Lost in a shopping mall

The explorers of psychology-6/6-In the 1990s, American Elizabeth Loftus, a specialist in cognitive psychology, worked on the concept of "false memory".

She idea came to her on the road to the end in 1991, on her way back from a conference at the University of Georgia in the USA. At the time, Elizabeth was not even the most in-fluent female psychologist of the 20th century - this honor from the scientific journal of the American Psychological Association will come in 2002 - but she is already recognized for her work on eyewitness testimony, which brought the science of memory into the courts. Her laboratory has shown that the memory of an event is corruptible: under the influence of subsequent suggestions, a witness can turn facts or a monstrosity appear on a hairless face. The psychologist believes that human memory is so malleable that it is impossible to induce a memory that has been fabricated from scratch or an experimental hypothesis. "A vivid memory," she tells the story of "a woman who drives her to the airport, but not so traumatic as to be deemed anathema." "Like getting lost in a crowd as a child?" the friend suggests. At the time, she is planning a shopping mall on the topic, Elizabeth Loftus is already on the market, "Lost in a mall."

Back at the University of Washington, where she was teaching cognitive psychology at the time, the researcher suggested that her students take advantage of the Thanksgiving break to try to implant this memory in someone close to them. Two weeks later, she listened in amazement to a recording of an interview one of them had conducted with his 14-year-old brother, who had "fallen for a classic Loftus trick". After reminding him of four events from his early childhood, including the false one, the elder brother encouraged him to write down everything he could remember about them. As the days went by, the gynaecologist produced various techniques, such as the holding of glasses and flannel of the old man who had found him, in tears, and escorted him back to his family. It was only when the deception was revealed, the memory was so ingrained that the teenager couldn't guess which of the quasi-traces anecdotes was fabricated.

"Memory wars"

Elizabeth Loftus has a va-riante of this device approved by her institution's ethics committee, and has found several dozen volunteers for a study presented as focusing on childhood memories. The procedure was simple: a false small sample size," says the psychologist, now a professor at the University of California, Irvine. Each research subject had to choose an older relative who was telling you to give us information about the moment that person saw to the moment that person that you or she could tell us the true story and help us develop a credible account of the false event. All this takes time. But the effort is worth it. After the interviews conducted two weeks apart, six participants recall getting lost in a shopping mall at the age of 5. In fact, no one has been published in 1995 in the journal of the Society of Psychological Science, a conspiracy-type collection of studies that continues the throug-then of ordinary Americans pressed to confront horrific pedophiles or victims on the basis of testimony that will turn out to be induced by investigators. In shirk's offices, the unanimous is expressed from so many that is supposed to be reinforced by the law abolished the statute of limitations, sparking a wave of lawsuits. Obsessed with the phenomenon of mis-recall, the American Elizabeth Loftus was no time in introducing her work before the courts. The frantia of academic psychologists is fractured on one side, the proponents of recovered memories, mainly clinicians, on the other side, those of false memories, mainly researchers in cognitive science. Those "memory wars", as the media will call them, end in disgrace for memory retrieval therapies, some of whose practitioners are ordered to pay millions of dollars in damages to their patients. Since then, Elizabeth Loftus has never ceased to be invited to appear as an expert witness. The psychologist, who turns 80 in 2024, estimates that she has testified in over 500 trials in recent years, including those of sexual predators such as Harvey Weinstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. These depositions, which have earned her countless written and spokeninvitations since the 1990s - one prosecution even called a "Harsh" in the corridor of a courthouse - continue to outrage some trauma-specialists. "I'm afraid I don't think it's very ethical to suggest in a jury that it's easy to induce false memories, and use them to cast doubt on the testimony of people talking about often terrible things they say happened to them," says Chris Bowers, a professor of clinical psychology at University College, London. Without denying their existence, a critical review of the scientific literature on false suggest-ions is a must.
you disgusted with strawberries.

Santa Claus, but his neon lights still shine in a small number of inner worlds.

Stéphanie Chayet

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