Bojack Horseman is my vote for the greatest show of all time. Yet, it's incredibly difficult to detail why someone should watch an animated comedy show about a horse. The medium of animated cartoons is already saturated but Bojack Horseman is unique, dark, and complex.

I'm hyper-aware of [experience-fallacy](http://google.com) and admittedly I'm the target audience with philosophy and dark humor. However what moves the show into S-tier for me is what also moves The Witness into S-tier -- the treating the medium and characters with deep respect, intellectually interesting, and ultimately my favorite – the absurd attention to detail. The Witness and Bojack Horseman are so detailed that no one could possibly grasp everything on a single pass through.

Depth is what makes being a fan and obsessing and thinking further on the content, lore, references, secrets *rewarding and fun* with additional playthroughs/watch-throughs.

I'll completely butcher why Bojack Horseman is amazing. I'll leave a few points and ultimately I'll share a few philosophical themes that I've learnt or understood more deeply by watching Bojack's examples of these philosophies live out.

* It's an animated cartoon but the characters dress up with real clothes and layers.
* It's an animated cartoon but many times they shoot with unique camera angles (aerial shots, perspective shots, etc).
* There's a silent episode
* There's a monologue episode
* There's a dementia episode
* There's a depression episode
* Each season they use the F word exactly once
* In total there are 5 main characters and each develop their own complex personalities with well-illustrated strengths and flaws.
* Background jokes, animal puns, absurd tongue twisters, countless call-backs, LA references
* They bring in famous actors (Daniel Radcliffe, Paul McCartney, Jessica Biel, etc) to voice lines for their character roasting/satirizing themselves
* It's one of the most intelligently well-written shows I've seen, and at the core explores what it means to be damaged – to grow and be healthier. It repeatedly illuminates the critical parts of human relationships that we all relate to, and don't discuss enough/aren't aware of.

Fiction is the best medium to explore realism. It allows you to precisely focus and illuminate truths in a hyper-real setting.

I believe this is the greatest show on mental health that has ever existed. It's also the best portrayal of real relationships. While there are plenty of humor and animal puns, the gold of the show is for those who are introspective with life experience and willing to associate with a character's flaws.

# (0)

* In real life everything is not wrapped up in thirty minutes.
* What does it mean to grow and change?
* Internal solutions aren't sufficient when problems manifest externally.

Unlike a sitcom, people are complex. Sometimes they make progress and other times they regress. This isn't a bug or feature -- it simply is.

There isn't linear progression or regression. This is best understood when contrasting eastern philosophy and western, but I'll avoid going deep here.

The darkest reality in Bojack is that even after you've moved on and are a better person, other people might not recognize it and the past mistakes do not disappear. Understanding the problem and asking for forgiveness does not guarantee forgiveness.

This is true for forgiveness, validation, closure, etc. The show does not always go on. In real life closure often requires work and is difficult to attain. It often is not sufficient to understand, improve, and repent. That's all one can do and it's commendable, but there isn't always a happy ending.

# (1)

* What does it mean to be a good person?

We all view our own lives in the first person and have valid rationale for most of our decision-making. This allows us to gloss over our own mistakes, and when we aren't as charitable with others we can demonize others – one extremely common example is when driving; one day you are infuriated at a terrible driver, another day you are the terrible driver who was careless for a moment.

Internally we believe there is this ultimate arbiter that determines whether we are good or bad. But real life isn't like that. The outcome, the conclusion, the effects are real and matter.

# (2)

* What does it mean to change?
* Internal vs External congruence

The TV attempts to show Bojack's humanity, while giving him plenty of anti-hero decisions.

Most TV shows illuminate problems. More comedic and aware TV shows will even point out the problems – however they never tackle them. They point out the absurdity, the impossibility, or what to do but it's always finished – because that's the lifecycle of their medium. They are not progressive in time.

This is Bojack's greatest strength. It's deeply progressive in nature.

In line with the above - TV shows are primarily about belief and innate characteristics.

In reality, it's never this simple.

Even in other satirical shows like South Park or Family Guy they make stellar points and deconstruct complex issues and help us understand our flaws and incongruent thinking however Bojack goes another step further.

What happens **after** deconstructing an issue? Bojack argues that is the real difficult part. The part where all the value and meaning is.

Laughing and catharsis and understanding is healthy, good, and necessary. However it isn't wholly sufficient. It doesn't change anything and isn't the solution for the more difficult and complex problems (addiction, depression, etc).

# (3) Good Damage

* Is it a problem to hold on to a tragic event?
* Is it a problem to not learn from a tragic event?
* Is it a problem to learn from a tragic event but not share with others?

I believe it is natural for us to hold on to events that are impactful. They make the greatest imprint in our minds and make great stories. Whether it's their childhood trauma, relationship experience, religious upbringing, etc often the desire is for it to be shareable.

Progress is learning from that experience.

Progress is sharing that learned experience with others.

This episode was impactful because beforehand I would never have been able to understand, much less verbalize these thoughts that I hold.

There is a deep moral judgment and I've found it to be incredibly common. It's not necessarily wrong because it's also what we want, but it's good to be aware and conscious of what is influencing our decision-making. We want utility, we want to improve, we want to help others and share our similar circumstances. I want to write everything down and have others understand the complexity and feelings that occurred.

By all means do that if you want to. But you don't need to.

Admitting that means that there really was no point to the suffering. It was problematic, bad, terrible – there was nothing good from it.

"You've dodged a bullet"

"Now you're not as naive"

Sometimes there isn't an explanation. And there shouldn't need to be.

Perhaps the happy ending is moving past it and forgetting it. Does it serve to hold onto the past?

# (4) Existence is hard

* Existence is hard

There is a deep pleasure and success in surviving and existing.

In productivity culture there's this looming pressure to be productive. It's as if the day starts at negative one hundred and for one to justify it and be proud they must be productive and then the scale will be neutral and one won't be falling behind everyone else who is running the race.

Enjoy the present and be proud.

# (5) The day after

* The day after

One of the more consistent themes is the philosophy that time is an arrow moving forward linearly. Further, there is always motion. No stopping, no ending. The concept of finalization is completely fiction -- it's a social construct, an idea that is useful, but not inherently true.

I personally believe there is utility to goals and there are also harmful things when you hold them too tightly -- which I now see is extremely common.

Once I achieve X then Y

Once I work out and diet and have the body I want then X will like me

Once I complete the project then my boss will recognize my contributions

Once I finish my blog then I will share it with everyone

By all means achieve X, but be honest and anti-naive about Y.

# (6) Complexities

Bojack Horseman is ahead of its time. Of course perhaps 50% of people are ahead of their time at any moment but . . .

* Depression
* Normalization
* Glamorization
* Celebrity Culture
* Sexuality
* Marriage
* Abortion
* Charities
* Mental Health
* Rehab
* Drugs
* Animals

I'm in awe of how well written characters and episodes are. I'm also impressed at how they illuminate both sides of issues and are opinionated.

One of the more complicated things for me was seeing the pattern of Bojack as a hedonistic person. Due to his history and behavior he is portrayed as a sexual predator similiar to current #metoo. It was incredibly fascinating and eye-opening to me because I have watched and followed him through all these actions and have never seen that pattern.

The formula to me is that he is heterosexual and thus ends up with many women. He's a terrible person and is horrible to everyone around him. He's attracted to women, thus he's terrible to a lot of women. He's famous therefore he has power and on average everyone is less influential to him and he holds a power dynamic.

# (7) Glamorization and Normalization

# (8) Altruism and Sacrifice

# (9) Closure and Conclusion

The best mirror is an old friend.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQaCoZL04LE>

Sorority Noise - A Portrait Of