

题目：A better way to talk about love

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OK, so today I want to talk about how we talk about love. And specifically, I want to talk about what's wrong with how we talk about love.

今天，我想讨论一下我们谈论爱情的方法。说得更明确一些，就是讨论一下我们谈论爱情时犯的错误。

Most of us will probably fall in love a few times over the course of our lives, and in the English language, this metaphor, falling, is really the main way that we talk about that experience. I don't know about you, but when I conceptualize this metaphor, what I picture is straight out of a cartoon -- like there's a man, he's walking down the sidewalk, without realizing it, he crosses over an open manhole, and he just plummets into the sewer below. And I picture it this way because falling is not jumping. Falling is accidental, it's uncontrollable. It's something that happens to us without our consent. And this -- this is the main way we talk about starting a new relationship.

我们大多数人在一生中会不止一次坠入爱河，而在语言中，我们使用“坠入”一词，很大程度上也形容了恋爱的体验。我不知道你们怎么想的，但我脑海中所浮现的画面完全和卡通片一样：有一个人，他走在人行道上，不经意间走过一个井口，然后“扑通”一声跌进了下水道。我这样想象是因为“坠入”与“跳入”不同。“坠入”是意外的，是不可控制的。它的发生是未经自己允许的。而这就是我们讨论一段新恋情时的描述方式。

I am a writer and I'm also an English teacher, which means I think about words for a living. You could say that I get paid to argue that the language we use matters, and I would like to argue that many of the metaphors we use to talk about love -- maybe even most of them -- are a problem.

我是作家也是英语老师，这意味着我靠咬文嚼字为生。你可以说我的工作就是告诉别人日常用语是很要紧的，而我想指出的是，有很多用来形容爱情的比喻，甚至可能是大多数，都是有问题的。

specifically
adv.明确地；专门地

metaphor
n.暗喻

conceptualize
v.将...概念化；构思

manhole
n.井口

plummet into
跌入

sewer
n.下水道

So, in love, we fall. We're struck. We are crushed. We swoon. We burn with passion. Love makes us crazy, and it makes us sick. Our hearts ache, and then they break. So our metaphors equate the experience of loving someone to extreme violence or illness.

所以说，我们会“坠入”爱河。爱情突如其来。我们不能自拔。我们痴狂迷醉。我们被热情灼烧。爱情使人癫狂，也使我们患病。我们的心在滴血，然后支离破碎。所以说，这种比喻将恋爱经历 等同于极暴力和病态。

They do. And they position us as the victims of unforeseen and totally unavoidable circumstances. My favorite one of these is "smitten," which is the past participle of the word "smite." And if you look this word up in the dictionary -- you will see that it can be defined as both "grievous affliction," and, "to be very much in love." I tend to associate the word "smite" with a very particular context, which is the Old Testament. In the Book of Exodus alone, there are 16 references to smiting, which is the word that the Bible uses for the vengeance of an angry God. Here we are using the same word to talk about love that we use to explain a plague of locusts.

事实真是如此。而这些比喻把我们定位成 某种未知、不可避免的事件的受害者。其中我最喜欢的单词“smitten”，是“smite”的过去分词。如果在词典里查询这个单词……你会发现它既可译为“惨痛的折磨”，又可以译为“被迷得神魂颠倒”。这个单词常使我联想到一段特殊文字，那就是《圣经·旧约》。仅在《出埃及记》中，就16次提及这个单词，它被《圣经》用来形容一位愤怒的神的复仇。而如今这个用来形容爱情的词，原本是拿来形容蝗灾的。

Right? So, how did this happen? How have we come to associate love with great pain and suffering? And why do we talk about this ostensibly good experience as if we are victims? 对吧？所以为什么会这样？我们怎么会将爱情和伤痛与苦难混为一谈？还有我们为何会讨论这种美好假象，好像自己是受害者？

swoon

v. 痴迷；昏倒

circumstance

n. 境遇；条件

dictionary

n. 词典

grievous

affliction

惨痛的折磨

vengeance

n. 报仇；复仇

plague

n. 瘟疫

locusts

n. 蝗虫

ostensibly

adv. 表面上地

These are difficult questions, but I have some theories. And to think this through, I want to focus on one metaphor in particular, which is the idea of love as madness.

