet's father is killed by his uncle Claudius in order to gain possession of the 'kingdom' of Denmark Corp. Material possession and wealth are more important to Claudius than the life of his brother. Conversely, for Hamlet, the lives of the people he loves are more important than material things. At the loss of his father Hamlet does not talk about him on a material level, but highlights the personal effect his father's death has on himself, his mother, the kingdom and the nature of things. Hamlet's 'too solid flesh' soliloquy (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 129–59) is an excellent example of how Hamlet does not dwell on his father's role and duty as ruler of Denmark, nor on what material spoils accompany this title. Hamlet's description of his father as an 'excellent king' (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 139) is important enough that he refers to it during the soliloquy. However, Hamlet's emphasis is the realm of the personal. The strength of his parents' love and marriage is what Hamlet sees as the paramount example of why his father should be considered a great man:

So excellent a king, that was, to this
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on⁵¹

This particular view of his father is also seen later in Hamlet's response to Horatio's description of his father as: 'a goodly king' (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 186). Hamlet's reply is to focus on personal value rather than on office and title: '*He was a man*, take him for all and

all, I shall not look upon his like again.' (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 187–8, emphasis mine).⁵² Having lost his father, Hamlet has now also lost the apparent love of his life, Ophelia, and this discussion on human life can also be seen to be applicable to her. Her life was valuable to Hamlet on a personal level, most notably displayed in his heartfelt admission to Laertes (Liev Schreiber), albeit too late, that: 'I loved Ophelia.' (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 266). Yet Ophelia is little more than a commodity to be controlled and used by the male authority figures in her life.

Burnett suggests that Almereyda's use of 'All Along the Watchtower' leads to an association specifically with the figure of Bob Dylan and his involvement with the civil rights movement, making reference to a rumoured assassination attempt on Dylan's life by the C.I.A.⁵³ He further connects this with Hamlet's return from London, and suggests that, having thwarted murderous designs on his own life, Hamlet is presented as a folk celebrity like Dylan. However, the words are sung by the Gravedigger, who is played by Jeffery Wright, an African-American actor, and not sung by Hawke's Hamlet himself. Therefore, the connections between Hamlet and this aspect of Dylan's celebrity are tenuous at best, and ignore both the context of the original song, and the emotion and tone behind the lyrics. What I refer to here in particular is Dylan's sense during the period he wrote 'All Along the Watchtower' of being stripped of his humanity and seen as just a commodity. Burnett's allusions to a period of social change, especially with regard to the civil rights movement, are much more applicable. These connections to ideas of race are further punctuated by the fact that 'All Along the Watchtower' was rearranged and brought to a different audience by Jimi Hendrix, an African-American musician. The song, which is synonymous with the 1960s (particularly the degeneration of American society into violence and confusion as a result of its involvement in the Vietnam war), serves as an anthem of that period and of social change (particularly in the United States of America), such as the beginning of racial and gender equality, and lost ideals, brought about by such history changing events as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam war, and the

assassinations of influential political figures such as President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. The song also acts as a momentary example of nostalgia for a period that is a complete juxtaposition of the world in which this film adaptation of *Hamlet* is set, a freer, earthy culture (one immediately thinks of the wine and earth Dylan refers to in the song 'All Along the Watchtower', which also hints at the connection of the bacchanal symbology of wine and the free love movement of the 1960s), as opposed to the orderly, urban, material, capitalistic, cold, modern world where Hamlet lives. Almereyda pointedly explains that the scene in the graveyard is the 'only respite from the city's hard surfaced, mirrors, screens and signs.'⁵⁴ The graveyard scene was filmed in Brooklyn's Cypress Hills Cemetery. Founded in 1848, Cypress Hills was one of the first rural cemeteries in America and has become not only a prestigious place to be buried (baseball player Jackie Robinson, actress Mae West, and artist Piet Mondrian are all buried here, along with several recipients of the Medal of Honor, the United States of America's highest military honor), but a place of natural respite, where people can enjoy the tranquillity of the landscaped surrounds away from the harsh grasp of Manhattan's urban claustrophobia.

