



Subtextual Analysis through Hegelian Dialectics in 5 Seconds of Summer's Good Girls

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Abstract

This article investigates patterns of Hegelian Dialectics in 5 Seconds of Summer's song lyrics entitled Good Girl. The background of this study lies on such stereotypes whether new literary works may still contain philosophical ideas. The research question of this paper is whether 5 Seconds of Summer's song lyrics entitled Good Girl can be analyzed through Hegelian Dialectics. Through qualitative method, this paper shows how the situation of the girl is covered by old and new knowledge in the scheme of thesis-antithesis-synthesis as theorized by G. W. F. Hegel. This approach emphasizes how traditional and modern understandings interact, highlighting how dynamic identity building is. Using explorative approach, the components of the song lyrics are discussed through subtextual understandings that Hegelian Dialectics may erode such stereotype and later shape another stigma as well. It is analyzed that the girl lives the stigma that a good girl is a nerd and should not have fun outside the house. The song lyrics then accentuate that a smart girl could also be a bad girl and it indeed breaks the stigma of a clever girl is always a good girl. In conclusion, the song lyrics show how ideas of a good and a bad girl are not that simple since those reflect complex situation between common, social, and even academic norms. By stating so, the novelty of this article is evident; such new literary works may still always contain certain philosophical presuppositions.

Keywords: 5 Seconds of Summer; Good Girls; Hegelian Dialectics; Stereotype; Stigma.

Abstrak

Artikel ini menyelidiki pola Dialektika Hegel dalam lirik lagu 5 Seconds of Summer berjudul Good Girl. Latar belakang penelitian ini terletak pada stereotip apakah karya sastra baru masih mengandung ide-ide filosofis. Pertanyaan penelitian dalam makalah ini adalah apakah lirik lagu 5 Seconds of Summer yang berjudul Good Girl dapat dianalisis melalui Dialektika Hegel. Melalui metode kualitatif, tulisan ini menunjukkan bagaimana situasi gadis itu dibentuk oleh pengetahuan lama dan baru dalam skema tesis-antitesis-sintesis oleh G. W. F. Hegel. Pendekatan ini menekankan interaksi pemahaman tradisional dan modern dan menyoroti betapa dinamisnya pembentukan identitas. Melalui pendekatan eksploratif, komponen-komponen lirik lagu tersebut dibahas melalui pemahaman subtekstual bahwa Dialektika Hegel dapat mengikis stereotip dan membentuk stigma lain juga. Dianalisis bahwa gadis itu menjalani stigma bahwa gadis baik adalah kutu buku dan tidak boleh

bersenang-senang di luar rumah. Lirik lagu tersebut kemudian menonjolkan bahwa gadis yang cerdas juga bisa menjadi gadis yang buruk dan itu mematahkan stigma bahwa gadis pandai selalu adalah gadis yang baik. Sebagai kesimpulan, lirik lagu tersebut menunjukkan gagasan tentang gadis yang baik dan gadis yang buruk tidaklah sesederhana itu karena keduanya mencerminkan situasi kompleks antara norma-norma umum, sosial, dan akademis. Dengan demikian, kebaruan artikel ini menjadi jelas; karya sastra baru masih selalu dimungkinkan untuk mengandung praanggapan filosofis tertentu.

Kata-kata Kunci: *5 Seconds of Summer; Dialektika Hegel; Good Girls; Stereotipe; Stigma.*

INTRODUCTION

The posture of a song in literary studies is quite open. On a hand, the perception of the melodies in a song show such prolonging contribution to the state of art. There is harmony and processed patterns in a song that could be recognized as art.¹ The music elevates the artistic complexity, while the lyrics delve into literary studies, reflecting everyday life through layered meaning. At times, the songs can be challenging due to uncommon vocabulary or abstract concepts.

A song is considered a literary work through its written ideas, extending beyond its form to a deeper embodiment of meaning. The interplay between melody and lyrics enriches the experience, as both elements complement each other to explore the song's themes more profoundly.² This is what makes a song lyric interesting and crucial enough to be underlined as matter of literary work. A song could be in distance from human beings but at the same time is well embraced by the creatures in its daily routine.³

Besides, there is a conception that old or even ancient science, especially on matter of philosophy, is actually outdated. However, such a perspective fails to recognize the enduring relevance of philosophical inquiry.⁴ This paper aims to challenge that view by emphasizing that modern philosophy remains relevant in today's world. Many everyday problems persist, including ongoing tensions in binary oppositions like good and bad, right and wrong, and other contested hierarchies.

