Performing gender and 'old age': silvering beauty and having a laugh

J. Dolan

Unlifted 'old age', untouchable stars

At this juncture, I continue to tease out issues arising at the old age, profit and celebrity nexus by shifting attention across the discursively produced, mediatised Cartesian binary from the ostensibly ageing brains of the silvered economy of celebrity to the gendered, ageing bodies of cinematic stars and the meanings inscribed on those bodies. As with Chap. 3, I locate stars in the economy of celebrity and its pursuit of profits, with my thinking informed by Dyer's account of star image. But here, greater weight will be given to his understanding of the ideological work performed by the bodies of stars whereby their flesh and blood existence works to guarantee an authentic, private person beyond the screen, beyond the image, and to 'articulate what it is to be a human being in contemporary society' (1986, 8). Such articulation speaks about 'society's investment in the private as the real' (13) and tells us 'how the private is understood to be the recovery of the natural "given" of human life, our bodies' (13). Therefore, when stars reveal their private lives, or are exposed in some way, they simultaneously uphold ideologies of individualism and uphold as 'natural' those discursive regimes through which bodies are individually differentiated—gender, race and sexuality. Dyer thus makes a crucial and useful distinction between specific biological bodies associated with particular star images, and the ideological work of those star bodies in making discursively produced social categories seems to be natural, to appear as biological propensities. As he summarises,

> 'Stars are … embodiments of the social categories in which people are placed and through which they have to make sense of their lives, and indeed through which we make our lives—categories of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and so on' (1986: 18).

It is no great leap to locate old age within Dyer's 'and so on' and to start thinking about the ways in which the silvering of stardom is imbricated in the naturalisation of old age as a biological process and an effect of chronologically measured living.

The appearance(s) of star bodies underpins the economy of celebrity, where, regardless of the product promoted, those bodies are subjected to the glare of publicity as they are simultaneously positioned as products/objects. For instance, my analysis of Nicole Kidman as a *Brain Age* ambassador identifies her transition from youth to old age (within the Hollywood conglomerate's taxonomy of feminine ageing) and how this transition positions her as a subject of scrutiny for signs of decline and decrepitude. To confess, my own scrutiny of Kidman tends to focus on her curiously unfurrowed, immobile brow and its suggestions that her *Brain Age* trained and rejuvenated mind is matched by an equally conditioned and rejuvenated face, and its visible reminder that for most female celebrities, it is never too soon to banish what are constituted as the feared signs of impending old age and to display the artifice of smooth, firm skin. There are suggestions that the mediascape is mobilising similar scrutiny of male celebrities, 'Brad Pitt's wrinkles ruining his career' (Gates 2010) or 'How to Age Gracefully, Clooney-Style: A 5-Step Guide for Men' (Dold 2013), but these examples are unusual and the extent to which this constitutes age based opprobrium is questionable. And following Pamela Church Gibson's (2005) recognition that Pitt and Clooney constitute the counterpoints of a 'rough/smooth' masculine dichotomy, these headlines are more about securing that counterpoint than the regulation of masculine age appearance, especially since male privilege is ubiquitous in the economy of celebrity. It is not just that male celebrities earn more and have more opportunities for work throughout their careers (Lauzen 2015), it is also that as male stars/celebrities age, they are protected from appearance based rejection and abjection by ideas of 'distinguished', 'veteran' and/or 'vintage' masculinity, and as Negra and Holmes (2008) suggest, by different notions of privacy that are more concerned with male misdemeanour than their appearance. It is also the case that the increasing visibility of older female celebrities whether local or global, is earned by their adherence to capitalist and patriarchal imperatives of female body management and the consumption of highly conventionalised processes and products that equates to a regulatory regime of ageing femininity. In effect, the visibility of silvered female stars is contingent upon the successful embodiment of a regulatory regime of beauty, what Naomi Wolf (1990) terms 'The Beauty Myth'.

Before I go any further I need to flag up the racialised and classed dynamic of the beauty myth. In a cogent review of feminist debates about beauty, Maxine Lee Craig (2006) points out that 'beauty is contested, at any given moment there will be multiple standards of beauty in circulation' (2006: 160) and that,

> Racist ideologies commonly promote the appearance of the dominant group against the purported ugliness of a subordinate group … Dominant beauty standards that idealized fair skin, small noses

> and lips, and long flowing hair defined black women's dark skin colour, facial features, and tightly curled, short hair as ugly. In many, but not all representations, black women's bodies were also stigmatized as hypersexual, a characterization that positioned black women as the moral opposites of pure white women (2006: 163).

From this position, Craig argues that black women who engage with beauty should be seen as making a claim to terrain already positioned as belonging to white women, or more particularly to thin white women, and thereby seen to be resisting or challenging that definition of beauty. She adds that white working-class women are simultaneously, but differently, marginalised by the paradigm of beauty through discourses of respectability. Where black women tend to claim beauty as an act of defiance, as a way of talking back, white working-class women are more likely to shore-up the status quo through the complicit adoption of beauty practices in attempts to secure respectability and to shield themselves from the stigmas attached to working-class femininity. Women, as Craig summarises, 'use beauty practices to position themselves as classed and racialized subjects of a particular age' (2006: 167).

The 'Beauty Myth' is then a white, middle-class myth that underpins a global industrial complex and that impinges on the economy of celebrity even as it forges an intersection with formations of old age that extends across the chronological age range from forty-something stars like Kidman, to those who have reached the seventy plus age group—Goldie Hawn (Tincknell 2012), Honor Blackman (Garde-Hansen 2012), Dame Judi Dench (Williams 2015), Julie Christie (Bell 2016) and Charlotte Rampling (Jermyn 2016). The 'whiteness' of the silvered beauty myth when articulated by the economy of celebrity can be recognised by the near absence of non-white ambassadors and the marginalisation of black stars into endorsements of functional, non-glamorous products. For instance, though still working as a documentary film narrator and voice actor as CGI animated Stretch in *Toy Story 3* (Unkrich 2010), Oscar winning Whoopi Goldberg has become largely invisible except for appearances in endorsement commercials for Poise 'weak bladder' pads. Here the disturbing proximity of black femininity and products that signify fourth age abjection speaks for itself.

Even as the silvered beauty myth secures a white hegemony, it also regulates the age appearance of its female celebrities through what Jo Garde-Hansen sees as a repertoire of 'distancing techniques that show…just how far the ravages of time can be eliminated or held at bay' (2012: 167). Kirsty Fairclough similarly observes how 'The gossip industry encourages a micro-scrutiny of the ageing self where no aspect of physical appearance can be left unattended and which must always be subject to "making over"' (2012: 102). Both the scrutiny and the 'making over' of the aged self is readily recognised in the disruptions to *Vanity Fair*'s Hollywood Portfolio by Diane Keaton (see Chap. 3), as well as the highly publicised red carpet appearances of older, glamorous female stars such as Meryl Streep, Dame Helen Mirren, Diane Keaton and Annette Bening, who less than twenty five years ago would all have been relegated to the Hollywood conglomerate's post-menopausal scrap heap. Instead, these silvered female stars who are seemingly untouched by both old age and rejuvenation interventions are held up as 'graceful agers'; as embodiments of late-life style and glamour— 'Timeless beauty: Hollywood star Meryl Streep, 65, oozes glamour at *Into the Woods* premiere' (Thistlethwaite 2014); 'Helen Mirren Looks Glamorous As Always At The Tony Awards' (Bickley 2015); 'Judi Dench Looks Impeccable In Abu Sandeep Khosla' (Baptiste 2015). Meanwhile, held in counterpoint to the elite cohort of 'untouched' graceful agers is a body (are the bodies) of ageing rejuvenators like Jane Fonda, Susan Sarandon and Madonna who are aligned to the botched/successful dichotomy of a rejuvenation imperative that is regulated by the kind of pathologising ageist gaze once brought to bear on Bette Davis and Joan Crawford in their late-life roles (Jermyn 2012; Dolan 2013; Shingler 2015; Shary and McVittie 2016).

My discussion of 'late-style' in Chap. 3 established how Dench and Keaton successfully negotiate the conflicting demands of chronological decorum—that is to appear youthful while also avoiding adjudications of 'mutton dressed as lamb'. Like Meryl Streep, another 'graceful ager' who similarly avoids age opprobrium, Dench and Keaton's images are based on highly publicised refusals of cosmeceutical interventions, 'My thinking about plastic surgery is this', Keaton says, 'I haven't had it, but never say never' (Snead 2012), while Streep is quoted as saying 'To each his own. I really understand the chagrin that accompanies ageing, especially for a woman, but I think people look funny when they freeze their faces' (Dilluvio 2014). Here, both Keaton and Streep gesture towards the rejuvenation imperative but also register a more widespread ambivalence 'about physical restoration of youth to middle-age, seeing such refurbishing and freshening as both necessary and impossible' (Wearing 2007). Inadvertently, Keaton and Streep answer an oft repeated query of Dench's, 'Will I be the only unlifted face in Hollywood?' (Brockes 2011), that was reputedly posed in advance of her Oscar award for *Shakespeare in Love* (Madden 1998). Such testaments do not exclude these stars from the logic that 'they look good so they must have had work done' that has them repeatedly cited across the blogosphere as exemplars of undisclosed and successful plastic surgery. Simultaneously, the unlifted beauty of these stars has become a source of inspiration and aspiration for stars like Kim Cattrall who want to 'embrace ageing' in the denial of the knife (Thompson 2011). The mass popularity of the 'untouched', unlifted female celebrity was foregrounded in 2016 by The Huffington Post's Andrea Pflaumer,

> About a month ago I posted on my Facebook business page what I thought was a fairly lovely — and innocuous — photo of two beautiful women, Maggie Smith and Judi Dench. I captioned it: 'Two divine women. no wild outfits. no heavy make-up or plastic surgery. They simply inspire our admiration and grab our attention because of who they are.' That post got nearly 16 million views. It was shared 96,454 times. It received more than 14,000 comments. (Pflaumer 2016)

However, Pflaumer is guilty of some obvious dissembling, in that our attention is grabbed not simply because of 'who they are', but largely because Smith and Dench are high profile stars who possess levels of economic and social capital that paves the way to the best make-up artists, best hairdressers and well-cut, well-fitting clothes, not to mention access to 'a little refreshing in photos' (Keaton in Snead 2012). And crucially, the 'who they are' is shaped by our knowledge of their position within an elite of female actors (the preferred term amongst professional thespians) that includes Streep and Keaton for whom silvered box-office appeal and ongoing opportunities for work are predicated on age-resistant acting ability, rather than age-vulnerable appearance. Such are the profiles of these stars in nominations for Oscar and BAFTA awards, as well as their renown from critically acclaimed box-office successes that I do not need to labour the point. This profile, this image gives them a virtually unassailable bankability that, while not totally independent of how they look, gives considerable leeway in the avoidance of the Hollywood conglomerate's rejuvenation imperative. In short, their distinctive unlifted faces that run counter to film industry rejuvenation imperatives does not undermine their bankability within the industry. Effectively, they are professionally 'untouchable' despite being embodiments of 'untouched' graceful ageing.

