Amanda Potter, "Entry on: Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice by David S. Goyer, Charles Roven, Deborah Snyder , Zack Snyder, Chris Terrio", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/892. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

David S. Goyer , Charles Roven , Deborah Snyder , Zack Snyder , Chris Terrio

Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice

United States (2016)

TAGS: Amazons Gods Icarus Prometheus Zeus



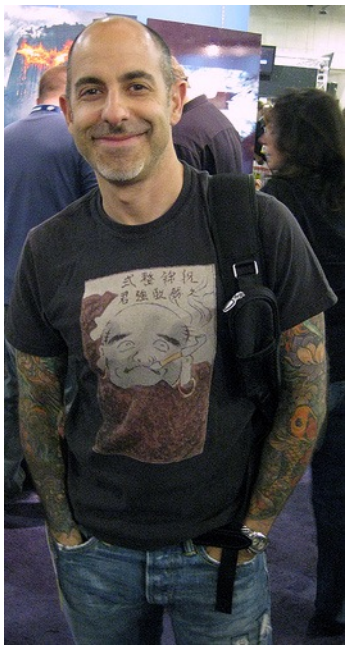


We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice
Studio/Production Company	DC Entertainment, RatPac Entertainment, Atlas Entertainment, Cruel and Unusual Films, Warner Bros. Pictures
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2016
Running time	151 minutes
Date of the First DVD or VHS	DVD: 1 August 2016
Genre	Superhero films
Target Audience	Crossover (Teens and Adults)
Author of the Entry	Amanda Potter, Open University UK, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators

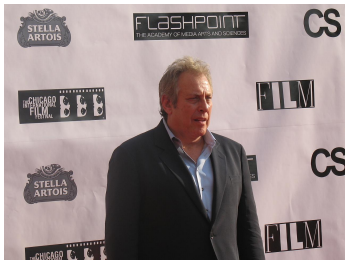


David S. Goyer in 2008, uploaded by RoadTrain. Retrieved from Wikipedia, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 (accessed: January 5, 2022).

David S. Goyer , b. 1965 (Scriptwriter)

David S. Goyer is an American writer and director best known for writing scripts for superhero films, including the *Blade* trilogy (1998–2004), *Batman, The Dark Knight* trilogy (2005–2012), *Man of Steel* (2013) and he co-wrote *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* with Chris Terrio. His television writing includes series based on comic book characters, *Blade* (2006) and *Constantine* (2014–2015), a science fiction series *FlashForwar*d (2009–2010), historical fantasy series based on the life of Leonardo Da Vinci, *Da Vinci's Demons* (2012–2015), and *Krypton* (2018), a series about the events before the birth of Kal-El/Superman that would lead to the destruction of the planet Krypton. Goyer is co-writer for video games *Call of Duty: Black Ops* and *Call of Duty: Black Ops*, and has co-written a series of science fiction novels with Michael Cassutt, *Heaven's Shadow* (2011), *Heaven's War* (2012) and *Heaven's Fall* (2013).

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University UK, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk



Charles Roven in 2008, uploaded by Nerd City. Retrieved from flickr.com, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Charles Roven , b. 1949 (Producer)

Charles Roven is an American film producer. He is best known for producing superhero films including *The Dark Knight* trilogy (2005-2012), *Man of Steel* (2013), *Suicide Squad* (2016) and *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* and *Wonder Woman* (2017). Other films he has produced include fantasy films *The Brothers Grimm* (2005), *Season of the Witch* (2011) and *Warcraft* (2016), and crime films *The Bank Job* (2008) and *American Hustle* (2013).

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

(accessed: January 5, 2022).

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University UK, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk



Deborah Snyder (Producer)

Deborah Snyder (previously surnamed Johnson) is an American film producer. She has worked with her husband Zack Snyder producing a number of films including *Watchmen* (2009), *Sucker Punch* (2011), *Man of Steel* (2013), *300: Rise of an Empire* (2014), *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *Wonder Woman* (2017) and *Justice League* (2017).

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University UK, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk



Zack Snyder by Elen Nivrae. Retrieved from flickr.com, licensed under CC BY 2.0 (accessed: January 5, 2022).

Zack Snyder , b. 1966 (Director)

Zack Snyder is an American film director, producer and screenwriter, and co-founder of production company Cruel and Unusual Films. He directed *Dawn of the Dead* (2014), *300*, based on Frank Miller's comics telling the story of Thermopylae, *Watchmen* (2009), an animated film *Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole* (2010) *Man of Steel* (2013), *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* and *Justice League* (2017). He was co-writer and director of fantasy action film *Sucker Punch* (2011), and was co-writer for *300: Rise of an Empire* (2014) and *Wonder Woman* (2017). He has worked with his wife, Deborah Snyder, on a number of these films.

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University UK, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.



