

# Sex, Cinema, and the Issue of Harmfulness: Sweden in the 1960s

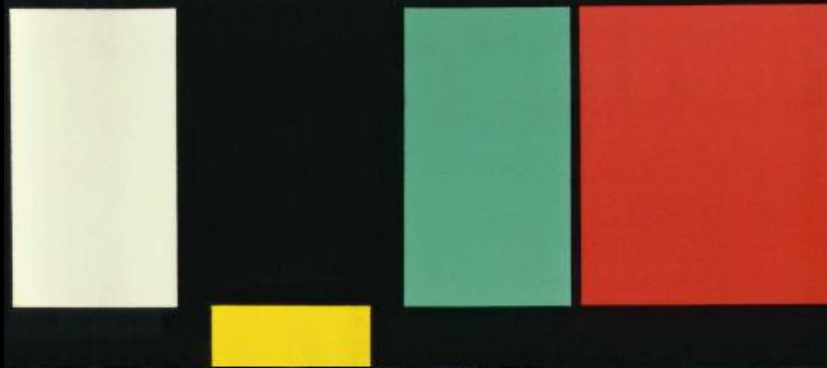
Mariah Larsson, Linnaeus University

Talk at ICC 2017, Stockholm

October 19, 2017

# Filmen

censur och ansvar

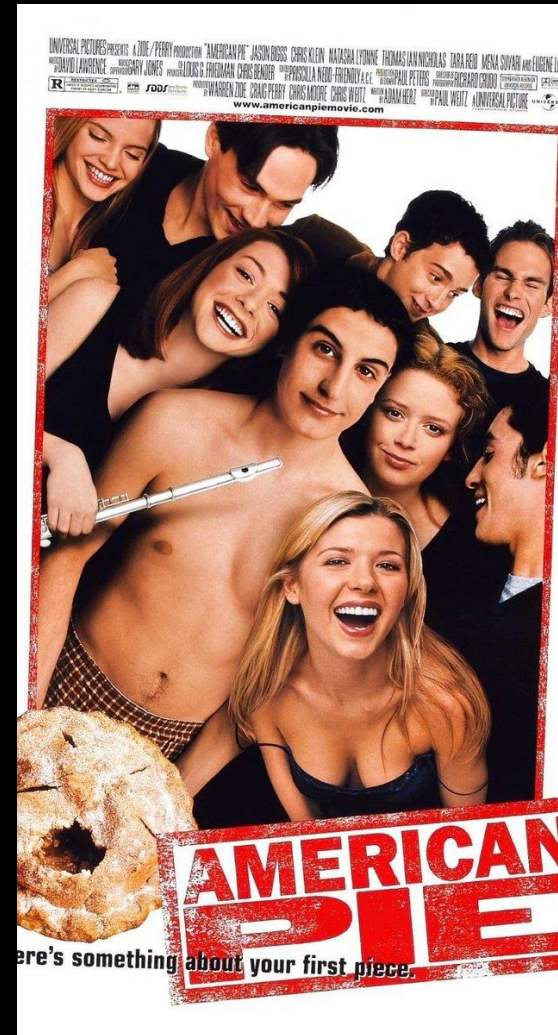


*American Pie, 1999*

*American Pie 2, 2001*

*American Wedding, 2003*

*American Reunion, 2012*



# American Pie (apple pie scene)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCAOKR1jpp0&t=8s>

# National Board of Film Censors

1911-2011

All films for public screening

Age limits (15, 11, 7, all audiences)

Cuts

Prohibition ("banning") of films

# After 2011: Swedish Media Council

“The Swedish Media Council is a government agency whose primary task is to promote the empowering of minors as conscious media users and to protect them from harmful media influences.”

“The ratings reflect whether the films are liable to harm the well-being of children. The age ratings are ‘all ages’, 7, 11 and ‘not rated’, the latter resulting in a 15 rating.”