这些问题很难回答，但我有一些理论。若想解释清楚，我想着重谈谈这样一个比喻，那就是将爱情喻为疯狂。

When I first started researching **romantic** love, I found these madness metaphors everywhere. The history of Western culture is full of language that equates love to mental illness. These are just a few examples. William **Shakespeare**: "Love is merely a madness," from "As You Like It." Friedrich Nietzsche: "There is always some madness in love." "Got me looking, got me looking so crazy in love -- "from the great **philosopher**, Beyoncé Knowles.

一开始研究浪漫爱情的时候，我发现这种比喻无处不在。西方历史文化中，有许多文字将爱情比喻为精神疾病。以下是几个例子。威廉·莎士比亚说过：“爱情不过是一种疯狂。”出自《皆大欢喜》。哲学家尼采说过：“爱情中总是有些疯狂的。”还有“你的爱，你的爱让我如此痴狂……”上句出自伟大的“哲学家”，碧昂斯·诺里斯。

I fell in love for the first time when I was 20, and it was a pretty **turbulent** relationship right from the start. And it was long distance for the first couple of years, so for me that meant very high highs and very low lows. I can remember one moment in particular. I was sitting on a bed in a hostel in South America, and I was watching the person I love walk out the door. And it was late, it was nearly midnight, we'd gotten into an argument over dinner, and when we got back to our room, he threw his things in the bag and **stormed out**.

我在二十岁的时候经历了初恋，那是一段自始至终都非常凌乱的恋情。刚开始几年还是长途异地恋，所以对我来说意味着 很高的高潮和很低的低谷。我还记得一个特别的瞬间。当时我在南美，坐在一间旅社的床上，看着我爱着的人冲出门外。当时很晚了，将近午夜，我们在晚饭时发生了争吵，当我们回到房间后，他把东西扔到包里，径直冲出了房间。

romantic
adj. 浪漫的

Shakespeare
莎士比亚

philosopher
n. 哲学家

turbulent
adj. 动乱的

stormed out
冲出

While I can no longer remember what that argument was about, I very clearly remember how I felt watching him leave.

我已不记得当时争吵的目的，但我清楚记得我看着他离开时的感受。

I was 22, it was my first time in the developing world, and I was totally alone. I had another week until my flight home, and I knew the name of the town that I was in, and the name of the city that I needed to get to to fly out, but I had no idea how to get around. I had no **guidebook** and very little money, and I spoke no Spanish.

我当时22岁，第一次来到发展中国家，而且我孤身一人。距离我回家还有一周，我记得我所在的那个小镇的名字，也记得我要飞离南美的出发地城市的名字，但我并不知道怎么走。我没有向导书也没有多少钱，而且我不会讲西班牙语。

Someone more **adventurous** than me might have seen this as a moment of opportunity, but I just froze. I just sat there. And then I burst into tears. But despite my panic, some small voice in my head thought, "Wow. That was dramatic. I must really be doing this love thing right."

比我更有冒险精神的人，可能会把这视为一次很好的锻炼经历，但我却不知所措。我就坐在那儿。然后嚎啕大哭。但在慌乱中，我脑海中的一个声音告诉我：“天啊，这很戏剧化哦。我一定是把爱情表现的淋漓尽致了。”

Because some part of me wanted to feel **miserable** in love. And it sounds so strange to me now, but at 22, I longed to have dramatic experiences, and in that moment, I was **irrational** and **furious** and **devastated**, and **weirdly** enough, I thought that this somehow **legitimized** the feelings I had for the guy who had just left me.

因为我内心深处是渴望在爱情中受伤的。这对于现在的我说很奇怪，但对于22岁的我，我渴望一次戏剧性的经历，那个瞬间我很不理性、很气愤、很绝望，而更奇怪的是，我认为某种程度上，它证明了我对离我而去那个人的爱。

guidebook
n. 向导书

adventurous
adj. 有冒险精神的

miserable
adj. 痛苦的

irrational
adj. 非理性的

furious
adj. 狂怒的

devastated
adj. 极度不安的

weirdly
adv. 奇怪的

legitimize
v. 合法化

I think on some level I wanted to feel a little bit crazy, because I thought that that was how love worked. This really should not be surprising, considering that according to Wikipedia, there are eight films, 14 songs, two albums and one novel with the title "Crazy Love."

