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There's Always More Show. The Impossibility of Remarriage in *BoJack Horseman*

One of the major tv shows of the last decade is surely *BoJack Horseman* (2014-2020), an animated television series articulated in six seasons that depicts an imaginary Hollywood in which not only human beings but also anthropomorphized animals of various kinds take part in the show business. The eponymous protagonist is a horse actor in his fifties who became popular thanks to a 1990s sitcom and aims to get back on track after a long period of depression. BoJack is an exemplary instance of a kind of character that has been made popular by tv shows such as *The Sopranos*, *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*, and which television studies have dubbed "the antihero" (Vaage 2016). The specificity of antihero narratives consists in creating a tension between the identification of the audience with the protagonist and the moral condemnation of his or her bad actions. While we identify with traditional heroes and we are happy to do so, identifying with antiheros may be grueling or awkward.

Tracing back *BoJack Horseman* to the sort of antihero narratives that characterize contemporary television is quite straightforward. Yet, I contend, there is a specificity in the way in which *BoJack Horseman* instantiates the antihero narrative that has to do with its stance towards the film genre that

Stanley Cavell (1981) calls "the comedy of remarriage". I claim that *BoJack Horseman* is not only a antihero narrative but also an "anti-remarriage" narrative. I will argue for this thesis in three steps. First, in §§ 1-3, I will focus on the last season of the series to show how the analogy between *BoJack Horseman* and the comedy of remarriage is explicitly suggested but finally contradicted by the series' narrative. Then, in §§ 4-6, I will trace the impossibility of remarriage in *BoJack Horseman* back to some structural features of the medium of television and its relationship to time. Finally, in §§ 7-8, I will argue that the impossibility of remarriage in *BoJack Horseman* goes hand in hand with the capacity of the medium of television to enable a special kind of self-defeating fictions which challenge fiction as a cultural institution.

1. Paige and Maximilian

Paige Sinclair and Maximillian Banks are two minor characters of *BoJack Horseman*. They show up for the first time in the last episode of the first half of the final season, *A Quick One, While He's Away*, and play a significant role in the second half, investigating BoJack's misdeeds. They appear to be a pastiche of screwball films from the 1930s and 1940s, especially Howard Hawks' 1940 *His Girl Friday*, which is among the films Cavell (1981) analyzes in his book about the comedy of remarriage.

Cavell sees comedies such as *His Girl Friday* as tales of moral progress in which a couple goes through a painful process of breakup and separation to finally achieve a renewed unity, namely remarriage, which turns wife and husband into a new woman and a new man who are finally capable of enjoying a shared happiness. One might claim that Paige and Maximillian indicate that *BoJack Horseman* also is a sort of comedy of remarriage. Indeed, they enter the story when BoJack is on the verge of the sort of moral progress and transformative process that according to Cavell can lead to happiness. In the penultimate episode of the first half of the last season, *The Face of Depression*, BoJack completed his rehab and then met each of his friends—Todd, Diane, Princess Carolyn and Mr. Peanutbutter—doing a good deal for each of them. This seems to be, if not remarriage, at least a significant step towards "re-friendship". Furthermore, during *The Face of Depression*, BoJack moves

from Los Angeles to Connecticut, the place which according to Cavell (1981, 48) represents the "green world" that favors change and transformation in remarriage comedies.

Still, BoJack's transformation into a new, better person is prevented by Paige and Maximillian's investigation, which unearths his worst misdeeds, bringing him back to his unhappy past. Paige and Maximillian look like time travelers who have come from 1940 to our times to assert that remarriage belongs to their times, not to ours. While the comedy of remarriage is about overcoming the past towards the future, *BoJack Horseman* is rather about the grip of the past on the present which prevents the future from being something else than the reiteration of the past.

2. The Xerox of a Xerox

From a Cavellian perspective, *The Face of Depression* would have been a fitting finale for *BoJack Horseman* as a narrative. In the last sequence of the episode, James Henry Jr.'s song *Take Me Down Easy* characterizes BoJack's alleged redemption as a way of "landing softly". The narrative closure is so accomplished that the next episode, *A Quick One, While He's Away*, can even do without the protagonist and the main characters of the series, as if this episode aimed to show that the fictional world kept existing even when the story was over. Yet, on closer inspection, *A Quick One, While He's Away*—the episode in which Page and Maximilian show up for the first time—reveals itself to be aimed at undermining the putative happy ending of *The Face of Depression*. BoJack remains off-stage while the mechanisms which will end up disintegrating the sort of happiness that he has so hardly achieved get going.

