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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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May-December Romances -- Sexy Or Silly

The NYTimes has a piece on the current crush of movies depicting romances between much older and younger people. They talk a lot about the difference between mutual attraction and someone being "stalked," but it all comes down to this old cliché -- the only relationship they don't find "icky" is between an older woman (Cate Blanchett) and a 15 year old boy. This of course is because everyone is supposed to think the young man is lucky to be "seduced" or "seduce" an older woman. An older man with a girl is gross, an older man with a boy is sick and an older woman with a younger woman is psychotic. I think they also delude themselves about "The History Boys" in thinking we're supposed to believe it's okay for the teacher Hector to fondle the naughty bits of his students. The play and movie does flirt with controversy by saying that in this situation the lads might be taken advantage of, but won't suffer life-long trauma because of it. (Not all molestation is equal.) But it's very clear that Hector is condemned and seen as rather pathetic in this regard. Personally, I found the Blanchett/boy sex icky too but didn't find the mom and high school gardener scenes in "Desperate Housewives" off-putting at all. It may be crass to say so, but the acceptability of all of these different sexual scenarios may boil down to one simple thing: do you think either or both of the people involved are desirable? If you do, it will seem on some base level to be okay. If you don't, all the justification in the world won't make it seem right.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 12:28 PM



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