The silvered beauty myth

Outside this elite, the pressures placed on most women within the economy of celebrity to look good, to stay looking young and beautiful are relentless. Yet, as Pam Cook (2012) observes, there is little pretence that looking young and beautiful is a natural attribute. Rather Cook argues, feminine allure is recognised as an achieved, fabricated effect; a form of self-presentation predicated on consumption and the skills of artifice. Cook adds that beauty is 'exhibited through visual display rather than emanating from a predefined self' (2012: 103). Within the silvered beauty myth fabrication now means rejuvenation through a range of potions and punctures that include, but cannot be limited to, hair dye, anti-ageing creams, Botox and plastic surgery. With cosmetic companies increasingly promoting their brands as 'anti-ageing' products, those female celebrities who have crossed the forty plus benchmark into Hollywood's taxonomy of old age and who can visibly display the achievement of the silvered beauty myth's imperatives are rewarded with media acclaim and access to highly profitable brand ambassador contracts, like those between L'Oréal cosmetics and Jane Fonda, Andie MacDowell, Diane Keaton, Dame Helen Mirren, Eva Longoria, Julianna Margulies, Julianne Moore, Susan Sarandon and Penelope Cruz who repeatedly assure us that 'We're worth it'. Yet even the widely shared recognition that celebrity beauty per se, and silvered ageing beauty more especially, hinges on skilful artifice, this artifice has normative limits. These limits are defined in two ways, first by a rejection of post-production image enhancements such as airbrushing and computer-graphic transformations, what Vivian Sobchack terms the 'second operation of plastic surgery' (Sobchack 1999: 206). Secondly, by an arbitrary positive/negative binary organised between successful/botched procedures and sanctioned/non-sanctioned interventions.

As I observe elsewhere (Dolan 2013) the use of post-production enhancements has led to consumer protests and legal action on both sides of the Atlantic. In 2012, the UK's Advertising Standards Authority ruled that the L'Oréal campaign fronted by Rachel Weisz was exaggerated and misleading and banned it, although the watchdog agency rejected complaints about a separate L'Oréal commercial for a moisturiser featuring a photograph of actress Jane Fonda (Reuters 2012). It also banned some Photoshopped cosmetics advertisements featuring Julia Roberts and Christy Turlington. After the national Advertising Division (NAD) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus ruled that a CoverGirl mascara advertisement was misleading, Procter & Gamble shut down the campaign. The NAD, which can issue rulings but cannot itself enforce them, said it was following the lead of its sister body in the UK. While the success of these cases can be a consumer led victory against the obfuscations of the advertising and marketing industries, it does reinforce the idea that there is a direct link between celebrity endorsement and consumer desires and that this must be based on trust. Effectively, the ruling supports the idea that endorsements must only use the kinds of fabrications of beauty that are widely available to consumers. This consumer/brand ambassador dynamic of trust has since been bolstered when complaints made to the UK Advertising Standards Agency in 2015 about the airbrushing of Dame Helen Mirren photos promoting L'Oréal's new 'older woman' range, 'Age Perfect Golden Age', were rejected because lines were visible on the face of the actress. As the Daily Mirror trumpeted, 'She really DOES look this good: L'Oréal moisturiser advert featuring Dame Helen Mirren, 69, is CLEARED by watchdog over claims she was airbrushed' (McClelland 2015).

Suspicion of the photographic image's unreliability makes 'live' embodied appearances by older female stars on chat shows and at red carpet events all the more powerful since it ostensibly bypasses the opportunity for 'second operation of plastic surgery' and allows for the 'successfully' aged female body to be effectively displayed. To put this

another way, the embodiment of successful ageing is placed on display. Such live appearances also illuminate how the effort of silvered beauty is not confined to the faces of stars but also extends to bodies that are seemingly unmarked by pregnancy or overindulgence; characterised by slender legs, pert breasts and buttocks and displayed through revealing and figure-hugging dresses. While live appearances provide rich sites for exhibiting the successful achievement of 'silvered beauty's' imperatives, they pale in comparison when compared to the power of paparazzi images. Famously, in 2008, just months after receiving an Oscar for her performance in the title role of *The Queen*, a globally circulated paparazzi shot of a bikini clad Mirren established her as the idealised benchmark of the older women's body and as the embodiment of 'senior sexiness' (Daily Mail Reporter 2008). The power of such photographs resides in the absence of any investment by the paparazzi in preserving Mirren's image. In the paparazzi paradigm, a shot breaking the 'magic spell' of 'cosmeceutical enhancement' (Sobchack 1999: 202) by revealing the signs of letting go (flab, body hair, stretch marks), the signs of maintenance (leaving the gym, leaving the beauty parlour, leaving the clinic), or signs of surgery (attempts to conceal scars, before and after images) is just as valuable as those shots of perfected artifice that secure the silvered beauty myth. Because of this, the Mirren bikini shot is seen as genuine and authentic because it is safely distanced from the practices of pre- or post-production enhancements that underpin official publicity and promotions. As the *Daily Mail*'s (2008) accompanying copy reassures, 'this was no retouched studio shot'. Crucially then, Mirren successfully embodies the silvered beauty myth.

Notably though the *Daily Mail* adds that 'the only work to transform her toned body having been carried out during gruelling hours in the gym'. Thus, there is no pretence that the achievement of the 'successfully aged' female body should be effortless. Similarly, in 2011 during an interview on NBC's Today show, Jane Fonda forged a link between effort and the silvered beauty myths' approach to 'successful ageing' when she rationalised her own election of plastic surgery despite having forsworn such procedures when she had signed as the 'ageing face' of L'Oréal cosmetics five years earlier (see Dinnerstein and Weitz 1994 for a comparison of approaches to ageing by Fonda and Barbara Bush). In that regretful interview she elaborated on the labour of 'staying young',

> It's important to exercise when you're younger. But it's like the number one ingredient for successful aging. …It's less about trying to look a certain way as being able to get up and down out of a chair, carry your grandkids, look over your shoulder when backing down a driveway. Staying as independent as you can. (Fonda 2011)

Notably, Fonda's explicit concern is the avoidance of fourth age frailty and fostering ongoing independence, rather than the endorsement of rejuvenated appearance. Yet, the elision between rejuvenated appearance and ongoing mobility and independence mobilised here suggests otherwise. And given that Fonda had just updated her trademark fitness videos it is tempting to accuse her of dissembling: of disavowing her own economic, emotional and psychological investments in the silvered beauty myth. But this overlooks the interpellatory power of discourse by conflating the person Jane Fonda, who no doubt suffers all manner of anxieties about her ageing body, with the celebrity image Jane Fonda whose signifying system both appropriates and is appropriated by the silvered beauty myth.

The failings of the silvered beauty myth

The silvered beauty myth effectively underscores the free-flowing dynamic between the economy of celebrity and the circuits of ideologically saturated meanings about ageing femininity flowing across, and naturalised by, the bodies of female celebrities. Such naturalisation does not simply impinge on ideas of beauty, but also on the consumption of products and services that promise its achievement. notably, the silvered beauty myth's rejuvenatory imperative is not confined to the erasure of the signs of ageing, but also extends to the effacement of rejuvenatory processes and procedures of erasure. In a bizarre ideological contradiction, it is not enough for an ageing female celebrity to look 'fresh', to expend time and labour on rejuvenatory practices, she must also work to hide that labour. Where success in the artifice of the silvered beauty myth is rewarded, the failure to conceal the labour of achievement results in censure and/or vilification. The global gossip machine is awash with features revealing failed attempts at hiding post-cosmetic surgery scars; with before and after images exposing changed features, slimmer torsos, smoothed brows, lifted jawlines, plumped body parts; and with displaying brutal examples of 'excessive' or 'botched' procedures. In the latter instance, the same list of celebrities is 'repetitively and non-sequentially' (Negra and Holmes 2008: 23) cited across multiple, exponentially increasing sites, and the named celebrities are denigrated for 'excessive' plastic surgery and for having 'spoiled their looks' through 'botched' or ill-advised procedures. Michael Jackson, once a soft target in this domain, is now exempt following post-mortem media canonisation, while the endless citation of La Toya Jackson, Jennifer Grey, Priscilla Presley, Joan Rivers, Mickey Rourke is little more than an excuse to elaborate and promote possible procedures provided they are successfully achieved. Even as print articles and Internet sites elicit disapproval of the 'failed' procedure, the comparisons they draw serve to further normalise plastic surgery generally and rejuvenation practices particularly, since they implicitly valorise their successful achievement. Like those body-shock

TV shows that seek to rectify 'botched' cosmeceutical interventions, the gossip machine is more about quality control than it is about dissuasion, and the silvered beauty myth is left intact.

While the denigration of the ageing female celebrity's body identifies the failures of cosmeceutical interventions as a mechanism through which to regulate the degree and quality of 'treatments', it also points to the limits of their reach, those parts of the body that rejuvenation procedures fail to reach—especially the hands. This is nowhere more evident than in the vilification of Madonna (music, video and film star), typified by one age-shaming headline that circulates between print and web platforms, 'She's so vein…Madonna's hands look worse than ever', while its anchoring text is similarly repeated, 'At 49, wrinkled and vein-ravaged hands that reveal she is battling to defy the signs of ageing' (*Mail Online* 2007; *Evening Standard* 2007). The *GossipRocks* blog (2007) goes further and adds an insinuating rider, 'Expert plastic surgeons say skin on hands is particularly susceptible to losing its plumpness over time and have noted that it is one of the parts of the body which betray a person's age', before stitching in a regulatory endorsement to the use of cosmeceutical interventions, 'While treatments are available, Madonna may have trouble fitting much into her already busy schedule'. The longevity of this hands-of-time age-shaming is striking. At the time of writing, almost ten years on, the *New York Daily News* was banging the same drum when its caption 'Madonna's hands aren't aging as gracefully as her fresh face' (Schroeder 2016) ran alongside a photograph of Madonna with hands raised. This caption perfectly illuminates an argument made by Diane Railton and Paul Watson (2012) who draw on feminist and 'queer' theory (Butler 1989; Bordo 1993) to suggest that Madonna 'drags out' ageing,

> Not in the sense of simply trying to retard or delay the visible marks of age on the body itself, dragging out the process over time, but more complexly in the sense of dragging the work required to appear young, attractive and desirable out into the open (2012: 205).

