

# 反思

吴静 杨荆泉 编译

## Reflection

繁复小社会 扰攘大世界

那些合理与不合理的存在

总能发人深省

反思 是动力

藉此 我们阔然前行

高端导读版  
[社会卷]

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这是一个塑造个人品牌的世界

## Reading Guidance



随着忙碌的美国人越来越依赖互联网,出现了利用网络来寻找伴侣的新趋势。在美国及世界各地,通过互联网选择约会的对象越来越被认为是寻找伴侣或者说至少是寻求约会的有效模式。单身人士已经不再满足于通过传统方式寻找另一半。上网寻找真爱,即使找不到,这也是一种宝贵的经历。在网上寻找爱情,主要原因在于网上交友空间大,可以有更多选择机会。在美国,除了速配网站这类传统交友或婚介网站外,还涌现出许多针对各种兴趣的网站以及“群约会”网站。“群约会”网站的特色并非为两名单身男女“牵线搭桥”,而是让两个团体配成一对。传统主义者也许会对这些约会活动提出批评,说太轻率或太肤浅。也有人担心,他们向没有见过面的人提供个人信息存在很大的风险。不过,对于约会网站的用户来说,互联网约会只是与人见面的另一种方式,现实世界才是他们真正建立联系的地方。

## The Love Machines

After his first marriage ended in divorce, Steven Rudin, 42, decided to have a go at online dating. He wasn't expecting much. In December 1998, he logged onto a website he'd heard about devoted to matching prospective mates

with an interest in rural life. Soon enough one profile caught his eye, that of Ann Christensen, also 42. Within a few weeks, the two were E-mailing each other, and by February they were engaged. Rudin moved from Seattle to Fresno, Calif., found a job as an auto mechanic, and last June he married Christensen, a customer-service rep with an agricultural company. The newly weds completed their rural idyll by settling down on a 30-acre raisin farm. “If you had told me that I would wind up meeting my great love this way,” says Rudin, “I would have said you were crazy.”

Crazy or not, the world of online dating is certainly booming, with millions of willing singles hunched over keyboards touch-typing their best smooth lines. “It’s to the point where mothers are actually telling single daughters to search for their husbands on the Web,” says Trish McDermott of Match.com, an internet dating service that boasts about 100,000 active members. Like similar services, Match.com attempts to rationalize and organize that messiest of human endeavors—finding love, or its closest substitute. Users, who pay \$100 a year, fill out a questionnaire listing their height and weight and personal interests. Like brokerage customers screening mutual funds according to their desire for current income or long-term capital appreciation, users also specify their romantic goals. Are they seeking an E-mail pen pal? A life partner? Finally, users receive a roster of other members who meet their criteria, and the e-chase is on.

In many ways, this is courtship as it once was, before the advent of the singles bar. There is plenty of conversation but no touching. With the computer serving as a chaperon, guaranteeing that no one gets too close, tastes are compared, as are family backgrounds, hopes and dreams. The dating sites serve as 19th century parlors where couples sit in chairs and chat. Even the word chat is slightly antique, recalling porch swings and glasses of iced tea.

“You’re actually seeing couples court each other and build up some level of intimacy,” says psychologist Alan Clark of Santa Monica, Calif. “This can



help make relationships more meaningful and exciting down the road.”

Online dating also puts a premium on verbal fluency, another bygone romantic skill. The sonneteers competed to shower their ladies with flowery metaphors and witty images; online suitors are also obliged to charm. “The written word promotes people talking about themselves without the self-consciousness of how do I look, how am I dressed,” says Andrea Baker, a sociologist at Ohio University. She sees the Internet as a haven for the shy, the tongue tied and the thoughtful. “You have the chance to think about what you say and revise what you say and add to what you say.” Also, says Jim Fraenkel, 29, a New York television producer, “all of a sudden, there’s a forum for meeting people that doesn’t involve alcohol or staying out till 4 in the morning.”

Despite its sometimes traditional etiquette, online dating has a futuristic side. In a sense, it resembles an electronic trading floor specializing in emotional futures. And with millions of people seeking partners in cyberspace, submarkets have sprung up, appealing to specific religious backgrounds, age groups and sexual orientations. Even better, online courtship saves time and energy by culling prospects in advance. If a man prefers, say, 6-ft., brunet Scorpio, he can make his tastes known up front, discouraging the advances of short, blond Leos. But no amount of screening can trump human chemistry. Grooving on instant messages doesn’t mean two people will click in person. “You cannot assess information about another person without physical, nonverbal cues,” says Dr. Reece Burka, a New Orleans psychologist. “A false sense of intimacy is created when interaction remains purely cognitive.”

