



Batman Unmasked: Analyzing a Cultural Icon

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 This is deep stuff-analyzing art styles, histories, individual panels, cultural concepts, and historical documents.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.superheroes.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."--Entertainment Weekly 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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