The second half of the series' last season portrays the disintegration of BoJack's fragile happiness. The first two episodes, *Intermediate Scene Study w/ BoJack Horseman* and *Good Damage*, concern the same temporal period, namely, BoJack's first semester as professor at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, but portray it from two different perspectives. While *Intermediate Scene Study* privileges BoJack's perspective, developing the tale of redemption that begun in *The Face of Depression*, *Good Damage* rather draws on the negativity of *A Quick One, While He's Away*,

developing Paige and Maximillian's inquiry into BoJack's past misdeeds. The positive versus negative polarity of the last two episodes of the first half of the season thus replicates and amplifies itself in the first two episodes of the second half: *Intermediate Scene Study* sketches a prospect of happiness which *Good Damage* undermines mercilessly.

The next two episodes, *Sunk Cost and All That* and *Xerox of a Xerox*, portray the final clash between BoJack's quest for happiness and Paige and Maximillian's attempt to spoil it by dragging him into a devastating scandal. In the first television interview about the scandal, BoJack takes a humble stance, gaining the sympathy of the audience which considers his repentance sincere. Had *BoJack Horseman* been a Cavellian comedy, this might have been the last fight of the hero against the forces opposing his pursuit of happiness. Yet, *BoJack Horseman* is a television series based on a mechanism of repetition rather than on the linear development of films such as remarriage comedies. Hence BoJack, who sees himself as "the Xerox of a Xerox", accepts to participate in a second television interview in which the interviewer, prompted by Paige, will finally frame him, casting him as a devilish misogynist. For BoJack, this will be the beginning of the ultimate fall.

The next pair of episodes, *The Horny Unicorn* and *Angela*, portray BoJack's fall, whose nadir can be found in the penultimate episode of the series, *The View from Halfway Down*, which is a sort of journey to the Underworld. The last episode, *Nice While It Lasted*, replicates the structure of *The Face of Depression*, consisting of four conversations between BoJack and his four friends. Still, in *The Face of Depression* BoJack's meetings with his friends were under the sign of a moral progress leading to reconciliation and redemption, while the four conversations in *Nice While It Lasted* are rather in a minor key, as if they were nothing but a farewell. Indeed, the flashforward at the beginning of the episode which evokes BoJack and Diane's final conversation at the very moment when BoJack is facing death after drowning in his swimming pool—thus realizing the prophecy of the title sequence—suggests that the four conversations might be nothing but the continuation of the hallucination of the dying horse that begun in *The View from Halfway Down*. When BoJack asks to Diane: "Hey, wouldn't it be funny if this night was the last time we ever talked to each other?", one

may have the feeling that there will be no future for their friendship. In this sense, *Nice While It Lasted* is a finale in which the story stops, just like life stops when death comes, without that peculiar "narrative closure" (Carroll 2007) or "sense of an ending" (Kermode 1966) which characterizes the finale of films such as remarriage comedies.

3. Four friends

The contrast between the teleological orientation of remarriage comedies and the merely temporal order of *BoJack Horseman* can be further emphasized by considering the narrative trajectories of the four friends of the protagonist. Given that the last two episodes, *The View from Halfway Down* and *Nice While It Lasted*, are both based on BoJack's perspective, the episode in which the trajectories of Diane, Mr. Peanutbutter, Todd and Princess Carolyn should come to an end is the third last, *Angela*. The last sequence of this episode, indeed, portrays the destiny of those four characters in parallel (together with the premise of BoJack's fall which will reach its climax in *The View from Halfway Down*). Diane has a phone call with her ex-husband Mr. Peanutbutter, while Princess Carolyne enjoys a serenade by his assistant Judah, and Todd reconciliates with his mother. Those narrative trajectories are surely more positive and edifying than BoJack's, but they still contrast with the full narrative closure of remarriage comedies.

During the phone call, Mr. Peanutbutter says to his ex-wife Diane: "I feel like if we met each other as the people we are now, things would be totally different with us. Yeah, but if we hadn't met each other until now, we wouldn't be the people we are now". Diane acknowledges that Mr. Peanutbutter is right. Their marriage and their breakup have transformed them, making them ready for a new beginning, just as the Cavellian model predicts. Yet, this transformation does not lead to remarriage, but rather prevents it. There is a price to pay in personal transformation which consists in the impossibility of restoring the relationship that has been broken in the transformative process. The pursuit of happiness thus undermines remarriage instead of favoring it.

