

SETTING THE SOCIOLOGICAL STAGE

Bennett, E. V., Clarke, L. H., Kowalski, K. C., & Crocker, P. R. (2017). "I'll do anything to maintain my health": How women aged 65–94 perceive, experience, and cope with their aging bodies. Body Image, 21, 71–80.

Cameron, E., Ward, P., Mandville-Anstey, S. A., & Coombs, A. (2019). The female aging body: A systematic review of female perspectives on aging, health, and body image. Journal of Women & Aging, 31(1), 3-17.

The connections between gender, appearance, social value / worth through the life course
*For women aging is still implicated in a loss of both beauty and power

Common approaches / messages around women's aging

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4

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- Individual responsibility and attitudes are emphasized
- *Healthy aging often situated as non-aging
- *Anti-aging products, "ageless" role-models

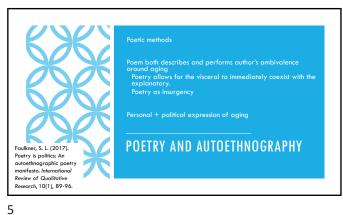
"Embracing invisibility"

Traumatizing patriarchal norms around how women (are meant to) look/age

More in-depth exploration of experiences of women who are aging

SETTING THE PERSONAL STAGE Process of resistance, A history steeped in patriarchal beauty norms pleases me not..
internalization compliance and disruption Aging as a "lifequake" – loss of agency, loss of "the usual methods"

3



Expansion of narratives around aging Critique of how social norms infiltrate understandings of gender and health CONNECTIONS TO WOMEN'S HEALTH

1





If "The Face" didn't give me away -

I want to matter but I am afraid to be seen.

You must be seen to matter

I want to - not be seen.

And yet not invisible – I want to matter

But appearance does

if it doesn't, it's because I've aged out

I don't want to be the age where appearance doesn't matter

When appearance doesn't matter

You are invisible

I want to matter, but not be seen -as I am

Aged

Appearance ALWAYS matters

. .

You are beautiful 'inside and out' silly

Said a friend, who didn't understand

Oh no, never look in the mirror with your glasses on –

Said the nurse aesthetician

Back away from the mirror, see the whole

Said a therapist

(If only there were no mirror −)

Fillers are the only thing that will work on the sagging and the vertical wrinkles,

but I don't recommend it. I've seen them go wrong

Said a nurse aesthetician

Botox didn't work because it's like when you drive a car over grass again and again and again,

the grass can't bounce back up.

There are ruts. You need filler AND Botox

Said a plastic surgeon

I have RUTS on my face

I said to myself.

Oh I would never consider plastic surgery, I love the look of a life lived

Said another friend

A life lived.... a life **lived** - in the past when you were young – and visible and mattered

A life now over

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I did ALL THE RIGHT THINGS

to be the healthy, active old person.

I mean I am not old yet,

Is 50s old?

but I did the things... I lost weight and maintained it (for power and for health),

I exercised daily and lifted weights (for looks, strength and confidence),

I learned which foods were better for me and why and I ate them.

I did ALL THE RIGHT THINGS

and my face got old and my skin still sagged.

I cannot – could not - exercise, learn or nourish my way out of an aging body.

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If no one knew my age –

if my face (and neck, and arms) didn't give me away

I could still matter... contribute, feel passion, know love

But

My mother said, you look old

My mother said, you don't look *that* bad My mother said, I didn't mean it that way

People don't see what you see

Said a friend

People don't see what you see

Are you fucking kidding me?

People don't see what you see

Doesn't make what I see any less real

I WANT to look young (younger) – I want it everyday I'd pay for it – but I don't I'm paying for not doing it – in angst and despair And wanting to be seen not seen – with this face

The end

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