

Free essay on men vs brony

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Bearded men with steady jobs and sometimes kids of their own are watching and even praising a colourful cartoon called “ My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic”. This is not one of the several new trends that this so-called post-modern world has bestowed upon us. This is definitely not something that was invented for a marketing campaign or that was born as a hoax in the deeper layers of the internet. No. This is a real thing, the viewers are called “ Bronies” (as in “ bro” plus “ ponies”) and to what extent it redefines masculinity in the United States is an ironically tough question.

This paper has no intention to answer this inquiry for all the American males. What it will certainly do, however, is share a couple of personal thoughts about this matter, based on the fact that the writer understands the Bronny culture as an unintended fandom of a television series which was originally created for little girls and now is said to be reshaping the concept of man in the US.

As for the point of view of a foreigner who has been living and studying in this country for many years, American males have always been seen as strong, challengeable, powerful and creative people. Manly men, for all that matters. The Bronny culture, on the other hand, does not immediately represent any of these values. Its participants often claim that the show they religiously follow indeed does so, alleging that every one of the characters in it impersonates a human quality and, therefore, transmit valuable lessons in each episode. But for those who are not aware of these proclaimed virtues a bunch of grown-up men cheering while watching the adventures of a gang of coloured ponies seems just too sketchy to be real.

So no, in fact the Bronny culture may not be the right one to redefine

masculinity in the United States. And here is a brief explanation of how it all started that will help to settle the matter.

“ My Little Pony” was a TV series that aired in the 1980s and rapidly became a huge success among kids of small age all over the world. It ran for only few years before being ended by a budget cut, and back then it never appealed to any audience it was not supposed to. The new version of it, renamed to “ My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic”, was supported by the collective funding platform Kickstarter — probably by the same children from that beginning era, now parents. It premiered in 2011 and surprisingly enough immediately caught the attention of an unexpected portion of the population: straight male adults with no record of psychological issues. The producer of the reboot did not change anything about the character’s personalities nor the plot of the series; they remained the old-fashioned multi-colored ponies with names like Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash who help each other in their adventures at Ponyland. Even so these men became real enthusiasts of it, and since then they denominate themselves Bronies.

A documentary reporting the origin and rising of this culture was filmed in 2010. “ Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony”, directed by Laurent Malaquais, is baffling in a sense that it shows that Bronies are all real adult men. No exceptions. In the movie one of the members states that their culture does not demand its member to be of a certain age and that they are willing to open their doors to any person who wants to join the group. However, while watching the documentary one immediately realises that the majority of the fans amongst that Brony culture are not social with other individuals outside it: they only interact with

each other.

There is a good reason for that: Bronies only have confidence in being a Brony because they socially support each other. They understand what it is like to love a cartoon at a more advanced age and do not, under any circumstance, judge a fellow Brony by his comportament or chosen attire. Even though they believe that it makes them more social between themselves, they end up having more difficulty to get accepted by people who are from outside their unusual culture. After all, not everyone would feel adequate being friends with a grown man that is a cheerful fan of colored, girlish ponies. Most of people care about their reputation within the society. Again, not all man would accept a Brony member to ultimately redefine the masculinity of his country.

Redefining masculinity is a totally different thing than what Brony culture has been doing to its members and to the society in general. When someone talks about the main kind of man he or she knows it invariably means heroes, fighters, tough men, defenders, sharp guys. Masculinity refers to fathers and, most importantly, leaders. The United States of America has developed their army until they became one of the most powerful armies in the world. Not to mention the brave workers who built this country and created its powerful cars. Based on these what can be easily stated is that Americans are by definition robust and dominant. One might argue whether any of these hard workers would ever accept a person saying that Bronies redefine men in the U. S. Brony is a soft, colorful, emotional and powerless culture, thus it cannot redefine all the American males by their values. American men have a high reputation between men in the world, and giving

the Brony culture a chance to represent their gender in the US will definitely affect that reputation. It is surprising to see that some soldiers are fans of “My Little Pony”; makes one wonder if their commander-in-chief is aware of what they are watching and of what could happen to them because of it. If the same case happened in Saudi Arabia, for example, a place where the Brony culture would have much less space in the society to develop, these soldiers would probably be under probation already.

In an article called “What Does It Mean To Be A Man?” the internet guru Dr. Nerdlove points out that people should think about the representativity of a man and how important it is for the society to fully understand it. The author, a famous pseudonym created by the writer and artist Harris O’Malley, assumes that certain people may blame this kind of changings in the culture for the ongoing loss of masculinity. He also assumes that losing masculinity is a result of giving women total attention and forgetting about men. Dr. Nerdlove, however, blames the men who got involved in these changes and forgot their basic standards (which applies to any Brony).

In his text, Dr. Nerdlove gives the audience a great example of the changes that masculinity has suffered throughout the years. He compares the person he considers to be the most powerful man in History, the mongolian warrior Genghis Khan, and the one that holds the same title in the present day, Facebook founder and dandy billionaire Mark Zuckerberg. The article has rich accounts of Dr. Nerdlove’s version of masculinity — it goes from the past of “physical dominance, social importance and financial achievement” to the actual “accomplishments” and “purpose” — and ends up by listing a few characteristics of the new man: faces his fears, does not make up excuses,

takes responsibilities, tries hard to become his best self, acknowledges his limitations, respect others and so on. Not a single mention to infantilization just for the sake of it.

Reinforcing this belief is doctor Aaron H. Devor, a sociologist and sexologist recognized worldwide by his works with the transgender community. In the article " Becoming Members of Society: Learning the Social Meanings of Gender" he claims that the most common characteristics of a manly man are toughness, confidence, self-reliance, aggressiveness, violence and ultimately and most importantly the capability of avoiding anything related to femininity. Male adults enthusiasts of " My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic" fail to meet at least three of these points, being, by any means, far from redefining the masculine in the US or anywhere in the world.

In a link to this case, it is mandatory to recall a scene from the aforementioned documentary where a guy named Alex reveals that he was for a long time threatened by some people in his hometown simply because they were against his interests. Some people, he said, went as far as attacking his car and breaking its windows with him still inside. Alex recalled that he faced a very risky threat from a guy who pointed a gun at him. The aggressor was allegedly warning Alex not to continue getting involved with the Brony culture.

This example helps clarify whether the Brony culture can be considered as currently redefining the American men or not. Receiving threats from people because of concurring interests is a serious problem. When someone's taste leads the person towards a hazardous behavior it means that his or her interest is simply not right; in the case of the Brony culture, that it does not

reflect any type of masculinity. Putting a person in danger is always wrong, so these who threatened Alex are also wrong because of their actions. Their thoughts and beliefs, however, made them aggressive only because they would never accept any person distorting the concept of masculinity.

Following the Brony culture is a sign of weakness as a man and no person should represent any group if he or she is weak. Nobody has even seen a president publicly displaying signs of fragility, therefore one cannot represent anything and be dull at the same time.

If one American man decides to ride a pony, would the pony bear the man on its back? The answer, of course, is no, a pony cannot carry a man on its back because a pony is weak. It will bend and break its back. This example refers to how Bronies values cannot represent American men. Not just the Brony culture is a weak one, but it also has side effects which masks its positive sides. The definition of masculinity is very heavy; it is not even believable that Bronies could hold that weight on their back.

Work cited

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