As they add, such 'dragging out' exposes the contradictions of a culture that aligns women's desirability to essentialist discourses of nature, youth and the body, while requiring women 'to invest considerable personal and economic resources in achieving a performance of gendered identity capable of meeting society's approval' (2012: 205). A comparison between responses to the exposure of Madonna's ageing flesh and that of Mirren's offers further insights here. Where Mirren is praised for her 'enviable curves and flat stomach' (*Mail Online* 2008a) and lauded for the effort and labour that produces such exemplary flesh, Madonna is scorned for the display of her visibly veined hands and sinewy arms that reveal 'she has been exercising too much' (*The Telegraph* 2009) while she is subjected to public regulatory injunctions 'Isn't it time you put it away?' (Moir 2008). So, where Mirren drags out her labour and her investments in the successful achievement of desirable, ageing femininity, Madonna, drags out the failure of similar efforts. Effectively, Madonna's flesh drags out the vulnerability of the silvered beauty myth, its propensity to break down, to collapse, to fail and she thus reveals the dreaded declining body that constantly threatens to rupture the artifice of rejuvenation.

To be clear, this is not a return to an essential body that lies underneath the artifice of the silvered beauty myth. Rather Madonna's failure to embody the silvered beauty myth's articulation of successful ageing marks the transition between the different discursive regimes of third and fourth age imaginaries. As I suggest above, Nicole Kidman's image also marks a transition: the transition between youthful and third age categories within the Hollywood taxonomy of female celebrity/star ageing. At this juncture, Kidman became an object of scrutiny for signs of success or failure within the regulatory regime of the silvered beauty myth. Here, through adjudications of failure, Madonna also crosses a threshold, but in this case from the acceptable achievement of third age artifice and practices into an abjected fourth age where those practices no longer have traction. Thus, it becomes evident that the vilification of Madonna's flesh is not simply an attack on 'botched' or 'excessive' techniques of third age artifice, rather this vilification is an expression of disgust at the inscription on her body of dreaded fourth age decline.

Discussing glimpses of the hidden and more 'disagreeable' aspects of the ageing process, Mike Featherstone argues that 'Such representations challenge our existing modes of classification and capacity to emphasize with those whose bodies have clearly betrayed them' (1995: 227). Gilleard and Higgs further argue that the constitution of such betrayal by the body, such failures of third age rejuvenation technologies mark a dreaded imagined future of fourth age incapacity and frailty, what is effectively a state of 'unbecoming'. Frailty, as they explain, is based on projections by socio-medical professionals of future high risk—not just of physical harm, but of becoming 'lost' from citizenship (2014: 13–15). Here, the disgust expressed by the failure of successful ageing, the dreaded slide into frailty glimpsed via Madonna's flesh chimes with Kristeva's account of abjection. For Kristeva, the abject is not simply that which is expelled from the body or society as repellent, disgusting and harmful, but it is also that which floats between established orders such as inside/outside, sustenance/ waste, self/other. Because the abject floats between categories, it disturbs/ unsettles them and brings into view the risk of failed boundaries. While this includes discriminatory boundaries like class, race, gender, sexuality, able-bodiedness; like third and fourth age imaginaries; it also includes the very idea of boundaries per se. And crucially, as Higgs and Gilleard argue, the abjections of fourth age frailty threaten 'the contamination of life by death' (2014: 15). Following from here then, it is possible to see that even as the disgust at Madonna's exposed, ageing flesh drags into view the cultural anxieties of the fourth age imaginary constituted in terms of frailty, decline, dependency and abjection, the 'contamination

of life by death' offers an unwelcome and potent reminder of our universal mortality.

This brief account of a third age female economy of celebrity and its failures has highlighted how successful ageing agendas resonate with the silvered beauty myth, its promises of rejuvenation through cosmeceutical enhancement, as well as anxieties about variable forms of failure—misleading photographs, botched procedures and those ruptures by the fourth age body that undermine the efficacy of successful ageing by inserting the contamination of abjection and inevitable mortality into the discursive nexus. But, gender should not be reduced to femininity, so what of male stars and the meanings of ageing masculinity in the economy of celebrity? I make no apologies for the normalised binary framing of this question since my research is focussed on the gender dichotomy promulgated by cinema more generally and in this instance, the economy of celebrity. Even here, where so much is invested (economic and ideological) in securing the gender binary, there are signs of some relaxation as new markets are recognised. For instance, Maybelline has signed transgender YouTube star Manny Gutierrez as a brand ambassador, and CoverGirl has Instagram star James Charles on its celebrity roster. However, these signs do not outweigh the overwhelming insistence on binary gender difference within the economy of celebrity, nor do they challenge the ways in which stars are mobilised to naturalise that dichotomy. Because I recognise that the gender binary is discursive, arbitrary and constantly under threat I am concerned with the very strategies through which potential ruptures are discursively and ideologically re-secured, especially at the intersection with gender and old age.

Male grooming, appropriate concerns and the exclusion of ageing

Old age is definitely different for male celebrity stars compared to their female counterparts. For female celebrities who cross the forty-something threshold their proximity to the menopause serves as a defining biological marker of entry into the third age imaginary and the elided 'losses' of fertility and youth, while the failure of the silvered beauty myth is constituted as a surrender to fourth age decline. For male celebrities though, as Whelehan and Gwynne suggest, 'there are less clear ascriptions applied to ageing masculinity than to femininity' (2014: 5). As I argue in Chap. 2, while masculine style is predicated on a youth/maturity dichotomy, maturity is the privileged aspect with youthful style positioned as something to be outgrown, rather than treasured and pursued. As I discovered while researching this book, that formation of extended middle-age, of enduring maturity, effectively excises old age from the repertoires of masculinity. Trying to grasp old age discourse in the circuits of male celebrity is, to use the vernacular phrase, like grabbing at fog. Moreover, while male celebrities per se are just as visible as their female counterparts, they are differently positioned in the economy of celebrity. For instance, male celebrity disappears when the words 'age, celebrity, endorsement' are keyed into a search engine (Google, Bing, Google Scholar) since resulting links are to the very same beauty and anti-ageing sites associated with 'female celebrity endorsement' keyword searches. By way of comparison, searches using 'male celebrity endorsement' or 'age male celebrity endorsement' brings up connections to party politics and/or social causes where a concern with age is registered in the cause, rather than the celebrity figure. In a similar vein, when figures like Clive Owen, Jude Law, Nicholas Cage, Johnny Depp, Brad Pitt, Leonardo di Caprio finally make male celebrity visible, they endorse watches, alcohol and fragrances. Clearly then, there is nothing akin to the adjudicatory mechanisms and regulatory regimes of the silvered beauty myth circulating within masculine formations of the economy of celebrity, and as Janet McCabe suggests, 'Men have traditionally escaped age opprobrium' (2012: 125).

Of course, as my discussion of style in Chap. 3 has already suggested, this should not be elided with a total neglect of appearance, provided it conforms to the limited repertoires of the great masculine renunciation. There is little in current grooming practices to disturb that regime and thus 'the gap between male and female grooming practices is decreasing' (Feasey 2009: 362). Ellie Tutt (2015) notes how sporting stars are being used to manage this shift through analysis of one campaign, 'Dove Men + Care partner up with rugby stars to make male grooming masculine'. This trend is threading across the economy of celebrity and Dove Men + Care rugby ambassadors Owen Farrell, Mike Brown and Chris Robshaw now keep company with, amongst others, veteran tennis stars John McEnroe and Pat Rafter and with Dwayne Wade from basketball. Here, it needs to be stressed that the shift noted by Feasey and Tutt is as much about discursive framing as it is about changed material practices—men have always washed, bathed, showered and managed their hair. But where men's grooming was largely dominated by discourses of health and hygiene it is increasingly being regulated under the terms of appearance and attractiveness. And, typically, as with the Beckham brand(ed) fragrance, the physicality of the sporting celebrity secures masculinity from potential disruption triggered by the effeminate connotations of grooming products. With that said, some non-sporting celebrities are acting as brand ambassadors, such as Levine and Justin Bieber for Proactiv skin care products and Rob Lowe for Profile; while *EBONY* magazine advertorials regularly feature Afro-American male celebrities like Laz Alonso, Kevin Hart and Columbus Short recommending facial care products (Walker 2012). notably, these are all young men and there seems little connection to either ageing male celebrity or the wider ageing male consumer, through either flattery or opprobrium.

Moreover, these examples remain highly unusual and with so few outside the sporting arena it is hard to fully connect explicit celebrity endorsements to the post-2009 rise in men's consumption of grooming products that, regardless of age, is usually attributed to 'changing sexual and cultural attitudes of a period that witnessed the rise of the

men's lifestyle magazine sector and the emergence of the metrosexual' (Anderson 2008). This evident distancing between named, non-sporty, male celebrities and grooming product endorsements suggests that celebrity images of masculinity, and the discursively produced structures of masculinity that underpin those images, are being protected from too close association with products that are still considered effeminate in some quarters. Ground breaking gender theorists like Sedgwick (1985), Connell (1995) and Chapman & Rutherford (1988) whose early adoption of feminist methodologies in the study of masculinity and/or masculinities have pointed to a limited and limiting hegemonic heteronormative, white and middle-class formation that is continually contested by competing and unsettling 'others' (non-white, gay, working-class and/or disabled men, all women and any non-binary identity), and hence to a foundational insecurity. Masculinity, or what Connell would term hegemonic masculinity, can only ever be provisionally secured and such provisional fixity requires constant vigilance against contamination from, or 'queering' by, its excluded 'others'. Above, I highlight how the structures of mainstream cinema and the economy of celebrity are persistently imbricated in securing the arbitrary boundaries of the gender binary. Part of this ideological project is the protection of the meaning of masculinity, even as the formation changes, due to influences within both the meshes of masculinities and across the gender binary in relation to shifting formations of femininity.

