



# JOURNAL OF BODIES, SEXUALITIES, AND MASCULINITIES

Call for Papers: Special Issue 2022

**Masculinity, Sex, and Dicks**  
*New Understandings of the Phallus*

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Guest Editors: Dr. Andrea Waling & Dr. Jennifer Power

## About

The symbolism, significance and meaning of the phallus/penis has varied historically, and across disciplines. In the psychoanalytic tradition, philosophers such as Lacan suggest that "(t)he subject ... can only assume its identity through the adoption of a sexed identity, and the subject can only take up a sexed identity with reference to the phallus, for 'the phallus is the privileged signifier'" (Segal 2007, 85). Lacan's work has inspired feminist critiques of "phallocentrism" in high and popular cultural texts since the 1970s (Segal 2007). Stephens (2007) describes the ancient Greek ideal of small penises as indexing self-control and rationality, while the Romans celebrated virility and power, which they associated with a large penis. Other scholarship has explored the racialisation of penis size, such as the myth of Black men as possessing large penises, indexing hypersexuality (Lehman 2006).

A spate of scholarship in the 1990s and early 2000s examined the representation of the penis in media and popular culture, including comedy films of this decade with their representation of anxieties about "premature ejaculation", penis size, masturbation and a variety of other painful, vulnerable or humiliating penis-centric scenarios (Glass 2001, 546). Recent research examines "the emergence of a new aesthetic discourse of the penis, which operates at the boundaries of both the "new paradigm of health" ... and "biomedicalisation" (Flowers et al. 2013, 122) which further complicates this narrative. For example, biomedicalisation has provided options to enhance the appearance of penises. This new "penile discourse" has developed through shifts in sexual norms and the proliferation of pornography that "focuses upon penile appearance as much as function" (Flowers et al. 2013, 121, see also Allan 2018). Biomedicine has also re-emphasised the centrality of penis function and virility, such as in the case of Viagra (Potts 2000). More recently, research has explored the advent of the "Dick Pic" and its infiltration in digital and mobile technology, raising questions about sexual violence, erotic male bodies, and sexual desire (Waling & Pym 2019; Paasonen et al. 2019).

Indeed, the penis, or the phallus, has undergone much scrutiny in academic discourse. However, with new forms of medical, digital, and mechanical technology providing transformative and new ways of understanding the penis beyond the assigned male-sex body, alongside new ways of thinking about gender, sexuality, and sexual practices, there is an urgent need to increase knowledge about the meanings, uses and applications of the penis in relation to masculinity, bodies, and sexualities.

We are seeking contributions from a range of disciplines (social sciences, visual and performing arts, humanities, medical sciences, technology studies) to explore the following questions:

- » How has the meaning of the phallus, such as of weakness, masculinity, sex, and power, shifted or altered across history and cultures?
- » In what ways can there be a consideration of the erotic possibility, meaning or potential of the penis?
- » How can we begin to think through questions of penile aesthetics, such as the foreskin, circumcision, and body modifications (i.e. piercings, tattoos, dermal implants etc.)?
- » How do technologies, including digital, medical, and mechanical technologies, shift or alter meanings and uses of the penis (i.e. Dick Pics, Viagra, Strap-On Dildos etc.)?
- » In what ways has the function of the penis been framed, or can be framed, in disability studies or studies of ageing bodies? What might this mean for redefining the centrality of penis function, for example, for older men, or men with physical, cognitive, or sensory disabilities?
- » How might the penis be reconceptualised, queered or challenged beyond gender, sexuality, and sexual practices binaries (i.e. non-gender binary bodies, pegging practices, Kink & BDSM practices)? What is the transformative possibility of the penis?
- » What relationship does the penis have to the masculine/trans masculine body and/or mental and physical health (i.e. body image anxieties, PReP, reproduction and fertility, penile reconstruction surgeries)?

### Process

Abstract proposals will be reviewed prior to invitation to submit a full manuscript for review. Abstract proposals should be 250–300 words and are due **April 28, 2020**. Abstracts should be emailed to the JBSM team at [JBSM@berghahnjournals.com](mailto:JBSM@berghahnjournals.com), with *Special Issue 2022* as the subject line.

Abstract proposals will be reviewed by the guest editors and JBSM editorial team, with notification by **May 22, 2020**.

If invited to submit a full paper, manuscripts should be no more than 7,500 words, including notes and references. Manuscripts will be due **November 30, 2020** and will undergo double-blind review. Please note that invitation to submit a manuscript does not necessarily mean acceptance of paper.

For more information about submission, please visit:  
[www.berghahnjournals.com/jbsm](http://www.berghahnjournals.com/jbsm)

Questions? Email Dr. Andrea Waling: [a.waling@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:a.waling@latrobe.edu.au)  
and Dr. Jennifer Power: [jennifer.power@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:jennifer.power@latrobe.edu.au)

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