**Love and logic: The story of a fallacy**

**爱情与逻辑：谬误的故事**

**1 I had my first date with Polly after I made the trade with my roommate Rob. That year every guy on campus had a leather jacket, and Rob couldn't stand the idea of being the only football player who didn't, so he made a pact that he'd give me his girl in exchange for my jacket. He wasn't the brightest guy. Polly wasn't too shrewd, either.**

**在我和室友罗伯的交易成功之后，我和波莉有了第一次约会。那一年校园里每个人都有件皮夹克，而罗伯是校足球队员中唯一一个没有皮夹克的，他一想到这个就受不了，于是他和我达成了一项协议，用他的女友换取我的夹克。他可不那么聪明，而他的女友波莉也不太精明。**

**2 But she was pretty, well-off, didn't dye her hair strange colors or wear too much makeup. She had the right background to be the girlfriend of a dogged, brilliant lawyer. If I could show the elite law firms I applied to that I had a radiant, well-spoken counterpart by my side, I just might edge past the competition.**

**但她漂亮而且富有，也没有把头发染成奇怪的颜色或是化很浓的妆。她拥有合适的家庭背景，足以胜任一名坚忍而睿智的律师的女友。如果我能够让我所申请的顶尖律师事务所看到我身边伴随着一位光彩照人、谈吐优雅的另一半，我就很有可能在竞聘中以微弱优势获胜。**

**3 "Radiant" she was already. I could dispense her enough pearls of wisdom to make her "well-spoken".**

**“光彩照人”，她已经是了。而我也能施予她足够多的“智慧之珠”，让她变得“谈吐优雅”。**

**4 After a banner day out, I drove until we were situated under a big old oak tree on a hill off the expressway. What I had in mind was a little eccentric. I thought the venue with a perfect view of the luminous city would lighten the mood. We stayed in the car, and I turned down the stereo and took my foot off the brake pedal. "What are we going to talk about?" she asked.**

**在一起外出度过了美好的一天之后，我驱车来到了高速公路旁一座小山上一棵古老的大橡树下。我的想法有些怪异。而这个地方能够俯瞰灯火灿烂的城区，我觉得它会使人的心情变轻松。我们呆在车子里，我调低了音响并把脚从刹车上挪开。“我们要谈些什么？”她问道。**

**5 "Logic."**

**“逻辑学。”**

**6 "Cool," she said over her gum.**

**“好酷啊，”她一边嚼着口香糖一边说。**

**7 "The doctrine of logic," I said, "is a staple of clear thinking. Failures in logic distort the truth, and some of them are well known. First let's look at the fallacy Dicto Simpliciter."**

**“逻辑学的原理，”我说道，“即清晰思考的主要原则。逻辑上出现的问题会歪曲事实，其中有些还很普遍。我们先来看看一种叫做‘绝对判断’的逻辑谬误。”**

**8 "Great," she agreed.**

**“好啊，”她表示同意。**

**9 "Dicto Simpliciter means an unqualified generalization. For example: Exercise is good. Therefore, everybody should exercise."**

**“‘绝对判断’是指在证据不足的情况下所作出的推断。比方说：运动是有益的，所以每个人都应该运动。”**

**10 She nodded in agreement.**

**她点头表示赞同。**

**11 I could see she was stumped. "Polly," I explained, "it's too simple a generalization. If you have, say, heart disease or extreme obesity, exercise is bad, not good. Therefore, you must say exercise is good for most people."**

**我看得出她没弄明白。“波莉，”我解释说，“这个推断太过简单化了。如果你有心脏病或者超级肥胖症什么的，运动就变得有害而不是有益。所以你应该说，运动对大多数人来说是有益的。”**

**12 "Next is Hasty Generalization. Self-explanatory, right? Listen carefully: You can't speak French. Rob can't speak French. Looks like nobody at this school can speak French."**

**“接下来是‘草率结论’。这似乎不言自明，对吧？仔细听好了：你不会说法语，罗伯也不会说法语，那么这所学校里好像是没有人会说法语。”**

**13 "Really?" said Polly, amazed. "Nobody?"**

**“是吗？”波莉吃惊地说。“没有人吗？”**

**14 "This is also a fallacy," I said. "The generalization is reached too hastily. Too few instances support such a conclusion."**