Within the meshes of masculinities, the rubric of male grooming offers a relatively new and unsettling set of discursively saturated consumer practices. Consequently, grooming has the potential to destabilise and transform hegemonic masculinity and thus unsettle gender binary through attitudes and practices that have previously been deemed feminine. Because grooming (rather than staying clean) still carries powerful residual threats of contamination because of 'queer' effeminate associations it has yet to become an adopted 'common sense' of male behaviour. Indeed, a recent study by Ros Gill, Karen Henwood and Carl McLean (2005) of attitudes expressed by male consumers about grooming and plastic surgery, suggests that grooming is a site of hegemonic struggle between 'lads' and 'new men' over the terms of dominant masculinity, with 'lads' 'hostile to the "narcissism" of the "new man" ("grooming is for horses"' opined a lad-mag editor)' (59). Here then, the near absence of male celebrity endorsements (as distinct from advertising) for grooming products can be an expression of anxieties stemming from lingering and emergent threats to hegemonic masculinity and its supporting binary system. It can also be recognised as a strategy whereby some individual male celebrities protect their images by placing a buffering distance between themselves, grooming products and any attendant threats to the hegemonic masculinity they represent and embody.

Given that celebrity ambassadors can demand considerable payments such distancing can be approximated in purely economic terms. For instance, Sylvester Stallone reputedly earned $one million for one year's work promoting the Russian Ice vodka brand for Russian producer Synergy (Serpe 2008), George Clooney is reputedly paid $40 million for facing up the Nespresso launches in Europe and North America (Said 2013), and under the headline 'Brad Pitt's most lucrative advert deal to date' *The Telegraph*'s Alice Vincent (2015) reports that Brad Pitt, Robert De Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio will appear in a $70 million Martin Scorsese directed casino advert. She adds that each star will receive $13 million for appearances in a film that took only two days to shoot. By way of comparison, she notes that Pitt was paid the smaller sum of $ten million to do *Troy*. The veracity of these claims notwithstanding, they are still indicative that the economy of celebrity rewards its ambassadors very well. If this earning potential is neglected in relation to male grooming products, it seems as if for the moment, the consumer capitalist imperative is completely outweighed by the demand to secure hegemonic masculinity.

However, while there are few cinematic male ambassadors for grooming products, the images of male stars are nonetheless appropriated and used to exemplify good practice. They are thus imbricated in the ideological project to normalise male grooming, to render it a 'common sense' or hegemonic practice that paves the way for new consumers, new products and expanded markets and profits. Typical are *Esquire* features that carry headlines such as '9 Men's Haircuts and Hairstyles That Will Never Go Out Of Style' (Parker 2016), or 'Top 10 Bald Celebrities' (Joshua, 2013). These features are heavily illustrated with head shots of leading male stars, both alive and dead—hirsute Daniel Craig, Leonardo DiCaprio alongside deceased Steve McQueen and Paul Newman; while Samuel L. Jackson, Jason Statham, Sir Patrick Stewart and Sir Ben Kingsley represent their bald counterparts—and all illustrations are placed near to advertisements for related male grooming products. Even though these are not explicit endorsements, the association with action heroes operates to mitigate effeminate association in the manner of sports celebrities. Equally, references to icons of earlier generations like Newman and McQueen, and silvered celebrities such as Stewart suggests an element of retro-fitting whereby grooming is presented as a continuity of proper masculinity and not a recent phenomenon. Effectively, old age is used as a mechanism of retro-fitting. Such grooming (and style) retro-fitting traces through a *Daily Mail* interview with Michael Caine, who like Eastwood is chronologically 'old' and professionally 'vintage' and who expresses a silvered life style to say the least, 'I like Crème de La Mer, a moisturiser for dry skin, … It's £100 a jar but it works. I use my wife's hairdresser Adolfo, who comes to the house, and I use Sud Pacific aftershave. I like suits made by Douglas Heyward, wear Merrell shoes for casual and Tod's for smart' (Lipscombe 2007). Given that Caine has been positioned as the embodiment of cool, besuited (never counter cultural) heteronormative, masculinity since the 1960s, he offers a role model of retro-fitted male grooming par excellence. With no evidence that Caine is formally contracted to endorse these brands, products and services, it is a reasonable presumption that he will be amply rewarded with the silver of freebies and/or discounts and/or preferential treatment. Crucially, even though Caine was 74 at the

time, which in many other contexts would count as third age verging on the fourth age imaginary, the signs of age are not an issue—he has dry skin, not wrinkles; problem skin, rather than ageing skin. Effectively, old age is effaced even as silvering stardom is inserted into the frame of masculine grooming.

Similar speech framings were noted by Gill, Henwood and McLean (2005) in their study of male attitudes to body projects. They report that 'in talking about their bodies men repeatedly drew upon a very limited range of discourses or repertoires' (43). En passant, I note the similarity to the limited codes and conventions of sanctioned masculine clothing style. Gill, Henwood and McLean's analysis of speech repertoires suggests that face creams are invariably identified as functional solutions to problem skin conditions such as acne, dryness or oiliness, rather than as enhancements to attractiveness, or like their female counterparts, anti-ageing products. In a similar vein, going to the gym is equated to health and not body image, or it is presented as a professional requirement for fire fighters and the like, or it is deemed to be a pre-requisite of self-defence in masculinity's economy of unpredictable violence. As they stress,

> a certain level of concern for one's appearance … is deemed acceptable and appropriate by men—indeed, … there is great censure in store for those who 'let themselves go'. The skill for men seems to be in negotiating the boundaries between appropriate concern and vanity (51).

Returning to Caine, his description of grooming practices and dry skin can be seen as employing the limited masculine repertoire of speech identified by Gill, Henwood and McLean and as displaying an appropriate concern for his appearance that avoids the taboo of vanity. But equally, because Caine treats dry skin and not wrinkles, age opprobrium escapes the masculine repertoire of speaking, while simultaneously, age and old age is seen to be excluded from masculinity's and/or masculinities' appropriate concerns.

Silvering male celebrity, deferred retirement and late fatherhood

With that said, old age does circulate in the male economy of celebrity, but not necessarily as opprobrium. In 2014 Harvey Keitel embarked on a series of promotional films linked to insurance in which he reprised his *Pulp Fiction* performance of Winstone Wolfe (protection racket irony duly noted). In the USA, he promoted and clarified Obama Health care (Luippold 2013) and in the UK, he became the face and voice of Direct Line car insurance (Glenday 2014). Using his *Telegraph* column (2014) as a direct address to 'one of the most respected actors of your generation, a leading light in such cinematic landmarks as *Taxi Driver, Reservoir Dogs* and *Thelma & Louise*', an enraged Jonny Cooper accuses Keitel of 'selling out' and of placing money over professional integrity. In a telling rider, he adds 'These may be the sunset days of your career, but your star is destined to burn long in Hollywood's celluloid sky. And surely—*surely*—you're not short of a few bob'.

The flippant response is that, who knows, he may well be 'short of a few bob' in his 'sunset years' given his three children with three partners and Hollywood's swingeing break-up settlements. But not to leave it there, at this point, 2014 to be precise, Keitel was 75, yet it is striking that Cooper envisages his career continuing into some future 'sunset years'. This continuation is unquestioned, but as Margaret Morganroth Gullette argues, 'full-time work is gradually becoming a privilege denied to midlife women and men in the United States, with fifty being the turning point even for well-educated men' (2004: 80). Despite the intermittent patterns of acting careers and celebrity appearances, Keitel, along with a cohort of celebrity actors, can safely be placed amongst the privileged over fifties. Additionally, the longevity of this privilege runs counter to average retirement ages for most Western men (and women) of a similar chronological age. Allowing for State variables the average age of retirement in the USA is 63 (Anspach 2016), UK is 65 (Peacock 2012) and in Canada 62 and rising (CBC News 2009). Equally, there are very few men or women who have laboured at tough physically demanding occupations who are able or willing to continue working into old age without a career change. The short span of sporting careers bears testimony to the vulnerability of bodies put under strain daily (and the ever-shifting configuration of being too old). Thus, Cooper's address to Keitel illuminates a middle-class hegemony that takes for granted that bodies remain fit for work well into the seventh decade, a common sense predicated on assumptions of non-manual labour and bodies protected from work-related strain and damage, or in possession of sufficient cultural and economic capital to make a career change in the event of strain or work-related damage.

Simultaneously, Cooper's invocation of Keitel's 'sunset days' unthreatened by retirement locates him amongst a cohort of ageing stars/celebrities whose careers extend well beyond average and normalised retirement ages. The image produced of an enjoyably challenging occupation that undergirds such professional longevity has powerful ideological implications, since it plays into the normalisation of extended working lives and deferred retirement that governments across the West propose as a partial resolution to the 'strain on public spending'—the so-called economic burden of the ageing population as suggested by the UK Office for Budget responsibility (Elliot 2015), or the 'double whammy' of an ageing population and increased health spending predicted by the US financial press in a highly revealing elison of old age, decline and public spending (Ip 2016). In continuing to work, the cohort of ageing stars that currently populate our screens and continue to benefit from the economy of celebrity, make deferred retirement

seem a normal and positive choice, rather than an imposition of neo-liberal economics (Dolan 2016). Of course, the emphasis on the chronological age of all celebrities who continue to work effectively secures them as active third agers or successful agers whose refusal of retirement can be seen as a form of resistance to fourth age decline and abjection. notably though, the hyper-visibility of silver female stars has the effect of glossing over the very real gender differences that pertain in the everyday world beyond the screen, constituted through typical patterns for women of lower pay and fewer working years due to motherhood and the social expectations of women's care-giving role (Gilleard and Higgs 2000: 45–52). With that said, the silvering of third age stardom is gendered and for female celebrities it bears the injunctions of rejuvenation once they reach 40-something, whereas male celebrities are positioned in the 'taken for granted' extended vintage 'maturity' foregrounded in Chap. 3. Under the headline 'Malkovich, Bridges and Keitel Storm Adland' the website Little Black Book: Celebrating Creativity (2014) informs 'that the ad industry just can't get enough of middle-aged, white, male Hollywood stars at the moment'. At that point, the middle-aged Malkovich, Bridges and Keitel were 61, 65 and 75 respectively, yet another instance where the longevity of male middle-age—vintage masculinity—is brought into view, especially when compared to their female counterparts. So, although old age can be recognised at this juncture of the economy of celebrity, it does not function to regulate appearance within repertoires of masculinity, ageing or otherwise, rather it operates in the ideological management of deferred retirement.

Janet McCabe argues that the heavily publicised later-life fatherhood of celebrity/stars George Clooney (55), Kevin Costner (55), Michael Douglas (56), Harvey Keitel (65) or Larry King (67) also makes evident the extended middle-age of male celebrities (2012: 125). By way of comparison, celebrity mothers in their forties are already deemed 'past it'. As recently evidenced in headlines such as 'Janet Jackson Baby: Health Concerns for new Mothers at 50' (Pietrangelo 2017), older celebrity mothers are pathologised through discourses of late pregnancy health risks and/or a social aberration. But no such concerns attend later-life fatherhood. Initially, celebrity fatherhood at any age needs to be in that configuration of postfeminist masculinity noted by Hannah Hamad (2010) whereby a concern with babies, children and family life speaks to ideals of responsibility, caring and sensitivity that are inextricably entwined with heteronormative male 'sexiness'. Hamad also suggests that fatherhood enables 'boyish' male celebrities to mature, to adopt a properly adult male persona while remaining an object of desire,

> The potential for fatherhood to inflect and transform a celebrity's dominant public persona from the immature … to the mature in a manner whereby the ageing process for men is rendered not only acceptable in a youth-orientated media culture, but positively desirable (2010: 155).