(Swedish Media Council’s website)

Until 1971

Obscenity clause in the penal code

“Offensive to discipline and morality”

Forbade pornography

Gayle Rubin:  
 "Thinking Sex:  
 Notes for a  
 Radical Theory of  
 the Politics of  
 Sexuality", 1984

**The charmed circle:**  
 Good, Normal, Natural, Blessed Sexuality

- Heterosexual
- Married
- Monogamous
- Procreative
- Non-commercial
- In pairs
- In a relationship
- Same generation
- In private
- No pornography
- Bodies only
- Vanilla



**The outer limits:**  
 Bad, Abnormal, Unnatural,  
 Damned Sexuality

- Homosexual
- Unmarried
- Promiscuous
- Non-procreative
- Commercial
- Alone or in groups
- Casual
- Cross-generational
- In public
- Pornography
- With manufactured objects
- Sadomasochistic

FIGURE 1. The **sex** hierarchy: the charmed circle vs. the outer limits

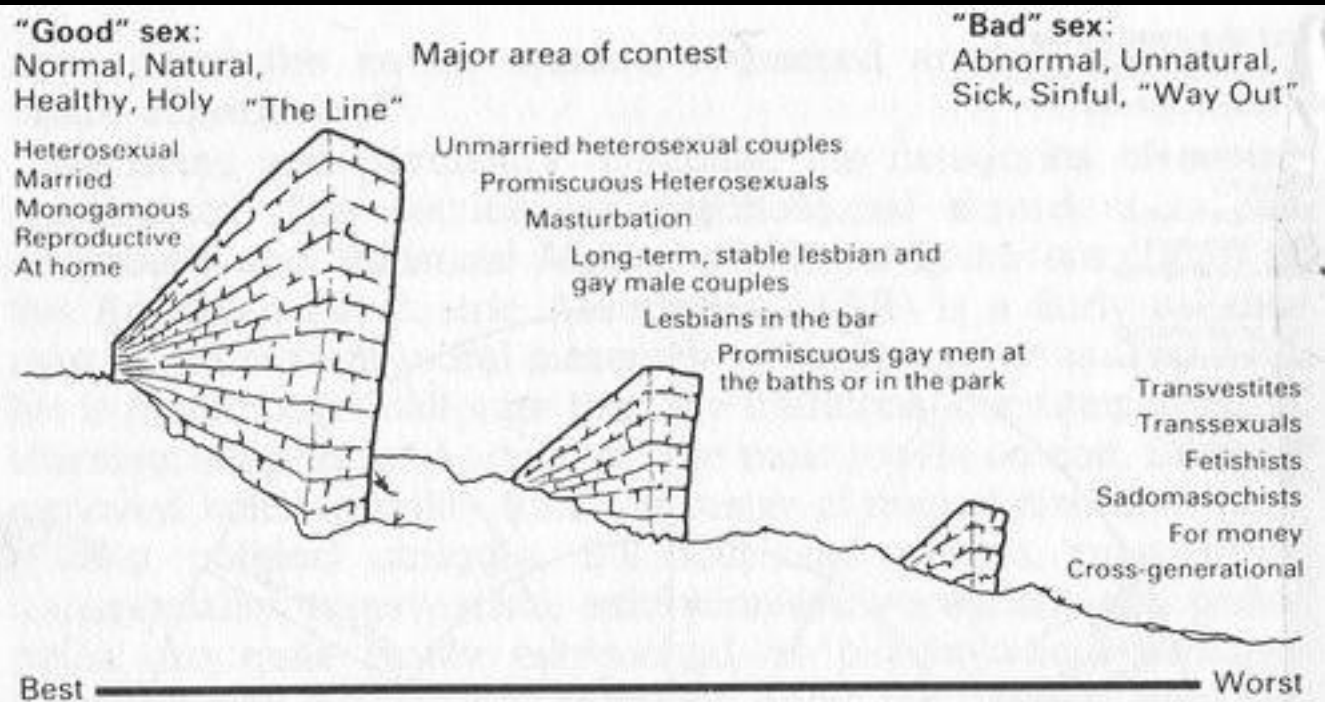


Figure 2 The sex hierarchy: the struggle over where to draw the line

# Sexual value hierarchy in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy

## "Charmed circle"

- Caring promiscuity
- Rational relationships
- Female-initiated sex
- Consensual BDSM
- Sexual fluidity (women)
- Gay coupledness
- Work/love collaborations

## "Outer limits"

- Non-consensual violence
- Rape
- Sexual harassment
- Male-initiated sex
- Patriarchal family structure (breeds nazism and misogyny)
- Sex for money
- Pedophilia

# Sexual script theory

Sociologists Simon & Gagnon

Sexuality as socially constructed

Sexual scripts

- individual, intrapsychic level

- interpersonal level

- cultural level

Paradigmatic and postparadigmatic societies

# Cinema and the sexual revolution in Sweden

1960s:

Film as art

Sexuality debates – sexual liberalisation

Swedish Film Institute 1963

Harry Schein

Film research group 1964

Vesterlund (2016): a paradoxical case of on the one hand a liberal and anti-authoritarian belief in freedom of speech and on the other, a research governed and controlled in a dubious and patronizing manner by its financiers (SFI)