The significance of the Gravedigger scene, or what's left of it in Almereyda's film, is summarized astutely by Samuel Cowl in his remark that the scene signals a 'return to a more natural and honest landscape—earth and death.'⁵⁵ The break from the harshly reflective, sterile hold of Manhattan's urban landscape and a return to a natural space is achieved both visually and aurally. The bright warm autumn colours of the trees and the lush green of the grass in the graveyard contrast with the dark tones and blue filter that are used in the rest of the film. The scene's setting is visually reminiscent of the graveyard in Zeffirelli's film adaptation of *Hamlet*. As Burnett astutely argues, Hamlet and Ophelia are themselves representative of children corrupted by the impurity and immorality of the urban corporate world which surrounds them.⁵⁶ The graveyard and its natural surrounds is the one place that is

honest and free from the corruption and dysfunction of both Manhattan (and Elsinore) and those who have power and influence in that space. Both Hamlet and Ophelia have a desire for a connection with this pure natural world, and strive for a return to a location and a landscape unaffected by consumerism.⁵⁷ However, the only connection each is ultimately able to have is with representations of the natural world. Hamlet obsesses over a filmed flower during the preparation of his *The Mousetrap* short film. The filmed flower on his screen repeatedly opens and closes, lives and dies, no longer alive yet also not allowed to permanently die. Ophelia clutches a diorama of a forest scene while chastised by her father, an escape from the harsh real world and her impending madness. When she does succumb to insanity, in lieu of actual flowers, she distributes Polaroid photographs of them⁵⁸. Substitute images of nature follow Ophelia to her death; she drowns not in a river, but in the fountain of a hotel lobby.⁵⁹ Only when she is buried in the cemetery is Ophelia allowed a connection with nature, albeit a landscaped park. Death becomes the ultimate escape from her life and the claustrophobia and surveillance that accompanies it. By film's end, Hamlet has also joined her.

In a 2011 article on Bob Dylan's greatest songs in a tribute issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine celebrating Dylan's seventieth birthday, U2 front man Bono writes of the connection between the two 'Bards', Shakespeare and Dylan: 'But at the top of this dysfunctional family tree sits the king of spitting fire himself, the juggler of beauty and truth, our own Willy Shakespeare in a polka-dot shirt.'⁶⁰ In his film adaptation *Hamlet* Michael Almereyda uses Dylan's iconic song 'All Along the Watchtower' as a fragmentary shortcut between a modern world saturated with pop references, and the multiple layers of beauty and meaning that are conveyed in the work of Bards from the Renaissance and the twentieth century, Shakespeare and Dylan. Almereyda recognises that ideas in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* relating to the worth of human life, the nature of death, and the desire to escape a corrupt money-hungry world still resonate in the work of modern troubadours like Dylan. Dylan himself acknowledges the

universality of themes raised in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by including the figure of Ophelia in his epic song 'Desolation Row' which closes the album *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965), as well more significantly name-checking Shakespeare in the song 'Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again,' from Dylan's seminal album *Blonde on Blonde* (1966).⁶¹ The song fragment from 'All Along the Watchtower' provides a bridge between Shakespeare's and Dylan's ideas on humanity, and is a perfect cinematic substitute for the truncated 'Gravedigger scene' in *Hamlet*, a film which reflects an urban world where the worth of human life is outweighed by the value of material possessions. Hamlet and Ophelia's only escape from this world dominated by images, technology, surveillance and repression is nature; but sadly they are only able to find some way out of this corrupt and fragmented urban space through their untimely deaths.

Notes

¹ *Hamlet*, dir. Michael Almereyda (Miramax, 2000) [on DVD].

² Kenneth Branagh's 'full text' version at 242 minutes is more than double the running time of Almereyda's film. Laurence Olivier's and Franco Zeffirelli's adaptations also have longer running times (155 and 130 minutes respectively). *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (Castle Rock Entertainment/Sony Pictures Entertainment, 1996) [on VHS]; *Hamlet*, dir. Franco Zeffirelli (Icon Entertainment International/ Warner Bros, 1990) [on VHS]; *Hamlet*, dir. Laurence Olivier (Two Cities Films / Universal Pictures 1948) [on VHS].

³ In this respect Almereyda's approach to adapting *Hamlet* for the screen owes more to Baz Luhrmann's frenetic reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet*, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) than to Branagh's visual extravaganza *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*. *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, dir. Baz Luhrmann (Bazmark Films/Twentieth Century Fox, 1996) [on DVD].