As I write, the near hysteria surrounding 56-year-old George Clooney's impending fatherhood—twin boys no less—perfectly illustrates the point. And building on this, for older male celebrities, fathering a baby implies a youth extended beyond the normative frame of chronological life stages; a youth just ending as the celebrity crosses the youth/maturity threshold in ways that carry over connotations of youthful fertility and virility–they're still up to getting it up. So crucially, late fathering is not simply an excision of ageing from formations of masculinity, it is also a claim to a youthful virile potency that continues well into maturity and thereby constitutes a rebuttal of any discourses of decline. This extension of youth into maturity is not the same as the feminine oriented imperatives of rejuvenation and their assumptions of a lost youth in want of restoration. Rather, with masculinity, youth is a continuity that never goes away: a continuity that informs 'maturity' and is imbricated in the maturation process as a valued ingredient. To put this another way, in formations of ageing femininity, old age is the raw material of the rejuvenation imperative, whereas in formations of ageing masculinity, youth is a raw material enhanced by virile maturity.

Acts of contrition to muscling out frailty

As gender cuts across the economy of celebrity, links are forged between the silvered beauty myth and consumer practices, while masculinity's extended and enduring maturity is predicated on bodies still fathering babies, still performing, still doing it after all these years. 'Still doing it' is especially applicable to the image of Mickey Rourke, the perpetual 'bad boy' of gossip culture. In the early 1990s Rourke famously gave up a highly acclaimed Hollywood career earned in films like *Diner* (Levinson 1982), *Rumble Fish* (Coppola 1983), *The Pope of Greenwich Village* (Rosenberg 1984), *9½ Weeks* (Lyne 1986), *Barfly* (Schroeder 1987) and *Angel Heart* (Parker 1987) to take up professional boxing. In the three-year period 1991–1994, Rourke won six out of eight fights, with draws declared in the remaining two. Following on, Rourke's film acting come-back was blighted in two ways, first by a reputation for alcohol/drug-fuelled fighting and unpredictability, with the likes of Alan Parker (director of *Angel Heart*) calling him a 'nightmare to work with' and 'dangerous on set' (MacKay 2009), and secondly by damage to his face incurred in the boxing ring. Rourke's image and embodiment of violent, unpredictable, but ultimately lovable, masculinity has been brilliantly mirrored and recycled in his portrayal of washed-up professional wrestler Randy 'The Ram' Robinson in *The Wrestler* (Aronofsky 2008) for which he was Oscar nominated and winner of BAFTA, Golden Globe and Independent Spirit 'best actor' awards, as well as being recipient of a Venice Film Festival Golden Lion. Rourke's image of violent excess has been somewhat tempered through a widely circulated confessional narrative of addiction, suicidal

desperation, rehab and contrition, Rourke says 'what ended up saving his life and removing him from his downward spiral was a priest. He was reportedly on the verge of killing himself, he says, before he turned to the Catholic Church for help' (David 2009). If Barry King's (2008) argument that the redemptions of celebrity culture are closely aligned to Catholic acts of contrition is in want of corroboration, Rourke offers the perfect example. Suffice to say that Rourke's image of troubled, oft times violent machismo and contrite rehabilitation, has been 'repetitively and non-sequentially' (Holmes and Negra 2008: 23) recycled and pored over by the celebrity gossip machine.

Of most interest though, is the scrutiny of Rourke's damaged face that intertwines a narrative of an uncontrolled and uncontrollable masculinity with an account of botched plastic surgery. As Rourke 'confesses' to the *Daily Mail's* Chris Sullivan,

> I had my nose broken twice. I had five operations on my nose and one on a smashed cheekbone. I had to have cartilage taken from my ear to rebuild my nose and a couple of operations to scrape out the cartilage because the scar tissue wasn't healing properly. Most of [the surgery] was to mend the mess of my face because of the boxing, but I went to the wrong guy to put my face back together. (Sullivan 2009)

On the one hand, this quote can be readily located in the process of image building whereby Rourke revises his tough-guy image—just look how much pain I can take (and still take)—'It's hard being hard' says Dominic Lennard (2014: 105) in his study of ageing tough-guy films. Simultaneously Rourke asserts his ongoing effort to reform both his behaviour and his face (still trying). Equally, Rourke employs the limited masculine speech repertoire identified by Gill, Henwood and McLean (2005). In foregrounding his smashed face, he undertakes reconstructive rather than cosmetic surgery and the procedure takes on the hue of masculine post-battle recovery. Rourke thus deflects any association with old age, or with taboo vanity practice, or with feminine rejuvenation, and thus secures the surgery within masculinity's appropriate concerns. Crucially, Rourke's image is protected from anxieties about inappropriate concerns, while at the same time, with these threats securely managed, masculinity can be located within, and exploited by, the cosmeceutical economy. Where femininity is exploited through the ageist concerns of the rejuvenation imperative within the silver beauty myth, masculinity is exploited through the ageless terms of reconstruction.

Since the Sullivan interview, Rourke has undergone further surgery and very similar strategies are in evidence. Rather than talking about pain though, Rourke displays it through posted selfies of his 'Gruesome' (Huffington Post 2012) bruised and battered post-surgical face. Here, the reiteration of machismo toughness is self-evident, so too the echoes of appropriate concern that deflect any signs of taboo vanity. Additionally, in a skilful manipulation of the gossip machine, the 'gruesome' sight effectively establishes the perfect counterpoint for a subsequent reveal of restored good looks, 'The resurrection of Mickey Rourke! The 62 year old oozes sex appeal with his face finally looking great after a series of botched surgeries' (Whiteman and Carpenter 2014). Leaving aside religious connotations, resurrection is a key word here. Unlike rejuvenation which implies enhancement by adding on or taking away from the body, resurrection conveys the idea of a body that was already there, lying dormant and awaiting revival. Resurrection suggests that Rourke's 'natural' body has been restored to him, to us, and unlike the artifice of feminine rejuvenation, his 62-year-old sex appeal is a natural continuity extending from youth to maturity.

Unusually for a male star, the gossip machine has forged links between Rourke's image and discourses of rejuvenation—through accounts of both his career and appearance. For instance, following the release of *The Wrestler*, Singh declared that the film had 'rejuvenated his career' (2009). This trope was repeated/recycled when Tybout of Pittnews observes that Rourke's post-*Wrestler* career had experienced 'a subsequent rejuvenation as critics unanimously hailed his performance as a tour de force' (Tybout 2010). notably, it is Rourke's career that is rejuvenated, rather than his body which continues to be inscribed with both the signs of troubled violent masculinity and of those rehab and contrition strategies that circumscribe his return to the fold of celebrity acceptability. However, six years, and several plastic surgery procedures later, *Atombash* exclaimed that,

> Sixty-three year old Mickey Rourke recently garnered media attention for his fit and chiseled, muscular physique, strutting a body more in-shape than men half his age. In addition to hitting the gym five times a week (as revealed in this *People Magazine* interview), pictures on the internet reveal this buff actor and athlete also engages in a little known anti-aging and fitness regimen at Beverly Hills Rejuvenation Center. (Contributor b 2015)

Importantly, this is rejuvenation of the body, rather than the 'lifted' face of female celebrity, and is attributed to sustained effort and adherence to 'a little known anti-ageing and fitness regimen', rather than to the surgeon's knife. Compare this reaction with that to Madonna's 'over-exercised' body and how her gnarled muscularity is equated to old age, or compare to reports of Mirren's 'toned' feminine curves. Notably, Rourke's body is here re-secured within the terms of 'nature' rather than artifice. As Richard Dyer (1982) suggested more than thirty five years ago, 'muscles are biological, hence "natural", and we persist in habits of thought, especially in sexuality and gender, whereby what can be shown to be natural must be accepted as

given and inevitable' (1982: 71). But, muscles are only 'natural' when displayed on the male body. Although muscular femininity has become more commonplace following the breakthrough of Martina Navratilova and other sportswomen, the sight of muscular women still triggers unease, and Madonna exemplifies the ease with which women's muscles can be rendered as excessive, unnatural and/or signs of abjected old age, especially when compared to the constitution of Mirren's body as toned not muscular, as curved not hard, as youthful not ageing. Moreover, the association of male muscles with 'nature' is also set in opposition to the 'artifice' of beauty, thus illuminating the instability of the female/nature, male/culture dichotomy. While this offers a telling example of the instability of the gender binary per se, it also illuminates how discourses of 'nature' are deployed to regulate regimes of acceptable and unacceptable femininity, and at the same time, in specific instances to secure masculinity and femininity as essentially different.

An inkling to the stakes of such deployments are suggested by Dyer's musings on phallic power. While linking muscular masculinity to phallic power, 'Because only men have penises, phallic symbols, even if in some sense possessed by a woman (as may be the case with female rulers, for instance), are always symbols of ultimately male power', Dyer also cautions against conflating the penis with phallic power, 'the penis isn't a patch on the phallus. The penis can never live up to the mystique implied by the phallus' (1982: 71). He adds that the failure of the penis to live up to the phallus gives rise to–

> the excessive, even hysterical quality of so much male imagery. The clenched fists, the bulging muscles, the hardened jaws, the proliferation of phallic symbols, they are all straining after what can hardly ever be achieved, the embodiment of the phallic mystique. (Dyer 1982: 71)

With Rourke as an example, we might add that the battered and bruised body that can take it (like a man) is also imbricated in this straining, even to extent of unsettling the gender binary. For Dyer, the excess of the muscular male body necessarily illuminates the instability of heteronormative masculinity through its very efforts to close over the ruptures, gaps and fissures in its formation. It is at one and the same time, a body of masculine instability and an assertion of masculinity's coherent and knowable nature, and a naturalisation of its hierarchies. As he concludes, 'Like so much else about masculinity, images of men, founded on such multiple instabilities, are such a strain' (72).