**“这也是一种逻辑谬误，”我说，“这一结论太草率了，因为能够支持这一结论的例证太少了。”**

**15 She seemed to have a good time. I could safely say my plan was underway. I took her home and set a date for another conversation.**

**她似乎学得很开心，而我也可以放心地说我的计划正在稳步推进中。我把她送回家，并且定下了下一次约会交谈的日子。**

**16 Seated under the oak the next evening I said, "Our first fallacy tonight is called Ad Misericordiam."**

**第二天晚上，坐在那棵橡树下，我说：“今天晚上我们要谈的第一个逻辑谬误叫‘文不对题’。”**

**17 She nodded with delight.**

**她高兴地点了点头。**

**18 "Listen closely," I said. "A man applies for a job. When the boss asks him what his qualifications are, he says he has six children to feed."**

**“听好了，”我说，“有个人去申请工作，当老板问他有什么应聘资格时，他说他有六个孩子要抚养。”**

**19 "Oh, this is awful, awful," she whispered in a choked voice.**

**“哇，这太可怕了，太可怕了,”她哽咽着轻声说道。**

**20 "Yes, it's awful," I agreed, "but it's no argument. The man never answered the boss's question. Instead he appealed to the boss's sympathy — Ad Misericordiam."**

**“对，是挺可怕的,”我表示赞同地说,“但这不是理由。这个人根本没有回答老板的问题，而只是在博取老板的同情，这就是‘文不对题’。”**

**21 She blinked, still trying hard to keep back her tears.**

**她眨着眼睛，仍在竭力地忍住眼泪。**

**22 "Next," I said carefully, "we will discuss False Analogy. An example, students should be allowed to look at their textbooks during exams, because surgeons have X-rays to guide them during surgery."**

**“接下来”，我小心地说，“我们来讨论‘错误类比’。举个例子：学生考试时应该允许看课本，因为外科医生在做手术时可以看X光片。”**

**23 "I like that idea," she said.**

**“我喜欢这个主意，”她说。**

**24 "Polly," I groaned, "don't derail the discussion. The inference is wrong. Doctors aren't taking a test to see how much they have learned, but students are. The situations are altogether different. You can't make an analogy between them."**

**“波莉，”我抱怨道，“别打岔，这一推论是错误的。医生们不是在参加考试以检查他们学到了多少，而学生却是。他们的情况完全不同，你不能将他们作类比。”**

**25 "I still think it's a good idea," said Polly.**

**“我仍然认为这是一个好主意，”波莉说。**

**26 With five nights of diligent work, I actually made a logician out of Polly. She was an analytical thinker at last. The time had come for the conversion of our relationship from academic to romantic.**

**经过五个夜晚的辛勤努力，我竟然真的将波莉打造成了一个逻辑行家，她总算能够分析思考了。现在应该是时候让我们的关系从学术向浪漫发展了。**

**27 "Polly," I said when next we sat under our oak, "tonight we won't discuss fallacies."**

**“波莉，”当我们又一次坐在那棵橡树下的时候我对她说，“今晚我们不讨论逻辑谬误了。”**

**28 "Oh?" she said, a little disappointed.**

**“哦？”她回答说，有一点失望。**

**29 Favoring her with a grin, I said, "We have now spent five evenings together. We get along pretty well. We make a pretty good couple."**

**我赞许地对她笑了笑，说:“我们在一起已经度过了五个晚上，相互之间挺合得来，我们是蛮相配的一对。”**

**30 "Hasty Generalization," said Polly brightly. "Or as a normal person might say, that's a little premature, don't you think?"**

**“草率结论，”波莉伶俐地说，“或者是按一般人的说法，这个结论有些不成熟，你不这样认为吗？”**

**31 I laughed with amusement. She'd learned her lessons well, far surpassing my expectations. "Sweetheart," I said, patting her hand in a tolerant manner, "five dates is plenty. After all, you don't have to eat a whole cake to know it's good."**

**我被逗得笑了起来，她功课还真学得不错，大大超过了我的预期。“亲爱的，”我开口说，同时宽容地拍了拍她的手，“五次约会已经够多了，毕竟你不需要吃掉整个蛋糕才知道它是不是好吃。”**

**32 "False Analogy," said Polly promptly. "Your premise is that dating is like eating. But you're not a cake. You're a boy."**

