Bad Boys and Binaries: Mary Harker on Diana Wieler’s *Bad Boy*

Perry Nodelman

Abstract

Résumé: Dans le présent article, P. Nodelman conteste les conclusions que Mary Harker propose dans son analyse du roman *Bad Boy* de Diana Wieler, parue dans la revue *CCL*. D’une part, l’auteur concède que le comportement du héros, A.J., s’inscrit en faux centre les stéréotypes de l’hétérosexualité; d’autre part, il démontre que le second personnage principal, Tully, conforte la vision traditionnelle de l’homosexualité masculine. Sous des apparences contestataires et modernistes, le roman respecte les dichotomies de la morale occidentale et sanctionne la représentation classique de l’homosexualité masculine.

Summary: A response to an earlier *CCL* article, Mary Harker’s “Tweaking the Canon: Diana Wieler’s *Bad Boy,*” this article challenges the idea that Wieler succeeded in her attempt to "contest the dominant, monologic male discourse of the Bad Boy tradition." While *Bad Boy* challenges conventional ideas about heterosexual masculinity in its portrayal of one of its central characters, A.J., it seems to confirm other conventional ideas—ones about homosexual masculinity—in terms of its portrayal of its other central character, Tully. Wieler's choice of counterpointing Tully's story with A.J.'s in a surprisingly intricate and detailed way ends up implying that homosexual behaviour is always other than and opposite to heterosexual behaviour, in just about every way imaginable. In indulging in this kind of traditional thinking by means of binary oppositions, the novel supports many stereotypical (and surely inaccurate) ideas about the meaning and nature of male homosexuality—stereotypes that are unfortunately still all too current in our culture.

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Bad Boy by Walter Dean Myers

summary? Bad Boy is basically about a little boy named Walter, who had speech problems and behaved badly in school. Walter knew that he would get a beating from his mom if he got red marks on his report card, yet he never changed his ways. Throughout his life he met at least three teachers that encouraged him. Walter was a foster child later in the story around the second or third chapter he met his biological father. He also met his step mom, half siblings, and whole siblings. These are people in his life that he never suspected to meet in his life. Diana J. Wieler has written: ‘Bad boy’ — subject(s): Hockey, Juvenile fiction, Sexual behavior, Young adults ‘Last chance summer’ ‘Ran van the Defender’ — subject(s): Juvenile fiction, Teenage boys. Diana Wieler was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1961. She moved to Calgary as a teenager and, after high school, took the Television, Stage, and Radio Ar... Diana’s most recent works include Last Chance Summer (Western Producer, Parie Books), a winner of the Ebel Memorial Reward; Bad Boy is the winner of the Governor General’s Literary Reward for Children’s Literature in 1989 and the Ruth Schwartz Foundation Reward for Excellence, the Canadian Library Association for Young Adult Book of the Year in 1990 and also optioned for. Canadian Film Rights; Ran Van the Defender, which won the Mr. Christie’s Book Award; and Ran Van: A Worthy Opponent, which were published by Groundwood Books.