Why men don't like shopping and most women do

为什么男人不喜欢购物而大多数女人喜欢

Do you like shopping? The answer may partly depend on one factor: whether you are male or female. Of course, it's a generalization to say, "Women like shopping and men don't" — I'm sure we all know people to whom this doesn't apply. However, there is evidence that this isn't a complete myth. A survey of 2,000 British people found that men became bored after only 26 minutes of shopping, while it took women a full two hours. The survey found that 80 percent of men didn't like shopping with their partners, and that 45 percent avoided doing so at all costs. Almost half of all spousal shopping trips ended in arguments, with men becoming frustrated, because they bought what they needed straight away, while their partners were still looking and taking too long to make decisions.

你喜欢购物吗？ 你的回答在某种程度上取决于一点，即你是男性还是女性。 当然，说“女人喜欢购物而男人不喜欢”，这是泛泛之论——我们认识的人当中肯定都有人不符合这种说法。 不过，有证据表明，这一说法也不全然是错误的。 一项对2,000名英国人的调查发现，男性逛商店才逛了26分钟就开始觉得无聊，而女性要逛整整两个小时后才会感到厌倦。 调查称，八成男性不喜欢陪伴侣购物，45%的男性想方设法避免和伴侣一起购物。 夫妻俩一起出门购物，近一半以吵架收场。让丈夫们抓狂的是，他们一下子就买到了需要的东西，而他们的伴侣却还在逛，还要花很长时间才能决定买不买。

If there is some validity to these generalizations — and if they are more than just the result of social conditioning — where could these different attitudes to shopping stem from?

如果这些泛泛之论有些道理的话——而且如果它们不仅仅是社会熏陶的产物——那么这些对于购物的不同态度是由什么造成的呢？

For hundreds of thousands of years, until around 8,000 B.C.E., all human beings lived as hunter-gatherers — that is, they survived by hunting wild animals (the man's job) and foraging for wild plants, nuts, and fruits (the woman's job).

约公元前8,000年之前的几十万年间，人类都是以狩猎和采集为生——也就是说，他们靠捕食野生动物（由男性承担）和寻找野生植物、坚果和果实（由女性承担）生存。

Beginning in the Middle East, human communities began to switch to farming around 8,000 B.C.E., and slowly, over the following millennia, the practice spread widely throughout Asia and Europe. But after so many hundreds of thousands of years of living as hunter-gatherers, it's no surprise that hunting and gathering are still instinctive to us. And this brings us back to shopping — because these instincts may show themselves in our shopping habits. When most women shop, they are in more of a "gathering" mode — browsing from tree to tree (or shop to shop), looking for ripe and nutritious fruits. They spend a lot of time examining the food, checking whether it is fresh and edible, and they discard quite a lot of it. At the end of the trip, they return home laden with a wide variety of foodstuffs (or shopping bags).

公元前8,000年左右，最早在中东地区，人类社会开始向农耕社会转变。在之后的一千年间，农耕方式逐渐广泛传播到整个亚洲和欧洲大陆。 不过，人类祖先作为狩猎者和采集者的历史毕竟长达几十万年，也难怪我们现在依旧保留着狩猎和采集的本能。 这就把我们带回到购物这件事——因为这些本能会在我们的购物习惯中显露出来。 大多数女性购物的时候，她们更多是处于一种“采集”模式——一棵树一棵树地瞧（或者一家店一家店地逛），找寻有营养的成熟果实。 她们花很多的时间仔细查看食物，看看是否新鲜，是否可食用，许多食物因此被丢弃。 最后，她们带着各种各样的食物（或者购物袋）满载而归。

In the same way, men's shopping habits may be related to their hunting heritage. This might explain why men appear to be more focused on a single task, rather than looking at different options. In prehistoric times, they had one thing in mind: Kill an animal and go home. They didn't want to waste time searching, and it was not so necessary for them to examine their food acquisitions. They just looked for animals, killed them, picked them up, and went straight home. Perhaps this rush to get home was based on the knowledge that if a hunter left an animal lying for too long, other animals or insects would start to eat it. Some dead animals would also have been heavy, and so difficult to carry around for long. Also, in hot and humid conditions, it wouldn't be long before the meat would start to go bad.

