



Yorkshire, Swearing and Female Power

Mrs Ramsay reviews Happy Valley and how Sally Wainwright brings the epic three series to an end

Unless you have been living under a large rock for the past few weeks, you can't help but have heard of BBC 1's Happy Valley. If you have any sense, you will also have fully immersed yourself in all three series. Filmed around Halifax and the picturesque town of Hebden Bridge, the show, written by Sally Wainwright, centres on inspirational, hard-working no-nonsense police sergeant Catherine Cawood (Sarah Lancashire) and her arch nemesis Tommy Lee Royce (James Norton). He destroyed her family and the legacy of this means Catherine wrestles with her own private grief and tries not to let her hatred affect her work. Their battle has built over three seasons and culminated at the weekend in one of the most powerful pieces of television I have seen for a long time; a master class in understated acting brilliance.

Lancashire has fully immersed herself into the role of Catherine Cawood, a working grandmother who excels at her job because she listens, pays attention and empathises with those around her. Her put downs are legendary and the way she handles the daily battles female police officers encounter as well as the hierarchy and red tape that stops effective action should be an inspiration to us all. The three seasons deal with separate crime stories and supporting characters but the centre around which they all spin and link is Cawood's and Royce's twisted relationship.

I watched series 2 when it first hit TV screens in 2016 but did not watch series 1 until last year in anticipation of Wainwright's final season which kicked off on New Year's Day and saw off Prince Harry's Netflix documentary in the ratings easily.

Why Cawood's character has appealed to so many of us is that she is not perfect. We can recognise our own failings: she says hurtful things to her sister and her son when in an emotional state; she seems weighed down and overwhelmed at times with her job; she swears a little too often and Lancashire's weary sigh as she rises from a chair speaks to all of us when life just gets a little too much. Despite all of this, she shows us that you can approach life in a flawed way and still laugh, love and, through your actions, make things just that little bit better for everyone you encounter.



Teeth: A short horror story

Grace Jappy reviews Sundance's 2015 short horror film 'Teeth' narrated by Richard E. Grant

Teeth is a short horror film, that can easily make your skin crawl. It is based around a man's progressing life and his spiralling obsession. The film narrates the journey of his life and as he navigates his feelings of hatred towards his own teeth.

The film starts when he began teething, then he developed his first tooth at age two, and from that point he did everything in his power to get rid of it. He seemed to view this tooth as an imposter on his already perfectly smooth gums. We see his insanity being caused quite early in his life because of this tooth, as he begins to want to punish it by purposely biting hard objects, such as table legs. However, it was finally taken out whilst he was eating a candy apple.

The film then jumps to when he is six and has a full set of adult teeth. His fight against his teeth is very clearly not over. His first adult tooth was accidentally lost in a fight. Although an accident, he seemed exhilarated every time he would glide his tongue through the gap it left.

Eventually, having become obsessed with the idea of once again feeling his original perfect gums, he continued to purposely loose teeth.

The film changes in time again but he has now lost all of his adult teeth. We see him again at forty-eight and in need of dentures. However, instead of wanting to destroy these new teeth his goal was to keep them pristine; he would spend hours analysing food to assess the harm it could cause his new artificial teeth, cutting it so small he could swallow without it even touching his teeth.

This inspired him to embark on a personal project. The focus of his obsession turned from himself to animals. He wanted to create the perfect dentures to match his perfect gums, capturing animals to take their teeth as he believed they had naturally better teeth.

He finally finishes his dentures by the time he reaches seventy-one. But he still must have been careless in the design as they were so sharp he manages to bite off his own tongue. It is implied that this began a whole new obsession of his with his tongue.

This man's obsession started as a child and grew as he did until it completely took over his mind. Most of the camera angles in his perspective were placed within his mouth echoing his focus being fully on his teeth and mouth. In addition to his own repetitive ideas of his teeth, there was also a constant image of flies following him in prominent moments of his life.

The fly seemed to be foreshadowing his eventual death, always landing on parts of him that were removed or dying. This man constantly surrounded himself with death and decay, from rotting teeth to the bodies of dead animals. The fly landing on his tongue was a reminder that history would only repeat itself and a new obsession would sprout. The man wasn't just obsessed with teeth but ultimately, he was obsessed with self-destruction. Unfortunately, he wasn't going to stop until every piece of himself was gone.

Teeth is a 2015 short film, showcased at the Sundance festival in 2015 in the Animated Film category. The film was directed by Daniel Gray & Tom Brown, and narrated by Richard E. Grant, winning many awards and gaining lots of nominations. It can be watched on the Alter YouTube channel.

LAST WEEK'S SONNET:
Royals - Lorde

Can you guess the pop
song from the
Shakespearean sonnet?
Correct answer in next
week's Culture Vulture!

Long after sunset, patrons shuffle in
to drink away the weary week that's pass'd.
I look about the pub whilst I begin
a ballad sweet, and mark the motley cast.
A wizen'd, he asked me for a song
forgotten, though well-lov'd in younger age.
The barkeep swears he doth not here belong,
but dreams instead of glory 'pon the stage.
The sailor and the merchant, they converse -
the wenches flirt - the merchants, they get sous'd.
The tavern-keeper smiles about the purse
he's earned from the crowd I've here around.
The people cry, 'Another tune, anon!'
'If music be thy trade, good sir, play on!'