To ease some of the strain, Rourke's ageing but buff body is linked to athletes whose concern with the body is a professional requirement and therefore an appropriate concern of masculinity (Gill, Henwood and McLean 2005). Once again, Rourke is removed from adjudications of vanity, as well as the risk of alignment with those non-hegemonic masculinities deemed to be vain. Equally, as with the Mirren bikini shot, Rourke's rejuvenation is framed through a discourse of effort. However, the contrast between her enviable curves and flat stomach and his chiselled muscular physique ensures no blurring of the gender binary, no fudging of the gendered nature/artifice dichotomy, even as the hard-work of exercise is established as an effective anti-ageing strategy for both men and women. With Rourke, rejuvenation rapidly slides across the risky for masculinity terrain of being a 'feminine' vanity project concerned with good looks and instead, rejuvenation is consolidated as a proper concern of masculinity with a focus on maintenance of a healthy, athletic body that has yet to make the transition from third to fourth age. There are also clear connections to be made between third age body maintenance and Dyer's suggestion that bulging muscles imply 'leisure, and the strength and vitality to use it', as well as 'the relative affluence of Western society, where people have time to dedicate themselves to the development of the body for its own sake' (Dyer 1982: 68). From here it is hardly a leap to recognise that parallels, or even overlaps can be drawn with the leisure of retirement and agendas of successful ageing.

While Rourke offers an isolated example of an explicit link being forged between ageing masculinity and rejuvenation, his buffed sixty three year old body throws a spotlight onto a broader pattern of highly visible muscularity and the insertion of third age, if not old age, into the matrices of masculinities that is especially telling in the context of *Terminator* reboots and the high profile of *The Expendables* crew. Following Dyer's argument that 'The "naturalness" of muscles legitimises male power and domination' (71) this intersection can be seen as extending that domination in line with the chronologies of the ageing demographic. In effect, it can be seen to extend the privileges of hegemonic masculinity more generally into the third age imaginary, while simultaneously securing a 'cradle to the grave' continuity for those privileges. My point here is that celebrity muscularity functions as a counter to the looming but unspoken presence of fourth age frailty in formations of third age masculinities, both in terms of hierarchies within the masculine paradigm and as a mechanism to re-secure any destabilisation of the gender binary. Let's face it, there can be nothing more unsettling to the power and privileges of masculinity than the terms of frailty and dependency, and vice versa. Thus, where the artifice of the silvered beauty myth marks the regulation of third age femininity and efforts to forestall the frailties underpinning the fourth age imaginary, the bulge of muscles per- forms the same function within paradigms of masculinity. Where fathering babies constitutes a virile continuity with youth, the bulge of muscles defers, marks and secures the unstable boundary between masculine third and fourth age imaginaries.

Just having a laugh

Some sense of the struggle to secure this boundary emerges in advertisements for Synergy's Russian Ice vodka featuring brand ambassador Sylvester Stallone. Stallone was then aged 62 but these adverts make no reference to age or to any possible decline. Rather, the circulating discourses are all predicated on his un-ageing Rocky Balboa derived image of tough-guy muscularity (Tasker 1993; Lennard 2014), as with the E-news headline 'Stallone Punches Up Vodka Endorsement' and its follow through copy, 'At least one company enjoys its vodka on the Rocky's—er rocks' (Serpe 2008). Meanwhile, a Russian language film-noir screen advertisement has Sly/Rocky in a mock stand-off with Russian gangsters prior to the display of the Russian Ice vodka bottle. Under the tagline 'Cliché is good' the campaign's English language version offers a montage narrative displaying Stallone's spectacular male body during a 'day in the celebrity life', while his extra-diegetic voice anchors the images through a catalogue of nationally branded luxury consumables connoting superior quality and excellence, 'coffee-Brazilian, suits-Italian, gardener-Mexican, cars-English [sic], chef-French, fans-Japanese, therapist-Viennese, work-Hollywood' and so on, until the pattern is disrupted through the depiction of the ramshackle operation of two hill-billy coded vendors selling 'Boonsville vodka, Tennessee', an undrinkable bootleg, before a cut to a bottle of Russian Ice vodka. Just in case the joke passes you by, both versions close with a head and shoulder shot of a laughing Stallone. And both versions are organised around what is undeniably a stereotypical action-hero hyper-masculinity. notably, the English language montage also includes stereotypes of subservient, male-servicing femininity, 'therapist-Viennese', 'assistant-German efficiency', 'friends-Beverly Hills', and 'wife-Cuban—with just a touch of silicone'. While such stereotypes are mobilised as part of the advertisement's jokily ironic display of clichés, it is striking that female cosmeceutical enhancement has entered common sense to such an extent that it is now clichéd and the silicone enhanced much younger, trophy wife is embedded in the repertoire of masculine banter. And (pause for effect), it is mobilised through the approval of ageing, hard bodied masculinity.

Humour also threads through George Clooney's ambassadorial promotions of Nestlé's Nespresso coffee products. Where Synergy have mobilised Stallone's hard-boiled image in their vodka promotions, Nestlé exploit George Clooney's smooth, urbane masculinity in its TV and cinema launch for Nespresso that was rolled out in the UK and Europe prior to a US campaign. Janet McCabe has placed Clooney alongside actors such as Cary Grant who 'gained in gravitas as they went grey' (2012: 125). Although no longer the world's most eligible bachelor, and not quite vintage in the manner of Clint Eastwood, Clooney does, as I note earlier, accrue connotations of mature virility from both his impending fatherhood, and his famous besuited style. The Nespresso website says that 'he has charmed fans and coffee aficionados as the perfect personification of the understated elegance and authenticity that make Nespresso what it is today' (Nespresso, undated). With Google claiming that 'George Clooney Brings in Over 50M Views for Nespresso on YouTube!' (Google 2014) for the commercial he shares with Matt Damon, Nespresso's claims are hardly inflated. As a body of commercial films, the Nespresso campaign is strikingly cinematic with one referencing the iconic British film *A Matter of Life and Death* (Powell 1948), quoting its aesthetics, its mise en scène and its storyline of a return from Heaven's gate following untimely death, and thus inscribing Clooney with further significations of urbane masculinity derived from *A Matter of Life and Death* star David Niven. In another, backdrops of lakes and mountains make specific reference to Nestlé's Swiss roots while constituting a picturesque generic Europe seen in a wide range of films from *The Sound of Music* (Wise 1965) to *Casino Royale* (Campbell 2006). Meanwhile back-lot Hollywood serves as a metonym for the US market in Nespresso's American launch.

As with that of Synergy Russian Vodka, this campaign is played for ironic laughs as each film sets Clooney against humorous foils including John Malcovich, Jean Dujardin, Jack Black and Danny de Vito. In the UK commercial, the Nespresso machine is the price paid for Clooney's return to life—even Heaven wants Nespresso and Earth really cannot spare 'gorgeous George'. Another commercial, set against the European backdrop, features a series of 'jokey' bluffs involving possession of the last cup of coffee. First Clooney swaps his stylish and expensive leather loafers for Dujardin's flip-flops (thongs in Australia) in return for the last cup of coffee, which in turn, is surrendered to an eye-lid batting beauty who turns out to prefer Dujardin. Several other films rework the idea that Clooney is unrecognised and overlooked; a reworking reinforced through the tagline 'it's the coffee, "What else?"', while several others run the gag that a now married Clooney is coaching Jack Black as his replacement eligible bachelor. The idea of man to man coaching also traces through the humour of the US launch when Danny de Vito brings 'a slice of comedy to the 54-year-old actor's famously silky act in the brand's European ads', where, 'Danny, 71, joins *The Monuments Men* actor as he tries to educate Danny in the art of good taste' (Nattrass 2015). Following my comments about masculine style and lack of adornment in Chap. 3, it is notable that the coaching of de Vito includes setting aside his trademark Hawaiian shirt and shorts in favour of the understated Neapolitan cut suit á la Eastwood and Clooney. To put this another way, even as de Vito sets aside youth associated colour and adornment in favour of mature style, he illuminates that masculine youth has a very long shelf life and that neither chronological age nor biology has any bearing on the transition from youth to maturity. Here, de Vito can readily be seen to perform a masculine version of avoiding overly youthful dress, the abhorred 'mutton dressed as lamb' pitfall, but because of the great renunciation of adornment there is no masculine equivalent of 'frumpy' and therefore no masculine mid-ground to negotiate.

Overall though, the point of achieving good taste, of adopting mature style, is shown to be skill in the seduction of beautiful, younger women who bear a striking resemblance to the trophy wife of the Synergy Vodka commercial. There is no space to fully discuss these commercials, but I would emphasise the striking 'whiteness' of the male celebrities, how heteronormative mature style and sex appeal is employed to structure a hierarchy of white masculinity, and of course, how for 71-year-old de Vito, neither body shape nor age is an impediment to his eventual success with the (much younger) ladies. It is more than forty years since Molly Haskell (1973) first brought attention to Hollywood's iniquitous and normalised older man/younger woman coupling, but the ease with which it can be still be mobilised suggests that it is far from being a residual discourse. Crucially, I would also foreground how the deployment of humour suppresses what is proper critical response to the male gaze (Mulvey 1975) employed in these commercials and the implicit 'trade in women' that Gayle Rubin (2011) argues structures heteronormative homosociality. And no, being invited and 'allowed' to pass a heterosexual female gaze across George Clooney does not counter the power of looking held by the male gaze that is secured by an exchange of approving looks between on-screen men at an intersection with the long history of privileged male looking, that incidentally, is ironically reproduced in the Synergy Vodka commercials. Nor does it counter the reinstatement of nubile young women as objects of the male gaze per se and the silvered male gaze especially. Yes, I do get the joke (to the extent of actually smiling) that several of the film advertisements feature very attractive women paying attention to coffee or female friends rather than to Clooney. But there would be no joke without a pre-existing image of 'gorgeous George's' ultimate hetero desirability, which of course, is reiterated here in the guise of the joke. In effect, he is merely passing as unnoticed, not actually being passed over.

Freud (1905/1991) was amongst the first to establish that there is no such thing as 'just a joke': that jokes are neither neutral nor harmless in that they enable the expression of unconscious desires and unsayable thoughts, while simultaneously deflecting any hostile reaction to articulations of inappropriate taboo thoughts and subjects. Little wonder that irony and humour saturates a postfeminist culture, whereby ongoing masculine privilege is cloaked by discourses of equal sexual and consumer opportunities (Whelehan 2000; Tasker and Negra 2007) and critics who say otherwise are trivialised as humourless spoilsports and/ or whingeing, ungrateful feminists. While the carnivalesque is sometimes associated with women's resistance to masculine privilege and normative femininity (Rowe 1995; Arthurs 1999), humour is more usually linked to masculinity and the reiteration of its hierarchies and privileges. For instance Peter Lyman (1987) argues that the symbolic rule breaking, embedded in jokes supports and strengthens bonding in masculine cultures, while Mary Jane Kehily and Anoop Nayak (1997) suggest that heterosexual masculinities are performed and displayed in the safety of humour, while Barbara Plester (2015) observes that 'workplace humour is used to establish a hyper-masculine culture', even as the 'humour displayed…includes performances that emphasize hegemonic masculinity while rejecting and mocking alternative expressions of masculinity and, in particular, homosexuality' (537).