**“错误类比，”波莉立即回应。“你的前提是约会就如同吃东西。可你不是蛋糕，你是个男孩。”**

**33 I laughed with somewhat less amusement, hiding my dread that she'd learned her lessons too well. A few more false steps would be my doom. I decided to change tactics and try flattery instead.**

**我又笑了笑，不过不觉得那么有趣了，同时还不能表露出我害怕她学得太好了。再错几步我可就无法挽回了。我决定改变策略，转而尝试奉承她的办法。**

**34 "Polly, I love you. Please say you'll go out with me. I'm nothing without you."**

**“波莉，我爱你。请答应做我的女朋友，没有你我什么也不是。”**

**35 "Ad Misericordiam," she said.**

**“文不对题，”她说。**

**36 "You certainly can discern a fallacy when you see it," I said, my hopes starting to crumble. "But don't take them so literally. I mean this is all academic. You know the things you learn in school don't have anything to do with real life."**

**“你还真是能在遇到逻辑谬误时一一辨别它们了，”我说，心里的希望已经开始动摇。“不过不要对它们太死板，我是说这都是些学术的东西。你知道，学校里学的东西和实际生活根本没有什么联系。”**

**37 "Dicto Simpliciter," she said. "Besides, you really should practice what you preach."**

**“绝对判断，”她说道，“而且，你自己教的东西应该自己身体力行。”**

**38 I leaped to my feet, my temper flaring up. "Will you or will you not go out with me?"**

**我一下跳了起来，怒火中烧，“你到底愿不愿意做我的女朋友？”**

**39 "No to your proposition," she replied.**

**“我不愿意，”她答道。**

**40 "Why?" I demanded.**

**“为什么？”我追问道。**

**41 "I'm more interested in a different petitioner — Rob and I are back together."**

**“我对另一位求爱者更感兴趣——罗伯和我重归于好了。”**

**42 With great effort, I said calmly, "How could you give me the axe over Rob? Look at me, an ingenious student, a tremendous intellectual, a man with an assured future. Look at Rob, a muscular idiot, a guy who'll never know where his next meal is coming from. Can you give me one good reason why you should be with him?"**

**我极力地保持着平静，说道：“你怎么会甩了我而选择罗伯？看看我，一个聪明过人的学生，一个不同凡响的学者，一个前途无量的人。再看看罗伯，一个肌肉发达的蠢材，一个有了上顿没下顿的家伙。你是否能给我一个充足的理由，为什么要选择跟他？”**

**43 "Wow, what presumption! I'll put it in a way someone as brilliant as you can understand," retorted Polly, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "Full disclosure — I like Rob in leather. I told him to say yes to you so he could have your jacket!"**

**“喔，这是什么假设啊！为了让像你这样聪明的人能够明白，我这么说吧，”波莉反驳道，声音里充满了讽刺，“事情的真相是——我喜欢罗伯穿皮衣。是我让他同意你们的协议的，这样他就能拥有你的夹克！”﻿**

**Why do smart people do dumb things?**

**聪明人为何会做蠢事？**

**1 Orthodox views prize intelligence and intellectual rigor highly in the modern realm of universities and tech industry jobs. One of the underlying assumptions of this value system is that smart people, by virtue of what they've learned, will formulate better decisions. Often this is true. Yet psychologists who study human decision-making processes have uncovered cognitive biases common to all people, regardless of intelligence, that can lead to poor decisions in experts and laymen alike.**

**传统观念将智力和思维的缜密性看作现代大学领域和科技产业工作的重要素质。这一价值体系所隐含的前提是，聪明人借助自己丰富的学识会作出更高明的决定。在大多数情况下，确实如此。但是，研究人类决策过程的心理学家们却发现了每个人身上都常见的“认知偏差”。不管智力水平如何，这些认知偏差都会引导人们作出错误的决定，不论他们是专家还是门外汉。**

**2 Thankfully these biases can be avoided. Understanding how and in what situations they occur can give you an awareness of your own limitations and allow you to factor them into your decision-making.**