同样，男性的购物习惯也可以和他们的狩猎传统联系起来。 这也许可以解释为什么男性似乎更专注于单项任务而不会去考虑其他选择。 史前时期的男性目标明确：捕杀一只动物，然后打道回府。 他们不愿意浪费时间四处搜寻，也没有必要仔细查看已经捕获的猎物。 他们要做的就是：寻找动物、捕杀它们，然后捡起来径直回家。 男性这么匆忙回家可能是因为他们知道，如果将猎物长时间留在地上置之不顾，会有其他动物或者昆虫来噬食。 有些死去的动物也可能很重，长时间地扛着四处走会比较费劲。 况且，在炎热潮湿的环境里，过不了多久，肉就会开始变质。

Let me repeat that these are generalizations — there are undoubtedly millions of men and women to whom these characteristics don't apply. And it may seem silly to make these connections between modern shopping habits and hunter-gatherer traits. But if there is a tendency for men and women to shop in these different ways, then it could be explained in terms of our hunter-gatherer past.

容我再重复一下，以上这些只是泛泛之谈——毫无疑问，有许许多多的男性女性和这些特征不沾边儿。 把现代人的购物习惯和狩猎采集的特征这样联系起来似乎有些荒唐。 不过，如果说男性和女性倾向于以不同的方式购物，这种倾向或许可以用我们狩猎采集的历史来解释。

Of course, I eventually realized that I was not the only person who had thought of it. Several years ago, anthropologists Kruger and Byker found very clear similarities between modern men's and women's shopping habits and our hunter-gatherer past. They found that women "scored higher on skills and behaviors associated with gathering … even though the environment and the objects being gathered have changed with respect to our ancestral environment. Also as predicted, men scored higher on skills and behaviors associated with hunting." They found that women were more inclined to spend extended time browsing around shopping malls, while men were more inclined to buy what they needed and then leave straight away. Their findings supply empirical evidence for the connections I'm making in this article.

当然，我后来终于意识到，我不是唯一一个这么认为的人。 几年前，人类学家克鲁格和拜克发现，现代男女的购物习惯和我们狩猎采集的历史之间存在非常明显的相似之处。 他们发现，女性“在和采集相关的技能和行为上得分更高······尽管相较于我们远古的环境，不管是环境还是采集的对象都已经发生了变化。而且，不出所料，男性在和狩猎相关的技能和行为上得分更高”。 他们发现，女性更有可能在购物中心逛很长时间，而男性更愿意买到需要的东西后立马离开。 他们的研究结果为我在文中所阐述的两者间的联系提供了实证。

One good thing about this: It provides justification for our shopping habits. You can always use the excuse that you can't help liking (or not liking) shopping, because you inherited those instincts from our prehistoric past. More seriously, this might also help us to overcome the impulse to buy unnecessary material goods.

这样建立联系的好处是，它为我们的购物习惯找到了正当理由。 你可以总是以此为借口，说你不由自主地喜欢（或者不喜欢）购物，因为你从人类的远古经历中遗传了那些本能。 说真的，这还有助于我们克制一时冲动，不去购买不必要的物品。

Once you become aware of the reasons for a behavior, it becomes easier to control and overcome it. I'm not saying that we should stop shopping, but perhaps we should shop in a more sensible way and bring our buying more in line with our needs than our desires.

一旦你弄清楚某种行为的理由，就更容易控制和克服这种行为。 我并不是说我们应该停止购物，我的意思是也许我们应该更加理性地购物，应该基于自己的需求而非欲望来进行购物。

But, then again, I am a man, after all.

不过，话说回来，我毕竟是个男的。