⁴ For more on the diverse range of musical responses to Shakespeare that have taken place from the seventeenth century onwards see: Adam Hansen, *Shakespeare and Popular Music* (London; New York: Continuum, 2010); Julie Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007); Stephen M. Buhler, 'Musical Shakespeares: Attending to Ophelia, Juliet, and Desdemona', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*, ed. by Robert Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 150–74; Stephen M. Buhler, 'Reviving Juliet, Repackaging Romeo: Transformations of Character in Pop and Post-pop Music', in *Shakespeare After Mass Media*, ed. by Richard Burt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 243–64; and Arthur Graham, *Shakespeare in Opera, Ballet, Orchestral Music, and Song: An Introduction to Music Inspired by the Bard* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997). For more on the use of music in Shakespeare film adaptations see: Kendra Preston Leonard, *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations* (Lanham: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2009); Marina Gerzic, 'The Intersection of Shakespeare and Popular Culture: an Intertextual Examination of Some Millennial Shakespearean Film Adaptations (1999–2001), With Special Reference to Music' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia, Perth, 2008); and Sanders (2007).

⁵ Bob Dylan, 'All Along the Watchtower', *John Wesley Harding* (Columbia Records, 1967; Sony Music, 2004) [on CD].

⁶ All line citations from *Hamlet* are taken from William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford, UK; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988; repr. 1998), pp. 653–90.

⁷ Almereyda repeats this technique of using a song by Bob Dylan as a musical short cut in his recent film adaptation of *Cymbeline*, dir. Michael Almereyda (Lionsgate, 2015) [on DVD]. Actress Milla Jovovich, who plays the scheming Queen (and wife to Cymbeline), sings the Dylan song 'Dark Eyes' (1985).

⁸ Douglas Lanier, 'Shakescorp Noir', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.2 Summer (2002), 157–80 (180).

⁹ Carter Burwell, *Hamlet: Original Score from the Miramax Motion Picture* (Varèse Sarabande Records, 2000) [on CD]; Various Artists, *Music From The Motion Picture Hamlet* (Rykodisc, 2000) [on CD].

¹⁰ Baz Luhrmann wrote some of his musical choices for the soundtrack into his screenplay. The published screenplay for *Romeo + Juliet* contains cues for a limited number of musical selections on the soundtrack, some of which were eventually changed during postproduction. Craig Pearce, Baz Luhrmann, and William Shakespeare, *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet: The Contemporary Film, the Classic Play* (London: Hodder Children's, 1997), pp. 17, 45, 78, 94, 107, and 138. The remainder of the songs from the soundtrack, including most of the well-known (and commercially successful) songs by musical artists such as Radiohead, Garbage, The Cardigans, and Des'ree were added during post-production. Luhrmann discusses the process of selecting the music for the film in the special 'Music Edition' of *Romeo + Juliet*. *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet: Music Edition*, dir. Baz Luhrmann

(Bazmark Films/Twentieth Century Fox, 2009) [on DVD]. Luhrmann discusses the difficulty with getting his musical choices approved in his Q&A with journalist Harvey Kubernik. Harvey Kubernik, 'Baz Luhrmann', in *Hollywood Shack Job: Rock Music in Film and on Your Screen* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), pp. 224–33.

¹¹ *10 Things I Hate About You*, dir. Gil Junger (Buena Vista, 1999) [on DVD]. For more on music and marketing in *Romeo + Juliet* and *10 Things I Hate About You* see Pamela Swanigan, 'Music as Facing-Page Translation in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*', *Borrowers and Lenders* 7.2 (Fall 2012/Winter 2013), np, <<http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/497/show>> [accessed on 2 October 2014]; Douglas Lanier, 'Recent Shakespeare Adaptation and the Mutation of Cultural Capital', *Shakespeare Studies* 38 (2010), 104–13; Sanders (2007), pp. 159–81; Richard Burt, 'Afterword: T(e)en Things I Hate about Girlene Shakesploitation Flicks in the Late 1990s, or, Not-So-Fast Times at Shakespeare High', in *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Theory and Popular Cinema*, ed. by Courtney Lehmann and Lisa S. Starks (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London; Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2002), pp. 205–32 (pp. 212–8); and Courtney Lehmann, 'Strictly Shakespeare? Dead Letters, Ghostly Fathers, and the Cultural Pathology of Authorship in Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52.2 (2001) 189–221 (193–4). For an analysis of the commodification (and watering down) of the Riot Girl scene (and its music) in *10 Things I Hate About You*, see Jennifer Clement, 'The Postfeminist Mystique: Feminism and Shakespearean Adaptation in *10 Things I Hate About You* and *She's the Man*', *Borrowers and Lenders* 3.2 (Spring/Summer 2008), np, <<http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/781814/show>> [accessed on 2 October 2014]; and Gerzic (2008), pp. 59–69.

