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QUALITY OF LIFE
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Youth is the ultimate commodity in a society of dying people. The human body is capable of producing youth. But not after you're 21. Not for you. Inside your body, youth is a nonrenewable resource. Outside your body, it's a baby. Even with exercise, a good diet, and a supersized bucket of supplements, your genes will only keep you looking and feeling ripe for so long. You're either in the desirable demographic or you're not. In the "free" market—where people are for sale—you have a sell-by date.

Our society's lifestyle economy keeps middle-class youth around as a commercial engine. When we're young, companies connect youthful feelings of health and well-being with various goods, services, desires, and experiences: music, clothing, sex, drugs, drug-foods, hair cuts, hair color, graphic design, celebrities, etc. For the rest of our increasingly long lives, companies will use these formative consumer experiences to sell us the feelings of youth and to promote the inadequacies of advanced age. I will always love/drain you.

Once youth starts slipping away—at a glacial pace in the beginning and then like a horrible rampaging avalanche—aging becomes a battle of attrition, a chilly arthritic retreat from Moscow in your telomeres and mitochondria. And in your mind. Meanwhile, circling above, marketing experts track your passing birthdays. Companies sell you back your own youth, preserved in deadstock eBay amber or reissued and updated in this season's colors; or a contemporary vision of youth, the alien cultural tastes and desires of people born decades after you. Or they sell you physical remedies: exercise, health food, vitamins, and primitive body modification. Simulation teenager skin cream. Twentysomething-colored hair dye.

As we march forward into the future, through the decades that lie beyond our culturally prolonged "endless" childhoods, youth escalates in value and desirability like profits accruing in the banks' government-secured electronic coffers. Youth can be used to sell almost anything. Put a youth on it. In front of it. Standing next to it half-naked. In denim. In rip-stop nylon. In nostalgia for another generation's adolescence. Anything looks good on young people—even the past. Perform an amputation and screw on a golden C3PO leg; a 22-year-old will still look good. Teenagers can dress in rags and old men and women will still drool at the sight of their flesh. Pop music.

Radical life extension begins in your ears. Its clandestine operating clinic is currently a clothing store. Youth always has a soundtrack. It always has a look. Generational opposition is a built-in feature of our economic system. Planned human obsolescence. Feeling stranded in a strange time? If you want to slough off your thirtysomething skin or shed your fortysomething fatigue: delete all the nostalgia from your bloodstream and get a taste transfusion. Keep your skill set current. Aging generations are the failed states of the future.

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