In the same sequence, Todd expresses a similar feeling when his mother says to him: “I thought kicking you out was the right thing”, and he replies: “I haven’t had a mom for so long, I... I don’t really need one anymore”. Once again, the separation between people who love each other involves a transformation of them, just as Cavell predicts, but the affective relationship reveals itself to be a casualty of the transformative process. Todd’s pursuit of happiness prevents him form regaining his place in his family.

The failure of remarriage in *BoJack Horseman* is so pervasive that one might be encouraged to conclude that remarriage is just a cinematic myth which television series like this can debunk. An exemplary narrative trajectory, in this sense, is Princess Carolyn’s. Had *BoJack Horseman* been a remarriage comedy, she would have finally rejoined the great love of her life BoJack after the transformation primed by their breakup. Instead, she will marry her assistant Judah, trying to compensate the impossibility of remarriage with a brand-new marriage.

Although the story of Princess Carolyn clearly contradicts remarriage, it might be argued that it instantiates the film genre that Cavell (1996) casts as the dark side of the comedy of remarriage, namely, “the melodrama of the unknown woman”.[i] While the heroine of remarriage succeeds in her process of self-creation through the relationship with her partner, the unknown woman cannot find a man who recognizes her as the person she really is, hence her process of self-creation will ultimately fail. However, the melodrama of the unknown woman, as a *melodrama*, involves a tragic ending, an ultimate failure of the heroine. In *BoJack Horseman*, by contrast, one can find neither the ultimate achievement of the remarriage comedy nor the ultimate failure of the unknown-woman melodrama: one is rather left with the impression that events are meant to repeat themselves relentlessly along similar patterns.

4. Television and animation

The difference between remarriage comedies and *BoJack Horseman* matches a difference in their media, namely, film and television. If one casted the medium as the structure that artists manipulate,

one might be tempted to conclude that film and television have the same medium, namely, the medium of moving images (Carroll 1996). However, as pointed out by David Davies (2004), the concept of an artistic medium includes not only the structure that artists manipulate but also the norms, principles and assumptions that govern such manipulation. Two media might share the structure that artists manipulate and yet differ with respect to the normative framework. This is precisely the way in which film and television constitute two distinct media (Nannicelli 2016). In particular, the normative framework of film mandates narratives to abide by a standard duration of about two hours while the normative framework of television mandates narratives to be articulated in a number of episodes having a standard duration of less than one hour each.

This difference in the normative framework involves a difference in storytelling. While the medium of film, with its limited amount of time, fits well with stories having a significant closure that makes sense of the development of characters and their relationships, the medium of television is characterized by a vast amount of time to be filled that favors stories in which the characters tend to be doomed to repetition (Cavell 1982; Bandirali and Terrone 2021). BoJack himself summarizes the logic of television narratives in his monologue in the sixth episode of the fifth season, *Free Churro*: "You can't have happy endings in sitcoms, not really, because, if everyone's happy, the show would be over, and above all else, the show... has to keep going. There's always more show. […] There is nothing more realistic than that. You never get a happy ending, 'cause there's always more show."

Television is a realistic medium since it lacks the teleological orientation that characterizes fairytales, myths, and films such as remarriage comedies. Although there are television shows like *The Affair* that struggle to achieve the sharp closure that characterizes the comedy of remarriage,[ii] the medium of television rather favors narratives like *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* in which breakup and remarriage repeat themselves in each season so as to make the moral progress advocated by Cavell meaningless or vain.

Television resembles real life in this respect. It might sound paradoxical to look for the imitation of life in an animated series like *BoJack Horseman* in which horses, dogs and many other animals behave and speak as if they were human beings. Yet, this series deploys both the temporal specificity of television and the representational power of animation to obtain a realistic treatment of the passage of time that it would be hard to achieve in traditional films. The vast amount of time that the medium of television yields to storytelling enables *BoJack Horseman* to track characters in different ages of their lives. Moreover, animation accurately portrays their aging as the years go by, and it also makes them look younger—sometimes even much younger—in flashbacks.

