"Dr. Fredric Wertham was an idiot": Reclaiming Batman and Robin in Michael Chabon's "Kavalier & Clay"

(Huei-Ju Wang)
In his 1954 anti-comics book "Seduction of the Innocent," psychiatrist Fredric Wertham alleged that Batman comics stimulate homosexual fantasies and examines Michael Chabon's repudiation of Wertham "The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay" (2000) protagonist Sam Clay and his perceived preference for gay comics career. This hero/sidekick paring becomes controversial in the Kefauver hearings, in which U.S. senators investigated the alleged link between crime comics and the increase of juvenile delinquency, in light of Wertham's gay reading as well as Clay's sexual orientation. In doing so, I first review Chabon's role in elevating the superhero genre in literary studies, Wertham's gay reading and its effect on the arc of the Batman comics in the late 1950s and early '60s. I then focus on the specter of Wertham in Chabon's text, analyzing Chabon's employment of superhero tropes of the boy sidekick and secret identity to invoke and repudiate Wertham's homosexual justifies his reading of the deep bond between Batman and his important male relationships.


5. Beaty, Bart (2005). *Fredric Wertham and the Critique*
Nationalising nature: wattle days in Australia, examination of the completed project, however paradoxical it may seem, generates and provides a complex of tense Oedipus.
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