Like walking from Plato’s cave into sunlight, the transition from E-mail to males and females interacting in person can be disorienting. Charles Frier, 50, an Atlanta attorney, used to frequent Compuserve’s Jewish single forum. “I met an interesting woman online,” Frier recalls, “but she lived quite far away. After I purchased an expensive nonrefundable ticket to visit her, she sent an E-mail canceling the meeting because she had met someone locally. Online re-

lationships,” an embittered Frier adds, “have no more guarantees than 3-D.”

Carl, 47, a mechanical engineer from Chicago who asked to remain anonymous, probably wishes Frier’s lament were true. Carl lost a wife six years ago. After noting a suspicious number of messages on his home computer from the same sender, he retrieved his wife’s deleted files and found romantic missives from a man two states away. A divorce ensued, and Carl’s wife moved in with her new boyfriend (they later broke up). “Conversing on the Internet,” Carl observes, “could totally ruin your life.” Carl, however, now lives with a woman he wooed online.

Romance has always had its perils, though, and if the great masked ball of online dating sometimes breeds heartbreak when the masks come off, that’s a risk millions seem prepared to take. Indeed, if the Net’s emotional dance floor poses a challenge for the lovelorn, it is the sheer size of the crowds it attracts. “You wind up having the kid in the candy-store effect, with unlimited numbers of people to choose from,” say Aaron Ahuvia, assistant professor of marketing at the University of Michigan. As marriages made by modem multiply, only time will tell if they’re as lasting as the ones made in heaven.

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## Notes

- idyll: 牧歌, 田园生活
- chaperon: 陪伴, 监护
- sonneteer: 拙劣的诗人
- trump: 王牌, 胜过
- cognitive: 认识, 感知

## 恋爱机器

斯蒂芬·鲁丁,42岁,在首次婚姻以离婚告终之后,他决定到约会网站去碰碰运气。起初,他并没有抱太大期望。1998年12月,他登录到一个以前听说过的约会网站,这个网站致力于将那些对乡村生活感兴趣的男女搭配成对。很快,一个人引起了他的注意,她叫安·克里斯滕森,也是42岁。在接下来的几个星期里,两个人通过邮件联系,到隔年2月,他们就订婚了。鲁丁从西雅图搬到了加利福尼亚州的弗雷斯诺,找了一份汽车修理工的工作。6月,他与克里斯滕森结婚,她在一家农业公司做客户服务代表。这对新婚夫妇在30英亩的葡萄农场定居下来,过上了田园生活。“如果你告诉我,我最终将以这种方式遇到我的挚爱,”鲁丁说,“我一定会说你疯了。”

无论疯狂与否,网络世界的约会的确欣欣向荣,数百万怀着美好愿望的单身男女用键盘敲打出了他们最优美甜蜜的话语。“妈妈们告知她们的单身女儿到网上去寻找丈夫,这是现实可行的。”默契网站的翠西·麦克德莫特说。该网站号称有10万名在线会员提供网上约会服务。与其他约会网站类似,默契网站力图将人们最棘手的工作——寻找爱人或是与之最接近的替代物——变得合理化和有组织性。每位用户每年需付费100美元,并且在问卷清单上写明他们的身高、体重和个人爱好。如同券商客户根据他们对当前收入和长期资本增值的期望来筛选基金一样,约会网站的用户也可以明确他们的浪漫目标。他们是想寻找一位电子邮件笔友呢,还是一位终身伴侣?最后,用户会收到一份符合他们标准的其他会员的名册,然后网上追求就开始了。

在他们去单身酒吧以前,网上追求在许多方面和过去一样。他们有许多

言语交流,但没有接触。电脑变身监护人,保证人们不会过于接近,只是了解彼此的喜好、家庭背景,还有希望与梦想。约会网站就类似于 19 世纪的会客厅,情侣们只是坐在椅子上聊天。“聊天”这个词现在说起来甚至感觉有些轻微的古董味,让人回想起门廊里的吊椅和一杯杯冰茶。

“你的确看到了情侣们彼此追求并建立了一定程度的亲密感。”加利福尼亚州圣莫尼卡的心理学家阿兰·克拉克说,“这有助于在一段时间后建立更有意义和激动人心的关系。”

网上约会也能促进言语表达,这也属于另一种旧式的恋爱技巧。如同蹩脚的诗人通过如花的隐喻和诙谐的图画向他们的爱人挥洒爱意。网络求爱者也得表现出他们的魅力。“网络语言有助于人们尽情地谈论他们自己,而无须在意自己的长相或是穿着怎么样。”俄亥俄大学的社会学家安德里亚·贝克说。她把网络看做是那些害羞、不善言谈但富有思想的人的天堂。“你有机会考虑要说的话,修改甚至补充说出的话。”纽约 29 岁的电视制作人吉姆·弗伦克尔也说,“突然之间,人们可以在论坛上见面,不必喝酒也不必熬夜到凌晨 4 点。”