¹ Rommel Utungga Pasopati, Cahyaningsih Pujimahanani, dan Adinda Putri, "The Significance of Phallocentrism as Illustrated on Grace Paley's Wants," *ELTALL: English Language Teaching, Applied Linguistic and Literature* 5, no. 1 (2024): 64–76, <https://jurnal.iainponorogo.ac.id/index.php/eltall/article/view/5716>.

² Jc Beall dan Elena Ficara, "Hegelian Conjunction, Hegelian Contradiction," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 44, no. 2 (2023): 119–131, <https://philpapers.org/rec/BEAHCH>.

³ Angelica Nuzzo, "Method in Hegel's Dialectic-Speculative Logic," in *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook* (Springer Nature Link, 2020), 151–166, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-26597-7_8#citeas.

⁴ Peter Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow A Report on the New Post Modern World*, Edisi 1. (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Moreover, these problems persist despite changes in form or appearance, reflecting the idea of “new bottle, old wine.” In many artistic works, while the surface evolves with time, core issues like justice, love, freedom, self-esteem, and truth remain central.⁵ The enduring nature of human problems reveals that literary works engage deeply with the complexities of identity. They reflect not isolated instances, but interconnected networks and diverse interpretations of intertwined human experiences.

This article explores subtextual elements of Hegelian Dialectics within the song *Good Girls* by 5 Seconds of Summer. Despite a 200-year gap between Hegel's 19th-century philosophy and the song's 2014 release, the lyrics reflect dialectical patterns, even if unintentionally.⁶ This connection highlights the notion that universal problems are ageless and open to examination from both contemporary and conventional perspectives. It demonstrates how some of the world's issues persist and can be explained by outdated or even outdated understanding.

This article seeks to answer how Hegelian Dialectics can be highlighted in 5 Seconds of Summer's *Good Girls*. It uncovers the song's thesis-antithesis-synthesis structure and examines the positive and negative impacts of these patterns, showing how knowledge is fluid, constantly evolving through interpretation and blending old, new, and contested ideas.⁷

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore and interpret the thematic and philosophical dimensions of the song “Good Girls” by 5 Seconds of Summer. The research is conducted through an explorative approach, primarily based on secondary data sources such as scholarly books and academic journals.⁸ These texts serve as a foundation for contextualizing the lyrical content within broader theoretical frameworks. The central aim of this research is to investigate how the song reflects or challenges certain social constructs, particularly in relation to gender, behavior, and societal expectations. To facilitate a deeper understanding, the study draws upon Hegelian Dialectics, a philosophical

⁵ Emmanuel Ofuasia, “On the Distinction between Friedrich Hegel's Dialectics and the Logic of Conversational Thinking,” *Arumaruka: Journal of Conversational Thinking* 1, no. 1 (2021): 46–62, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajct/article/view/221115>.

⁶ 5 Seconds of Summer, “Good Girls,” *Fandom*, last modified 2014, [https://5sos.fandom.com/wiki/Good_Girls_\(song\)](https://5sos.fandom.com/wiki/Good_Girls_(song)).

⁷ Sean Sayers, “The Rational Kernel of Hegel's Dialectic,” *International Critical Thought* 12, no. 2 (2022): 327–336, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/21598282.2022.2054000?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.

⁸ John Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Edisi 4. (Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE Publications, 2014).

framework developed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, as a lens through which the contradictions and tensions within the lyrics can be interpreted.

The data collection technique used in this study is documentation, specifically focusing on the systematic gathering and categorization of the song's lyrics.⁹ These lyrics are analyzed based on recurring patterns, thematic content, and contextual relevance, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the song's implicit and explicit messages. Documentation as a method allows for detailed textual analysis, which is crucial in qualitative research that seeks to uncover latent meanings and ideological underpinnings.

For data analysis, the study adopts content analysis as its primary strategy.¹⁰ This includes several methodological steps: identifying and selecting relevant data sources, engaging in close and repeated readings of the text, making critical comparisons between the song's content and broader cultural or theoretical issues, extracting significant quotations, and incorporating them appropriately into the analysis. All referenced materials are meticulously documented in a reference list to ensure academic rigor and transparency.