Chris Terrio , b. 1976
(Scriptwriter)

Chris Terrio is an American screenwriter and director. He won an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for the film *Argo*, released in 2012, and based on the rescue of hostages in the US embassy in Tehran in 1979. Terrio co-wrote the screenplay for *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* with David S. Goyer, and co-wrote the follow-up film, *Justice League* (2017). He has also co-written the script for *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (2019).

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University UK,
amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Casting

Ben Affleck – Bruce Wayne/Batman,

Henry Cavill – Clark Kent/Superman,

Gal Gadot – Diana Prince/Wonder Woman,

Amy Adams – Lois Lane,

Jesse Eisenberg – Lex Luthor,

Diane Lane – Martha Kent,

Laurence Fishburne – Perry White,

Jeremy Irons – Alfred Pennyworth,

Holly Hunter – June Finch,

Wallace Keefe – Scoot McNairy.

Summary

Superman (superhero from the planet Krypton is also known as Clark Kent) and General Zod (Superman's adversary, also from Krypton) fight in the sky, causing death and destruction as the high-rise buildings of Metropolis collapse around them. This is witnessed by Bruce Wayne (whose alter ego is Batman) who saves a little girl from the collapsing Wayne Financial Building 18 months later, Kryptonite is found in the Indian Ocean. Millionaire businessman and opponent of Superman, Lex Luthor, has this weaponised as a deterrent against Kryptonians, such as Superman, as Kryptonite deprives them of their super powers, and arranges for this to be shipped to Metropolis.

In the (fictional) country of Nairomi in Africa, Lois Lane, the girlfriend of Clark Kent/Superman is kidnapped when interviewing General Amajagh, regarded by some as a terrorist. Superman saves her, amidst much fighting and loss of life. Lois finds a bullet from Nairomi lodged in her journal. She subsequently finds out that the bullet comes from Lex Corp, Lex Luthor's company, and that her kidnapping was arranged by Lex in order to further discredit Superman, who is already under government scrutiny, with many believing his powers

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

should be controlled.

Bruce Wayne is invited to a party by Lex Luthor, to celebrate Luthor's support of Metropolis library. Clark Kent is also at the party, and Clark and Bruce discuss Batman and Superman, each seeing problems with the other's alter ego operating above the law. Bruce attempts to download data to prove Luther is involved in criminal activity, but his data storage device is stolen by a mysterious woman, who turns out to be Diana Prince/Wonder Woman. She subsequently returns this to Bruce, unable to decrypt the data to find a picture of herself stolen by Lex. Bruce has the drive decrypted and finds information about Diana in a file entitled Metahumans, including a picture of her from 1918. He also finds out about the weaponised Kryptonite being shipped, and as Batman he unsuccessfully attempts to steal it in transit, and consequently gets into a fight with Superman.

Superman attends a government hearing on controlling his powers, and the building is blown up, causing many deaths. Lex Luthor leaves before the bomb goes off. Public opinion against Superman continues to rise as he disappears to his ice cave sanctuary. Meanwhile Lex gets into the Kryptonian chamber, and takes the body of Zod, which he uses with his own blood to create a monster, Doomsday. Martha Kent and Lois Lane are both kidnapped by Lex's henchmen, and Lex throws Lois off a building so that Superman appears and catches her. Lex tells Superman to kill Batman in order to save his mother. He meets Batman in Gotham and tries to explain but Batman won't listen, and uses Kryptonite smoke grenades against Superman. However Batman refrains from killing Superman with a kryptonite-tipped spear when he hears that their mothers share a name, Martha. Batman saves Martha Kent from Lex's mercenaries.

Lex sends Doomsday to defeat Superman, as Batman has been unable to, Superman fights him and Diana sees Superman fighting Doomsday on television as she is just about to leave on a plane, but instead decides to join Superman and Batman in the fight against Doomsday. The government deploy nuclear weapon to kill Doomsday, but he gets stronger with each strike. Batman lures Doomsday to Gotham, and the kryptonite tipped spear. Diana/Wonder Woman appears in costume for the first time and saves Batman from Doomsday. She and Superman fight Doomsday, as Lois tries to retrieve the spear she threw into a pool of water after Superman and Batman fought in Gotham. Superman saves her from drowning and retrieves the spear. Wonder Woman fights Doomsday and restrains him with her Lasso while

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Superman takes the spear. Superman pushes the spear into Doomsday as Doomsday pierces and kills him. Batman and Wonder Woman retrieve his body. Lex is taken to prison. Clark's funeral happens in Smallville with family and friends as an empty coffin for Superman is buried with military honours in Metropolis. Bruce asks Diana to help fight and find the others like her.