¹² Simon Frith, 'Mood Music: An Inquiry into Narrative Film Music', *Screen* 25 (1984), 78–87 (83).

¹³ Frith, 83–4.

¹⁴ Murray Smith, 'Altered States: Character and Emotional Response in the Cinema', *Cinema Journal* 33.4 (1994), 34–56. See also, Richard Dyer, *In the Space of a Song: The Uses of Song in Film* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), especially pp. 5–12 where Dyer discusses music's affective potential to 'name and ground emotions' (5); Kathryn M. Kalinak, *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 4–5, 16–21; K. J., Donnelly (ed.), *Film Music: Critical Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001); and John Mundy, *Popular Music on Screen* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). There has recently been some fascinating analysis done of the psychology behind audiences responses to music in film, in particular how viewers read and relate to characters and their emotions through musical cues; see Berthold Hoeckner, et al. 'Film Music Influences How Viewers Relate to Movie Characters', *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 5.2 (2011), 146–53; and S. L. Tan, M. P. Spackman, and M. A. Bezdek, 'Viewers' Interpretations of Film Characters' Emotions: Effects of Presenting Film Music Before or After a Character is Shown', *Music Perception*, 25.2 (2007), 135–52.

¹⁵ For more on the fragmentation of Hamlet's soliloquy and the influence of Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist ideas of 'interbeing' see: Melissa Croteau, 'Celluloid Revelations: Millennial Culture and Dialogic "Pastiche" in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000)', in *Apocalyptic Shakespeare*, ed. by Melissa Croteau and Carolyn Jess-Cooke (Jefferson, NC: McFarlnad, 2009), pp. 110–31 (pp. 115–22); Peter S. Donaldson, 'Hamlet Among the Pixelvisionaries: Video Art, Authenticity, and "Wisdom" in Almereyda's *Hamlet*', in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen*, ed. by Diana E. Henderson (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 216–37; Alessandro Abbate, '"To Be or Inter-Be": Almereyda's End-of-Millennium *Hamlet*', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 32.2 (2004), 82–8; and Joana Owens, '"Images, Images, Images": The Contemporary Landscape of Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 20.2 (2003), 21–7 (22–4). As the video of Thich Nhat Hanh plays in the background, Hamlet watches previously recorded footage on his Pixelvision camera of Ophelia reading the Eastern Spiritualist text *On Living and Dying* (1992) by Jiddu Krishnamurti (the book argues that death is inseparably joined with life). Amanda Rooks identifies the book Ophelia is reading. Amanda Rooks, 'The "New" Ophelia in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', *Literature-Film Quarterly* 42.2 (2014), 475–86 (482). This brief moment poignantly connects Ophelia's own philosophy and belief, the connection between death and life (that

Krishnamurti talks about in *On Living and Dying*), with the film's fragmentation of the 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy.

¹⁶ The use of 'All Along the Watchtower' as a musical cue is repeated by composer Bear McCreary in his music for the re-imagined science fiction television series *Battlestar Galactica* (2003, 2004–2009). The musical experience is associated in the series with a 'switch going off' in the minds of four characters, who suddenly become aware that they are not humans, but human-looking Cylons (human-created robots).

¹⁷ *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, dir. Martin Scorsese (PBS/Paramount Pictures, 2005) [on DVD].

¹⁸ Pete Seeger, who has been referred to as a folk purist, was an early supporter of Dylan's career. Seeger claims that during Dylan's performance he went to the sound system and told the technicians to: 'Get that distortion out of his voice [...] It's terrible. If I had an axe, I'd chop the microphone cable right now.' (Pete Seeger qtd in *No Direction Home*). Seeger's statement has become the basis for several rumours about Dylan's set at Newport, including that a festival board member wanted to pull out the entire electrical wiring system, or that Seeger actually had an axe and was prepared to use it. In *No Direction Home* Bob Dylan claimed that Pete Seeger's unenthusiastic response to his set was like a 'dagger in his heart' and made him 'want to go out and get drunk' (Bob Dylan qtd in *No Direction Home*). Seeger's reaction to Dylan's set indicates that he preferred to hear Dylan play songs acoustically, which he reveals in his recollection of the events at Newport during an interview with David Kupfer. David Kupfer, 'Long Time Passing: An Interview With Pete Seeger', *Whole Earth* 104 Spring (2001), 19–22 (21).