Through this approach, the research not only aims to dissect the lyrical content of "Good Girls" but also to situate it within a wider discourse of philosophical and sociological inquiry. By applying Hegelian Dialectics, the study seeks to unveil the dynamic interplay between opposing ideas, such as conformity versus rebellion or innocence versus experience, thereby highlighting the dialectical nature of identity and moral judgment as portrayed in popular music.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Shift of Meanings of Good Girls in *Good Girls*

As explained above, a song is not merely about melodies, but also what the lyrics speak to the audience. In this case, recent trends on song is usually related to certain genres being supported by the artists.¹¹ This analysis supports the idea that everyday life is marked by tensions between individual and societal conflicts. The song reflects this reality by capturing various dialogical aspects of the human condition, though it cannot fully encompass the entire human experience.

⁹ Hamed Taherdoost, "What are Different Research Approaches? Comprehensive Review of Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Research, Their Applications, Types, and Limitations," *Journal of Management Science & Engineering Research* 5, no. 1 (2022): 53–63, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4178694.

¹⁰ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2018).

¹¹ Beall dan Elena Ficara, "Hegelian Conjunction, Hegelian Contradiction."

The band of 5 Seconds of Summer or abbreviated as 5SOS comes from Sydney, Australia. Formed in 2011, this band brings in pop-punk music alongside with its ear-catching lyrics. It's easy-listening is their power to attract the audience that has shaped such loyal fans until now.¹² Starting as YouTube celebrities, the band gained global attention with their self-titled debut album in 2014, introducing a fresh wave of pop-punk. Their ongoing success is largely driven by the passionate 5SOSFam, whose support through social media and live events has helped the band achieve sold-out tours and numerous awards.

One of 5SOS' song is entitled *Good Girls*. This song is stated on the first album and was released as the 4th single of the album. The lyrics of the song is interesting since it tell's about realities of teenagers with their teenage problems.¹³ The song describes girls who appear polite and well-behaved at home but act wild outside, often outsmarting their parents, siblings, and teachers. Overall, *Good Girls* challenges societal stereotypes by questioning the binary of 'good' versus 'bad' girls and criticizing the unfair expectations placed on young women. The full lyrics of the song are listed below:

[Verse 1]

*She's a good girl, she's daddy's favorite
He's saved for Harvard (He knows she'll make it)
She's good at school, she's never truant
She can speak French (I think she's fluent)
'Cause every night she studies hard in her room
At least that's what her parents assume
But she sneaks out the window to meet with her boyfriend
Here's what she told me the time that I caught 'em*

[Chorus]

*She said to me, "Forget what you thought
'Cause good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught
So just turn around and forget what you saw
'Cause good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught"*

[Verse 2]

*Well, she's a good girl, a straight A-student
She's really into all that self-improvement
I swear she lives in that library
But if you ask her she'll say ("That's where you'll find me")
But if you look, then you won't find her there
She may be clever, but she just acts too square
'Cause in the back of the room, where nobody looks (Nobody looks)
She'll be with her boyfriend (She's not reading books)*

¹² Kirsten Maree, "Single Review: 5 Seconds Of Summer – 'Good Girls,'" *Renowned for Sound*, last modified 2020, <https://renownedforsound.com/single-review-5-seconds-of-summer-good-girls/>.

¹³ 5 Seconds of Summer, "Good Girls."

[Chorus]

[Post-Chorus 1]

Do it, do-do it, d-do, do-do-do-do-do
Good girls are bad girls and good girls are bad girls

[Bridge]

She's a good girl (She's a good girl)
Hasn't been caught (She's a good girl)
She's a good girl (She's a good girl)
Hasn't been caught

[Chorus]

[Post-Chorus 2]

Woah
*Good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught*¹⁴

The most interesting parts of the song's lyrics are in Verse 1, Verse 2, and the Chorus, which reveal how the idea of "good girls" contrasts between assumptions and reality. The label "good girls" is often given to those who conform to structures like family and school without question.¹⁵ The good girls are spoken as those who stay at home and never do anything out of common social norms. Moreover, the good girls are considered smart and diligent, and even many times are considered as nerds.

