

[英 汉 对 照]

西方学术经典文库

人 性 论

A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE

[英]戴维·休谟 著

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石碧球 译

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PART IV.

Of The Sceptical And Other
Systems Of Philosophy

SECTION I. Of Scepticism
With Regard To Reason.

In all demonstrative sciences the rules are certain and infallible; but when we apply them, our fallible and uncertain faculties are very apt to depart from them, and fall into error. We must, therefore, in every reasoning form a new judgment, as a check or controul on our first judgment or belief; and must enlarge our view to comprehend a kind of history of all the instances, wherein our understanding has deceiv'd us, compar'd with those, wherein its testimony was just and true. Our reason must be consider'd as a kind of cause, of which truth is the natural effect; but such-a-one as by the irruption of other causes, and by the inconstancy of our mental powers, may frequently be prevented. By this means all knowledge degenerates into probability; and this probability is greater or less, according to our experience of the veracity or deceitfulness of our understanding, and according to the simplicity or intricacy of the question.

There is no Algebraist nor Mathematician so expert in his science, as to place entire confidence in any truth immediately upon his discovery of it, or regard it as any thing, but a mere probability.

第四章 论怀疑论的哲学体系和其他的哲学体系

第一节 论关于理性的怀疑主义

在所有实证的科学中的规则都是确定而又可靠的;但是,当我们应用它们的时候,我们的那些可能犯错的、不确定的官能就非常倾向于背离这些规则,并且陷入错误中。因此,我们在每一个推理中都必须形成一个新的判断,以当做对我们最初判断或信念的一个核对或审核;并且我们必须扩大我们的视野,以了解我们的知性曾经欺骗过我们的所有例子的历程,并且把这些例子同那些为知性所宣称是正确的和真实的例子加以比较。我们的理性必须被看作是一种原因,真理乃是其自然的结果;但是,这样的一个原因却会由于其他原因的急剧增加,以及由于我们心理能力的变换无常,可能会经常地受到阻挠。通过这种方式,所有的知识就退化为或然性;而且依照我们关于知性真实或虚伪的经验,以及依照问题的简单或复杂,那么这种或然性也就会更大或更小。

任何代数学家或数学家都不会在他的学科中有如此精深的造诣,以至他对任何一条刚刚发现的真理具有十足的信心,而不

Every time he runs over his proofs, his confidence encreases; but still more by the approbation of his friends; and is rais'd to its utmost perfection by the universal assent and applauses of the learned world. Now 'Tis evident, that this gradual encrease of assurance is nothing but the addition of new probabilities, and is deriv'd from the constant union of causes and effects, according to past experience and observation.

In accompts of any length or importance, Merchants seldom trust to the infallible certainty of numbers for their security; but by the artificial structure of the accompts, produce a probability beyond what is deriv'd from the skill and experience of the accomptant. For that is plainly of itself some degree of probability; tho' uncertain and variable, according to the degrees of his experience and length of the accompt. Now as none will maintain, that our assurance in a long numeration exceeds probability, I may safely affirm, that there scarce is any proposition concerning numbers, of which we can have a fuller security. For 'tis easily possible, by gradually diminishing the numbers, to reduce the longest series of addition to the most simple question, which can be form'd, to an addition of two single numbers; and upon this supposition we shall find it impracticable to shew the precise limits of knowledge and of probability, or discover that particular number, at which the one ends and the other begins. But knowledge and probability are of such contrary and disagreeing natures, that they cannot well run insensibly into each other, and that because they will not divide, but must be either entirely present, or entirely absent. Besides, if any single addition were certain, every one wou'd be so, and consequently the whole or total sum; unless the whole can be different from all its parts. I had almost said, that this was certain; but I reflect, that it must reduce *itself*, as well as every other reasoning, and from knowledge degenerate into probability.

Since therefore all knowledge resolves itself into probability, and becomes at last of the same nature with that evidence, which we

会把它仅仅看作是一个单纯的或然性。他每审视他的证明一次，他的信心就增加一分；而当他的证明得到他的朋友的认可时，其信心依然会得到增强；而当他的证明得到了学术界的普遍同意和欢呼的时候，其自信心就会提高到最完美的程度。很显然，这种确信的逐步增加仅仅是若干新的或然性的增加，而且它是根据过去经验和观察而由原因和结果之间的恒常结合产生的。

商人们很少会相信在任何长的或重要的帐目中所记数目是没有错误的；而是要用人为的计算方法，超出由记帐员的技术和经验产生的或然性，再产生一种或然性。因为计算本身显然就是某种程度的或然性；尽管根据他的经验的程度和帐目的长度，这种或然性会变得是不确定的和可变的。由于没有人会主张，我们对一长串计数的确信将超过或然性，所以我就可以确实地断言，我们对任何有关数字的命题都不会比或然性有更为充分的确信。因为随着数字的逐步减少，我们就很容易将最长的加法归结为最简单的问题，也即归结为两个简单数字的相加；根据这一假定，我们将会发现，要在知识和或然性之间划一条精确的界限，或者去发现那个表示知识结束而或然性开始的特殊的数字，是不切实际的。但是，知识和或然性又有着如此相反和不一致的本质，以至它们不可能彼此不知不觉地渗入到对方中，因为它们是不能分割的，而必须是要么完全存在，要么是完全不存在。此外，如果某一个简单的相加是确定的，那么每一次相加也将是如此，因而全部的或总的数目也是确定的；除非这个全部的数目能和它的所有部分不同。我差不多说过这是确定的；但是我又反省到，同其他任何推理一样，它也必然会减弱自身，并且从知识退化为或然性。

因此，既然所有的知识都可以分解为或然性，并且在其最后