Spending an Evening with Batman's Brain in Victoria, BC: A Summary

By Ed Sum (The Vintage Tempest)

To spend "An Evening with Batman's Brain" is a perfect way to prepare for next week's ultimate grudge match in Zack Snyder (https://twitter.com/zacksnyder)'s Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice (http://batmanvsuperman.dcomics.com/). The UVic Centre for Biomedical Research presented this discussion March 16, and the two hours went by rather quick. Normally, at a comic convention, these discussions get one hour to get the point across. Two hours are not that common. To add an appearance of The Joker, Two-Face, and Scarecrow corralling Batman onto center stage only helped set up the night and provide audiences with a bit of entertainment in what the Clown Prince of Crime exclaimed as "Nerds on parade. Boring!"

I was wide awake and soaking as much of the discussion in. The information presented was jam-packed with fact-filled insights into the psychology of Bats, the dilemmas he faces and the punishment he takes as a man in his prime. The comics and movies (mostly Chris Nolan's) are referenced, and a bit of the animated series (where my knowledge comes from) is referred to. Dr. Travis Langley (https://twitter.com/Superherologist?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) (Psychologist at Henderson State University (http://www.hsu.edu/)), Dr. Mark D. White (https://www.psychologytoday.com/experts/mark-d-white-phd) (Philosopher at College of Staten Island (http://www.csi.cuny.edu/)), and Dr. E. Paul Zehr (http://www.zehr.ca/) (Neuroscientist at University of Victoria (http://www.uvic.ca/)) each gave their presentations examining this character. Noted CBC Radio (http://www.cbc.ca/radio/) personality Shelagh Rogers (https://twitter.com/RogersShelagh?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) moderated this panel. She opened the floor for audiences to ask questions and if only this event lasted three hours, I'm sure fans will get more than a general sense of what makes Batman tick.

Ultimately, his portrayal in media throughout the 70 years reflects what was pertinent in society for each decade. Each era had a specific focus. The existential question of what Batman and Joker represent in the mythology can be debated, but all of that depends on who is writing that story and what kind of moral dilemma needs to be solved. Sometimes, that includes what the publisher wants. As an animated product, DC Entertainment (http://www.dcentertainment.com/) wants the continuity to work. I asked about where the television series Gotham (https://twitter.com/Gotham?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) fits in and Langley believes that product is in its own world. Since the show looks at the people around young Bruce Wayne's life instead of focussing on him, this reasoning makes sense.
Victoria (http://www.tourismvictoria.com/), BC is fortunate to get this high-quality show normally reserved for comic book conventions. I hope this team’s presentation will tour. But for those who have missed it, some of the information can be found in book format from each of these professors works. White authored his treatise in what makes Iron Man tick. (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470482184/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470482184&linkCode=as2&tag=wiupgeathm20&linkId=UIFRNR5QCCGE4RO)

Here, I highlighted the major points answered at the end of the lecture and asked afterward. It’s my hope the organizers of this show will develop more nerdy presentations to fill this campus’ Farquhar Auditorium (https://www.uvic.ca/auditorium/).

This lecture could have been a springboard for White’s upcoming book, *Philosopher Reads Marvel Comics’ Civil War*, but he announced last week a sudden change from e-book to hardcover and he promises to keep readers updated to new release dates on his blog (http://www.profmdwhite.com). I picked up Langley’s *Batman and Psychology: A Dark and Stormy Knight* (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1118167651/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1118167651&linkCode=as2&tag=wiupgeathm20&linkId=7OJDZLQYVN6RKLJC) to get autographed because he is a very engaging speaker. White and Zehr are just as phenomenal but in who stole the show is the theatre troupe Launchpad Productions. (http://www.bringingyouthestars.com/) This group reprised their characters from last year’s Arkenham Abbey (https://thecastle.ca/events/arkenham-abbey-4/), which played at Craigdarroch Castle (http://thecastle.ca/). This play looked at the dichotomy of Batman’s growth and to notice this city’s denizens love the character must mean we’re all a little batty.

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