



The Feeling of Appearance and the Appearance of Feeling

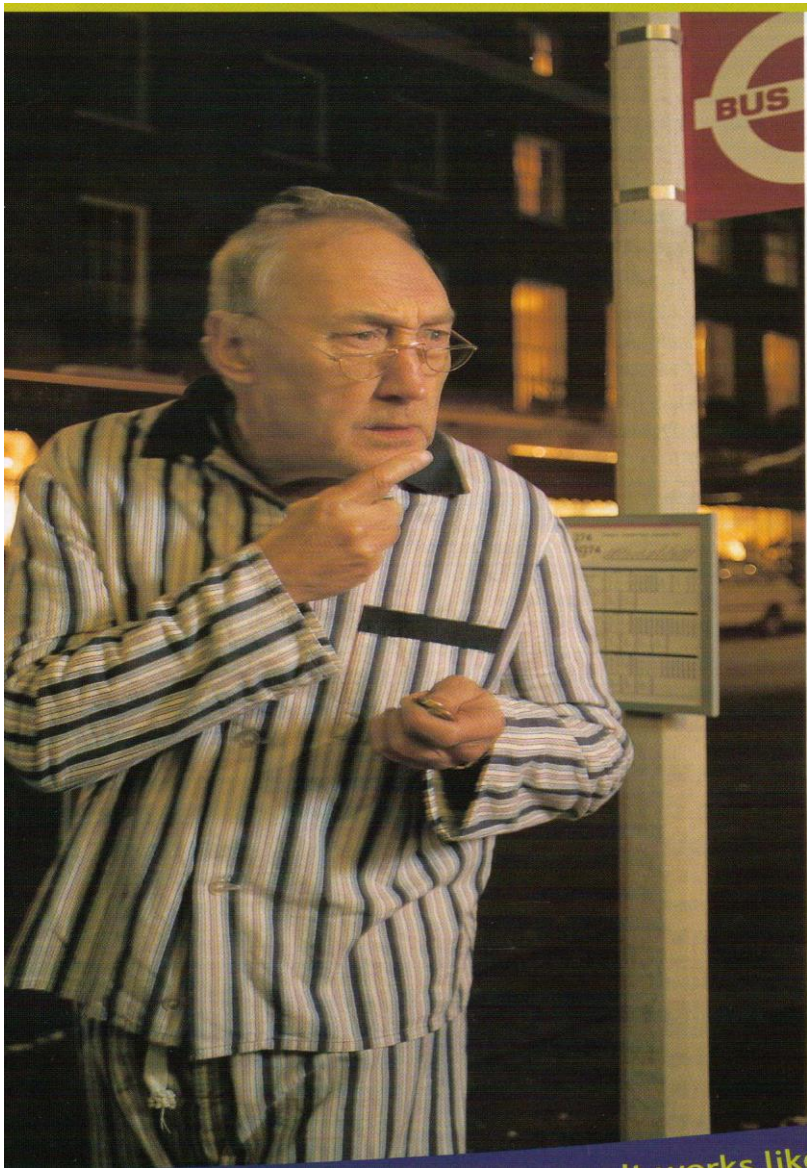
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Hair and Care Project - Overview

- *Contextualising appearance*: Care services ‘audit’: availability, prevalence / access to hairdressing services. Discussion groups and semi-structured stakeholder interviews (incl. hairdressers; informal carers; health and social care workers; key informants)
- *Doing appearance in care*: Over 8 months in care-based salons and visiting people at home – participant observation, filming of salon process; in-situ conversations with workers and clients
- *Embodied histories*: ‘appearance biographies’ interviews to explore appearance and the practices involved in maintaining it throughout people’s lives.

Appearance Biographies

Age	Gender	Interviewed with...	Home situation	Use of images
70's	Male	Wife	Lives with wife	Used photographs
70's	Female	Daughter (P1.), daughter and grandson (P2.)	Lives in a care home, became a widow in her forties.	Used photographs
80's	Female	Husband	Married for 60+ years and lives with husband.	Used photographs
80's	Female	Husband	Married for 50+ years. Lives with husband.	Used photographs
80's	Female	Two cousins	Lives with cousin and cousin in law / Never married	Photographs and clothing were used in the interview and we looked at her make-up and make-up bag.
70's	Male	Wife	Married lives with wife	-
80's	Male	Wife	Married lives with second wife. Married for around 30 years.	-
70's	Female	-	Living in Sheltered accommodation	Used photographs
50's	Female	-	Married, lives with husband and two dogs	Used photographs
60's	Female	Daughter	Married lives with husband and has grown up children living nearby	Used photographs

Shiny Shoes

Vic: Some people didn't care what their kids looked like, my mother was just the opposite, and you had to do it, she told me what to do – my shoes had to be cleaned and all that... that was my era

Judith: ... it used to be regarded as a good personality if you had shiny shoes, if you cleaned your shoes

‘...how many times must I show you this?’

Vic: You never see me going out without a shave... I could not under any circumstances go out without.. I couldn't do that

Interviewer: So you'd never let it grow for a day or two and have a bit of growth?

V: No, no

I: Why is that? Why wouldn't you want to do that?