Verse 1 depicts a 'good girl' as innocent and obedient, contrasting her public image with her true behavior revealed in Verse 2. The lyric "She's a good girl, a straight-A student" challenges the assumption that academic success equals good behavior, highlighting that girls can be just as wild as anyone else. The chorus, with "Good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught," underscores the irony and shows how societal labels are misleading, masking the rebellious reality beneath.¹⁶ This song necessarily captures the shifting meanings of good girls. Furthermore, the shift or the change is quite related to how knowledge is shaped from being a concept that is facing its negation and shapes new meanings. The lyrics are distinct reflection of Hegelian Dialectics in his scheme of theses-antithesis-synthesis.

¹⁴ Maree, "Single Review: 5 Seconds Of Summer – 'Good Girls.'"

¹⁵ 5 Seconds of Summer, "Good Girls."

¹⁶ Simon Briole, "Are Girls Always Good for Boys? Short and Long Term Effects of School Peers' Gender," *Economics of Education Review* 84 (2021): 102–150, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272775721000698>.

Dialectics and Its Relations to Old and New Knowledge

The term “dialectic” originates from the Greek word *dialektike*, which refers to a practical method involved in shaping knowledge. Thus, dialectics is not knowledge itself but a technique or epistemic approach used to discover knowledge.¹⁷ Dialectics then is stated as a way to find knowledge. In wider condition, the word is developed into such critical examination in the way of asking as inscribed in philosophical traits.

Dialectics formally underpins human knowledge by applying common-sense logic within rhetorical discussions to shape truth from diverse opinions. This technique, popularized by Socrates and later developed by Plato and Aristotle, has long been used to explore and refine understanding.¹⁸ Then, it slowly changes into such certainty of metaphysics by Hegel and being extended into material discourse in the following era. Nowadays, dialectics works more dialogical to show how conversations among themes are shown in its particular possibilities.

In philosophy, dialectics resembles logic by creating tension between opposing arguments, often expressed through binary oppositions. According to Karl Marx, dialectics drives progress by evolving through contradictions, even including fallacies.¹⁹ It shows how things changed in patterns. It may not be predictable, but the ones who make changes of it is quite certain for the material of humans' conditions.

On a hand, it is being materialized since its situation is about human beings after all. No knowledge is totally for its own essence but being useful only for the survivals points of those ultimate creatures. Its certainty is about being conversed in everyday life. On the other hand, dialectics plays on art of reasoning among various probabilities.²⁰ In this view, all knowledge must be grounded in metaphysical understanding, providing a stable and uncontested foundation. Hegel sees dialectics as a progression of knowledge through phases, moving from lower to higher levels toward an ultimate truth that explains how history unfolds.

According to Hegel, dialectics consists of three main stages: the thesis, where a person recognizes a knowledge or fact; and the antithesis, which is an opposing fact or

¹⁷ Kusuma Wijaya et al., “Paradox of Freedom as Elucidated in Avenged Sevenfold's M.I.A.,” *Pioneer: Journal of Language and Literature* 16, no. 2 (2024): 166–180, <https://unars.ac.id/ojs/index.php/pioneer/article/view/4320>.

¹⁸ Nick Shannon, Michael F. Mascolo, dan Anastasia Belolutskaia, *The Routledge International Handbook of Dialectical Thinking*, Edisi 1. (New York: Routledge, 2025).

¹⁹ Simon Nørgaard Iversen, “Norm Critique and the Dialectics of Hegelian Recognition,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 58, no. 6 (2024): 869–894, <https://philpapers.org/rec/IVENCA>.

²⁰ Deng Xiaomang, *A New Exploration of Hegel's Dialectics III The Three-Dimensional Structure* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

knowledge that challenges the thesis.²¹ The final stage is synthesis, where new knowledge arises by combining the thesis and antithesis. This synthesis is distinct from both original stages, creating something new based on their shared foundation.

The core of dialectics lies in synthesis, which generates new knowledge that builds on previous ideas. Here, synthesis creates a new space for understanding by reconciling the thesis and antithesis, where the thesis can advance if applied well, while the antithesis challenges it by confronting the realities of everyday life.²² Synthesis shapes new values that may discard previous aspects, thus bringing new consequences. Hegel's main focus is that synthesis continuously moves forward, uncovering definite aspects within various indefinite ones.

As synthesis keeps moving forward, its main idea is about progress. That is the way of romanticism that reflects further modern value in Hegelian sense. Synthesis will always keep going forward by leaving both thesis and antithesis behind.²³ Antithesis is temporary, arising only to challenge the thesis, while synthesis progresses beyond both, eventually leaving them behind. Thus, dialectics involves a complex process where ideas are understood, known, and eventually forgotten as new knowledge emerges.