虽然有时候也有传统的礼仪,但网上约会有其未来主义的一面。在某种意义上,它类似于一种专营情感期货的电子交易大厅。数百万人在网络空间里寻找伴侣,细分市场已经涌现,吸引着有特定宗教背景、年龄层次和性取向的人。更绝妙的是,网络追求通过预先筛选潜在对象节约了时间和精力。例如,如果一个男人偏好 6 英尺高的、深色肤色的、天蝎座的女性,他就能事先按照他的喜好,淘汰掉那些矮个的、金发碧眼的、狮子座的女性。但是,没有哪种筛选能胜过人类的化学反应。在快捷的信息交流方面彼此相通不意味着两个人面对面时有感觉。“一个人不能在没有面对面交往的情况下去评估另一个人。”新奥尔良的心理学家里斯·布尔卡博士指出,“当相互关系仍处于纯粹的感知阶段时,就会造成一种亲密的错觉。”

如同从柏拉图的洞穴走进阳光地带一样,人们从电子邮件的交往直接过渡到男人与女人面对面的交流可能会迷失方向。50 岁的查尔斯·弗里尔是一位亚特兰大律师,他过去经常光顾 Compuserve 公司(美国最大的在线信息服务机构之一)的犹太人单身论坛。“我在网上遇到了一位有趣的女人,”弗

里尔回忆道,“但是她住得非常远,当我买了一张昂贵且不能退的机票打算去看她时,她给我发了一封电子邮件取消了这次见面,因为她已经结识了一名当地人。”苦涩的弗里尔补充道,“网上的关系,没有活生生的人那么有保证。”

47岁的卡尔是一位来自芝加哥的机械工程师,他要求匿名,也许倒是希望弗里尔的悲伤是真的。六年前,卡尔失去了妻子。原因是他在自家电脑里发现了来自同一个人的可疑信息,之后,他检索了妻子删除的文件,发现了来自两个州之外的一个男人的浪漫信件。接下来,卡尔和妻子离婚了,卡尔的妻子搬到新男友(他们后来也分手了)那儿去住。“网上交谈,”卡尔说道,“能彻底毁了你的生活。”然而,卡尔现在正和一个在网上追求到的女人住在一起。

爱情总是有风险的,网上约会就像一个巨大的假面舞会,一旦取下面具有时会令人伤心,这是数百万网上情侣需要准备好面对的现实。事实上,网络情感向失恋者提出的最大挑战,那就是它吸引的人过多。“你到那里,就如同一个孩子进到糖果商店里一样,得从不计其数的人中去选择。”密歇根大学从事市场研究的助理教授亚伦·阿胡瓦说。当婚姻通过电脑来制造时,时间将成为检验真爱的唯一标准。

### More to Read



凭借着全开放的环境和只闻其声不见其人的神秘感,网上聊天、交友已经成为许多人的生活方式。它为人们拓宽了交际圈,有着其他交友方式无法比拟的优点:个性害羞、不善言谈的人发现网上约会能促进他们言语表达,通过预先筛选潜在对象,可以很快从人群中找到与自己兴趣相投的人。现实中有许多幸福的夫妻就是在网上牵手成功的。但是同时,网络交友也存在很大的风险,有很多的网上恋情以欺骗和失败告终。无论如何,网络只是为人们的交往提供了一个现代化的平台,虚拟世界终究代替不了现实生活,真爱还要经得起时间的考验。

## Reading Guidance



自从 2007 年 12 月美国经济出现衰退迹象以来,2008 年下半年和 2009 年上半年,由美国领导的全球经济陷入前所未有的衰退时期。为了使这次危机与 1929 年至 1930 年初的“大萧条”有所区分,国际货币基金组织将这次危机称为全球经济大衰退。专家预测,本次经济危机的深度和广度可能超越 1929 年至 1930 年初的大萧条,并将深远地改变世界经济格局和各国社会经济发展模式以及各国的文化基础。大萧条曾经给美国经济和精神带来了严重冲击,影响了三代美国人。20 世纪 80 年代后,曾经是全球经济基石的美元在全球市场中的地位急剧下滑,与经济规模相比,美国的债务水平高得离谱,处于历史最高点的失业率面临着更为严峻的挑战,美国人民正在努力走出又一次低谷。

## The Great Recession: America Becomes Thrift Nation

Sometimes we change because we want to: lose weight, go vegan, find God, get sober. But sometimes we change because we have no choice, and since this violates our manifest destiny to do as we please, it may take a while before we notice that those are often the changes we need to make most. We ran

a good long road test of the premise that more is better: we built houses that could hold all our stuff but were too big to heat, we bought cars that could ferry a soccer team but were too big to park, we thought we were embracing the simple life by squeezing in a yoga class between working and shopping and took an extra job to pay for it all.

