**Gender variables in friendship: Contradiction or not?**

**友情中的性别差异：矛盾还是不矛盾?**

**1 When I think of my good friends, I see them in cinematic terms. The camerawork is entirely different for men and women. The "movie" memories I have of female friends are open and intimate. We are talking, interested in each other in a magnetic sort of way. They look straight into my eyes, sensitive to my feelings, listening to me with deliberate attention. In comparison, memories of male friends are in an entirely different film altogether. An action or adventure movie! Not much in the way of dialog. The ritual of motion, or the sequence of action, makes up for the deficiency of dialog and honest narrative.**

**想到我的好朋友们，我就会用看电影的眼光看待他们。对男性和女性的拍摄手法是完全不同的。我对女性朋友的“电影式”记忆是开放的、亲密无间的。我们交谈着，像磁铁般互相吸引着。她们直视我的眼睛，她们善解人意，她们用心倾听。相比较而言，我对男性朋友的记忆是完全不同的另一部影片。那是一部动作片或者冒险片！对话不多。习惯性的行动，或者说一系列的动作，弥补了对话及坦诚倾诉方面的不足。**

**2 My mind retreats back to my earliest childhood friend, Donald. I was still living in Europe at the time, and near my house was an old German truck left abandoned after the war. No wheels. No windshield. No doors. But the steering wheel was intact. Donald and I continuously "flew" to America in that truck, our "airplane". Even now, I remember our daily ritual as we flew along, across Europe, across the Atlantic, on a mission of mercy. We were innocent and inseparable, the deep security that comes between best friends. Naturally, not one word of our evident feelings for one another was ever uttered; it was all done in actions.**

**我里回想起我儿时最早的朋友唐纳德。那时候我还住在欧洲，我家房子附近有一辆战后遗弃的德国旧卡车。没有轮子，没有挡风玻璃，没有车门。但是方向盘还完好无损。我和唐纳德一直开着这辆卡车——也就是我们的“飞机”——“飞往”美国。即使到现在，我还记得我们每天飞行的那个套路。我们飞过欧洲，飞越大西洋，去执行救援任务。那时候的我们单纯，形影不离，有着最好的朋友之间才有的那种高度安全感。自然，对于我们彼此间显而易见的感情，我们从未吐露过一个字，一切尽付诸行动。**

**3 Each day, as we were flying over the Atlantic, there inevitably came that wonderful moment: "Engine failure!" I'd shout into the microphone, "We'll have to jump out." "A-a-a-a-a-!" Donald made sounds like a failing engine. Glancing at me, he'd say, "I can't swim!" "Fear not! I'll drag you to shore," I'd bravely reply. And, with that, we'd both spill out of the truck onto the dusty street. I swam through the dust. Donald drowned in the dust, coughing, "Sharks!" he cried. But I always saved him. The next day, changing roles, the elaborate drama would repeat. "I can't swim!" I'd say and Donald would save me. We saved each other from certain death hundreds of times, until finally a day came when my family really did leave for America. Donald and I stood rigid at the train station ready to say farewell. We didn't know what to say; we couldn't save each other this time. So, we just cried silently as the train pulled away.**

**每天，当我们飞翔在大西洋上空时，总是不可避免地会出现那精彩的时刻：“发动机故障！”我总会对着麦克风大叫，“我们必须跳出去。”“啊－啊－啊－啊－啊－！”唐纳德发出像发动机出现故障时的声音。他看了我一眼，说：“我不会游泳啊!”“别怕！我会把你拉上岸的。”我总是勇敢地回答。于是，说完这些后，我们两人都从卡车里扑到满是尘土的街道上。我在尘土中游泳。唐纳德淹没在尘土中，一边咳嗽，一边大叫：“有鲨鱼！”但我总是会把他救上来。第二天，我们交换角色，那精心策划的一幕又重复上演。“我不会游泳啊！”我会喊道，而唐纳德就会来救我。我俩数百次地把对方从必死的境地中救出，直到最终有一天我家真的要去美国了。我和唐纳德在火车站呆呆地站着，准备道别。我们不知道该说些什么，这次我们谁也救不了谁。于是，当火车驶离时，我俩只是默默地流泪。**