Hegelian dialectics can generate new knowledge but also has side effects. Not all synthesis is neutral; often, it reflects power dynamics and can dissolve old knowledge, leading to complex everyday issues.²⁴ Second, using synthesis to create universal knowledge should be avoided, as it can erase diverse and specific meanings by trying to encompass everything. Third, synthesis can never fully deny particularities, which persist and challenge civilizations through everyday anomalies, operating more through subtle, everyday realities than grand ideas.

Fourth, synthesis can create new stigmas when forced ideas become part of the new knowledge. Because antithesis may offer only universal falsifications, synthesis can be arbitrary and lead to knowledge that, while universal, might dehumanize people in its

²¹ Giovanna Luciano, "Critique and Speculation: Reconsidering Hegel's Early Dialectical Logic," *Cambridge University Press* 44, no. 2 (2022): 251–274, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/hegel-bulletin/article/critique-and-speculation-reconsidering-hegels-early-dialectical-logic/F99DA90947679B9AF0B08507BB7E82E3>.

²² Ewa Majewska dan Bartosz Wójcik, "The Return of Hegel: History, Dialectics and the Weak: Introduction," *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 43, no. 1 (2022): 9–18, <https://wuwr.pl/prt/article/view/14248>.

²³ Xiaomang, *A New Exploration of Hegel's Dialectics III The Three-Dimensional Structure*.

²⁴ Andrew Werner, "Hegel's Dialectical Method: A Response to the Modification View," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 50, no. 6 (2020): 767–784, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/canadian-journal-of-philosophy/article/abs/hegels-dialectical-method-a-response-to-the-modification-view/30C8EF2C468357252FA881DC8B258332>.

application.²⁵ Fifth, synthesis cannot easily erase cultural models, as people live by everyday clichés and enduring societal myths that resist change. Sixth, new knowledge may emerge but never fully fulfills promises, as unexpected realities remain beyond dialectics' control, making the progress of knowledge complex and uncertain.

Furthermore, this criticism is consistent with a postmodern perspective that challenges the absolute basis of synthesis. According to this viewpoint, the search for universal truths frequently ignores the various context-specific facts that influence knowledge.²⁶ The postmodern perspective highlights that power dynamics are inherent in every synthesis, influencing which voices are validated and which are marginalized. Thus, valuing diverse perspectives alongside synthesis allows for a richer, more complex understanding of knowledge that rejects simplistic, reductionist narratives.

Good Girls in Continuance of Hegelian Dialectics

The song *Good Girls* by 5 Seconds of Summer (2014) can be examined through the lens of Hegelian dialectics, highlighting the tension between appearance and reality. Written collaboratively by band members and external songwriters, the lyrics portray a teenage girl who outwardly conforms to parental and societal expectations of virtue and studiousness. However, the narrative reveals a hidden contradiction as she secretly defies these norms by sneaking out to meet her boyfriend, embodying the dialectical conflict between imposed identity and authentic desire.²⁷ So, when the singer caught the girl, the girl said to forget all assumptions about good girls because actually good girls are bad girls that have not been caught.

The lyrics illustrate a dialectical tension where the girl's identity is constructed through the assumptions embedded in her subtextual behaviors rather than her intrinsic self. Thus, her essence is defined by the dichotomy of being perceived as good or bad, emphasizing the primacy of external knowledge over her authentic existence.²⁸ Through that sense, the subtextual assumptions are not singular either since those also include social, parental, and even academic points of the girl.

²⁵ Shannon, Michael F. Mascolo, dan Anastasia Belolutskaia, *The Routledge International Handbook of Dialectical Thinking*.

²⁶ Nuzzo, "Method in Hegel's Dialectic-Speculative Logic."

²⁷ 5 Seconds of Summer, "Good Girls."

²⁸ Kiran Vinod Bhatia, Payal Arora, dan Manisha Pathak-Shelat, "Good Girls Don't Go Online: Unpacking the Quotidian Playful Resilience Influencing Girls' Social and Digital Engagements," *International Journal of Communication* 15 (2021): 4755–4773, <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/17552>.

