



From Bad Boys to New Men?: Masculinity, Sexuality and Violence in the Work of Éric Jourdan (Modern French Identities)

Owen Heathcote

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This book is the first critical survey of the work of Éric Jourdan. Jourdan first came to public attention as a schoolboy in 1955, when he published *Les Mauvais anges*, a sulphurous novel of adolescent male-to-male love, which was banned by the censors in 1956 and again in 1974. It did not officially appear until 1984. Despite the ban, and despite ongoing censorship, Jourdan continues to write novels, short stories and plays. His many books include the 'trilogy' *Charité*, *Révolte* and *Sang*, and other equally uninhibited texts such as *Le Garçon de joie*, *Aux gémonies* and *Le Jeune soldat*. More recent publications include short stories, historical novels (*Sans lois ni dieux*, *Lieutenant Darmancour*) and the more autobiographical text *Trois cœurs*.

This study charts Jourdan's writing career from *Les Mauvais anges* to the present day, situating his work in the context of writers from Peyrefitte and Montherlant to Guibert, Dustan and Guyotat. The analysis concentrates on three main themes: boyhood and masculinity; sex and (homo)sexuality; and violence and death. Throughout, a number of questions are paramount. What is the connection between masculinity and violence? How does Jourdan reconcile *joie de vivre* with pain and punishment? Do his young male protagonists progress from bad boys to new men? In what ways can his texts be seen as homoerotic, homosexual, gay or queer? What, ultimately, is the connection between sex, sexuality and writing in Jourdan?

The book includes detailed bibliographies of Jourdan's works and, for the first time since its original, controversial publication in *Arcadie*, his short story 'Le Troisième but'.

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