**4 These days, Jessica is one of my best friends. A recent occurrence made me reexamine and interpret my behavior in a new light. We were swimming at a beach in the Atlantic. The very Atlantic I had "flown" over in my German truck with Donald. We were far from shore when we abruptly turned back. We both thought we detected a shark! Water is not only a good conductor of electricity but of panic as well. We began splashing like crazy people toward the shore. In my panic, I suddenly realized how much I loved my friend Jessica, and what an irreplaceable friend she was. Although I was the faster swimmer, I fell back to protect her. In the end, the "shark" proved to be imaginary. But not my deep emotional feelings for my friend. It felt great back on the beach, a little scared and laughing with the excitement of being alive. We looked into each other's eyes and Jessica spontaneously said, "I love you!" "Love you too!" I replied.**

**现在，杰西卡是我最好的朋友之一。最近发生的一件事让我从新的角度重新审视和解释我的行为。当时，我们正在大西洋的一个海滩游泳。就是我曾经和唐纳德坐在德国卡车里“飞越”过的那个大西洋。猛然回头，我们发现我们已经离岸很远了。我俩都认为发现了一条鲨鱼！海水不仅导电性很强，传递恐慌也很快。我们开始发疯似的噼里啪啦地游向海岸。惊恐之余，我突然意识到我有多爱我的朋友杰西卡，而且她是一位多么难以取代的朋友啊。虽然我游得比较快，但是我还是落在后面保护她。最后，所谓的“鲨鱼”证明并不存在。但我对我朋友的深情厚谊却是真真切切的。回到海滩上的感觉真是好极了，我们有点惊魂未定，同时又因逃命成功而激动地大笑。我们互相注视着对方的眼睛，杰西卡脱口而出：“我爱你！”“我也爱你！”我答道。**

**5 As I spoke, I realized just how gender-based my communication styles were. With women, I could be open, emotionally honest, and transparent. With male friends, it seemed impossible to express caring feelings no matter how deep the friendship was. I could easily utter "I love you" to my mother, my sisters and girlfriends; yet not once in my life had I been able to look a male friend in the eye and say the same thing. Quite impossible! Was this just me or was every male in the world similarly cursed? Was I emotionally backward or just a "guy"? I was determined to find out!**

**说这些时，我意识到我的交流方式是多么地因对方的性别不同而不同。和女性朋友在一起，我可以是开放的、真情流露的、直截了当的。但和男性朋友在一起时，不管我们之间的友情有多深，我似乎都无法表达对对方的关爱之情。对我的母亲、姐妹和女朋友，我可以轻松地说出“我爱你”；然而，我有生以来从未能做到看着一位男性朋友的眼睛并说出同样的话。这完全不可能！这样的情况只是发生在我一个人身上，还是说世界上所有的男人都面对着类似的困扰呢？是我情感不发达还是因为我只是个“男人”？我决心找出真相！**

**6 Much to my relief, research shows that I am, indeed, a "normal guy". It seems that men and women have very different emotional and rational processes. Part of it is "nature" and part is "nurture". We are born with very different genetic tendencies which society encourages as either "masculine" or "feminine". These differences in behavior and communication styles were made famous by John Gray in his book Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus. This book and other articles helped me realize it's OK I am the way that I am. Men do tend to be more restrained with emotional expressions. I learned that I did love all my friends — only the means of expression differs from one gender to the other. What a relief!**

**让我颇感欣慰的是，研究表明我实际上是一个“正常的男人”。男性和女性似乎有着截然不同的情感和理性处理方式。部分是“先天因素”，部分源自于“后天养成”。我们生来就有极其不同的基因倾向，这种倾向被社会强化为“男子气”或“女性化”。约翰·格雷的书《男人来自火星，女人来自金星》使这些行为和交流风格上的差异变得众所周知。这本书和其他文章使我认识到我那样的做法是正常的。男性确实往往在情感表达方面比较克制。我认识到，我其实爱我所有的朋友——只是表达的方式男女有别而已。这真让我松了一口气！**