*Doo, doo-doo
D-d-d-doo-doo-doo-doo
She's a good girl, she's daddy's favorite
He saved for Harvard (he knows she'll make it)
She's good at school, she's never truant
She can speak French (I think she's fluent)*

The first stanza above indicates such background or basic assumption of the singer that this girl is a good girl. It can be seen from her status which is her father's favorite child and she is a student at Harvard which is a school for intelligent student around the world.²⁹ Harvard symbolizes both the fulfillment of social expectations and intellectual excellence, with attendance regarded as a pinnacle of achievement that aligns with societal norms. Her consistent school attendance and fluency in French reinforce her self-perception as a successful, well-rounded individual embodying the traits of diligence, intellect, and cultural refinement, as analyzed through a dialectical approach in the thesis.

The girl is deemed a "good girl" primarily because she consistently stays at home and excels academically, meeting her parents' expectations. The song lyrics convey these traits to presuppose her inherent goodness, which is reflected through her behavior.³⁰ She is meant to be the best and always goes forward as well.

*Cause every night she studies hard in her room
(At least that's what her parents assume)
But she sneaks out the window to meet her boyfriend
Here's what she told me the time that I caught 'em*

The second stanza presents both thesis and antithesis: the thesis depicts the girl studying diligently each night, while the antithesis reveals her secretive rebellion by sneaking out to meet her boyfriend. This contrast challenges societal norms and the perception of her as solely a "good girl," revealing a more complex character that defies the simplistic image of obedience.

The song lyrics present an antithesis to illustrate a dualistic perspective, revealing the coexistence of contrasting traits within the subject. While she is characterized as a good girl, the lyrics also acknowledge her capacity for naughtiness, suggesting a more complex and

²⁹ Hagung Yudistiro Utomo, Henny Suharyati, dan Sari Rejeki, "The Use of Metaphors as Social Criticism in Billie Eilish Oconnell and Finneas Oconnells all the Good Girls Go to Hell and the Bad Guy," *Journal Albion: Journal of English Literature, Language, and Culture* 4, no. 1 (2022): 28–32, <https://journal.unpak.ac.id/index.php/albion/article/view/5247>.

³⁰ Briole, "Are Girls Always Good for Boys? Short and Long Term Effects of School Peers' Gender."

multifaceted reality.³¹ The new sense is the opposite from the previous one. Her parents may only know a perspective, but he may know another perspective. Indeed, the new perspective covers the old one, making her not a good girl anymore.

*She said to me, "Forget what you thought
'Cause good girls are bad girls who haven't been caught
So just turn around and forget what you saw
'Cause good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught"
Woah-oh, oh-oh, oh-oh
Good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught
Woah-oh, oh-oh, oh-oh
Good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught*

The following stanza functions as a synthesis, evident in the girl's statement, "'cause good girls are bad girls that haven't been caught." This challenges the initial thesis that a diligent, academically successful girl favored by her father is inherently good, suggesting that appearances may be deceptive.³² In another reality, the good girl also commits mischief which is the antithesis in this story.

The girl's message in this verse urges the rejection of preconceived notions about what defines a "good girl," revealing that a seemingly good girl may in fact be a naughty one who has yet to be caught. This synthesis introduces new knowledge for the singer, replacing previous assumptions with the understanding that a good girl can simultaneously possess a hidden bad side.

*Well, she's a good girl, a straight A-student
She's really into all that self-improvement
(I swear she lives in that library) ooh-ooh
But if you ask her, she'll say, "That's where you'll find me"*

The stanza reasserts the thesis by portraying the girl as an exemplary student, widely perceived as diligent and high-achieving. However, beneath this socially reinforced image, she also embraces the "bad girl" persona, revealing a duality often overlooked in binary frameworks. Her identity, therefore, is a complex interplay of opposing traits, challenging the limitations of traditional dialectical analysis.

³¹ Cahyaningsih Pujimahanani, Rommel Utungga Pasopati, dan Flora Anasis, "Gender Performativity as Asserted on Kate Chopin's A Respectable Woman," *ANAPHORA: Journal of Language Literary and Cultural Studies* 5, no. 1 (2022): 92–103, <https://gotriple.eu/es/documents/ftunitagsurabaya%3Aoai%3Aajurnal.untag-sby.ac.id%3Aarticle%2F6423>.