While neither the Synergy Russian Vodka nor the Nespresso commercials mock homosexuality, they certainly normalise heterosexuality and certainly reiterate knowledge of which kind of men are to be taken seriously, which ones are not to be passed over, even as they perform, passing as unnoticed. The commercials also reiterate sexist ways of looking at women's bodies, but ways disguised as an ironic gesture to the 'bad old days before women were equal'. The extent to which women have achieved equality is a moot point that always begs the question 'which women, where and when'? Answering that question through the lens of Hollywood, illuminates ongoing male privileges on both sides of the screen (Lauzen 2015) and reveals the deployment of ironic humour to be yet another strategy to secure those privileges. Moreover, the play of humour is always about masculinity and its concerns. Crucially, more than anything, in the joke, in just having a laugh, masculine differences of age are effaced—men are just men, and age makes no difference.

Impersonating 'old age'

Banter and joking or joshing are pivotal mechanisms in homosocial dynamics, a crucial repertoire of man to man communication frequently witnessed in male film genres, in the workplace, in social settings, and as suggested by my discussion of Wogan in Chap. 3, in broadcast culture—especially of sport. Aligning humour with Rabellasian subversion, Jane Miller suggests that it is gendered, and that 'men can seem to have appropriated the management of misrule as well as the imposition of order' (1990: 138), while in their study of male grooming, Gill, Henwood and McLean (2005) identify the wisecrack, the joke as 'part of the performance of gender…a powerful way of "*doing* masculinity"' (2016: 42). Indeed, comedians are counted alongside rock, pop and movie stars in popular culture's hierarchies of successful masculinity. Making a similar point, Michael Allen and Janet McCabe (2012) offer a nuanced analysis of the homosocial dynamic highlighted by the interactions of renowned British celebrity 'funny men' (comedians, actors and impressionists) Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon, during the reality TV series extended road-movie, *The Trip* (BBC 2012–2014) where they identify a 'relentless performance of the public self' enacted through recurring impersonations and 'perpetual bickering and telling jokes, debating and disagreement' (2012: 155). Here, even with my formulation of cinema as extending beyond medium and material architecture, and even considering

Coogan's profile as an international film actor, *The Trip* may well seem unduly tangential for some readers. However, please bear with me, since Allen and McCabe's analysis of *The Trip* is focussed on impersonations by Coogan and Brydon of iconic movie stars, Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins and Michael Caine and thus offers yet another example of the impossibility of fixing cinema as a specific medium. More importantly, their analysis offers some invaluable insights into the intersection of performance, humour, masculinity and old age that can be usefully extrapolated in order the think about the ideological uses of old age within the economy of celebrity.

Allen and McCabe's (2012) central argument that voice and/or linguistic competency is an overlooked aspect of celebrity image, is undoubtedly of interest to star and celebrity studies more broadly, especially when placed alongside Jennings and Krainitzki's (2015) analysis of Vanessa Redgrave's mature voice, that they suggest offers a rare example of female subjectivity built on a continuum of ages, rather than a dichotomy between young and old. As I will elaborate, such a continuity is embedded in Coogan and Brydon's impersonations where it functions as a convention of masculine performativity. Allen and McCabe (2012) contend that age related changes to the celebrity voice, are embedded in enduring star images and that these are foregrounded by Coogan and Brydon's skilled vocal mimicry of the distinctive voices of the movie stars Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins and Michael Caine at both youthful and older life stages and the duo thus perform and embody a continuity of celebrity ageing. Here, it is worth noting that Coogan and Brydon's impersonations highlight how enduring celebrity image can accommodate bodily changes, as well as Richard Dyer's point that even the most basic impersonation 'reproduces, extends and inflects' star images (1986: 3). And, even as Coogan and Brydon reproduce the fame and images of Burton, Hopkins and Caine, they secure, publicise and enhance their own reputations as skilled comics and mimics. Indeed, they can be said to spectacularise their own vocal performance skills through these impersonations of young and ageing voices. In a similar vein, Ruth O'Donnell identifies verbal dexterity as a pivotal characteristic of Tom Cruise's movie derived star persona, suggesting that 'verbal facility is tied to the manipulation of the listener, but it is also itself a spectacle' (2015: 34). Tracking the centrality of verbal spectacle across Cruise's oeuvre (2015) she further argues that proper control of verbal talents is constituted as the 'mark of a "real" man' (34). From here, for Coogan and Brydon, the mark of the 'real' man is informed by the performances of old age vocal registers borrowed from Burton, Hopkins and Caine.

At the same time, as Allen and McCabe observe, Coogan and Brydon's verbal performances are punctuated with an 'Angst about ageing that lurks under the skin of the modern male body' (2012: 155). '"Everything is exhausting when you're past 40. Everything's exhausting at our age"' (2012: 157) says Coogan. notably, as with femininity, the masculine benchmark for commencement of old age symptoms is here fixed at forty. But these symptoms are predicated on declining functions and not loss of looks. Equally, Allen and McCabe's angst can only be safely expressed through the humour of the wisecrack, a position that completely chimes with my earlier evocation of Freud's account of humour as a vehicle that permits expression of the unsayable. If ageing is constituted as decline, then old age decline constitutes a threat to masculine supremacy. Here, verbal dexterity performs a double move, in that it simultaneously articulates anxiety about the age related failure of masculinity, while offering a repertoire of masculine competency that effectively shores up the configuration of the real man. Allen and McCabe further suggest of *The Trip* that male angst about the threat of ageing is exposed by gruelling physical challenges, such as jogging and rock and hill climbing, that are undertaken by Coogan and Brydon as an 'antidote to their increasing corporeal decline' (2012: 155). Following Toni Calasanti's observation that, 'Anti-aging advertisements directed at ageing men emphasise bodies that perform while those for ageing women focus on appearance' (2007: 343), another way to think about the antidote of physical challenge is as a masculine version of rejuvenation. Thus, we can begin to recognise the gendered constitution of old age as it intersects with discourses of rejuvenation and the gendering of strategies that promise a continuing successful third age and the deferral of fourth age failure and abjection.

With that established however, there are further nuances to be discussed since Coogan and Brydon are bad at physical challenge; their attempts are always undercut—either by a klutzy mishap or the figure of a shadowy even older man who gets there faster and better. As Allen and McCabe (2012) suggest, this is yet another joke through which Coogan especially is made to look foolish. But of course, the masculine cultural capital accrued from the linguistic competency of the Coogan/Brydon duo ensures that we know that neither is *really* foolish. Indeed, the duo's spectacularised verbal dexterity suggests that we might also think about the joke of failed physical challenges as a display of slap-stick comedy staples—the pratfall and associated deadpan melancholy—whereby Coogan and Brydon (and their editors) display a professional understanding of visual comedy genres and their own high-level competencies in the timing and bodily performances of slap-stick humour. Here, implicit evocations of iconic slap-stick movie stars, like Chaplin, Keaton, Laurel and Hardy, are as telling as explicit evocations of Burton, Hopkins and Caine. Where Burton, Hopkins and Caine are evoked through the mimicry of speech, Chaplin and co. are evoked through the mimicry of physical (in)competency. Taken in this light, Coogan and Brydon's klutzy mishaps can be seen as a display of specialised professional skills that rank alongside their vocal dexterity as impersonators and wise-cracking ad-libbers. Such displays inevitably promote and secure the duo's reputations and earnings as professional 'funny men' while also shoring up their respective images of comedic stardom within the economy of celebrity— even as they articulate male anxieties about fourth age decline.

Moreover, once we start thinking about Coogan and Brydon's angst, whingeing and physical incompetency as

performance we can start to see it as a display of age associated (not age derived) aches and pains—a display that echoes Rourke's gruesome exhibition of post-surgery bruising discussed above. Here, I am also reminded of the displayed performance of age associated aches, pains and/or injuries by male stars in highly acclaimed films, for example John Wayne in *True Grit*, (Hathaway 1969), Clint Eastwood in *Unforgiven* (Eastwood 1992) and *Gran Torino*, Tommy Lee Jones in *No Country For Old Men* (Joel Coen and Ethan Coen 2010), Bruce Willis in *A Good Day to Die Hard* (Moore 2013), and even Daniel Craig in *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012), where complaints of bodily discomfort and pain by the ageing hero are always the precursor to action and problem resolution in ways that belie the earlier expression of pain and the narrative of old age as decline. Crucially, age is established as experience, and experience trumps youth every time. As Lennard argues, the action hero's bodily discomfort serves to '"confirm" and "aestheticise" what is "essential", "real" or insuppressible in gender terms' (Lennard 2014: 104). I am not suggesting that Coogan and Brydon are necessarily pretending to have aches and pains. It is the attribution of aches and pains to ageing rather than to unaccustomed physical exertion that is key here. In this attribution, the duo cite an existing repertoire of masculine old age performance associated with hyper-masculine cinematic genres: a citation that adds another repertoire of impersonation to their skilled performances of voice and slap-stick— that of male icons acting old and expressing anxieties about the ageing male body immediately prior to the ideological resolution and effacement of those anxieties in the action that follows. Crucially, all of this is performed through/as humour, repartee and banter, as 'having a laugh'. Here then, through humour, in 'having a laugh', Coogan and Brydon's performances not only promote their expertise as mimics and comedians and as eminently hire-able within the economy of celebrity, they also illuminate what it means to 'do' masculinity. As with Rourke, as with action heroes, as with Coogan and Brydon, doing masculinity includes the display of aches and pains generally, and old age related discomfort particularly. In other words, taking it 'like a man' is performative and predicated on the transcendence of the body in pain; the transcendence of the 'old' body constituted as vulnerable and painful. So, like humour, the aches and pains attributed to old age can be counted amongst sanctioned repertoires of masculine performance and performativity.

