



Even a basic interaction with an older adult, wherein the person's age is revealed, can trigger what seems to be an innocuous response: "Really? You don't look seventy-eight!" As though first there is a way one must look at seventy-eight and second that it is a compliment not to appear so. What does a seventy-eight year old look like, and is it any better or worse than looking five or thirty-five? These compliments actually communicate affirmation of healthfulness while insinuating derision of age. By stating something to the effect of "That's *great* you don't look your age!" we are reaffirming to the recipient and ourselves that the last thing any of us wants to appear is... old.