**Similarities and difference: Friendship across cultures**

**各有异同：不同文化中的友谊**

**1 Since I was five years old, I have had the good fortune to travel all over the world. I have had the privilege of living in Europe, Africa and North America and have made many foreign friends there. My family, friends, and co-workers are always very interested and curious and shower me with questions like: How do you begin a friendship in a foreign country? Are they different from us? Do people in those countries value friendship? In fact, the framework and value of friendship is universal and comparable around the world. But the way friendship is expressed differs greatly from country to country. The difficulty when strangers from two countries meet is not a lack of appreciation for friendship but the assumption of sameness. They do not anticipate the diverse expectations and subtle differences of what constitutes friendship, how it comes into being and how it should be expressed. So, who is a friend? How should friends treat each other? That depends on where you are!**

**从五岁起，我就有幸周游世界各地。我很幸运，曾在欧洲、非洲和北美洲生活过，并且在那里结交了很多外国朋友。我的家人、朋友和同事总是饶有兴趣、充满好奇地向我提出一大堆的问题，例如：在外国你怎么开始一段友谊？外国人跟我们有区别吗？那些国家的人看重友谊吗？其实，友谊的准则和价值在全世界都是普遍存在的，而且是相似的。但是友谊的表达方式则因国家的不同而有着巨大的差别。当来自两个国家的陌生人相遇时，交友的困难不是不珍视友谊，而是想当然地认为对方跟自己一样。他们没有想到的是，在什么是友谊、如何建立友谊、如何表达友谊这些方面，双方有着不同的期待和微妙的差异。因此，谁是朋友？朋友之间该如何相待？这都取决于你身在何处!**

**2 In the United States, society is highly mobile and it is quite common for people to move back and forth across the country for a new job, education, or many other reasons. The term friend can be applied casually to a wide range of relationships — to someone you worship with, to a close business associate, to a childhood playmate, or a trusted ally, either man or woman. They may be parents of the children's friends, a neighbor's guests, members of a committee, or business clients from another town or even another country. For Americans, there are real differences among these relations; a friendship may be superficial, casual, situational or deep and enduring. But a foreign visitor who comes to an American home can scarcely find any variations. For an outsider, who sees only behavior visible on the surface, the differences seem arbitrary if they find any. The mood is relaxed, and there is little ceremony. Most people, old and young, are called by first names and family and friends alike interact freely and speak in a relaxed, casual way.**

**在美国，社会流动性极高，人们因为新工作、教育或其他许多原因而在国内搬来搬去是司空见惯的事。所以，“朋友”这个称谓可以宽泛地适用于一系列关系——朋友可以是与你一起做礼拜的人，可以是亲密的生意伙伴，可以是儿时的玩伴，也可以是可依赖的盟友。朋友可以是男的，也可以是女的。他们可以是孩子朋友的家长、邻居家的客人、某个委员会的委员，或者来自另一个城镇、甚至另一个国家的生意上的客户。对美国人而言，这些关系是有着真正的区别的；友谊可以是浅浅的、泛泛的、应景的，也可以是深厚而长久的。但是，一个到美国家庭做客的外国人几乎看不出其中的任何差别。对一个外来人而言，他们只看到表面的表现。即使他们发现其中有任何差别，他们也觉得这种差别似乎并非美国人有意为之。朋友之间气氛很轻松，也不太讲究礼数。不管老少，多数人都直呼其名。而且家人和朋友们都自由地交流，轻松随意地谈话。**

**3 Comparatively, friendship in other countries seems more complicated. In France, as in many other European countries, friends generally are of the same sex. Many French people doubt the possibility of cross-gender friendships. For the French, friendship is a one-to-one relationship that demands a keen awareness of the other person's personality and specialized interests. The special relationship of friendship is based on what the French value most – on the mind, on compatibility of outlook, on a corresponding appreciation of artistic expression, on a love of fine foods, on philosophy, or on the enjoyment of sports. French friendships are private relationships with distinct boundaries. A man may play chess with one friend or discuss poetry with another for 30 years without learning about either of his friends' personal lives or families.**

