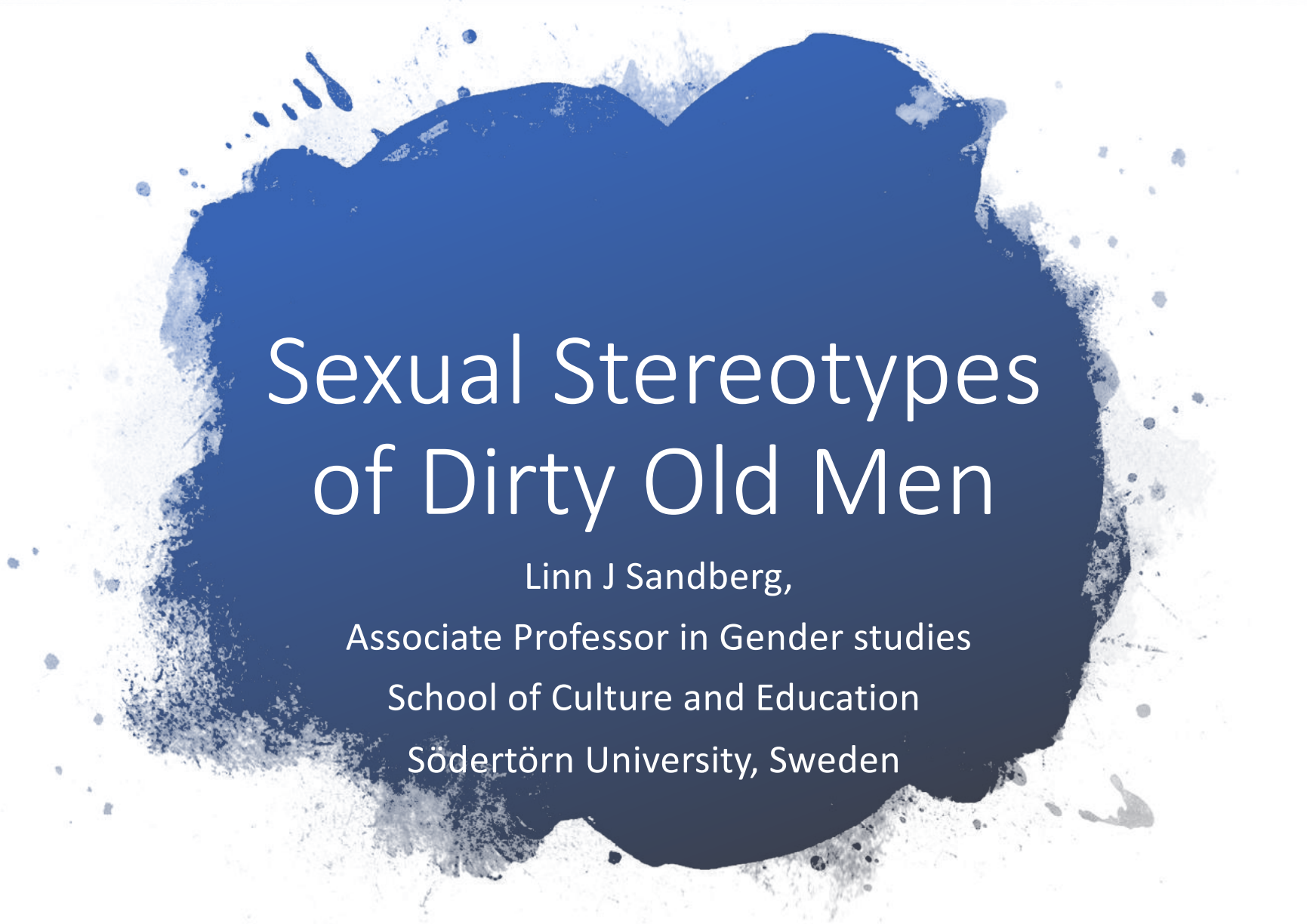




Sexual Stereotypes of Dirty Old Men

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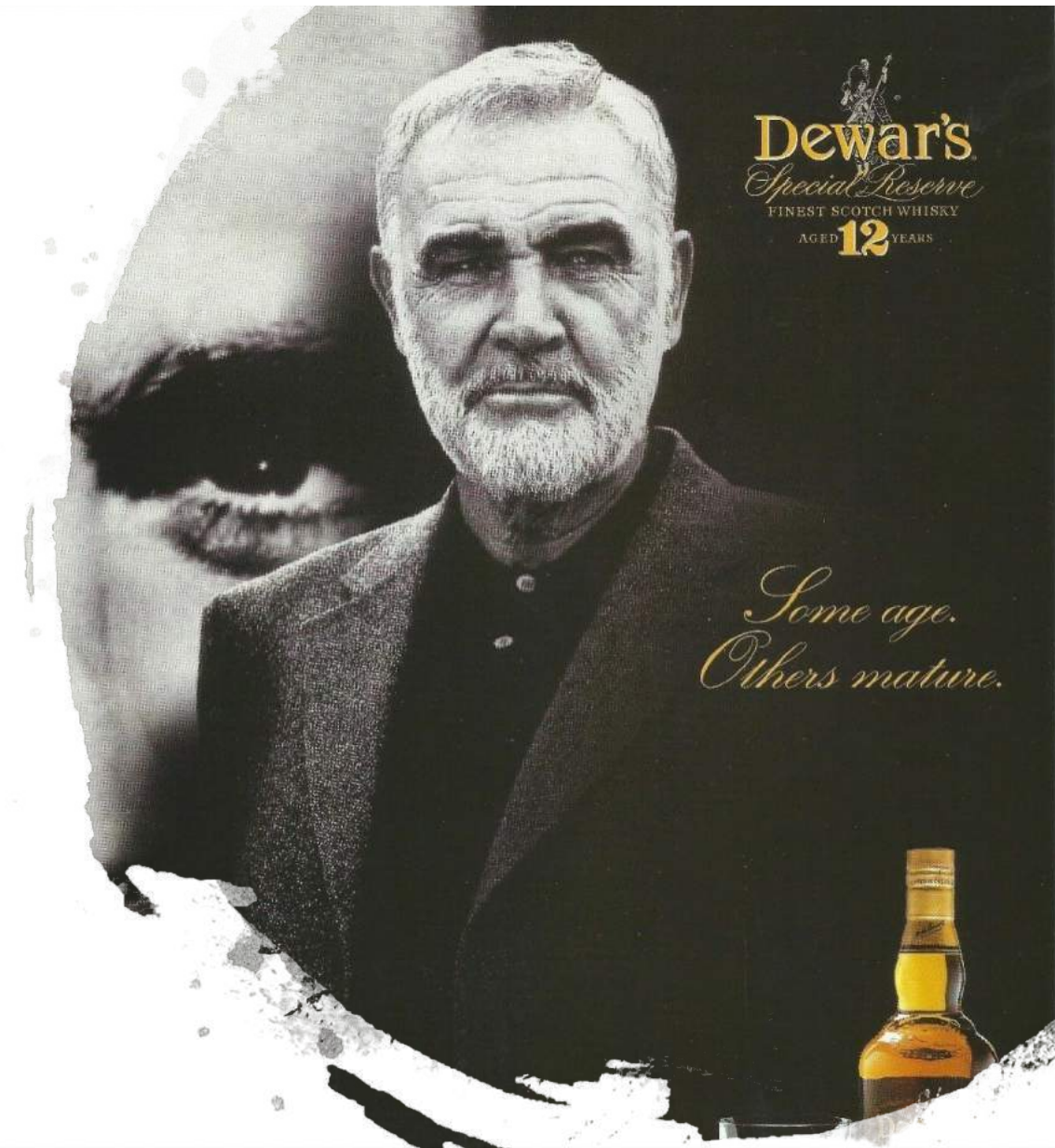
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The ambiguity of older men's sexualities

Being regarded as continuously attractive through discourses of men's ageing as maturity, being distinguished etc.



Pervasive discourses on later life as de-gendered and asexual

- Older people's sexualities as either non-existing or regarded as non-wanted and disgusting (Gott 2005, Barrett & Hinchliff 2017).





The dirty old
man - a
“queer” figure

A Swedish study on sexuality among older heterosexual men

- 16 interviews, 14 body diaries. All in all 22 participants
- Recruitment through advertising in weekly newspaper, presentation in senior's club and senior's social venues
- White ethnically Swedish men, identifying as heterosexual. No major illnesses or disabilities
- Working or middle class background. Aged 67-87, living in smaller and bigger cities and rural areas in Sweden

The considerate, tender and unselfish lover – emphasising intimacy, touch and love

Jakob: The desire is the same, and eh, being together doesn't have to end with or lead to intercourse. A lot of warmth can be given just by bodily contact really

Nore: "I'm more interested in touching and feeling and like that, now than [before]. She thinks that's really nice"

Frank: As a sexual partner I am probably more considerate, I think I was in my fifties too, but in my thirties I was not considerate like that, let me see I don't remember exactly. Between 50 and 70 I could probably say that I've become more tender.

