Batman and Robin are homosexuals?

More has been printed on the subject of homosexuality than any other sexual phenomenon. This would indicate not only a preoccupation with the subject, but also that our understanding of it is still incomplete.

Comic books, like other books, can be read at different levels with different people getting out of them different things. That does not depend only on differences in age, it is affected also by more subtle factors of consititution, experience, inclination and unconscious susceptibilities. To determine them, Dr. Frederic Wertham, a child psychologist interested in the causes of juvenile delinquency, let children draw, write and make up stories; studied their dreams and asked them directly or in playroom observation what they got out of these stories, what they dislike, and how they thought the stories would affect other children—especially younger ones.

Many pre-adolescent boys pass through a phase of disdain for girls. Some comic books tend to fix that attitude and instill the idea that girls are good only for being banged around or used as decoys. A homoerotic attitude is also suggested by the presentation of masculine, bad, or witch-like women. In such comics, women are depicted in a definitely anti-erotic light, while the young male heroes have pronounced erotic overtones. The muscular male supertype, whose primary sex characteristics are usually well emphasized, is, in the setting of certain stories, the object of homoerotic sexual curiousity and stimulation. This is increased by the male "art nudes" featured in art book advertisements that have appeared in millions of comics.

In a 1954 issue of a popular comic there was on the back cover a full-page colored picture. It showed a stalwart youth, nude except for a "well-filled loin cloth." No young man or adolescent in the upper age groups whom Wertham asked to describe the picture in one word used any expression except for "fairy."

Many adolescents go through periods of vague fears that they might be homosexual. Such fear may become a source of great mental anguish and these boys usually have no one in whom they feel they can confide . In a number of cases, Wertham found this sequence of events: At an early age these boys become addicted to the homo-erotically tinged type of comic book. During and after comic book reading they indulged in fantasies which became severely repressed. Life experiences, either those

drawing their attention to the great taboo on homosexuality or just the opposite - experiences providing any kind of temptation - raise feelings of doubt, guilt, shame, sexual malorientation.

The term "pederasty" does not mean - as is often erroneously believed - a crude physical relationship between men. It comes from the Greek word "pais" meaning a youth or boy, which is also the root of such words as pedogogy. Pederasty means the erotic relationship between a young man and a young boy.

Over 20 years ago, a California psychologist pointed out that the Batman stories, published by D.C. Comics in New York City, are psychologically homosexual. Our researches confirm this entirely. Only someone ignorant of the fundamentals of psychiatry and of the psychopathology of sex can fail to realize a subtle atmosphere of homoeroticism which pervades the adventures of the mature "Batman" and his young friend "Robin". Male and female homo-erotic overtones are present also in some science-fiction, jungle, and other comic books.

Just as ordinary crime comic books contribute to the fixation of violent and hostile patterns by suggesting definite forms for their expression, so the Batman type of story helps to fixate homoerotic tendencies by suggesting the form of an adolescent-with-adult or Ganymede-Zeus type of love relationship.

In the Batman type of comic book such a relationship is depicted to children before they can even read, and Batman, although the first of the boy sidekick comics was not the last, set a trend for boy sidekicks followed by Captain America and Bucky; Green Arrow and Speedy; Captain Marvel and Captain Marvel Jr.; Flash and Kid Flash, and literally hundreds of others.

Batman and Robin, the "dynamic duo", also known as the "daring duo," go into action in their special uniforms. They constantly rescue each other from violent attacks by an unending number of enemies. The feeling is conveyed that men must stidk together because there are so many villianous creatures who have to be exterminated. They lurk not only under every bed but also behind every star in the sky. Either Batman or his young boyfriend or both are captured, threatened with every imaginable weapon, almost blown to bits, almost crushed to death, almost annihilated. Sometimes Batman ends up in bed injured and young Robin is shown sitting next to him. At home they lead an idyllic life. Their true identities are Bruce Wayne and "Dick" Grayson. Bruce Wayne is described as a "socialite" and the official relationship is that Dick is Bruce's ward. They live in sumptuous quarters, with beautiful flowers in large vases, and have a butler, Alfred. Batman (Bruce) is sometimes shown in a dressing gown. As they sit by the fireplace the young boy sometimes worries about his partner: "Something's wrong with Bruce. He hasn't been himself these past few days." According to Wertham, it is like a wish dream of two homosexuals living together. Sometimes they are shown on a couch, Bruce reclining and Dick sitting next to him, jacket off, collar open, and his hand on his friend's arm. Like the girls in other stories, Robin is sometimes held captive by the illains and Batman has to give in or "Robin gets snuffed."

Robin is a handsome ephebic boy, usually shown in his uniform with bare legs. He is buoyant with energy and devoted to nothing on earth or in interplanetary space as much as to Bruce Wayne. He often stands with his legs spread, the genital neg: on discreetly evident.

In these stories there are practically no decent, attractive, successful women. A typical female character is the Catwoman, who is vicious and uses a whip. The atmosphere is homosexual and anti-feminine. If the girl is good looking she is undoubtedly the villainess. If she is after Bruce Wayne, she will have no chance against Dick. For instance, Bruce and Dick go out one evening in dinner clothes, dressed exactly alike. The attractive girl makes up to Bruce while in successive pictures young Dick looks on smiling, sure of Bruce. Violence is not lacking in these stories. Many times the reader is shown Batman and Robin standing in a room with rows of corpses and unconscious foes on the floor. Violence has always played a large part in the Batman stories. Batman is portrayed as a vengeful presence terrifying his enemies before beating the daylights out of them. Was this to prove that he was as masculine as anyone else, if not more so? It may be of note that in the late sixties and early seventies when Robin left Batman to enter college, Batman became far more violent and the comic stories and artwook took on a darker, moodier tone. This was mainly under the tutelage of writer, Denny O'Neil and artists, Neal Adams and Dick Giordano, all of whom are now considered

continued
on next page

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