Animation, in this sense, enables *BoJack Horseman* to overcome a typical aesthetic problem concerning the representation of the passage of time in film, namely, the difficulty in reconciling the characters' changes with the invariance of the actors' appearance. The traditional alternative consists in either casting actors of different ages for the same role or relying on makeup. However, both options have significant aesthetic costs. The change of actor may produce an odd sense of discontinuity, for instance when one pays attention to the physiognomic difference between Jena Malone and Jodie Foster who play the same character at different ages in *Contact*. The make-up, on the other hand, may look awkward even when supported by the most advanced technologies, as it is arguably the case in Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman* (2019), in which Robert De Niro plays the eponymous hero over a half-century span. A much less common option, famously pursued by Richard Linklater in *Boyhood* (2014), consists in shooting the film over such an extended time that the aging of the actors is perceptible, but in this case the temporal extension that can be portrayed is constrained by production contingencies. Conversely, the power of animation enables *BoJack Horseman* to portray any character at any stage of his or her life. It is difficult to find a narrative in which one has such a vivid sense of the exterior change of characters, and this sounds ironic considering that the series makes a point about the extreme difficulty of true interior change.

5. Flashbacks

Through the power of animation, *BoJack Horseman* systematically intertwines the present of the story with its past. Flashbacks are pervasive in this series (just like in other series such as *Lost*, *Orange is the New Black*, *Money Heist*), and they often come to the fore relegating the present to the background. In the first three seasons, flashbacks focus on the production of "Horsin' Around", the sitcom featuring BoJack as the Horse who lives with the three little orphans he has adopted. The third episode of season one, *Prickly-Muffin*, deploy flashbacks to introduce Sarah Lynn, the wunderkind who played the orphan Sabrina in "Horsin' Around", then became a pop star of global fame, and is now undergoing a decline characterized by alcoholism and drug abuse. In the eight episode, *The Telescope*, the flashbacks evoke BoJack's friendship with Herb Kazzaz, the creator of "Horsin' Around" who was fired by the network after he was revealed to be gay, and is now terminally ill with cancer. Both in *Prickly-Muffin* and *The Telescope*, the flashbacks mercilessly compare the illusory promises of the past and the bleak reality of the present. In the subsequent seasons, such a comparison will be pushed further especially in episodes such as *Still Broken*, the third episode of season two which intertwines flashbacks with the images of Herb's funeral, and *That's Too Much, Man!* and *That Went Well*, the last two episodes of season three in which Sarah Lynn's decline reaches its climax.

While in the first three seasons the flashbacks are about the making of "Horsin' Around" which constitutes BoJack's professional background, the flashbacks of season four mainly explore his familiar background. The season's second episode, *The Old Sugarman Place*, portrays the childhood of BoJack's mother, Beatrice, while its penultimate episode, *Time's Arrow*, tells Beatrice's youth, her falling in love with Butterscotch, the birth of their son BoJack and the vicissitudes of their unhappy marriage. These flashbacks, just like those about Herb and Sarah Lynn in the first three seasons, cast the past not in the way remarriage comedies do so, that is, as the premise of the pursuit of happiness in the present, but rather as the cause of the impassable unhappiness of the present.

Beside revealing BoJack's professional and familiar background, the flashbacks also explore the past of his four friends. Both *The BoJack Horseman Show*, second episode of season three, and *Mr. Peanutbutter's Boos*, eight episode of season five, interweave flashbacks involving Diane, Mr.

Peanutbutter, Todd, Princess Carolyne and BoJack himself. The flashbacks of *The BoJack Horseman Show* occur in 2007 while those of *Mr. Peanutbutter's Boos* portray four Halloween parties, which take place in different years (1993, 2004, 2009, 2018) but in the same place (BoJack's house) and with the same outcome (a couple crisis involving Mr. Peanutbutter).

Both *The BoJack Horseman Show* and *Mr. Peanutbutter's Boos* focus on inaugural events. As the latter portrays the first encounter between BoJack and Diane and the beginning of Todd's stay in BoJack house, the former depicts Princess Carolyn falling in love with BoJack, and the first encounter between Mr. Peanutbutter and Diane. These flashbacks give us the impression of going back to the source of a river, as it were, of which we usually inhabit the mouth. At the source there is a sense of freshness, spontaneity, innocence and confidence in the future, which seems to have completely disappeared in the present. While remarriage comedies drawn on the happiness of the past to build up a new happiness for the future, *BoJack Horseman* rather casts happiness a something stuck in the past and inaccessible from the present.