³² Laila Nabilahuzzahro Ibrahim dan Rommel Utungga Pasopati, "The Preservation of Femininity in A. K. Summers' Pregnant Butch," *Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature* 3, no. 4 (2024): 358–367, <https://journal.jcopublishing.com/index.php/jcell/article/view/277>.

*But if you look, then you won't find her there
She may be clever, but she just acts too square
'Cause in the back of the room where nobody looks (nobody looks)
She'll be with her boyfriend (she's not reading books)*

The next stanza presents a stark contrast to the earlier assumption, revealing that although the girl was indeed in the library, she was secretly engaging in intimate behavior with her boyfriend rather than studying. This discovery, observed by the singer, deepens the narrative by questioning the reliability of appearances and highlighting the dissonance between public perception and private reality.³³

This popular song intriguingly embodies profound philosophical concepts, particularly through its effective use of Hegelian Dialectics by portraying the girl across multiple realities beyond common perception. Rather than focusing on dualism, the lyrics emphasize duality, highlighting an open coexistence of differences without attempting to subdue the negative aspects.³⁴ It lets the bad aspects come together with the good ones because that is how reality is eventually.

The song lyrics vividly reflect Hegelian Dialectics, particularly through the dynamic interplay of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The thesis is the girl's socially acceptable identity maintained in class and before her parents, while the antithesis emerges in the contrasting reality of her being caught making out with her boyfriend.³⁵ The synthesis reveals that a "good girl" can simultaneously embody traits of a "bad girl," reflecting the dialectical unity of opposites. These lyrics underscore a deep philosophical insight: knowledge can be both universal and particular, challenging existing stigmas while potentially giving rise to new stereotypes, where the universal thesis confronts a highly particular antithesis.³⁶ Interestingly, the synthesis may involve both universal and particular aspects that may bring another consequence.

The thesis of a good girl is a stigma she wants to maintain. She is comfortable with that identity because she is actually smart too. However, that stigma is too universal as it

³³ Ofuasia, "On the Distinction between Friedrich Hegel's Dialectics and the Logic of Conversational Thinking."

³⁴ Vivi Nur Aini Susanto et al., "Homo Sacer as Illustrated on Kya on the Film Where the Crawdads Sing," *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora dan Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2023): 21–28, <https://journal.admi.or.id/index.php/JUSHPEN/article/view/560>.

³⁵ Rizal Rafiuddin et al., "How Stereotypes are Formed: The Discontents of Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relations in Cultural Models," in *Proceeding International Conference on Religion, Science and Education*, vol. 4 (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, 2025), 431–442, <https://sunankalijaga.org/prosiding/index.php/icrse/article/view/1480>.

³⁶ Werner, "Hegel's Dialectical Method: A Response to the Modification View."

may also omit other different perspectives.³⁷ The song challenges conventional stereotypes by suggesting that a clever or smart girl is not confined to the image of a reclusive nerd, but can also embrace freedom and multiplicity. Through its portrayal of overlapping identities and the coexistence of good and bad, the lyrics highlight the complexity of reality, where opposites persist simultaneously and resist fixed categorization.

The antithesis is actually the revelation of knowledge provided by another given reality.³⁸ The girl's portrayal as "bad" does not negate her intelligence; rather, it reveals a nuanced identity that defies binary classifications. This particular antithesis between cleverness and conformity resists universal synthesis, emphasizing the complexity of her character.

The synthesis then is not accompanying old universal value with new universal idea as well. New knowledge complements the old idea, not substitutes it. In this sense, total aspects of old values are not gone at all.³⁹ The renewal of understanding through revelation enables a deeper comprehension of identity by bridging past and present, revealing its dynamic and context-dependent nature. Within the cyclical structure of Hegelian Dialectics, the interplay of particular and universal continually reshapes identity, making complexity and contradiction inherent to its formation.

The song lyrics critically engage with subtextual stereotypes, revealing them as reductive generalizations that overlook the complexity of human behavior. By deconstructing the "good girl" trope, the lyrics expose the inherent fallacies in such categorical labels.⁴⁰ The song lyrics challenge listeners to question the validity of stereotypes, emphasizing the risks of confining individuals to reductive categories. By portraying the "good girl" as a straight-A, compliant figure, the data reveals how such idealized images obscure the nuanced and diverse realities of individual identity.

