

Pedophilia Chic In A Bookstore Near You

By PAUL LIKOUDIS

If producers of pornographic movies are on high alert, their fears, apparently, are not shared by their peers in the publishing industry who are flooding the market with what Mary Eberstadt calls patently illegal "pedophilia chic."

Writing in the January 1/January 8 issue of *The Weekly Standard*, Eberstadt warns of the ongoing campaign by the pedophile establishment to erode the taboos against adult/child sex — at least as far as male children are concerned.

In "Pedophilia Chic' Reconsidered," Eberstadt explains how the social consensus against the sexual exploitation of children is evaporating, contrary to views she expressed four years ago in an earlier article.

"Until very, very recently, public questioning of the social prohibition against pedophilia — to say nothing of positive celebration of child molestation — was practically nonexistent in American life," she writes.

"The reasons why are not opaque. To most people, the very word 'pedophilia' summons forth a preternatural degree of horror and revulsion; and the criminal law that reflects those reactions has consistently treated the sexual molestation of minors as a serious and eminently punishable offense. . . .

"This social consensus against the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, however — unlike those against, say, animal sex or incest — is apparently eroding, and this regardless of the fact that the vast majority of citizens do overwhelmingly abominate the thing. For elsewhere in the public square, the defense of adult-child sex — more accurately, man-boy sex — is now out in the open.

"Moreover, it is on parade in a number of places — therapeutic, literary, and academic circles; mainstream publishing houses and journals and magazines and bookstores — where the mere appearance of such ideas would until recently have been not only unthinkable, but in many cases, subject to prosecution."

Why, Eberstadt asks, did the mid-1990s see such an increase in the number of voices seeking to sanction "man-boy love" — a time when "public attention to the sexual abuse of girl children had simultaneously reached an all-time high?"

She continues: "Nobody, but nobody, has been allowed to make the case for girl pedophilia with the backing of any reputable institution. Publishing houses are not putting out acclaimed anthologies and works of fiction that include excerpts of men having sex with young girls. Psychologists and psychiatrists are not competing with each other to publish studies demonstrating that the sexual abuse of girls is inconsequential; or, indeed, that it ought not even be defined as 'abuse.'

"Two examples from the last few weeks will suffice to show the double standard here. In the November 12 *New York Times Book Review*, a writer found it unremarkable to observe of his subject, biographer Gavin Lambert, that when 'Lambert was a schoolboy of 11, a teacher initiated him [into homosexuality], and he "felt no shame or fear, only gratitude".' It is unimaginable that *New York Times* editors would allow a reviewer to describe an 11-year-old girl being sexually 'initiated' by any adult (in that case, 'initiation' would be called 'sexual abuse'). Similarly, in mid-December *The New York Times Magazine* delivered a cover piece about gay teenagers in cyberspace which was so blase about the older men who seek out boys in chat rooms that it dismissed those potential predators as mere 'oldies.' Again, one can only imagine the public outcry had the same magazine published a story taking the same so-what approach to online solicitation, offline trysts, and pornography 'sharing' between anonymous men and underage girls. . . .

"The reason why the public is being urged to reconsider boy pedophilia is that this 'question,' set-

led though it may be in the opinions and laws of the rest of the country, is demonstrably not yet settled within certain parts of the gay rights movement. The more that movement has entered the mainstream, the more this 'question' has bubbled forth from that previously distant realm into the public square."

Eberstadt recalls the national uproar which followed publicity surrounding the American Psychological Association's July 1998 publication of a pro-pedophilia article, "A Meta-Analytic Examination of Assumed Properties of Child Sexual Abuse Using College Samples," coauthored by Bruce Rind (Temple University), Robert

Bauserman (University of Michigan), and Philip Tromovitch (University of Pennsylvania), and how quickly prominent "mainstream" homosexuals such as *National Review* editor Andrew Sullivan defended the study.

The study argued that the common view that the sexual abuse of a minor by an adult leaves permanent traumatic scars on the child's psyche was erroneous.

Once the APA-endorsed article received national coverage on Dr. Laura Schlessinger's show in May 1999, the public was outraged, unaware that the cause for public acceptance of homosexual mentoring of young men had for years been a part of homosexuals' plans to promote their lifestyle.

(In March 1997, *Wanderer* readers learned that Dr. Richard Isay, giving the keynote address at a New Ways Ministry conference in Pittsburgh, spoke of the importance of homosexual adults introducing teens to the "gay lifestyle." See *The Wanderer*, March 20, 1997.)

"In retrospect," writes Eberstadt, "there were two significant and little-noticed facts in all this. One was not so much the schism that this controversy revealed between elite-therapeutic and popular

thinking about pedophilia, but rather that the schism itself had gone unnoticed for so long. For shocking though it may have been to the general public, 'Meta-Analytic' was in fact only the latest in a very long series of professional attempts to revise therapeutic conceptions of boy pedophilia, attempts of which most lay readers remain quite ignorant.

"Professionals in the field know better. Fifteen years ago, for example, in his careful research volume *Child Sexual Abuse*, noted authority David Finkelhor was already drawing attention to the 'body of opinion and research [that] has emerged in recent years which is trying hard to vindicate homosexual pedophilia.'

"To read Finkelhor's sources on the subject — or, for that matter, to read the notes in the heavily sourced 'Meta-Analytic' itself — is to see exactly what he means. In their call to redefine 'abuse' as 'contact,' for example, Rind, Bauserman, and Tromovitch were merely resurrecting research and conceptual work stretching back over two decades; similarly, their distinctions between boys' and girls' supposed experiences of abuse have a pedigree that begins with Kinsey and branches out dramatically in professional publications of the last 25 years."