6. Time's arrow

"Time's arrow neither stands still nor reverses. It merely marches forward", says the patriarch Joseph Sugarman—Beatrice's father and BoJack's grandfather—in *The Old Sugarman Place*. Films such as remarriage comedies endow time's arrow with a teleological orientation that makes it not only march from the past through the present towards the future, but also point towards an end. The teleological orientation of time's arrow thus makes sense of the past as the precondition for the pursuit of happiness in the present and its realization in the future. *BoJack Horseman*'s narrative, by contrast, does not impose a sense on time's arrow but rather systematically bends it to explore the past through flashbacks, and even to explore counterfactual situations that show what the characters would have been had things gone differently. From this perspective, happiness does not have its proper place in the future, as in the comedy of remarriage, but rather in the past or in the possible.

In *Downer Ending*, the penultimate episode of season one, BoJack, under the effect of drug abuse, hallucinates the happy life he might have enjoyed had he married Charlotte, a doe whom he met in Los Angeles when he was taking his first steps in the show business. Later, in the penultimate episode of season two, *Escape From L.A.*, BoJack will struggle to turn his dream into reality by moving to New Mexico to rejoin Charlotte. The result will be a disaster, as if a metaphysical barrier prevented happiness from migrating from the worlds that one imagines to the real one.

The contrast between the happiness of possible worlds and the unhappiness of the actual one is even most striking in *Ruthie*, the ninth episode of season four, which appears to be a flashforward in which the eponymous character, a descendant of Princess Carolyn, tells a day in the life of her "great-great-great grandmother". In the last part of the episode, however, the putative flashforward reveals itself to be nothing but a figment of Princess Carolyn's imagination after discovering that her pregnancy stopped, and that she will not be able to get pregnant anymore. In the finale, Princess Carolyn has a phone call with BoJack and reveals to him how she makes up Ruthie's stories: "Hey, you wanna know what I do when I have a really bad, awful, terrible day? […] I imagine my great great-great granddaughter in the future talking to her class about me. She's poised and funny, and tells people about me and how everything worked out in the end. And when I think about that, I think about how everything's going to work out. Because how else could she tell people?". BoJack cynically objects that "it's fake" but Princess Carolyn replies "Yeah, well... It makes me feel better".

7. The self-defeating fiction

Do fictions really make us feel better despite being fake? The answer of *BoJack Horseman* to this question is ambivalent. On the one hand, the series embeds fictions which are aimed to make one feel better. The episodes of the sitcom "Horsin' Around" are fictions of that sort, as exemplarily shown in the Christmas Special *Sabrina's Christmas Wish*, which casts Santa Claus as the paradigm fictional character. Remarriage comedies also can be cast as fictions of that sort: they make us feel better since they persuade us that happiness can be pursued. *BoJack Horseman*, by contrast, is a reflexive, self-

defeating fiction, which is aimed at debunking fictions of that sort by pushing the expressive possibilities of television and animation to their limits.

Traditional fictions such as remarriage comedies are Aristotelian narratives: they have a beginning, a middle and an end such as that the beginning raises an issue that the middle addresses and the end solves, thereby providing the audience with a sense of closure that makes fictional events meaningful. *BoJack Horseman*, on the other hand, favors a Platonic skepticism towards representations, showing that they mislead us by portraying events from an odd perspective that confers them a meaning they do not have. For example, in *BoJack Kills*, the third episode of season three, we see Mr. Peanutbutter in his garden but then a long shot reveals that he is in his house in front of a window overlooking the garden. In the finale of *Escape from L.A.*, we see BoJack sailing on a boat but then a long shot reveals that he is on a highway where his boat is pulled by a truck. At the end of *Free Churro*, a reverse shot reveals that BoJack is doing the eulogy of his mother at the wrong funeral. When events are seen in their entirety, the meaning that was deceptively superimposed on them vanishes.

Such a debunking of representations can be extended from single shots or episodes to the whole narrative. Instead of focusing on a privileged segment of the characters' life, as it happens in films such as remarriage comedies, *BoJack Horseman* deploys the combination of animation and serial television to explore the life of the characters in all its temporal and modal complexity. The result is quite upsetting. Life seems to be meaningful when one considers the short temporal segments that films represent, just like the earth seems to be flat when one considers the small areas one can perceive. Yet, when much larger segments are considered, as in *BoJack Horseman*, life comes down to a dogged iteration of meaningless actions and unhappy situations. Meaning and happiness were just deceiving effects of considering events from too close.