Crucially, the labour of impersonation exposes this dynamic. As Butler suggests, impersonation 'implicitly reveals the structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency' (1990a, b: 187). Such contingency arises because there is no original to copy, all impersonations are copies of copies. Impersonation thus disarticulates gender from biology and thereby foregrounds the performance and performativity of gender, dragging out its contingency. Everything about *The Trip*'s multiple strands of impersonation points to a dragging out of the rehearsals, performances and iterations of the gestures and acts that constitute masculinity, and its extended third age imaginary, including anxiety about its provisionality and the threats of fourth age vulnerabilities. Gender says Butler (1990a, b) is performative in that it is brought into being by the acts and gestures that seemingly guarantee its prior existence, and here, the prior existence of masculinity is guaranteed by the gestures of old age. In a time when the biological underpinnings of gender are increasingly threatened by an increasing awareness of cross and transgender identities, the gestures that guarantee the prior existence of gender are similarly threatened. In marked contrast, old age continues to be firmly fixed (by a discursive nexus composed, at least, of bio-medical expertise, state welfare policy provision and neo-liberal capitalist circuits) as being an inevitable property of the biological body: as having a prior existence. Here, I am suggesting that old age constituted as a biological property of the body is appropriated as a gesture of masculinity in order to articulate an embodied prior existence that deflects from the instability of both the gender binary and formations of masculinity. Effectively, old age is used to bolster an essential masculinity and to shore-up the gender binary. While we can see the expression of age associated aches and pains as expressing male anxiety about the threats of fourth age frailty, we can also recognise that, like style and like grooming, such expressions are one more performative repertoire of masculinity: a masculinity constituted in the terms of vintage with its longitudinal formation of a privileged and enduring third age. Here, in having a laugh, ageing as old age is dragged out as one more gesture within masculinity's performative repertoire and one more gesture that seemingly guarantees gender's biological prior existence.

Conclusion

This chapter further extends an account of contemporary cinema constituted in the economy of celebrity, gender and old age nexus by tracing ideas of stardom, brand endorsements and embodiment. It develops the previous chapter's discussion of feminine late-style and graceful ageing by aligning Diane Keaton and Dame Judi Dench alongside Meryl Streep in an elite cohort of silvered female stars famed for acting rather than glamour, and whose box-office pull and critical acclaim render them professionally 'untouchable' within the circuits of casting and celebrity culture, enabling them to remain 'untouched' and 'unlifted' in the rejuvenatory imperatives of a silvered beauty myth—the extension into old age of The Beauty Myth first identified by Naomi Wolf (1990). As well as making money for the stars involved, and supporting the profits of the film and cosmeceutical industries, the white and middle class silvered beauty myth that is exemplified by L'Oréal's star endorsed advertising campaigns, functions as a regulatory regime of ageing femininity and as an articulation of successful ageing. It is seen to be embodied by iconic stars, including Nicole Kidman, Dame Helen Mirren and Jane Fonda, and seen to play across the spectrum of the Hollywood conglomerate's taxonomy of feminine old age whereby the youth/age threshold for women is chronologically positioned as 40(ish).

With the silvered beauty myth predicated on artifice, its achievement is aligned with success (and successful ageing), while under the rubrics of botched and/ or excessive procedures, its repeatedly reiterated failures are rendered significant within a media mesh that proffers Madonna as a vilified exemplar of failure. Developing Railton and Watson's (2012) deployment of 'drag' theory in their study of Madonna, this chapter argues that her failures to simultaneously achieve the artifice of rejuvenation and to conceal the signs of its effort, effectively drags out the vulnerability of the silvered beauty myth, its propensity to break down, to collapse, to fail. In turn, this drags into view the performativities of both gender and old age, as much as cultural anxieties of fourth age frailty, and an unwelcome and potent reminder of our universal mortality.

Consciously reiterating the gender binary, attention turns to masculine grooming; its transition from the health and hygiene paradigm to that of appearance; its regulation of vanity and potential effeminacy through discourses of appropriate concerns, that Gill, Henwood and McLean (2005) identify as regulatory mechanism of homosociality. Anxieties about effeminate associated grooming impacts on the money making potential of celebrity culture when all but securely hyper-masculine sports and action stars are excluded from its remit. And, within the terms of appropriate concerns, cycles of consumption are made evident when embodied traits of appearance, such as dry skin, are constituted as problems alongside the marketing of grooming practices and products that are offered as remedies. While correspondences can be drawn between the operations of male grooming promotions and the marketing of beauty products, there is no male equivalent of the silvered beauty myth. Where the silvered beauty myth constitutes old age as a problem to be effaced and its signs to be erased or hidden, within the regime of male grooming, age simply disappears from its repertoires of appropriate concerns.

Retirement similarly disappears through the appearances of stars such as brand ambassador Harvey Keitel who promotes Obama Health care in the USA and reprises Winstone Wolfe, his *Pulp Fiction* role, in endorsement commercials for UK Direct Line car insurance. As with other stars and celebrities, male and female, who continue to work and earn money long past the West's accepted retirement ages, Keitel operates ideologically in the normalisation of deferred retirement, extended working lives and deferred pensions that are increasingly suggested and implemented as crisis of ageing solutions. Ageing masculinity is also explored through the frame of late fatherhood that functions like late-style in the transformation of youth into desirable maturity, and the constitution of masculinity as an extended third age imaginary whereby the fourth age imaginary is persistently deferred. Where older mothers are pathologised and adjudicated to be at risk, late fathering is articulated as the sign of a virile and potent masculinity that effectively forestalls discourses of the decline and the potential abjections of the fourth age imaginary since chronologically old fathers are constituted as evidently youthful—'still doing it'. Here, as with style, there is an extension of youth into masculine old age whereby youth is constituted as raw material to be improved and enhanced by age and maturity, like wine or cheese it is rendered vintage by the ageing process. In comparison, for ageing femininity, whether constituted through the embodiments of appearance or pregnancy, youth is always already lost and always already in want of restoration.

The discourses of 'still doing it' that underpin late fatherhood are pivotal to the perpetual bad boy star image of Mickey Rourke as constituted through a narrative of boxing, drunken brawls, a smashed face, botched plastic surgery and ultimate restoration whereby Rourke's hyper-macho image locates his plastic surgery within the limited, but permitted, repertoires of appropriate masculine concern. Within that frame, Rourke's facial surgery is articulated as reconstruction following injury, rather than the rejuvenation of an ageing face. Thus, Rourke's image is protected from anxieties about inappropriate and effeminate concerns with appearance, while, more importantly, the masculinity he embodies is located within the regimes of the cosmeceutical economy, but in ways that do not threaten ideologies of masculinity. The ideological work of Rourke's face is matched by that of his resurrected muscled body and its articulation of naturalised male power and dominance based on the biological body that only the imaginary of fourth age frailty can undermine: an articulation that simultaneously functions to counter the con- joined threats to both the masculine third age imaginary and the gender binary posed by the looming presence of fourth age frailty. Where, the artifice of the silvered beauty myth functions to forestall fourth age frailty through the artifice of third age rejuvenation, muscles, like fathering babies, constitutes a naturalised continuity between virile youth and an extended third age, while simultaneously marking and securing the unstable boundaries between the imaginaries of third and fourth age masculinities and between masculinity and femininity.

The final section of this chapter, builds on Freud's (1905/1991) account of jokes as an expression of unconscious desires and unsayable thoughts that simultaneously deflects any anger or hostility to such expression, while pointing to a body of scholarship from Lyman (1987), Kehily and Nayak (1997) and Plester (2015) that variously links humour to formations of masculinity, while verbal wit and dexterity are counted amongst its most highly prized and privileged performative repertoires. From this position, an intersection is traced: an intersection between humour and a normalised white masculinity that is variously rehearsed within Gill, Henwood and McClean's (2005) male grooming focus groups, through irony, mimicry and wisecracks by the likes of late BBC broadcaster Sir Terry Wogan; the film and TV comedy duo Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon; and in commercials for Synergy Russian Ice vodka where a closing shot of a heartily laughing Sylvester Stallone ensures we get the joke of a Boondock vodka scene inserted into an ironic montage display of stereotypical, male star commodity trappings. Knowing irony also underpins the homosocial

dynamics between George Clooney, John Malcovich, Jean Dujardin, Jack Black and Danny de Vito in Nestlé's Nespresso campaign organised around Clooney's urbane sex appeal, and man to man coaching in its achievement. One running joke has 'gorgeous George' overlooked in favour of coffee—but of course this is simply passing at being passed over. Troublingly, as with all ironic humour, the joke is double edged in that its target is all too frequently legitimated by the very articulation of critique. Here, ironic homosocial banter shores the old age by-pass of masculinity and reiterates masculine privileges of looking when the gaze of chronologically old male stars is brought to bear on the bodies of much younger women in ways that rearticulate the age/gender politics critiqued by Haskell (1973) more than thirty five years ago. Meanwhile, the broader cultural processes of postfeminism and its stereotypes of humourless, feminist spoilsports deflect and trivialise any potential to read against the grain. While age and ageing are made to matter for the female objects of an ageist male gaze, neither has any bearing on the homosocial dynamics of masculinity where men are just men, where 'having a laugh' is what men do in masculinity's perpetually extended third age imaginary and where age makes no difference until the onset of a repeatedly deferred fourth age. Equally, the articulation of old age by Coogan and Brydon in their spectacularised mimicry of Michael Caine, Anthony Hopkins and Richard Burton's aged voices and their rehearsals of old age associated aches and pains has the potential to rupture masculinity's third age imaginary, while such acts of impersonation 'drag out' the performance and performativity of gender (Butler 1990a) in ways that threaten masculinity's essentialist constitution. But such potential is effectively managed and defused through discourses of 'just joking', while threats to both essentialist formations of masculinity and the attendant gender binary are re-secured and re-naturalised through the guarantees of biology mobilised by the play of old age.

Overall, this chapter is concerned with an intersection between the silver of profits and the embodiment of a gendered third age imaginary by ageing stars within the economy of celebrity. It points to the ideological function of such embodiments in the normalisation of gendered successful ageing agendas; in the normalisation of deferred retirement; and in the normalisation of third and fourth age imaginaries as both discursive formations and sets of lived practices. It teases out, or drags out, some of the discourses that constitute ageing feminine/masculine binary, and the play between them, produced by the economy of celebrity and embodied by its stars. It highlights the centrality of appearance and artifice and the pathologisation of visibly ageing femininity in the constitution and achievement of the silvered beauty myth. In turn, this is contrasted to the near absence of age opprobrium in formations of masculinity as it is variously constituted through discourses of male grooming and cosmeceutical practices, through discourses of late fatherhood, and through the performances of humour. And as with Chap. 3's account of male, vintage late-style, this chapter repeatedly highlights the ways in which masculine old age is articulated as an enhancement to youth, as a desirable mark of achievement. In marked contrast, for ageing femininity, the erasure of a pathologised old age and the restoration of youth is constituted as its primary goal. Crucially, old age is identified as a mechanism through which masculinity, and by extension, the gender binary, is reinstated as a product of nature and biology.

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