Perpetuation

But perhaps this is all a mistake. Perhaps there is no such longing of the soul. Perhaps there is no soul. Certainly, modern science doesn’t speak about the soul; neither does medicine or even our psychiatrists (whose name means “healer of the soul”). Perhaps we are just animals, complex ones to be sure, but animals nonetheless, content just to be here, frightened in the face of danger, avoiding pain, seeking pleasure.

但或许这都是一个错误。或许对灵魂来说并没有这种渴望，或许灵魂也不存在。当然，现代科学并没有谈论灵魂；医学甚至我们的精神病医生（他们的名字意思是“灵魂的治疗者”）也没有。或许我们只是动物，虽说可以肯定是一种复杂的动物，但作为动物，仍然是满足于待在某处，会在危险面前害怕，尽量避免痛苦，找寻乐趣。

Curiously, however, biology has its own view of our nature and its inclinations. Biology also teaches about transcendence, though it eschews talk about the soul. Biology has long shown us a feasible way to rise above our finitude and to participate in something permanent and eternal: I refer not to stem cells, but to procreation— the bearing of and caring for offspring, for the sake of which many animals risk and even sacrifice their lives. Indeed, in all higher animals, reproduction as such implies both the acceptance of the death of self and participation in its transcendence. The salmon, willingly swimming upstream to spawn and die, makes vivid this universal truth.

然而，奇怪的是，生物学对我们的本性及其倾向有自己的看法。生物学也教导超越，尽管它回避谈论灵魂。长期以来，生物学一直为我们提供了一种超越自身极限并参与永久和永恒之事的可行方法：我指的不是干细胞，而是繁殖——生育和照顾后代，许多动物为此冒着生命危险，甚至牺牲自己的生命。的确，在所有高等动物中，繁殖本身意味着接受自我死亡和参与自我超越。鲑鱼愿意向上游游动产卵并死亡，使这一普遍真理变得生动起来。

But man is natured for more than spawning. Human biology teaches how our life points beyond itself—to our offspring, to our community, to our species. Like the other animals, man is built for reproduction. More than the other animals, man is also built for sociality. And, alone among the animals, man is also built for culture—not only through capacities to transmit and receive skills and techniques, but also through capacities for shared beliefs, opinions, rituals, traditions. We are built with leanings toward, and capacities for, perpetuation. Is it not possible that aging and mortality are part of this construction, and that the rate of aging and the human lifespan have been selected for their usefulness to the task of perpetuation? Could not extending the human lifespan place a great strain on our nature, jeopardizing our project and depriving us of success? Interestingly, perpetuation is a goal that is attainable, a transcendence of self that is (largely) realizable. Here is a form of participating in the enduring that is open to us, without qualification—provided, that is, that we remain open to it.

但人的天性不仅仅是为了产卵（繁殖）。人类生物学教导我们的生命是如何通过我们的后代、我们的社区、我们的物种来超越自身。像其它动物一样，人是为繁殖而生的。在为社会而生这一点上，人超过其它动物。而且，与其它动物不同的是，只有人也为文化而生：这不仅是通过传播和接受技能、技术的能力，而且是通过分享信仰、观点、仪式和传统的能力。我们天生就倾向于永续，并且有能力永续。是否有这样一种可能，即衰老和死亡本身是这种结构的一部分，而选择衰老的速率和(有限的)人类寿命正是因为它们对永续这一任务有用。这样一来，延长人类的寿命难道（反而）不会给我们的天性带来巨大的压力，危机我们的项目，剥夺我们的成功吗？有趣的是，永存是一个可以实现的目标，是一种（很大程度上）可以实现的自我超越。这是一种对我们开放的能参与永恒的形式之一，无条件开放，也就是说我们对它保持开放。

Biological considerations aside, simply to covet a prolonged lifespan for ourselves is both a sign and a cause of our failure to open ourselves to procreation and to any higher purpose. It is probably no accident that it is a generation whose intelligentsia proclaim the death of God and the meaninglessness of life that embarks on life’s indefinite prolongation and that seeks to cure the emptiness of life by extending it forever. For the desire to prolong youthfulness is not only a childish desire to eat one’s life and keep it; it is also an expression of a childish and narcissistic wish incompatible with devotion to posterity. It seeks an endless present, isolated from anything truly eternal, and severed from any true continuity with past and future. It is in principle hostile to children, because children, those who come after, are those who will take one’s place; they are life’s answer to mortality, and their presence in one’s house is a constant reminder that one no longer belongs to the frontier generation. One cannot pursue agelessness for oneself and remain faithful to the spirit and meaning of perpetuation.

抛开生物学的考量，单纯地渴望延长自己的寿命既是我们无法向生殖和更高的目标开放自己的迹象，也是其失败的原因。或许这一代人的出现并不是偶然，他们的知识分子宣称上帝的死亡，宣称致力于无限延长寿命并试图以此来治愈空虚感的人生是没有意义的。延长青春不仅仅是一种想要吞噬生命然后留住它的幼稚渴望，也是一种拒绝奉献给后代的幼稚而又自恋的表达。它寻求一个无止境的当下，与任何真正永恒的事物隔绝，与过去和未来的任何真正的连续性分离。这在原则上是敌视儿童的，因为儿童，那些后来的人，就是那些将取代自己位置的人；他们是生命对死亡的解决之道，在家庭中出现，不断提醒着人们已不再属于前沿一代。一个人不能为自己追求永恒，而又同时忠于永存的精神和意义。

**翻译部分**：

这一章节的标题是perpetuation，文中也多出出现这个词。中文直译可以是永存，不朽，延续。普通人的个体目前为止是做不到永生的，我的理解是人这一群体通过代代相传的方式来达到种族的不断延续，所以如果让我来翻译，我会认为想表达的是永续的意思。

**核心观点**：

人属于动物的范畴，无法摆脱个体死亡的命运，但正如其它动物一样，作为族群可以通过代代相传的方式永恒地延续下去。并且，与多数动物不同的是，人是有社会性的，是有文化的。如果考虑以代代相传的方式来达到种族的延续，那么个体衰老和死亡的过程就有可能是为了达到这种目的而需要的，是这个过程的一部分。按照这种说法，延长个体的寿命反而会危害种族的延续。而那些企图永远保持青春的人是对新生个体的威胁，因为他们不肯让步自己的存在。综上，一个人无法做到自己永恒，同时又符合种族延续的要求，因为这两者本质上是矛盾的

**个人观点：**

如果基于翻译大体没错的前提下，作者的结论是循环论证的，令人困惑。在文章的开头作者提到，因为个体难以避免死亡，所以通过繁殖来达到种族延续的目的。之后的论述是，因为种族想要永恒延续，所以需要个体的死亡来达成。作者可能在这个部分想说明当代社会人们追求长寿不是有意义的行为，甚至这种风气会影响人这个群体进一步走向永恒。