The subtextual stereotype of the "good girl" is deeply embedded in societal expectations that prescribe how women ought to behave. These norms pressure young women to conform to a limited ideal of goodness, characterized by obedience, modesty, and academic achievement, thereby constraining individual expression.⁴¹ In reality, such stereotypes are not only reductive but also harmful, as they overlook the complexity of

³⁷ Rafiuddin et al., "How Stereotypes are Formed: The Discontents of Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relations in Cultural Models."

³⁸ Nuzzo, "Method in Hegel's Dialectic-Speculative Logic."

³⁹ Ofuasia, "On the Distinction between Friedrich Hegel's Dialectics and the Logic of Conversational Thinking."

⁴⁰ Briole, "Are Girls Always Good for Boys? Short and Long Term Effects of School Peers' Gender."

⁴¹ Maree, "Single Review: 5 Seconds Of Summer – 'Good Girls.'"

individual identities and may create internal conflict. These rigid classifications risk becoming self-fulfilling prophecies, pressuring individuals to conform to imposed expectations rather than embracing their authentic selves.

Moreover, the song lyrics challenge the subtextual black-and-white thinking that underlies stereotypes, emphasizing the fluidity of human identity. By rejecting rigid moral binaries, the song suggests that individuals possess multifaceted personalities, and the line between “good” and “bad” is far more ambiguous than societal norms suggest.⁴² It is essential to look beyond appearances and acknowledge the inherent complexity of human nature. In this context, Hegelian Dialectics is particularly relevant, as it facilitates the progression from old to new knowledge, aiming to dismantle existing stereotypes without prematurely creating new ones.

5SOS’s “Good Girl” illustrates how individuals can simultaneously embody seemingly contradictory qualities, reflecting the evolving nature of the self through dialectical tension. By merging traits traditionally assigned to both “good girls” and “bad girls,” the song challenges underlying stereotypes and reveals identity as fluid, variable, and adaptable rather than fixed.⁴³ This balanced perspective highlights how traits like intelligence and defiance can coexist harmoniously rather than conflict, embracing complexity. The study reinforces the notion that individuals are not confined to predetermined roles but can integrate diverse aspects of themselves, promoting open acceptance of varied identities and viewpoints.

CONCLUSION

The song *Good Girls* by 5 Seconds of Summer (5SOS) presents a nuanced exploration of identity through the philosophical lens of Hegelian Dialectics, particularly focusing on the constructed nature of female subjectivity. In Hegelian terms, the “good girl” archetype functions as the thesis, a socially sanctioned ideal typified by academic excellence, politeness, and behavioral restraint. This conception aligns with broader patriarchal constructs that valorize submissive femininity. However, as the narrative voice in the lyrics exposes the underlying contradictions in this archetype, a negation emerges, the antithesis, in which the same “good girl” subverts these expectations through acts of defiance and self-

⁴² Adelia Putri Oktafiani et al., “The Complexities of Interpersonal Conflicts as Reflected in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Killers*,” *TANDA: Jurnal Kajian Budaya, Bahasa Dan Sastra* 3, no. 1 (2023): 29–41, <https://aksiologi.org/index.php/tanda/article/view/942>.

⁴³ Wijaya et al., “Paradox of Freedom as Elucidated in Avenged Sevenfold’s M.I.A.”

assertion. This contradiction does not dissolve the original identity but reconfigures it, leading to a synthesis that transcends the binary. In this new form, identity is reconceptualized not as a fixed, externally defined category, but as a dynamic interplay of compliance and resistance. The “good girl” becomes a dialectical subject, one who negotiates between imposed norms and inner authenticity.

Through this dialectical unfolding, *Good Girls* challenges the ideological infrastructure that underpins gendered dichotomies such as “good” versus “bad.” The lyrics dismantle the false moral economy in which intellect and agency are tethered to conformist behavior, proposing instead that rebellion and self-expression are not antithetical to intelligence or virtue. In doing so, the song undermines the performative expectations attached to femininity and highlights the existential freedom of the subject to redefine herself beyond prescriptive roles. Moreover, the presence of Hegelian logic within a piece of mainstream pop culture reveals the capacity of popular music to engage in profound philosophical critique. Rather than being dismissed as superficial, songs like *Good Girls* can function as sites of cultural resistance and intellectual inquiry. They reflect the dialectical tensions at the heart of identity formation and social recognition, illustrating how even in mass-mediated forms, art can articulate complex ideas about subjectivity, power, and social transformation.

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