

Batman: Anchor for the Space Between

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Batman is one of the most widely recognized fictional characters in the world. In his nearly 80-years of existence, the Caped Crusader has transcended the medium of comic books, starring in blockbuster movies, live-action and animated television programs, best-selling video games, and countless merchandising forms from toys and t-shirts to sports cars and roller coasters. Batman has been depicted in thousands of different ways, sometimes only loosely maintaining the core ingredients of the Batman mythos. In contemporary culture Batman can, and is, represented as everything from a grim and violent avenger, to a loving and supportive father, to a cute and infantile little cherub. This presentation will analyze of how the multiplicity of Batman in contemporary comic books allows a single character to intersect with a range of social issues. Batman becomes, in effect, a nexus for exploring how topics like justice, ethnicity, sexuality, and patriarchy are influentially presented through a character revered by millions of casual consumers and dedicated fans alike. Batman will be considered as a focal point for expressing perspectives on important issues such as sexuality, ethnicity, feminism and familial relationships. The organizing premise is that while Batman is perceived as a very clearly defined character, he is open to a wide range of mutiplicities, or interpretations and depictions in the comics, each of which allows access to different cultural issues. The idea of Batman functions as an anchoring point out of which multiple Batmen, or Batman-like characters, can occupy different positions: Grim Batman, Gay Batman, Female Batman, Black Batman, Cute Batman, and so on. Each iteration of Batman opens up a discussion of different cultural issues pertinent to modern society.

Kurzbiographie

Jeffrey A. Brown is a Professor in the Department of Popular Culture and the School of Critical and Cultural Studies. He received his Doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Toronto. Dr. Brown is the author of over thirty journal articles and book chapters about gender, ethnicity and sexuality in contemporary media. He has also authored three books from the University Press of Mississippi: *Black Superheroes: Milestone Comics and Their Fans* (2000), *Dangerous Curves: Gender, Fetishism and the Modern Action Heroine* (2011), and *Beyond Bombshells: The New Action Heroine in Popular Culture* (2015). And two books for Routledge Press: *The Modern Superhero in Film and Television* (2017), and the forthcoming *Batman and the Multiplicity of Identity: The Contemporary Comic Book Superhero as Cultural Nexus* (2019).