8. BoJack and Diane

What is the cause of such a deception? Why meaning and happiness comes down to deceptive embellishments of unhappy and meaningless events instead of being a real feature of human life? In certain passages, *BoJack Horseman* seems to individuate the source of unhappiness in toxic institutions such as capitalism and patriarchy. The most unquestionably negative characters in the series are all rich adult males, for instance the putative philanthropist Sebastian St. Clair who in season two reveals himself to be a self-centered cynic man, or the patriarch Joseph Sugarman from whose ruthless inflexibility descends the unhappiness of his daughter Beatrice, of his son-in-law Butterscotch and of his nephew BoJack, who in turn transmits unhappiness to a number of other people, in particular to his "symbolic daughters" Sarah Lynn, Penny, and Hollyhock.

By critically portraying capitalism and patriarchy, *BoJack Horseman* refers to two contemporary series that in turn have controversial rich male protagonists, namely, *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*. Specifically, *BoJack Horseman*'s title sequence, which portrays the fall of the hero, draws on *Mad Men*'s title sequence, and the reference to that series is strengthened by the acting of Alison Brie who played Trudy Campbell there and gives voice to Diane here. Similarly, the reference to *Breaking Bad* is secured by the acting of Aaron Paul who played Jesse Pinkman there and here gives voice to Todd: in both cases, the actor plays a character with whom the series' antihero—there Walter White, here BoJack—has a controversial relationship of symbolic paternity. Moreover, BoJack is guilty of the same sin of omission as Walter when it comes to rescuing an overdosed girl. Nevertheless, *BoJack Horseman* differs from both *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad* since it does not limit itself to portraying the sort of unhappiness that derives from the capitalist-patriarchal system but also aims to look beyond that.

In particular, *BoJack Horseman* portrays designated heirs of a patriarchal capitalist dynasty who refuse that role in the name of their own freedom and creativity. The character of Butterscotch points in that direction, though he is finally forced to abandon the dream of writing his Great American Novel to devote himself to his father-in-law's company. His son, BoJack, on the other hand, will completely disregard the family business to focus on his career as an artist. In this sense, BoJack is a

late instance of the conception of art as the sick outcome of capitalism whose most illustrious precedent can be found in the work of Thomas Mann—especially in the design of characters such as Hanno Buddenbrook or Tonio Kröger. A similar trajectory can also be found in a one-time character of *BoJack Horseman*, namely, Cooper Thomas Rogers Wallace Jr., the heir of a family of capitalists who dreams of becoming a great athlete and, as we learn from the flashbacks of the fifth episode of season five, *The Amelia Earhart Story*, ends up getting his maid's daughter—Princess Carolyn—pregnant.

BoJack Horseman contrasts the capitalist-patriarchal system also by developing outstanding feminist characters such as writer Diane Nguyen and filmmaker Kelsey Jannings. Those characters provide us with critical points of view on the predatory behaviors of the series' male characters, especially on those BoJack, as well as on the culture that expresses them. BoJack final fall, from this perspective, might appear to be what he ultimately deserved. However, in the episode *The Horny Unicorn*, an Afro-American boy sympathizes with BoJack after his fall, saying to him: "Everything these days is all 'patriarchy' this and 'male gaze' that. And, well, I think it's cool you're pushing back against that". BoJack replies "Well, no, I'm not pushing back", and yet the boy's utterance suggests that *BoJack Horseman*'s stance attitude towards feminism is more nuanced than what one might believe in the first instance.

The point is that the unhappiness that pervades the series seems to have deeper roots than those to which the critics of capitalism and patriarchy gesture towards. The understanding between the third-generation feminist Diane and the scion of patriarchal capitalism BoJack may appear paradoxical and unrealistic in the first instance. Yet, one can explain that by considering the ability of them both to look beyond the surface of things, grasping the fundamental absurdity of it all. Diane does not believe the fallacy that capitalism and patriarchy are the cause of all evil, the diabolical factors of corruption of a natural inclination to good and happiness. Just like BoJack, Diane knows well that unhappiness and lack of meaning have deeper roots that have to do with the very existence of living creatures. The difference between Diane and BoJack is that she strives to be a better person

anyway, to "make a difference", despite the awareness that those are just surface differences, while BoJack tends to let himself sink into the absurdity of existence. However, when BoJack and Diane sit together on a roof—as it often happens in the series—looking at the vicissitudes of life from the right distance, they seem to share the same perspective on a world in which there is no room for remarriage, happiness and ultimate meaning because, just like in television, there is always more show.[iii]

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[ii] Thanks to Nick Stang for drawing my attention to that.

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