可能在某些时候想疯狂一些，因为我以为爱情就应该是这样。其实这不应该使人惊讶，因为根据维基百科，有8部电影，14首歌，2张专辑，和一本小说都命名为《疯狂爱情》。

About half an hour later, he came back to our room. We made up. We spent another mostly happy week traveling together. And then, when I got home, I thought, "That was so terrible and so great. This must be a real romance." I expected my first love to feel like madness, and of course, it met that expectation very well. But loving someone like that -- as if my entire well-being depended on him loving me back -- was not very good for me or for him.

半小时后，他回来了。我们复合了。接下来，在旅行中我们度过了愉快的一周。然后我回到家，我想，“这可真是既糟糕又美好。这一定是真正的爱情吧。”我期盼着能在初恋中感受到疯狂，显然，这个期望被很好的满足了。不过这样爱着一个人，好像我的全部都取决于他回馈的爱，对自己是很不好的，对他也一样。

But I suspect this experience of love is not that unusual. Most of us do feel a bit mad in the early stages of romantic love. In fact, there is research to confirm that this is somewhat normal, because, **neurochemically** speaking, romantic love and mental illness are not that easily **distinguished**. This is true.

不过我觉得这段爱情经历并不是非常罕见。我们大多数人在恋情的早期都会感受到些许疯狂。事实上，研究表明这是正常现象，因为，从神经学角度来说，恋情和精神疾病并没有特别大的区别。这是真的。

neurochemically
adv.神经化学上

distinguish
v.区分；认出

This study from 1999 used blood tests to confirm that the **serotonin** levels of the newly in love very closely resembled the serotonin levels of people who had **been diagnosed with** obsessive-compulsive disorder.

一个1999年的实验通过验血，确认了新情侣的血清素水平 和另一群人的血清素水平相似，那就是强迫症患者。

Yes, and low levels of serotonin are also associated with seasonal affective disorder and depression. So there is some evidence that love is associated with changes to our moods and our behaviors. And there are other studies to confirm that most relationships begin this way.

没错，低水平的血清素 与季节性情感障碍 以及抑郁症都有关联。由此证明，心情和行为的变化与爱情是有关的。也有其他研究确认 大多数感情是这样开始的。

Researchers believe that the low levels of serotonin is correlated with **obsessive** thinking about the object of love, which is like this feeling that someone has set up camp in your brain. And most of us feel this way when we first fall in love. But the good news is, it doesn't always last that long -- usually from a few months to a couple of years.

研究者相信，低水平的血清素 代表了对恋爱对象的强迫性回忆，就好像别人在你的脑海中安营扎寨。我们在初恋都有这样的感受。但幸运的是，这感受不会持续很久，通常只有几个月到一两年。

When I got back from my trip to South America, I spent a lot of time alone in my room, checking my email, desperate to hear from the guy I loved. I decided that if my friends could not understand my grievous **affliction**, then I did not need their friendship.

当我从南美回来的时候，我在我的房间里独自待了很久，查看我的邮箱，非常渴望得到我爱的那个男人的消息。我决定：如果我的朋友不理解我的困境，那我也不需要这些友谊。

serotonin

n.血清素

be diagnosed

with

被诊断出

obsessive

n.痴迷；困扰

affliction

n.苦难

So I stopped hanging out with most of them. And it was probably the most unhappy year of my life. But I think I felt like it was my job to be **miserable**, because if I could be miserable, then I would prove how much I loved him. And if I could prove it, then we would have to end up together eventually.

所以我和大多数好友断绝了联系，那可能是我人生中最失落的一年。但我感觉我必须感受痛苦，因为通过我的痛苦，才可以证明我对他的爱。如果我可以证明，那我们终将会在一起。

This is the real madness, because there is no **cosmic** rule that says that great suffering equals great reward, but we talk about love as if this is true.

这才是真正的疯狂，因为并没有明确规定，受苦受难就一定能得到回报，但在爱情里我们却觉得这是对的。

Our experiences of love are both **biological** and cultural. Our biology tells us that love is good by activating these reward circuits in our brain, and it tells us that love is painful when, after a fight or a breakup, that **neurochemical** reward is **withdrawn**. And in fact -- and maybe you've heard this -- neurochemically speaking, going through a breakup is a lot like going through cocaine withdrawal, which I find **reassuring**.