Analysis

This is the first live action film to include the character of Diana Prince/Wonder Woman, the female superhero based on the Amazons from Greek mythology (previously the character has only featured on television and in animated films). Her Amazon history is not revealed in the film, and there are no references to Amazonian mythology, but she is introduced in the film as a mysterious character linked with ancient history. Her first meeting with Bruce Wayne is in front of a cabinet that contains 'the sword of Alexander … the blade that cut the Gordian knot'. Bruce tells her 'It's a fake. The real one was sold in 98 on the black market', and 'Now it hangs…' and Diana finishes his sentence 'Over the bed of the Sultan of Hajar'. A historical story, that of Alexander and the Gordian knot, is blended with the story of a fictional character, the Sultan of Hajar, to create an illusion of realism – if the story of the Gordian knot is based on historical fact then it may be possible that other elements of the film are also factual. This episode also signposts to viewers that Diana mixes in elite circles (i.e. both she and the millionaire Bruce have personal information about the fictional Sultan). She also has access to knowledge about the ancient world, which could mean that she is older than she appears, or has studied the ancient world. From the subsequent film, *Wonder Woman* (2017) we find out that Diana is a member of the ancient race of Amazons, and is a curator at the Louvre museum in Paris, and so both belongs in and has an interest in the ancient world.

The other character linked with Greek mythology and ancient history is the villain, Lex Luthor. In his speech to the guests at his party at Metropolis library he says:

> "The word for philanthropist comes from the Greek, meaning a lover of humanity. It was coined about 2500 years ago…… between gods and men. Prometheus went with us and he ruined Zeus' plan to destroy mankind, and for that he was given a thunderbolt."

Lex here is equating himself with Prometheus, champion of

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

humankind against the god-like superhero Superman. This would make him a hero of the people, however erudition, and particularly knowledge of the ancient world, when possessed by rich, white men, can be seen as a marker of villainy in recent popular culture (see Dan Curley's discussion of this development in the television drama *Revenge* (2011–2015). We find that Lex is no Prometheus figure, giving power to the people; he simply wants the power for himself.

At the party we see chefs carrying a model of the Parthenon, either a centrepiece or a cake, again signifying Lex's interest in the ancient world, and that the world of ancient gods is relevant to modern-day Metropolis, where a being with god-like powers exists. Lex also invokes the story of Icarus when he says of the dead Kryptonian Zod 'you flew too close to the sun now look at you'. Zod is a failed god/hero, whose nemesis was not the sun, but Superman, and Lex will use the body of Zod, together with Kryptonian technology, to increase his own power.

Lex is fascinated by the power of gods, personified for him by Superman and other Kryptonians. Lex tells Senator June Finch 'more likely than not these exceptional beings live upon us, the basis of our myths, gods among men upon our little blue planet'. Alfred Pennyworth, Bruce's butler, also links Kryptonians with the power of the gods; he tells Bruce 'men fall from the sky, the gods hurl thunderbolts, innocents die'. Lex could easily be speaking about the Greek pantheon when he expresses his opinion that 'if god is all powerful he cannot be all good, and if god is all good he cannot be all powerful'. When superheroes are at their most dangerous, they are linked with the ancient gods, as they have power over humans, and there is no higher power to control them. Lex aims to gain supporters among others who would see superheroes controlled, like the Senator, but it is Lex himself who creates his own god-like monster, Doomsday. Lex, then, is aiming to be a god himself, through his creation.

In bringing together Batman and Superman Lex says that he is orchestrating 'the greatest gladiator match in the history of the world, god versus man, day versus night', again speaking in terms from the ancient world. The fight between Batman and Superman takes place in a temple-like structure with fallen pillars. At his lowest point Batman drags Superman around on a cord, like Achilles with Hector's body, and is going to use a Kryptonite tipped spear to kill him, choosing an ancient rather than a modern weapon. The ancient world is again invoked as a negative influence. It is the humanity of Bruce

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

and Clark, not their status as superheroes, that brings them together, as they find that their human mothers shared the name Martha. In their hands the pseudo-ancient weapon, the spear, is used to destroy the monster Doomsday, and to defeat the would-be god, Lex. Ancient power, then, can be used for good, in the hands of a hero who is guided by his or her humanity. This film paves the way for Wonder Woman to use powers routed in the ancient world to destroy the Greek god Hades in *Wonder Woman* (2017).

It is unlikely that young viewers will pick up on all the classical allusions in the film, for example the model of the Parthenon is only on screen for a few seconds. However the theme of the power of the gods runs through the film, and young viewers will be encouraged to think about superheroes as modern representations of ancient gods, and how the power of the gods can be used for good or evil.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Amazons Gods Icarus Prometheus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Gender Heroism Superheroes

Further Reading

Aperlo, Peter, *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice: The Art of the Film*, London: Titan, 2016.

Bergstrom, Signe, *Wonder Woman: Ambassador of Truth*, New York: HarperCollins, 2017.

Curly, Dan , "“Benefits of a Classical Education” : Classics, Identity and Revenge", *New Voices in Classical Reception Studies,* 2019, forthcoming.

Potter, Amanda, "Feminist heroines for our times: Screening the

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of “Artes Liberales” of the University of Warsaw.

Amazon Warrior in *Wonder Woman* (1975–1979), *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1996-2001) and *Wonder Woman* (2017)", *Thersites* 7 (2018): 30–57.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.