The 65th Annual Grammy Awards

On Sunday 5th February, the 65th Annual Grammy Awards took place in the Crypto.com Arena (previously Staples Centre) in Los Angeles. This award ceremony saw musicians from around the world flood to America for the prestigious ceremony. The 2023 awards made history, with both Beyonce and Viola Davis gaining huge accomplishments. Viola Davis became the 18th person to receive an EGOT - Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony holder - and only the third black female winner, behind Whoopi Goldberg and Jennifer Hudson.

Beyonce also made Grammy history, winning four awards on Sunday taking her total to 32; the most in history. This record was previously held by George Solti, a classical music conductor, who has 31 Grammys and was unbeaten since 1998.

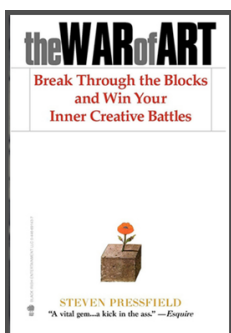
Harry Styles was the big winner, taking home the album of the year award for Harry's House. He also won an award for best pop album, as well as performing single 'As it Was' to the star-studded audience.

Although historical, the most talked about moment were the shots of Ben Affleck with wife J-Lo, where his face of boredom amused twitter as the night carried on... and on. As it is only the start of awards season, we may see more of the slightly far-away look from different celebrities as the evenings progress!

Mrs Davies suggests:

The War of Art - Steven Pressfield

This is an interesting and brilliant book about the resistance we put in front of us if we are trying to be creative. It looks at the excuses we all use to avoid getting on with what we really want to do. Steven Pressfield is a writer (He wrote the screen play for the Film Bagger Vance) and he talks about how our ego often gets in the way of our focus and our ability to make our creative ideas a reality.



Soundtrack to the week:
This week's soundtrack to the week has been built by editors and readers. If you would like to have your say, follow the QR code on page 5!

MONDAY:

**Slipping
Through My
Fingers - ABBA**



TUESDAY:

Heirloom - Bjork



WEDNESDAY:

**Show Me How
- Men I Trust**



THURSDAY:

**Rose Blood -
Mazzy Star**



FRIDAY:

**The Thrill is
Gone - Raye**



SATURDAY:

**One Kiss - Dua
Lipa**



SUNDAY:

**Easy -
Commodores**



Molly Shillinglaw reviews: *The Whale*

A tragic story of a disconnected father and daughter complimented by remarkable performances.

Darren Aronofsky's latest film follows the story of Charlie (Brendan Fraser), a father who is attempting to reconnect with his daughter, Ellie (Sadie Sink), whom he abandoned, when she unexpectedly shows at his home.

Since the death of his boyfriend at the hands of the church, Charlie's depression took a turn for the worse leading him to gain a large amount of weight – demobilising him. She resents him for leaving her and her mother and instead the two strike up a deal that provides Charlie the task of completing her homework and giving her the \$120,000 he kept for her. In return Ellie visits him and he is granted the honour of getting to know her after 8 years of separation.

Their relationship is incredibly strained still and he becomes subject to her verbal abuse. The film is accompanied by religious themes which present themselves through a local church missionary claiming to be from the church that murdered Charlie's boyfriend. It is later revealed that he ran away from said church due to his over-ambitious methods of spreading the gospel – but not before stealing the church's money.



The presence of religion in the film is a reminder that everything that takes place in the film is Charlie's last chance at redemption before death as he is reassured his heart is failing at the start of the film.

Essentially, the film is a tragedy of a man who intends to make up for his mistakes in life potentially too late, resulting in Charlie's own catharsis (purging of emotions) before he leaves his life; the element of catharsis is heavily implied near the end of the film where Charlie physically purges his meals, before the missionary's final visit.

Director Aronofsky is not unfamiliar with themes of addiction and obsession, which Charlie's binge eating disorder may easily be interpreted as, due to his filmography which includes *Requiem For a Dream* (2000) and *Black Swan* (2010). Both films explore a central theme of addiction and both end catastrophically, similar to *The Whale*. Though slightly recycled in terms of storyboarding, Aronofsky proves himself to be the actor's director with this film, utilizing his cast to move, craft and mould the story.

Though Brendan Fraser has slinked out of Hollywood due to a lack of work opportunities, *The Whale* has potentially revived the career of a forgotten actor with many watchers popularizing the hashtag #Brenaissance. A film that sets out to repulse us instead leaves us fascinated by the delicate story and unforgiving performances and a masterful, heart-breaking story.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

As the weeks progress, we are hoping Culture Vulture will become jam-packed with student articles, recommendations and reviews. If you would like to make your own creative suggestion, or have a piece of work that you would like to see in the next magazine, scan the QR code.



Alternatively, if you would like to contribute an article, film, album, book or podcast review, or have an itching to write a features piece about a current cultural affair, email either theysham@gordanoschool.org.uk or pramsay@gordanoschool.org.uk with your idea and they can point you in the right direction. Who knows - you may see your name in print!

Make sure to encourage your tutors and friends to get involved, and let's make creativity central to the Gordano Sixth Form experience!