我们的爱情体验既是生理上的，又是文化上的。生理通过激发我们大脑的激励反馈，告诉我们爱情是美好的。然而在吵架或分手后，它又告诉我们爱情是痛苦的，这时候神经反馈是无效的。事实上，你可能听说过，从神经学的角度来说，经历分手和戒毒过程非常相似，这点我感到很舒心。

miserable
adj.痛苦的

cosmic
adj.宇宙的；
巨大的

biological
adj.生物学的

neurochemical
adj.神经化学的

withdrawn
v.退出；撤离

reassuring
adj.令人感到
宽慰的

And then our culture uses language to shape and **reinforce** these ideas about love. In this case, we're talking about metaphors about pain and addiction and madness. It's kind of an interesting **feedback loop**. Love is powerful and at times painful, and we express this in our words and stories, but then our words and stories prime us to expect love to be powerful and painful.

reinforce

v.加强

feedback loop

反馈环路

我们的文化利用语言 来塑造与加强对于爱的观念。 现在的情况是，我们将其等同于 痛苦、癖嗜和痴狂。 这好像是一个有趣的反馈循环。 爱情很伟大，但有时也让我们痛苦， 我们用词句和故事来表达这点， 然后这些文字又使得我们 盲目期待爱情就应是伟大而痛苦的。

What's interesting to me is that all of this happens in a culture that values **lifelong monogamy**. It seems like we want it both ways: we want love to feel like madness, and we want it to last an entire lifetime. That sounds terrible.

lifelong

adj.终身的

monogamy

n.一夫一妻制

而对我来说有趣的是， 这一切都发生在一个 鼓励终生一夫一妻制的文化里。 这好像是说我们想两者兼得： 我们既想让爱情疯狂一些， 我们又想让它持续一生。 这听起来糟透了。

To reconcile this, we need to either change our culture or change our expectations. So, imagine if we were all less passive in love. If we were more assertive, more open-minded, more generous and instead of falling in love, we stepped into love. I know that this is asking a lot, but I'm not actually the first person to suggest this. In their book, "Metaphors We Live By," **linguists** Mark Johnson and George Lakoff suggest a really interesting solution to this **dilemma**, which is to change our **metaphors**.

linguist

n.语言学家

dilemma

n.窘境

metaphor

n.隐喻

要缓解这种情况， 我们要不改变我们的文化， 要不改变我们的期望。 请各位想象一下， 所有人的爱情都没那么被动。 想象我们少一些固执， 心胸变得更宽广、更开放， 我们不再“坠入”爱河， 我们“步入”爱河。 我知道这个要求有点高， 但我并不是第一个提出这点的人。 在《我们赖以生存的隐喻》一书中， 语言学家马克·约翰逊和乔治·拉克夫 提出了一个非常有趣的方法 来解决这一矛盾， 那就是改变我们的比喻。

They argue that metaphors really do shape the way we experience the world, and that they can even act as a guide for future actions, like self-fulfilling prophecies.

他们认为，比喻真的可以左右我们感受世界的方式，而它们甚至可以成为我们未来行动的指引，就像是自我实现的预言。

Johnson and Lakoff suggest a new metaphor for love: love as a collaborative work of art. I really like this way of thinking about love. Linguists talk about metaphors as having entailments, which is essentially a way of considering all the implications of, or ideas contained within, a given metaphor. And Johnson and Lakoff talk about everything that collaborating on a work of art entails: effort, compromise, patience, shared goals. These ideas align nicely with our cultural investment in long-term romantic commitment, but they also work well for other kinds of relationships -- short-term, casual, polyamorous, non-monogamous, asexual -- because this metaphor brings much more complex ideas to the experience of loving someone.

约翰逊和拉克夫提出了爱情的一种新比喻：爱情是一个合作完成的艺术品。我很喜欢这种看待爱情的方式。语言学家运用比喻是有很多内涵的，其实就是说喻体中包含了本体的几乎一切含义与概念。而约翰逊和拉克夫的比喻涉及到了合作创作艺术品的所有含义：努力、妥协、耐心、共同的目标等等。这些概念与我们在长期恋情中做出的精神投入很契合，但它们同样适用于其它各种恋爱关系——短期的、随意的恋情，多角恋，非一夫一妻制，无性恋……因为这种比喻在恋爱的体验中赋予了更多复杂的概念。

So if love is a collaborative work of art, then love is an aesthetic experience. Love is unpredictable, love is creative, love requires communication and discipline, it is frustrating and emotionally demanding. And love involves both joy and pain. Ultimately, each experience of love is different.

