



Linn Sandberg

*Getting  
Intimate*

A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF OLD AGE, MASCULINITY & SEXUALITY

*Well it changes – it's probably like that for all older couples. It gets drier and the man has more difficulties to get an erection. So it isn't just like the old days, and maybe that's a good thing in some ways, cause then there is a different technique sort of. You have to touch each other in a different way.*

Nore, 77 years old

Impotent old men whose sex lives are long gone, or “sexy seniors” who are sexually active long after retirement? Discourses on later life sexuality are often contradictory. Where old people have traditionally been considered asexual, later life is increasingly understood as a time for continued sexual activity. Viagra and other sexuo-pharmaceuticals mean that impotence is no longer an inevitable part of men's ageing. But how do old men themselves experience sex and sexuality?

This qualitative study focuses on how heterosexual men, aged between late sixties and mid-eighties, describe experiences of sexuality, old age and the ageing body. Through interviews and the author's own invented method of “body diaries”, the study explores issues such as impotence, sexual desire and how age and masculinity shape meanings of sexuality.

The narratives of the men in this study form a complex picture and offer ways of rethinking masculinity, sexuality and old age. The study will be of interest to researchers, students and others working with old people, but also to readers interested in feminist theories of embodiment and sexuality. This book argues that old age and the specificities of the ageing body matter for feminist theorizing and gender studies.

LINN SANDBERG is a researcher at Tema Genus, the Department of Thematic Studies – Gender Studies, Linköping University, Sweden. This is her doctoral thesis.

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science, No. 527, Linköping 2011



**Linköping University**  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES