

Afro-textured hair

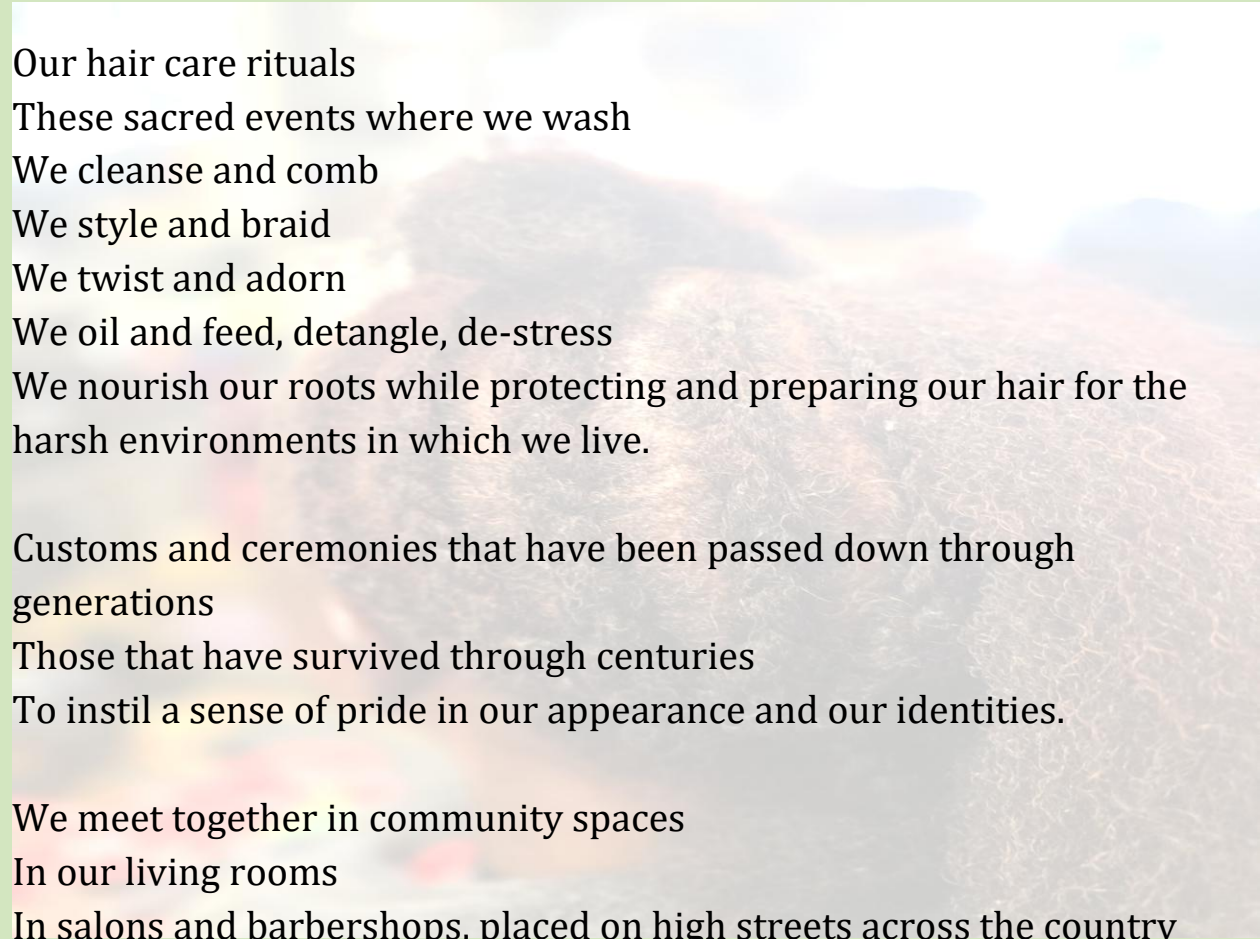
The most diverse and unique hair type on planet earth



Rider Shafique

From coils to curls
Locs to twists
From braids to fades
Afro-textured hair is vastly versatile
Evidenced through our wide range of natural hair styles.

Styles that are deeply rooted in culture, tradition, and spirituality.



Our hair care rituals
These sacred events where we wash
We cleanse and comb
We style and braid
We twist and adorn
We oil and feed, detangle, de-stress
We nourish our roots while protecting and preparing our hair for the
harsh environments in which we live.

Customs and ceremonies that have been passed down through
generations
Those that have survived through centuries
To instil a sense of pride in our appearance and our identities.

We meet together in community spaces
In our living rooms
In salons and barbershops, placed on high streets across the country
Across the globe
Across the diaspora
Places where we go to nurture and celebrate our 'Blackness'
Centres of Black love
Community hubs
Portals to home
Where the importance of positive representation

Self-love, beauty and Black joy are understood.

Yet still we are told by society that some hair is better than others
That some hair is bad while other hair is good
And that the hair that grows naturally from our heads can be
unprofessional
Unacceptable, problematic and a reason for dismissal.

From as early as four or five
Our Black children face discrimination for natural hair and natural hair
styles
Discrimination that sadly follows most for the rest of their lives.

For we have lived lifetimes being told that Afro-textured hair is less
presentable
That it affects our intelligence and performance
Or that somehow we are more efficient when wearing wigs
The closer our hair appears to resemble Eurocentric beauty standards
The more acceptable we become.

Too many have internalised these colonial ideals and ideologies
Leaving many traumatised due to these attacks on our livelihoods
Our cultures
Our identities and our humanity.

We need to call out the racism
the discrimination
the unconscious bias
The ludicrous.

Wash and cleanse our minds of this colonial mentality
Repair the damage done through centuries of mistreatment

misinformation and misrepresentation

Speak out in support of those who have faced or are facing Afro-textured hair discrimination for whatever reason, situation, location or setting.

For this, a personal hair journey where we learn to rellove our hair,
We relearn the significance of our practices and routines,
We take pride in our appearances,
Our identities,
Our cultures and heritages,

For these crowns are blessed, majestic, spiritual and deeply rooted in pride and resistance.

Afro-textured hair,
A lifelong journey.



Poem's Providence

Afro-textured hair; The most diverse and unique hair type on planet earth by Rider Shafique. This poem is based partially on photo-elicitations conducted by first year undergraduate students within the Sociology department at Goldsmiths University of London; and funded by the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust grant awarded in 2024 to Dr. Pamela Odih BSoc.Sc. Ph.D.

Research Funding

British Academy and Leverhulme Trust award. British Academy and Leverhulme Trust (2024/25): *Challenging Hair Discrimination Through Racial Narratives, Industry Knowledge on the Economics of Hair and Counter Literacy Equality, Diversity Strategies*. <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/38561/>

Further Information

Dr. Pamela Odih is a senior lecturer in sociology at Goldsmiths University London. Please contact her to discuss the project and it's free to access teaching resources available for EDI leads and school teachers. Pamela's email address: p.odih@gold.ac.uk

