



"Bitches ain't gonna hunt no ghosts": totemic nostalgia, toxic fandom and the Ghostbusters platonic [

2017

text (article)

Analítica

In March 2016, the trailer for Paul Feig's Ghostbusters reboot debuted online and suffered the unfortunate accolade of being the most disliked trailer in YouTube history. Popular news media, including professional, pro-am, and amateur commentators, picked up on the resulting online kerfuffle as clear indication that there is something rotten in the state of fandom. Feig himself frequently turned to the echo chamber of social media to denounce fans as "some of the biggest arseholes I've ever met in my life". Addressing fans that singled out the reboot as "ruining my childhood," Feig poured fuel on the fire by criticising such a perspective as merely the product of "some whacked-out teenager," overdramatic, pathological and, perhaps more pointedly, "toxic". In so doing, Feig-and, by extension, the cast of the Ghostbusters reboot-replicated and re-activated traditional stereotypes of the fanboy-living in his mother's basement and obsessing over trivial entertainment. This article takes the claims of "childhood ruination" seriously to examine what is at stake for fans of the original Ghostbusters film. Despite the organs of online media heavily criticising fanboys as misogynistic relics and sexist heathens, often in aggressive ways, I argue that fans' affective, nostalgic attachment to the first Ghostbusters film-the "primary cinematic text" (Bernard, 2014)-forms a crucial component of fans' "self-narratives" (Hills, 2012) and "trajectories of the self ". By drawing on empirical work on "nostalgic narratives" conducted in the psychology field, I argue that it is not simply toxicity that drives these fans to defend the fan-object from being colonised by an invading text, but, rather, what I am terming as totemic nostalgia, a form of protectionism centred on an affective relationship with a text, usually forged in early childhood. Threats to the Ghostbusters totemic object, then, "can thus be felt as threats to these fans' self-narratives" (Hills, 2012, p. 114)

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Baratz Innovación Documental

- Gran Vía, 59 28013 Madrid
- (+34) 91 456 03 60
- informa@baratz.es