



Batman Unmasked: Analyzing a Cultural Icon

By Will Brooker

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A work of scholarship and a labor of love. "This is the definitive history of the Batman in all media: comics, film, television and the internet. The book's combination of rigorous historical research and a witty, fluid writing style make it both vastly instructive and vastly entertaining."--Roberta Pearson, editor of *The Many Lives of the Batman* "Will appeal to avid students of pop culture and comics, and a gay cult audience...Brooker's impressive overview of Batman's history reflects on the masked one's origins, early arch rivals and the introduction of Robin, and concentrates on four periods: WWII, the mid 1950s, the '60s and the '90s. In 1954, child psychologist Fredric Wertham attacked the comic book industry noting homoerotic undercurrents between Batman and Robin; Brooker's lengthy and fascinating 'gay reading' supports Wertham's claim, albeit with a positive, postmodern twist. After recalling the campy image of Batman spawned by ABC's 1960s TV show, the author takes a look at Batman writers, fans, fanzines and the Net, concluding with a hilarious chapter on how his research was ridiculed by the British media." -Publishers Weekly

Brooker's account is bolstered by his fan expertise. This book usefully expands upon *The Many Lives of Batman*. Recommended--Library Journal "A historical, detailed, deep analysis of Batman as a cultural icon in America. This isn't a simple polemic or surface-shallow analysis. This is deep stuff-analyzing art styles, histories, individual panels, cultural concepts, and historical documents. plenty of startling revelations and analyses. This is a stunningly well-done, intelligent book. It's proof that comics are not throwaway ephemera, but real, vital, analyzable parts of our culture. It's also a must-have for the hardcore Batman fan and comics fan-who doesn't mind some ideas being challenged."--www.super-heroes.net

Brooker cuts through the mumbo jumbo to deliver incisive analysis and very sharp reporting, particularly on the comic book's homoerotic subtext and on the 60's TV show's knowing self-mockery, as well as on how the 'official' 21st Century Batman nods to both.

Over the sixty years of his existence, Batman has encountered an impressive array of cultural icons and has gradually become one himself. This fascinating book examines what Batman means and has meant to the various audiences, groups and communities who have tried to control and interpret him over the decades. Brooker reveals the struggles over Batman's meaning by shining a light on the cultural issues of the day that impacted on the development of the character. They include: patriotic propaganda of the Second World War;

the accusation that Batman was corrupting the youth of America by appearing to promote a homosexual lifestyle to the fans of his comics; Batman becoming a camp, pop culture icon through the ABC TV series of the sixties; fans' interpretation of Batman in response to the comics and the Warner Bros. franchise of films.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Like James Bond, Robin Hood and Dracula, Batman stands as a cultural icon whose malleability from era to era reveals much about our changing social preoccupations. This heavily footnoted volume which will appeal to avid students of pop culture and comics, and a gay cult audience, though it's unlikely to break out to a wider audience allows Brooker (co-editor of *Post-Modern After-Images*) to examine the famed DC Comics character in greater depth, benefiting from access to DC's own library plus interviews with long-time Batman editor Denny O'Neil. Invented by artist Bob Kane and scripter Bill Finger in *Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939), Batman has since branched into every form of communication: newspaper comic strips, radio, TV, short stories, graphic novels, magazines, movies, merchandising, and now the Internet. Brooker's impressive overview of Batman's history reflects on the masked one's origins, early arch rivals and the introduction of Robin, and concentrates on four periods: WWII, the mid 1950s, the '60s and the '90s. In 1954, child psychologist Fredric Wertham attacked the comic book industry in *Seduction of the Innocent*, noting homoerotic undercurrents between Batman and Robin; Brooker's lengthy and fascinating "gay reading" supports Wertham's claim, albeit with a positive, postmodern twist. After recalling the campy image of Batman spawned by ABC's 1960s TV show, the author takes a look at Batman writers, fans, fanzines and the Net, concluding with a hilarious chapter on how his research was ridiculed by the British media. 20 b&w illus. (Nov.)

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Review

"Batman Unmasked is a well-researched history and an impressive tour of our culture's fascination with a mythos in its populist midst..." -- *Rain Taxi*

About the Author

Will Brooker is Director of Film Studies and Television at Kingston University, UK. He is the author of several books, including studies of Batman, Star Wars, Blade Runner, and Lewis Carroll.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ryan Donahue:

This *Batman Unmasked: Analyzing a Cultural Icon* book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is actually information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This specific *Batman Unmasked: Analyzing a Cultural Icon* without we understand teach the one who reading through it become critical in considering and analyzing. Don't end up being worry *Batman Unmasked: Analyzing a Cultural Icon* can bring any time you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' come to be full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even telephone. This *Batman Unmasked: Analyzing a Cultural Icon* having very good arrangement in word and layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

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