“The Impact of Film on Its Audience” report by the Film research group (1967)

“Film: censorship and responsibility” inquiry into film censorship (1969) proposed abolishment of film censorship

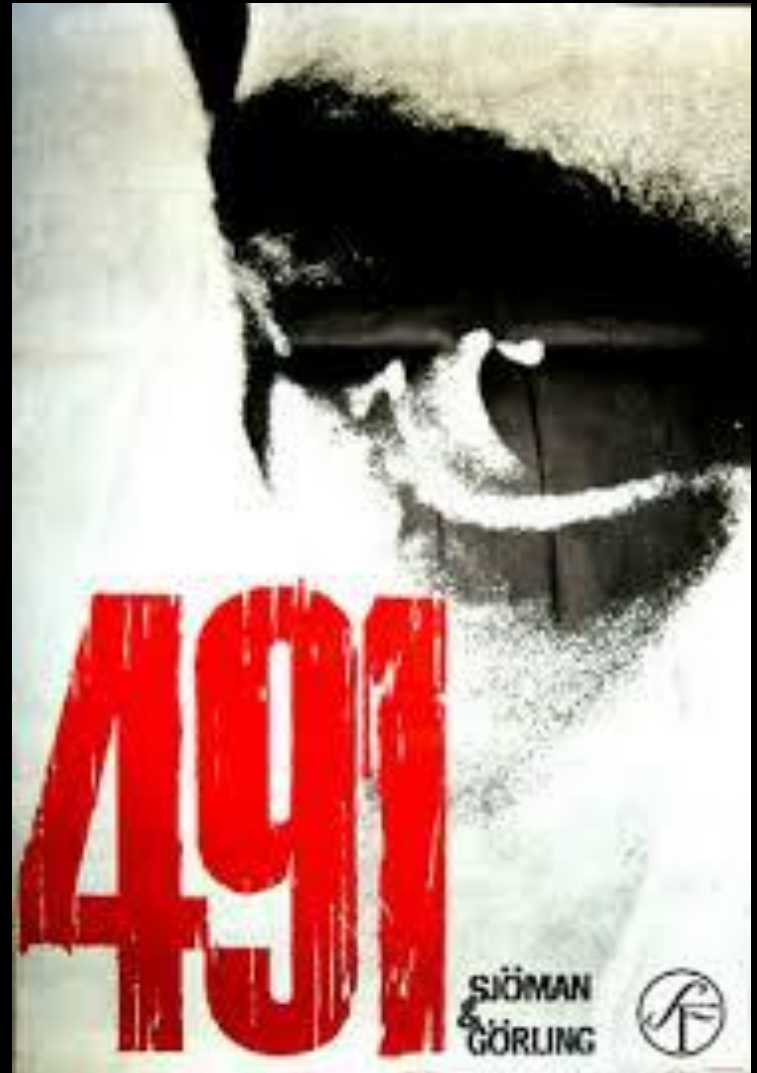
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“The limits of freedom of expression” inquiry into freedom of expression (1969) proposed legalization of pornography



*The Silence* (Ingmar Bergman, 1963)



491 (Vilgot Sjöman, 1964)

”rape, a strange form of bestiality, qualified prostitution, and criminal homosexuality”

”affect human beings who are in a phase of development characterized by emotional instability and hesitant, insecure values”

(Motivation for prohibition of 491)

# Normative sexuality?

Unsimulated, heterosexual intercourse – OK (*They Call Us Misfits*, 1968)

Female masturbation – OK in a brief scene in *The Silence* (1963), cut in a longer scene in *Inga* (1968)

Elderly couple using a vibrator – OK, but criticized (*More About the Language of Love*, 1970)

“The intercourse scene with the aged couple, she stimulated with a dildo... ?????? Censorship of taste or brutalizing animalism? [---] Where is LOVE? Does it demand porn images?”

# Lars Ullerstam De erotiska minoriteterna



Zindermans/Zinderella

"The Erotic Minorities", 1964

1. Scientific study of sexuality as an emancipating force

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2. Utopian idea of welfare society as able to solve all human problems (“sexual destitution”)

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2. Utopian idea of welfare society as able to solve all human problems (“sexual destitution”)
3. An extreme male perspective
4. Speaking on behalf of others (less fortunate)

# David Frost and Olof Palme 1969

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLfBDHsfMPI&t=241s>

(clip I showed starts at 23.28)

# SAUSAGE PARTY



# Thank you!

Mariah Larsson  
mariah.larsson@lnu.se



**Linnæus University**