所以假如爱情是合作完成的艺术品，那么爱情就是一种美学体验。爱情是无法预测的，爱情是创造性的，爱情需要沟通，需要规矩，爱情是令人沮丧的，会造成很多精神压力。而爱情中既有快乐，也有痛苦。而最终，每次爱情经历都是不同的。

collaborative
adj.合作的

entailment
n.蕴含

commitment
n.投入；承诺

monogamous
adj.一夫一妻制的

aesthetic
adj.美学的

frustrating
adj.令人沮丧的

When I was younger, it never occurred to me that I was allowed to demand more from love, that I didn't have to just accept whatever love offered. When 14-year-old Juliet first meets -- or, when 14-year-old Juliet cannot be with Romeo, whom she has met four days ago, she does not feel **disappointed** or **angsty**. Where is she? She wants to die. Right? And just as a refresher, at this point in the play, act three of five, Romeo is not dead. He's alive, he's healthy, he's just been **banished** from the city. I understand that 16th-century Verona is unlike **contemporary** North America, and yet when I first read this play, also at age 14, Juliet's suffering made sense to me.

当我还年轻的时候，我从来没想过我可以从爱情中寻求更多，或者说我不需要全盘接受爱情给我提供的感受。当14岁的朱丽叶第一次见到……或者说，当14岁的朱丽叶不能和罗密欧在一起，她才认识罗密欧四天时间，她不觉得失落或痛苦。她怎么了？她想寻死。对吧？大家回忆一下，戏剧演到这里的时候是五幕中的第三幕，罗密欧并没有死，他还活着，他很健康，他只是被驱逐出城了。我明白16世纪的维罗纳和当今的北美非常不同，然而当我第一次读到这部戏剧，同样也在14岁，我觉得能够感受朱丽叶的痛苦。

Reframing love as something I get to create with someone I admire, rather than something that just happens to me without my control or consent, is **empowering**. It's still hard. Love still feels totally maddening and crushing some days, and when I feel really frustrated, I have to remind myself: my job in this relationship is to talk to my partner about what I want to make together. This isn't easy, either. But it's just so much better than the alternative, which is that thing that feels like madness.

把爱情当作一个与我所爱的人共同创造的东西，而不是一个不经我控制或同意就发生在我身上的东西，这想法非常激动人心。这依然很难做到。爱情有时候还是让我陷入疯狂与痛苦，而当我感到特别沮丧时，我必须提醒自己：在这段关系中，我的任务是与伴侣交流，沟通我们想共同创造的东西。其实这也不容易，但它已经比另一种方式要好很多了，那就是将爱情当作疯狂的体验。

disappointed
adj. 失望的

angsty
adj. 焦虑的；生气的

banish
v. 驱逐

contemporary
adj. 当代的

empowering
v. 授权

This version of love is not about winning or losing someone's affection. Instead, it requires that you trust your partner and talk about things when trusting feels difficult, which sounds so simple, but is actually a kind of **revolutionary**, radical act. This is because you get to stop thinking about yourself and what you're gaining or losing in your relationship, and you get to start thinking about what you have to offer. This version of love allows us to say things like, "Hey, we're not very good **collaborators**. Maybe this isn't for us." Or, "That relationship was shorter than I had planned, but it was still kind of beautiful."

revolutionary

adj. 革命性的

collaborator

n. 合作者

这种爱情不是为了 赢取或者失去某人的爱慕， 而是需要你相信你的伴侣， 而且当遇到信任危机时冷静交流， 虽说听起来很容易， 但这实际上是 挺革命性、颠覆性的。 因为你可以不再纠结于自身， 不再纠缠自己在爱情中的得与失， 而开始思考你可以做出什么贡献。 这种爱情让我们可以这样说：“嘿，我们之间的合作不是很好。可能这不适合我们吧。”或者说，“这段爱情 比我预计的要短一些， 但它还是挺美好的吧。”