Now we're stripping down and starting over. A platoon of TIME reporters and pollsters fanned out to every corner of the country to measure—anecdotally and empirically—what's changed in the way we set our priorities and spend our money since the Great Recession began. Most people think the pain will be lasting and the effects permanent, only 12% expect economic recovery to begin within six months, half believe it will be another year or two, and 14% believe we are at the start of a long-term decline.

Our institutions watch for economic vital signs. But maybe, for individuals, the sickness is what came before—the hallucination that debt would never need to be repaid, that values only rise, that bubbles never burst. When the markets collapsed, that fever broke. In our assumptions and attitudes and expectations, the recovery is already well under way.

Talk to people not just about how they feel but about how they're living now, and you hear more resolve than regret. Nearly half say their economic status declined this year, and 57% think the American Dream is harder to achieve. And yet pain and promise are a package deal, even after all this, fully 56% believe that America's best days are ahead. It would be nice if it took something sort of a heart attack to get us to work out, eat better and spend more time with our kids. But in the end, where we wind up matters more than how we got there.

Unlike any other downturn since the 1930s, this one has affected everyone, either the fact of it or the fear of it. Even when prosperity returns, 61% predict, they'll continue to spend less than they did before. Among people earning less than \$50,000 a year—roughly half of U. S. households—34%

have not gone to the doctor because of the cost, 31% have been out of work at some point, and 13% have been hungry. At the same time, 4 in 10 people earning more than \$100,000 say they are buying more store brands, 36% are using coupons more, and 39% have postponed or canceled a vacation to save money. Forty percent of people at all income levels say they feel anxious, 32% have trouble sleeping, and 20% are depressed. After a season of big news, of war and storms and swindlers, pirates and poison peanut butter, 43% are watching the news even more, taking the medicine even if it tastes bad because skipping it could be risky.

The calculus of life suddenly offers new equations. Insurance agents see clients raising their deductibles to lower premiums, or skipping collision coverage for older cars so that they bear more of the risks themselves. Twenty-seven percent have raided their retirement or college savings to pay the bills. Violent crime may not be up, but fear of it is: 40% of people say that since the downturn began, they are more worried about their personal safety.

For all the reflexive analogies, this is not the 1930s, when Babe Ruth took a \$10,000 salary cut (roughly what A-Rod earns per swing) and New York City Mayor Jimmy Walker told theaters to show only cheery films. And yet we're channeling our grandparents, who were taught, like a mantra, to use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without. Now, if you can make it, you don't have to buy it: just replace the lawn with a vegetable garden, eat your fill and then store whatever is left. Sales of canning and freezing supplies rose 15% during the first three months of the year compared with the same period last year. Cough and cold-remedy sales are down 9% because you can make your own chicken soup. Common sense is back in style, meaning we're less willing to buy what we can have for free: bottled-water sales have dropped 10%. The 137-year-old Los Angeles public library system set record highs in circulation and visitors. And film and camera sales have plunged 33% this year, because who would want this winter in their album?



There's a natural longing to find the upside in the downturn. A college-admissions officer, watching families reassess their means and ends, suggests that maybe the insane competitiveness will recede. The yoga instructor says living more simply relaxes us, as if the entire country needs to slow its breathing. The buyer at the used-car lot feels both frugal and green: that hatchback isn't used, it's "pre-owned," and this counts as recycling. The discount shoppers view their task as a scavenger hunt and take a certain pride in finding the bargain, cutting the deal, 23% of us are haggling more, a profitable contact sport.

No one wishes for hardship. But as we pick through the economic rubble, we may find that our riches have buried our treasures. Money does not buy happiness. Once you reach the median level of income, roughly \$50,000 a year, wealth and contentment go their separate ways, and studies find that a millionaire is no more likely to be happy than someone earning one-twentieth as much. Now a third of people polled say they are spending more time with family and friends, and nearly four times as many people say their relations with their kids have gotten better during this crisis than say they have gotten worse.

A consumer culture invites us to want more than we can ever have, a culture of thrift invites us to be grateful for whatever we can get. So we pass the time by tending our gardens and patching our safety nets. Years from now, this season will be remembered for what we lost, or all that we found.

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## Notes

hallucination: 幻觉, 错觉

depressed: 抑郁的, 消沉的

premium: 溢价, 保险费

mantra: 颂歌, 咒语

scavenger hunt: 寻宝