¹⁹ Tony Scherman, 'The Bob Dylan Motorcycle-Crash Mystery', *American Heritage.com: History's Homepage*, last updated 29 July 2006, <<http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/web/20060729-bob-dylan-motorcycle-woodstock-methamphetamine-robert-shelton-howard-sounes-ed-thaler.shtml>> [accessed 20 October 2009].

²⁰ For more on the mystery behind Dylan's crash see: Scherman (2006).

²¹ Kurt Loder, 'Bob Dylan, Recovering Christian,' *Rolling Stone* 21 June 1984, <<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bob-dylan-recovering-christian-19840621>> [accessed on 21 October 2009], emphasis is Loder's. Dylan expounds on his state of mind at the time in a previously unheard audio interview (dated March 1966). During this interview Dylan talks angrily about the people he thinks are taking advantage of him: 'I'm sick of giving creeps money off my soul...' Bob Dylan qtd in Rebecca Jones, 'Dylan Tapes Reveal Heroin Addiction', *BBC Today*, last updated 23 May 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9492000/9492886.stm> [accessed on 29 November 2011].

²² During this period The Beatles released their seminal album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) and The Rolling Stones attempted psychedelic sound in *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (1967). Jimi Hendrix would draw the song 'All Along the Watchtower' back into the realm of psychedelia, by including a cover version on the album *Electric Ladyland* (1968) by The Jimi Hendrix Experience. Dylan himself would later acknowledge Hendrix's version of the song as 'definitive.' When asked by an interviewer about what he thought of Hendrix's cover of the song, Bob Dylan responded with: 'It overwhelmed me, really. He had such talent, he could find things inside a song and vigorously develop them. He found things that other people wouldn't think of finding in there. He probably improved upon it by the spaces he was using. I took license with the song from his version, actually, and continue to do it to this day.' Bob Dylan qtd in John Dolan, 'A Midnight Chat with Bob Dylan', *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel* September 28 1995, section 1.E. For more on the connection between Dylan's and Hendrix's versions of 'All Along the Watchtower' see: Albin J. Zak III, 'Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation "All Along the Watchtower"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57.3 (2004), 599–644.

²³ Bob Dylan, 'All Along the Watchtower', *BobDylan.com* <<http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/all-along-the-watchtower>> [accessed on 10 January 2010].

²⁴ Michael Gray, *The Bob Dylan Encyclopedia* (London; New York: Continuum International, 2006), p. 7.

²⁵ Christopher B. Ricks notes of the song's unusual looping repetitive structure, that: 'at the conclusion of the last verse, it is as if the song bizarrely begins at last, and as if the myth began again.' Christopher B. Ricks, *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (London: Viking Books, 2003), p. 359. In an interview with John Cohen and Happy Traum published in the folk music magazine *Sing Out!* (October, 1968), Dylan acknowledges the unconventional sense of time within the song's structure: "All Along the Watchtower", which opens up in a slightly different way, in a stranger way, for we have the cycle of events working in a rather reverse order.' Bob Dylan qtd in John Cohen and Happy Traum, 'Interview with John Cohen and Happy Traum, *Sing Out!*: October/November 1968', in *Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews*, ed. by Jonathan Cott (New York: Wenner Books, 2006): pp. 113–39 (p. 122).

²⁶ In musical modulation, a transient chord is 'an intermediate chord foreign both to the key left and that reached.' Theodore Baker, *A Dictionary of Musical Terms* (New York: Schirmer, 1923), p. 203.

²⁷ Cadence is the succession of notes or more often chords 'leading to a musical repose; the close or ending of a phrase, section, or movement.' Baker, pp. 33–4.

²⁸ A tonic chord is 'one which has the key-note as root.' (Baker, p. 206). For example, while A-major and A-minor have different modes they both have the same tonic. The tonic is the first note of a musical scale in the tonal method of musical composition. So A-minor is the parallel minor of A-major.