Yngve: To walk maybe like this [holding just a finger], with the one you like beside you, that's sexy as hell. But not sexy in the genital way, right? I don't know how to say it really. But those kinds of things have been of great importance to me. Usual sex has had much less importance.

Linn: When you're saying usual sex, what are you thinking of, then?

Yngve: Well to make love to one another. But rather it is touching each other, holding each other, to show each other that you like it and so on. There's too much weight put on the sexual today, and sleeping with each other. That's my opinion

Emphasising intimacy,
touch and being a considerate
lover –
as ways of resisting being
labelled "dirty" ?



- Sigurd: But now I've given it all up . And I prayed to our lord for that, because I have always felt disgusted by those old homosexuals who hang out by the urinals.. and like this [opens his mouth and stares out into the air with widely open eyes] Yes. And I did not want to become like that. So I've prayed for that every night. I started doing that when I was passed 70, or at least 75. And he has answered my prayers: I feel no [desire] I have given it up. [...] Oh no I've been a nice boy. I've had my share. But as I tell my friends: I will age with dignity.

(Kristansen 2013)

Concluding remarks

- The dirty old man ageist stereotype – pointing to an excessive sexuality, out of time and out of place
- Possible to negotiate for older heterosexual men
- Dirty old man as a particular negative valence for older gay men- homophobic and ageist discourse imbricated.
- How does the dirty old man stereotype also have particular racialised implications?
- Older men with dementia- understood as "hypersexual" or performing "inappropriate sexual behaviours"- being labelled and understood as dirty old men?

Thank you!

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