

"greats" in the comic book field. Was Batman's becoming more violent a subconscious reaction to being apart from Robin for extended periods of time?

In a study of over a thousand homosexual cases at the Quaker Emergency Service Readjustment Center in the United States, Wertham found that the arousal of homosexual fantasies, the translation of fantasies into fact and the transition from episodic homosexual experiences to a confirmed fixation of the pattern may be due to all sorts of accidental factors. The Batman type of story may stimulate children to homosexual fantasies, of the nature of which they may be unconscious. In adolescents who realize it, the stories may give added stimulation and reinforcement.

In many adolescents the homoerotic, anti-feminist trend unconsciously aroused or fostered by these stories is demonstrable. Wertham and his associates inquired about Batman from overt homosexuals treated at the Readjustment Centre, to find out what they thought the influence of these Batman stories was on children and adolescents. A number of them knew these stories very well and spoke of them as their favorite reading. The reply of one intelligent, educated young homosexual was typical: "I don't think that they would do any harm sex-

ually. But they would ruin their morals.

One young homosexual during psychotherapy brought Dr. Wertham a copy of "Detective Comics," with a Batman story. He pointed out a picture of "The Home of Bruce and Dick" a house beautifully landscaped, warmly lighted and showing the devoted pair side by side, looking out a picture window. When he was eight this boy had realized from fantasies about comic-book pictures that he was aroused by men. At the age of ten or eleven, "I found my liking, my sexual desires, in comic books. I think I put myself in the position of Robin. I did want to have relations with Batman. The only suggestion of homosexuality may be that they seem to be so close to each other. I remember the first time I came across the page mentioning the 'secret bat cave.' The thought of Batman and Robin living together and possibly having sex relations came to my mind. You can almost connect yourself with the people. I was put in the position of the rescued rather than the rescuer. I felt I'd like to be loved by someone like Batman or Superman."

A boy of thirteen was treated by Wertham in the Clinic while he was on several years' probation. He and a companion had forced a boy of eight, threatening him with a knife, to undress and carry out

sexual practices with them. Like many other homoerotically inclined children, he was a special devotee of Batman: "Sometimes I read them over and over again. They show off a lot. I don't remember Batman's name, but the boy's name is Robin. They live together. It could be that Batman did something with Robin like I did with the younger boy...Robin looks something like a girl. He has only trunks on."

The lesbian counterpart of Batman may be found in the stories of Wonder Woman. The homosexual connotation of the Wonder Woman type of story is psychologically unmistakable. The "Psychiatric Quarterly" deplored in an editorial the "appearance of an eminent child therapist (Dr. Wm. Moulton) as the implied endorser of a series...which portrays extremely sadistic hatred of all males in a framework that is plainly lesbian."

For boys, Wonder Woman is a frightening image. For girls she is a morbid ideal. Where Batman is anti-feminine, the attractive Wonder Woman and her counterparts are definitely anti-masculine. Wonder Woman has her own female following. They are all continuously being threatened,

captured and almost put to death. There is a great deal of mutual rescuing, the same types of rescue fantasies as in Batman. Her followers are the "Holliday girls", i.e. the holiday girls, the gay party girls, the gay girls. Wonder Woman refers to them as "my girls." In a typical story, Wonder

Woman is involved in adventures with a princess, who talks repeatedly about "those wicked men." -compiled from the late Dr. Frederic Wertham's book, *The Seduction of the Innocent*, and original writings by Calum Johnston, News Editor, on the subject.



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