²⁹ For more on surveillance in Almereyda's film adaptation *Hamlet*, see: Elizabeth Klett, 'The Heart of the Mystery: Surveillance in Michael Almereyda and Gregory Doran's Films of *Hamlet*', *Literature-Film Quarterly* 41.2 (2013), 102–16; Mark Thornton Burnett, 'I See My Father' in 'My Mind's Eye': Surveillance and the Filmic *Hamlet*', in *Screening Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Mark Thornton Burnett and Ramona Wray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 31–52; and Mark Thornton Burnett, "'To Hear and See the Matter": Communicating Technology in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000)', *Cinema Journal* 42.3 Spring (2003), 48–69 (52–3).

³⁰ In the booklet that accompanies Carter Burwell's score for the film, Michael Almereyda describes how the music transports the listener and viewer of the film into the maddening dilemma of the film's central character: 'repeating melodies that circle and superb a heroic ideal. Lucid chords describing a descent into madness, man's mind resisting, and then riding, the sweep of fate, the coiling movements of love and loss.' Michael Almereyda qtd in the booklet accompanying the film's score. Burwell [on CD]

³¹ For more on the way in which Carter Burwell's score emphasises the repressive spaces within the film see: Burnett (2003), 53.

³² Michael Almereyda, *William Shakespeare's Hamlet* (London: Faber & Faber, 2000), p. 140.

³³ Jeffrey M. Anderson, 'Brushing Up Shakespeare: Interview with Ethan Hawke & Michael Almereyda', *Combustible Celluloid*, last updated 4 May 2000, <<http://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/inthawke.shtml>> [accessed on 5 Aug. 2004].

³⁴ For more on *Hamlet*'s videoing, see Marina Gerzic, 'Reel life: Representing the Human in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', in *What is the Human? Australian Voices from the Humanities*, edited by Bob Hodge, Philippa Kelly, and Liam Semler (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012), pp. 237–52; Donaldson, (2006), Yu Jin Ko, "'The Mousetrap" and Remembrance in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 23.4 (2005), 19–33; Katherine Rowe, "'Remember Me': Technologies of Memory in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', in *Shakespeare, the Movie, II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, Television, and DVD*, ed. by Richard Burt and Lynda E. Boose (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 37–55; and Courtney Lehmann, 'The Machine in the Ghost: *Hamlet*'s Cinematographic Kingdom', in *Shakespeare Remains: Theatre to Film, Early Modern to Postmodern* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 89–129 (esp. pp. 98–9).

³⁵ Pascale Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies: Stage and Screen Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 100.

³⁶ For more on the significance of the graveyard scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, see: Indira Ghose, 'Jesting with Death: *Hamlet* in the Graveyard', *Textual Practice* 24.6 (2010), 1003–18; Catherine Belsey, 'Sibling Rivalry: *Hamlet* and the First Murder', *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 129–74; Maurice Hunt, 'Hamlet, the

Gravedigger, and Indecorous Decorum', *College Literature* 11.2 (Spring, 1984), 141–50; Gerard Reedy, "'Alexander Died": *Hamlet*, V. i. 216–40', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 24.2 (Spring, 1973), 128–34; Eleanor Prosser, 'The Readiness is All', in *Hamlet and Revenge*, second ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971), pp. 219–42 (pp. 219–27); Bridget Gellert, 'The Iconography of Melancholy in the Graveyard Scene of "Hamlet"', *Studies in Philology* 67.1 (1970), 57–66; T. McAlindon, 'Indecorum in "Hamlet"', *Shakespeare Studies* 5 (1970), 70–96; Harry Morris, "'Hamlet" as a "Memento Mori" Poem', *PMLA* 85.5 (1970), 1035–40 (1036–8); and J. Dover-Wilson, 'Hamlet Returns', in *What Happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. 265–75.

³⁷ Ghose, 1009.

³⁸ Belsey, pp. 170 and 166.

³⁹ Gellert reads this remark as Hamlet's 'denial of his own behavior in earlier episodes' (65), for example his jests about Polonius' corpse. Gellert elaborates that, 'It is now the Clowns that do the fooling' (66), a thought much in line with Ghose's comments above (see note xxxvii).

⁴⁰ While I have chosen to refer to the character as the Gravedigger, in Shakespeare's playtext the character of the Gravedigger is referred to by the name The First Clown.

⁴¹ *Hamlet*, V. 1. 126–32.

⁴² Hunt, 143.