**相比之下，在其他国家，友谊似乎更为复杂。在法国，如同在许多其他欧洲国家一样，朋友一般是同性的。许多法国人都对异性之间的友谊持怀疑态度。对法国人而言，友谊是一种一对一的关系，需要十分了解对方的个性和特殊兴趣。友谊作为一种特殊关系，是基于法国人最为重视的一些方面，即拥有共同的思想、一致的世界观、对艺术表现的共同欣赏、对美食的喜爱、相同的人生哲学或者对体育的喜爱。法国人的友谊是带有明确界限的一种私人关系。一个人可30年来与一位朋友下棋或者与另一位朋友讨论诗歌，但他可能对这两位朋友的私生活或家庭情况一无所知。**

**4 In Germany, friendship is much more a matter of feeling and affection. Young boys and girls form deeply sensitive alliances, walk and talk together – not so much to polish their wits as to share their hopes, fears, and ideals, and to join in a kind of mutual discovery of each other's own inner life. Within the family, the closest relationship over a lifetime is between brothers and sisters. German men and women find in their closest friends among the same sex the loyalty of a brother or the devotion of a sister.**

**在德国，友谊更多的是一种感觉和喜爱。年轻男孩和女孩结成灵犀相通的盟友，一起漫步、交谈，其目的与其说是为了变得更有智慧，不如说是为了分享他们的希望、忧虑和理想，以及为了共同参与对彼此内心世界的挖掘。在家庭中，一生中最亲密的关系是兄弟姐妹之间的关系。德国男性和女性在他们最亲密的同性朋友身上可以找到兄弟般的忠诚或者姐妹般的挚爱。**

**5 English friendships follow a still different pattern. Their basis is shared activity. They may share literary interests, serve on a committee, enjoy sports together or share a mutual love of walking. Close English friendships may be of the same sex or of mixed gender; friends may be found in two people, two couples or even a small group. English friendships are made outside the family but can often be enhanced by becoming an integrated part of a family's social life.**

**英国人的友谊则又是另一种模式。英国人友谊的基础是共同参与活动。他们或许拥有共同的文学爱好、在一个委员会共事、一起享受体育活动或都喜欢散步。英国人之间的亲密友谊可以建立在同性之间，也可以是异性之间；朋友关系可以建立在两个人、两对夫妻甚至是一小群人之间。英国人的友谊是在家庭以外形成的，但是往往因其成为家庭社交生活的组成部分而得到进一步发展。**

**6 What, then, is friendship and what is its significance? To summarize, it's a vital human quality that can bind people together for life. And unlike family, it involves freedom of choice. A friend is someone you choose and who chooses you. My friends are quite different from each other. Some are mutual friends. Conversely, others don't even like each other! That is the odd thing about friendship. Just because I like two people does not guarantee that they will like each other. However, I owe them all a debt of gratitude. Whatever the continent or country, people have extended the hand of friendship and welcomed me into their lives. By opening the doors of friendship to me, they occupy a special place in my heart. They have profoundly enriched my life experience, because wherever I am, when I'm with friends, I feel at home. The miracle of friendship is the same. It just takes time to understand the many different ways that friendship is expressed around the world.**

**那么，什么是友谊？友谊的意义何在？概括而言，友谊是人类的一个重要品质，它能使人们一生紧密相连。而且，和家庭不同的是，友谊具有选择的自由。朋友就是你选择了他、他也选择了你。我的朋友们各不相同。他们中有些彼此也是朋友。另一些则相反，他们甚至互不喜欢！这就是友谊的奇怪之处。仅仅因为我喜欢两个人并不能保证这两个人也彼此喜欢。不过，我对他们都心怀感激。无论在哪个大陆、哪个国家，人们都伸出友谊之手，欢迎我走进他们的生活。通过向我打开友谊之门，他们在我的心中占据着一个特殊的位置。他们极大地丰富了我的生活经历，因为无论我在哪里，只要跟朋友们在一起，我就感到舒适自在。友谊的奇妙之处是一样的。只是人们需要时间去理解世界各地表达友谊的许多不同方式。**