After recounting how the major media, including *The New York Times*, assaulted Schlessinger for exposing the APA's apologia for pedophilia, Eberstadt reviews the burgeoning literature promoting adult-[male] child sex, such as *The Coming Storm* (St. Martin's Press), by Vassar English professor Paul Russell — a tale about a 25 year old's sexual relationship with a troubled 15-year-old boy.

"*The Coming Storm*," writes Eberstadt, "became the object of effusive praise by award-winning reviewer Dennis Drabelle in *The Washington Post Book World* (August 15, 1999). *The Coming Storm*, Drabelle enthused, 'takes off from a sensational subject — forbidden sexuality — to arrive at unexpected heights and subtleties.' It 'persuades the reader' that 'the sexual relationship between Noah and Tracy is not only not harmful to either but a boon to the precocious junior partner, who becomes a better, more engaged student after the affair gets under way.' What is 'troublesome' about the book, according to Drabelle, is not that anyone is 'corrupted' by what happens ('no one is'), but that 'it is apt to be stereotyped, not least by the legal system that makes it a crime'."

Among the dozen books Eberstadt lists which have won high praise in publishing circles and mass-circulation newspapers is Tony Duvert's *When Jonathan Died*, which features the sexual relationship between an adult male and a seven year old.

Eberstadt continues: "As for the related matter of gay nonfiction, here too, judging by the public domain, the subject of boy pedophilia has a manifest niche.

"One book only recently available in the 'gay studies' section of a Borders in downtown D.C., for example, is a peculiar classic of a sort entitled *Male Inter-Generational Intimacy: Historical, Socio-Psychological, and Legal Perspectives*, edited by the aforementioned pedophile icon Edward Brongersma [editor of the Dutch journal *Paidika*, which advocates pedophilia] and two colleagues.

"This book, according to one of its jacket endorsements, 'shed[s] critical light on the broad spectrum

of man-boy love and its place in ancient and contemporary societies.' In other words, it is a series of briefs using scientific polemics in an effort to rationalize the sexual molestation of boy children. The article abstracts speak for themselves. ('Pedophilia is always considered by mainstream society as one form of sexual abuse of children. However, analysis of the personal accounts provided by pedophiles suggests that these experiences could be understood differently.' 'The incidence of violence is very low in pedophile contacts with boys. The influence can be strong in lasting relationships; it can either be wholesome or unwholesome.' And so on.)

"Of course, this opus that 'gay studies' bookshelves now reserve space for did not spring from nowhere. The book itself grew out of two issues of the *American Journal of Homosexuality* (vol. 20, nn. 1/2, 1990) dedicated to the pondering of 'male inter-generational love.' Here again, an ostensibly mainstream gay vehicle was put to the service of advocating pedophilia. In fact, the case of the *Journal of Homosexuality* is particularly interesting as a case study of how a pernicious idea can spread. The editor of this reputable gay journal, John P. DeCecco, is a psychologist at San Francisco State University. DeCecco is favorably quoted in the introduction to *Male Inter-Generational Intimacy* for having praised the 'enormously nurturant relationship' that can result from pedophile-boy contact.

"DeCecco is also on the editorial board of *Paidika*.

"As one would expect, such cross-pollination in gay fiction and criticism is verifiable many times over via the inhuman efficiencies of cyber-correlation. It was not immediately obvious, for example — in fact, it came as a surprise — that typing *Paidika* into an ordinary search engine would turn up a reference to Gay Men's Press bestsellers; but it did not take long to see why. For one of the books on the Gay Men's Press bestseller list turns out to be *Dares to Speak: History and Contemporary Perspectives on Boy-Love*, edited by Joseph Geraci — all of whose chapters but one appeared originally in *Paidika* itself. . . .

"Surfing also makes plain that the better-known gay organizations, all of whom stand dead-set against any conflation of homosexuality and pedophilia, are nonetheless sending mixed messages about what is and is not off-limits for the underage. Most of them, for instance, now have 'youth sections' on their web sites for and about legal minors. The justification for this heightened attention to the young is to ameliorate the angst of gay teenagers. . . .

"Consider, for example, the web site of PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), one of the more respected gay rights organizations in the country. It is just a click of the mouse from PFLAG's 'useful links' to a site where one can read the 'coming-out' stories of children aged 10, 11, and 12. . . .

"At OutProud — another site recommended and linked by leading gay organizations — visitors are routed to a comic strip called Queer Boys. It features two boys who are said to be 16 and look younger. They set off for Manhattan ('Let's run away to New York, where it's safe to be Queer!!' 'Kew!!'), where they triumph over evildoers (i.e., parents and reparative therapists) and find happiness at last thanks to the habitues of a bar in the West Village. ('A gay rock club! That's so cool! Damn! I wish we were old enough to get in!!' says one of the boys. 'Damn those politicians! Damn them all to hell!!' replies the other.)

"For a final example of how pedophilia is being defined down, consider XY magazine — which would doubtless have run afoul of the obscenity laws until very recently. Started just four years ago, XY is now, according to its founder and publisher Peter Ian Cummings, the 'third largest gay magazine in the U.S., selling over 60,000 copies per year and hav[ing] more than 200,000 readers.'

"(These numbers are unaudited but would put XY on a par with the *Advocate* in circulation, though lower than *Out* magazine's 120,000.) Cummings also reports that 'you can find XY on sale in Borders, Tower Records, Virgin Megastores, B. Dalton, Barnes & Noble, Waldenbooks, and many others'."

Eberstadt concludes her survey of this burgeoning pro-pedophile industry with this sentence:

"About pedophilia there remains one and only one proposition that commands public assent. It is this: If the sexual abuse of minors isn't wrong, then nothing is."