⁴³ Hunt, 143.

⁴⁴ Ghose, 1011.

⁴⁵ Burnett (2003), 55.

⁴⁶ See Margreta de Grazia, *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 5, 181–194; Arthur McGee, *The Elizabethan Hamlet* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), esp. pp. 68–137; and Robert Weimann, 'Mimesis in Hamlet', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 275–92. De Grazia argues that Hamlet's delay and reputed madness are representations of the behaviours of 'stock theatrical images of privation', the clown, madman, Vice, and devil, rather than images of psychological disorder (de Grazia 2007, p. 5). McGee refers to Hamlet's sadistic jesting during his game of hide-and-seek with Polonius' body as 'typical of Vice.' (McGee 1987, p. 136). Weimann suggest that Hamlet 'as actor-character ... revitalizes the legacy of the Vice actor as director and master of ceremonies theatrical.' (Weimann 1985, p. 285). For a more detailed look at Hamlet as a clown-like character see Manfred Draudt, 'The Comedy of Hamlet', *Atlantis* XXIV.2 (2002), 85–107; Malcolm A. Nelson, 'Hamlet', in *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. by Vicki K. Janik (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), pp. 231–36; and Sandra J. Pyle, 'Physician Heal Thyself -- Hamlet, the Clown Prince, Purges Sloth', in *Mirth and Morality of Shakespeare's Holy Fools* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), pp. 115–42.

⁴⁷ Lanier, 'Shakescorp Noir', 180.

⁴⁸ Michael Almereyda paid for the privilege of using all the brand names. At the end of the film there is a long list of credits and thanks for all the companies that allowed their products and trademarks to be used.

⁴⁹ Almereyda, *William Shakespeare's Hamlet* (2000), p. xi.

⁵⁰ Elsie Walker, 'A "Harsh World" of Soundbite Shakespeare: Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000)', *EnterText: An Interactive Interdisciplinary E-Journal for Cultural and Historical Studies and Creative Work* 1.2 (2001), 317–41, (331).

⁵¹ *Hamlet*, I. 2. 139–45.

⁵² See also Hamlet's comparisons of his father and uncle (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 152–53 and *Hamlet*, III. 4. 52–66). Visual differences are symbolic of their dissimilarity in character and morality. Hamlet's father is a 'fair mountain' majestic and godlike, whilst his uncle is a 'moor' dark and muddy.

⁵³ Burnett (2003), 61.

⁵⁴ Michael Almereyda, 'A Live Wire to the Brain: Hooking Up "Hamlet"', *New York Times* May 7. 2000, p. 2.19.

⁵⁵ Samuel Cowl, *Shakespeare at the Cineplex: The Kenneth Branagh Era* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003), p. 190.

⁵⁶ Burnett (2003), 56.

⁵⁷ Burnett (2003), 55.

⁵⁸ Carolyn Jess incorrectly claims the Polaroids Ophelia shows Claudius are of her father, Polonius. They are instead images of flowers, and are only handed to Laertes (and dropped on the floor) and not shown to anyone else. Carolyn Jess, 'The Promethean Apparatus: Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* as Cinematic Allegory', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 32.2 (2004), 90–6 (92).

⁵⁹ For an in-depth analysis of the Ophelia (including her drowning scene) in Michael Almereyda's film adaptation of *Hamlet*, see Rooks (2014).

⁶⁰ Bono qtd in 'Great Artists Pay Tribute to Their Favourite Bob Dylan Songs', *Rolling Stone* May 10 2011, < <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/great-artists-pay-tribute-to-their-favorite-bob-dylan-songs-20110511>> [accessed on 16 May 2011].

⁶¹ Bob Dylan, 'Desolation Row', *Highway 61 Revisited* (Columbia Records, 1965; Sony Music, 2010) [on CD]. 'Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again', *Blonde on Blonde* (Columbia Records, 1966, 2004) [on CD]: 'Shakespeare, he's in the alley / With his pointed shoes and his bells / Speaking to some French girl / Who says she knows me well.' Bob Dylan, 'Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again', *BobDylan.com*, <<http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/stuck-inside-mobile-memphis-blues-again>> [accessed on 26 May 2015]. For more on the connection between Dylan's music and Shakespeare, see Hansen (2010), pp. 37, 40–2, and 149–50; and Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare and Modern Culture* (New York: Pantheon, 2008), p. 50–1.

