Women write about family; men write about war?

女性作家书写家庭，男性作家书写战争？

Stereotypes about women writers are as old as the books written by women. Many female authors — Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters among them — rose to prominence in the mid-19th century, a period called "the Age of the Female Novelist." But this age also witnessed the development of narrow ideas about women writers and the topics they should write about. G. H. Lewes regarded "sentiment" as a consistent "feminine literary trait;" George Eliot, herself a woman, believed that "maternal affections" distinguished books written by women. It has been commonly believed since then that women writers are excessively emotional and can only write about things like family or feelings.

有关女性作家的刻板印象由来已久，就如同女性作家的作品那么久远。 十九世纪中叶被称为“女性小说家时代”，其间许多女性作家纷纷崭露头角，如简・奥斯汀和勃朗特姐妹。 但是，这一时代也出现了关于女性作家及其创作题材的狭隘观点。 乔治・亨利・刘易斯认为，“情感”向来是“女性文学的特征”。乔治・艾略特，身为女性，也觉得“母爱”是女性作家的创作特色。 此后，人们普遍认为，女性作家过于感性，因此，她们的作品仅限于家庭和情感类题材。

Since the early 2000s, gender inequality in the culture industry — literature, music, and film — has gained much attention. In the world of writing, gender bias has come to be seen as particularly strong. Studies showed that men appeared over 60 percent more often in some of the most influential book review periodicals. This number is valuable because it can track how often publications review books by women, but what it can't track is how reviewers then treat women's work: How they write about women and the stereotypes they help to create.

自二十一世纪初以来，文学、音乐和电影文化产业中的性别不平等问题引起众多关注。 在文学界，性别偏见显得尤为严重。 有研究结果显示，在一些最具影响力的刊物书评中男性的出现频率要比女性高60%以上。 这一数据颇为重要，因为它可以用来对出版物中女性作品被评论的频率进行跟踪调查，但是该数据却无法用来跟踪了解书评人如何评论女性创作的作品：他们如何描绘女性，如何共同构建有关性别的刻板印象。

This is where our project began. We decided to analyze the contents of recent book reviews to see if men and women were written about differently when their books were under review. And we wanted to see if anything had changed over the last 15 years. We examined a collection of 10,287 reviews published since 2000. We labeled the genders of the reviewer and the author under review and then carried out analyses to identify language in the reviews that indicated the different genders.

这就是我们项目的出发点。 我们决定分析最近的书评内容，看看针对男女作家的作品，评论方式是否有所不同。 我们还想了解在过去的15年间评论方式是否有任何变化。 我们查看了2000年之后出版的共计10,287篇书评文章， 标注了书评人和被评作家的性别，然后进行了分析来识别书评中带有性别指向的语言。

The results are shocking. Book reviewers are three or four times more likely to use words like "husband," "marriage," and "mother" to describe books written by women between 2000 and 2009, and nearly twice as likely to use words like "love," "beauty," and "children." However, when describing books written by men, reviewers are twice as likely to use words like "president" and "leader," as well as "argument" and "theory." The results are almost too good in their confirmation of gender stereotypes. The book reviews overwhelmingly suggest that women tend to write about domestic issues and affairs of the heart, while men are more likely to write about "serious" issues such as politics.

测试结果令人震惊。 测试结果令人震惊。2000到2009年间，在描述女性作家的作品时，书评人用“丈夫”、“婚姻”和“母亲”等词语的可能性要高两三倍，用“爱”、“美丽”和“孩子”等词语的可能性要高近一倍。 然而，在描述男性作家的作品时，书评人用“总统”、“领导人”、“争论”以及“理论”等词语的可能性要高一倍。 该结果几乎完美印证了有关性别的刻板印象。 绝大多数的书评显示，女性作家往往以家庭和情感问题为创作题材，而男性作家的作品涉及政治等“严肃”话题的可能性更大。

We might say these results are hardly surprising. Yes, the stereotypes of women writers in book reviews are sad but predictable. But what is particularly startling about our results is that these stereotypes do not change over time: If you look at the results for the period between 2010 and 2016, the distinctive words are nearly identical. Men still write about politics and have "ideas." Women still write about "family" and obsess over love or themselves. Many people claim the situation is getting better, but these results clearly show that nothing is changing. In 2010, several periodicals made a concerted effort to review more books by women and to employ more women reviewers. In 2014, it was reported that the book reviews in these periodicals were down to a 14 percent bias toward men, and this was regarded as a sign of improvement.

我们或许会说，这些结果并不奇怪。 确实，书评中刻板的女性作家形象虽然令人遗憾，却也是可以预料到的。 不过，我们的调查结果中让人颇为意外的是，这些刻板印象并没有随着时间而改变：看看2010年到2016年间的数据结果，高频词几乎一模一样。 男性作家还是写政治，还是那么富有“想法”。 女性作家依然写“家庭”，依然痴迷于情感问题或沉迷于自我。 很多人声称情况正在好转，但这些结果明确显示，一切都没有变。 2010年，几家刊物共同努力，力图评论更多女性作家的作品，录用更多的女性评论家。 2014年，据报道称，这几家刊物书评中男性的出现频率下降，只比女性高14%，而这被视为情况好转的迹象。

But things are, in many significant ways, not getting better at all. Although more women writers are now discussed in book reviews, the way they are talked about in the press has not changed. The discourse around gender has essentially remained the same since the 19th century: Women writers are still being defined by their "sentimental" traits and a love of writing about "maternal" issues, while men are most often being defined by their attention to matters of science and the state.

但是，在很多重要方面，情况根本没有好转。 尽管女性作家的受评率有所增加，但是媒体评论她们的方式并没有变化。 十九世纪以来，有关性别的话语基本上没有变过：女性作家的特点依然是她们的“情感”特质，依然是她们对于生儿育女话题的钟爱；而男性作家的特点通常是他们对于科学和国家相关话题的关注。

Ultimately, what's at stake in these findings is not simply the question of how to reduce gender inequality in the world of letters, but also how we imagine and recognize such change. Quantitative changes in gender representation are not trivial and they provide a noticeable sense of improvement: This year, more books by women were reviewed. Yet, they may also disguise the real site of struggle: our unconscious attitudes about the idea of women writing books. Many publishers have done a great service in pursuing better gender representation. But gender representation does not necessarily equal less gender discrimination. The pattern is bigger than a head count — it's also about the patterns of ideas and words, which have proven far more enduring and unchanging than we would have thought.

从根本上来讲，这些研究结果不仅关乎如何减少文学界的性别不平等，而且关乎如何想象并认识这种变化。 性别比例在数量上的变化并不是微不足道的，它们能够让人清楚地意识到情况已经有所改善：今年，女性作家的作品受到评论的数量有所增加。 然而，这些数量上的变化也有可能掩盖了斗争的根本所在：我们潜意识中对于女性从事写作的态度。 很多出版物在改善性别比例方面已经作出了很大的贡献。 但是，改善性别比例并不一定等同于减少性别歧视。 性别不平等的模式不只关乎人数统计——它还关乎思维模式和语言模式，而这些要比我们原以为的更加历久不变。