V: Because my dad had me from that day – ‘you've done this, you've done that, that's standing up now you better get that right, do that now, get that done’

I: So it's partly your dad's influence a little bit is it?

V: Oh aye, when father spoke you didn't say no. Poor fellow is gone now and he'd say ‘you've missed that – come here - how many times must I show you this...’

'... everything was uniform'

Stuart: I mean it was so easy, I can fall out of bed, take a pyjama top off and put a white shirt on and a pair of trousers and that was it for work..

Deborah: ...he was at boarding school from eight years old so everything was uniform, even at weekends it would be, you know, as it was for me too. You know you wore a uniform for whatever you were doing it was all the same, you didn't have that individuality to choose

‘...I know his waist size and his leg length’

Interviewer: Have you always bought your own clothes or have other people bought clothes for you?

Stuart: I did up to the time Debs and I got together and after that I have had nothing whatever to do with clothes at all. Debs is in charge. I don't have anything to do with clothes. When I need something, she thinks I need something, she will go out and...

Deborah: ...he NEVER thinks he needs anything!

Deborah: I mean I know his waist size and his leg length and the colours that suit him and what he likes as well.

Occasionally I'd go like that flowery shirt the grey with the pink flowers on... so you know occasionally we'd go just slightly, slightly trendy as he would say. But going back to hair, I used to cut your hair for years didn't I?

‘...even in a poor neighbourhood there were different grades of poor’

Lily: My mother worked in a rag sorting place. They used to have rag and bone men that went around those days collecting rags, and my mother worked where they took the rags to, and she was amongst dozens of others, grading, taking cotton from wool and all this sort of thing... and if anything looked wearable she bought it home and I wore it

'...every colour under the sun'

Lily: *When I started work and I can remember the very first thing I had done. It was a perm and at the time they called it a bubble cut. When I think about it now it was horrendous*

Interviewer: *And going to the hairdresser's regularly has that become a natural part of your life?*

L: *Oh yes! Once I had money in my pocket I was every colour under the sun*

I: *Really?*

L: *They brought one out called Black Tulip and it was like a... it was very dark purple. But one thing I was very adventurous with was my hair. I'd have it permed, then I'd have it cut short, then I'd have it dyed. And I did all sorts with my hair. I wasn't very adventurous in any other way, but with my hair I did mess about, yeah*

Number One Nana

Grandson: I bought it back and she wore it. She never took it off, for years. Do you remember that? 'Number One Nana' as it was called.... It got all crunched up in the end from when she went to sleep and things like that, but 20 years she wore it

Mo: Purple is probably one of my first.. is my colour really. It's Mark's colour as well, isn't it, and what have you. And the same with my mum, there's purple..

Interviewer: Where did that come from then do you think?

Mo: I think it's still to do with Mark really. I've got two brothers, I've got Mark that's died and Glen as well.

Appearance as a mode of orientation

The 'body-at-home': 'Such a body extends into space through how it reaches towards objects that are already 'in place'... By objects we would include not just physical objects but also styles, capacities, aspirations, techniques, habits'.

'Disorientation involves failed orientations: bodies inhabit spaces that do not extend their shape, or use objects that do not extend their reach'

(Ahmed, 2006, 2007)

‘... so I decided to get it chopped’

Daughter: ...and looking at calorie contents on things, it's not always easy, because numbers were one of the first things to go, wasn't it?

Mo: Well my hair's always been very long, and I decided to get it chopped because I felt it was too much for me to do, when I first got my diagnosis and everything. And I just couldn't be bothered. I mean it was down here, my hair...

Daughter: You used to have to do more styling of it, didn't you

Mo: Yeah and I just couldn't do it. So that's how I finished up having short hair. But I'm quite happy about it, I'm still happy about it because it's easier to do it now

‘... that feeds into the dementia look’

Deborah: I do find when it (hair) gets longer and – I’m interested in this project you’re doing – I think when it gets longer and fuzzy looking and he’s got on his gardening tracksuit bottoms and an old t-shirt, which is absolutely fine for the garden – it’s amazing how dishevelled, rightly so for a gardening thing, but add to that something where the clothes aren’t right, you know, that the clothes may be a bit stained or something like that and the shirt’s maybe very old and worn, I think that feeds into the dementia look

‘...they still know you’re married to me’

Deborah: And that’s why, when you, you know, even if you say ‘Oh I’ve just put this shirt on’, I’ll say ‘Well it’s no use it won’t go with - you’ve got black with navy’ and he’ll say ‘Oh alright’ even if it’s a bit of a fag at least somebody’s caring. And he’ll say ‘Oh I’m only playing with the old chaps at the golf club’ I’ll say ‘Well they still know you’re married to me, change your top’ – doesn’t matter what they think

Interviewer: So Stuart’s appearance is a reflection on you in some indirect way would you say?

D: Well I wouldn’t want people to think I didn’t care how he looks when he went out.

Conclusions

- Multi-sensory and embodied memories are woven into biographical narratives
- The doing of appearance figures prominently in recollections
- Appearance is a situated accomplishment
- Meanings and practices are deeply ingrained but not always easily observed or discerned
- Maintaining appearance is a relationship-sustaining practice
- Appearance is a mode of orientation; the 'body-at-home' feels comfortable