

Bojack Horseman's final season is an existentialist's wet dream

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16th May 2021

January 31, 2020 brought with it the final curtain call on Bojack Horseman, and as the acclaimed show fades to black, season 6 exquisitely demonstrates what the show does best: hopeful poignancy coupled with existential dread. This Netflix animated-series about anthropomorphised animals and humans in Hollywood has consistently presented a profound deconstruction on the human condition. In season 6, its exceptional craft of absurdist social commentary is perfected. A character's trajectory through season 6 that is emblematic of this perfection is Diane. Here she finds herself struggling through depression attempting to write her book of essays. In episode 6:10 "Good Damage", Diane has an existential breakdown over her fears that "If I don't write my book of essays now, that means all the damage I got, isn't good damage. It's just damage".

The notion of good damage, that all the trauma one experienced throughout their life must have some profound purpose, is something many aspiring writers can relate to (including myself). What is so wonderful about her arc this season is not just her decision to relinquish her need to write about her trauma, but also her decision to finally accept the help she deserves, in the form of her boyfriend, and through taking antidepressants. The season reaches an apotheosis in the penultimate episode, "The View From Halfway Down" (6:15). Here, packed with Secretariat's harrowing poem on his own suicide, Amy Winfrey and the team manage to create perhaps the most visceral statement in TV history.

The whole episode appears a caricature of the post-war Theatre of the Absurd movement, with Bojack, one who has spent the entire show repeatedly driving away in an attempt to escape the absurd, or using his trauma to rationalise his neglectful decisions, has no choice but to participate in the show and face the deceased characters he has wronged. However, when it seems the curtain has fallen on Bojack, the next episode indicates that there is still a new day. A new day to be held accountable, a new day to "do the hockey cokey and turn yourself around". Replete with expertly constructed interwoven narratives, the pertinent underlying theme of the dialectical conflict Bojack has between his personal agency and behavioural determinism is laid to rest. In this ending, Bojack finally accepts his responsibility.

Season: 6 Creator: Raphael Bob-Waksberg

Available on: Netflix

My Rating: 10/10