**好在这些偏差是可以避免的。只要知道这些偏差如何及在何种情况下发生，你就能意识到自身的缺陷，并在决策过程中考虑到这些因素的影响。**

**3 One of the most common biases is what is known as the fundamental attribution error. Through this people attribute the failures of others to character flaws and their own to mere circumstance, subconsciously considering their own characters to be stainless. "Jenkins lost his job because of his incompetence; I lost mine because of the recession." It also leads us to attribute our own success to our qualifications, discounting luck, while seeing others' success as the product of mere luck.**

**最常见的偏差之一就是通常所说的“基本归因错误”。犯这种错误的人会将别人的失败归因于性格缺陷，而将自己的失败仅仅归因于周遭环境，潜意识中认为自己的性格是完美无瑕的。“詹金斯丢掉了工作是因为他能力太差，我丢掉了工作则是因为经济衰退。”同样，这种偏差也会让我们将自己的成功归功于自身素质而不是运气，而将别人的成功仅仅看作是运气使然。**

**4 In other words, we typically demand more accountability from others than we do from ourselves. Not only does this lead to petty judgments about other people, it also leads to faulty risk assessment when you assume that certain bad things only happen to others. For example, you might assume, without evidence, that the price of your house will go up even though 90 percent of them have dropped in price, because you yourself are more competent.**

**换句话说，我们通常要求别人承担更多的责任，而不是自己。这不仅导致我们心胸狭窄地对别人进行评价也会由于假定某种坏事只会发生在别人身上而致使我们做出错误的风险评判。举一个例子，你可能会毫无根据地假定自己的房子会升值，哪怕周围百分之九十的房子都已经贬值了，因为你总认为自己的能力更强。**

**5 Confirmation bias is sometimes found together with fundamental attribution error. This one has two parts. First, we tend to gather and rely upon information that only confirms our existing views. Second, we avoid or veto things that refute our preexisting hypotheses.**

**“确定性偏差”有时会和“基本归因错误”一并出现。这种偏差包含两部分：第一，我们往往只收集且只依赖对我们的已有观点起支持作用的信息；第二，我们回避或否认那些与自己之前所持的假设相左的信息。**

**6 For example, imagine that you suspect your computer has been hacked. Every time it stalls or has a little error, you assume that it was triggered by a hacker and that your suspicions are valid. This bias plays an especially big role in rivalries between two opposing views. Each side partitions their own beliefs in a logic-proof loop, and claims their opponent is failing to recognize valid points. Outwitting confirmation bias therefore requires exploring both sides of an argument with equal diligence.**

**比如说，假设你怀疑自己的电脑受到了黑客攻击，那么它每次死机或出个小错，你都会认定是由黑客引起的，而且你认定自己的怀疑正确无误。这种偏差在两种敌对观点的对抗中会起到尤其重要的作用。每一方都会把自己的观点隔离出来，认为其在逻辑上无懈可击，并声称他们的对手忽略了某些要点。所以，要克服“确定性偏差”，就要以同样的努力认真探究论点的正反两面。**

**7 Similar to confirmation bias is the overconfidence bias. In an ideal world, we could be correct 100 percent of the time we were 100 percent sure about something, correct 80 percent of the time we were 80 percent sure about something, and so on. In reality, people's confidence vastly exceeds the accuracy of those judgments. This bias most frequently comes into play in areas where someone has no direct evidence and must make a guess — estimating how many people are in a crowded plaza, for example, or how likely it will rain. To make matters worse, even when people are aware of overconfidence bias, they will still tend to overstate the chances that they are correct. Confidence is no prophet and is best used together with available evidence. When witnesses are called to testify in a court trial, the confidence in their testimony is measured along with and against the evidence at hand.**

**与“确定性偏差”相类似的是“过度自信偏差”。在一个理想的世界，当我们百分之百地确信某件事时，我们就百分之百地正确；当我们百分之八十地确信某件事时，我们就百分之八十地正确，以此类推。但在现实中，人们的信心却大大超过了其判断的准确度。在一个人缺乏直接证据而必须要作出某种猜测的情况下，这一偏差就最有可能起作用，比如，估计一个拥挤的购物广场有多少人，或下雨的可能性有多大。更糟糕的是，即使人们意识到自己有过度自信的偏差，他们还是会高估自己的正确率。光靠自信是无法进行准确预测的，只有在切实证据的基础上，自信才能发挥最大的作用。当法庭传唤目击者出庭作证时，对他们证词的信任度是通过已经获取的相符或相反的证据来度量的。**

**8 The availability bias is also related to errors in estimation, in that we tend to estimate what outcome is more likely by how easily we can recount an example from memory. Since the retention and retrieval of memories is biased toward vivid, sensational, or emotionally charged examples, decisions based on them can often lead to strange, inaccurate conclusions.**

**与估计失误相关的还有“可得性偏差”，因为我们常常会凭借回忆某一例证的难易程度来推测哪种结果更可能出现。由于记忆的留存和重拾会因为事件的生动与否、震撼程度和情感触动程度的不同而产生偏差，那么，基于这些记忆所作出的决定也往往会是奇怪或不准确的结论。**

**9 In action this bias might lead someone to cancel a trip to, for example, the Canary Islands because of a report that the biggest plane crash in history happened there. Likewise some people might stop going out at night for fear of assault or rape.**

**在具体行为中，这种偏差可能会使某人取消比如前往加那利群岛的行程，因为有报道说，史上最惨重的空难就发生在那里。同样，人们也可能因惧怕遭到人身侵犯或者强暴而不敢再在晚上出门。**

**10 Repelling the availability bias calls for an empirical approach to a particular decision, one not based on the obscured reality of vivid memory. If there is a low incidence of disaster, like only one out of 100,000 plane landings results in a crash, it is safe to fly to the Canary Islands. If one out of one million people who go out is assaulted, it is safe to go out at night.**

**要排除“可得性偏差”，就必须在作某一具体决定时，以实证方法所取得的证据为依据，而不是以与现实不太相符的某个鲜明的记忆为依据。如果灾难的发生率很低，比如飞机着陆过程中坠毁的可能性只有十万分之一，那么飞往加那利群岛就仍是安全的。如果人们外出只有百万分之一的几率遭到人身侵犯，那么夜晚出行也就仍是安全的。**

**11 The sunk cost fallacy has a periodic application and was first identified by economists. A good example of how it works is the casino slot machine. Gamblers with a high threshold for risk put money into a slot machine hoping for a big return, but with each pull of the lever they lose some money playing the odds. If they have been pulling the lever many times in a row without success, they might decide that they had better keep spending money at the machine, or they will have wasted everything they already put in.**

**“沉没成本谬误”也时有发生，它最初是由经济学家发现的。其作用机理最好的例证就是赌场老虎机。赌徒们冒着高风险，把钱投入老虎机，期望能够得到很大的回报，但随着一次次拉动拉杆，他们也一次次把钱赌输了。如果他们多次连续拉动拉杆而没有一次成功，他们可能会决定最好还是继续把钱投入老虎机，否则他们之前投入的成本就悉数浪费了。**

**12 The truth is that every pull of the lever has the same winning probability of nearly one in a trillion, regardless of how much money has been put in before — the previous plays were sunk costs.**

**而事实是，不论他们之前投入了多少钱，每一次拉动拉杆的成功几率都同样是极小的——之前投入的那些即为沉没成本。**

**13 In everyday life this can lead people to stay in damaging situations because of how much they have already put in, stuck on the erroneous belief that the value of that time or energy they have invested will decay or disappear if they leave. The wisest course is to recognize the effects of the sunk cost fallacy and to leave a bad situation regardless of how much you have already invested.**

**在日常生活中，这种谬误会导致人们由于顾及之前所投入的成本，而持续停留在损失的状态中，同时困顿于一种错误的观念，即他们害怕自己一旦离开，之前所投入的时间和精力就会贬值或付诸东流。而最明智的办法则是，要充分认识沉没成本谬误导致的结果，离开糟糕的境况，不论之前已投入了多少。**

**14 While there are still more biases, the key to avoiding them remains the same: When a decision matters, it is best to rely on watertight logic and a careful examination of the evidence and to remain aware that what seems like good intuition is always subject to errors of judgment.**

**尽管还有其他更多的偏差，避免这些偏差的关键其实都一样：当涉及重要决策时，最好是依靠严密的逻辑并仔细审查证据；同时，要保持警惕，那些看上去良好的直觉总是很容易导致判断失误。**