

A MODEST PROPOSAL AND OTHER SATIRES

英美文学精品译丛



英美文学精品译丛

Jonathan Swift



中国对外翻译出版公司

英美文学精品详注丛书

A Modest Proposal and others satires

Jonathan Swift

中国对外翻译出版公司

〔京〕新登字020号

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

一个小小的建议:英文/(英)斯威夫特(Swift, J.)著;史密斯(Smith, P.)注释. —影印本. —北京:中国对外翻译出版公司, 1994. 10

(英美文学精品译注丛书;第二辑/李长杉编)

据意大利 Meravigli Editrice 原版影印

ISBN 7-5001-0313-1

I. 一… II. ①斯… ②史… III. ①小说—英国—阅读教学②英语—语言读物, 小说 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(94)第14578号

责任编辑:李长杉

中国对外翻译出版公司出版、发行 北京市太平桥大街4号
邮编:100810 电话:6022134 电报挂号:6230
新华书店北京发行所经销
北京市顺义李屯山胶印厂印刷

787×960毫米 1/32 2.75印张 字数58(千)
1994年12月第一版 1994年12月第一次印刷

中国对外翻译出版公司发行处 电话:6022124

ISBN7-5001-0313-1/H·104 定价:3.00元

出版说明

本丛书经中华版权代理总公司代理、由意大利 Meravigli Editrice 公司授权中国对外翻译出版公司独家出版,意在增加读者词汇量,提高读者阅读和写作水平,使读者的英语水平在短期内出现飞跃。

本丛书特点如下:

- 所选均为名家精品,未作任何删节
- 用英文详加注释,对同一生词不惜重复注释,以方便读者
- 注释编排方式与众不同,排在原作对页,且与原作平行,使读者不致分散注意力,又可免去翻查之苦,宛然读简易英文一般
- 注释可作单词表使用,检验、巩固读者的记忆,从而迅速扩大词汇量

《一个小小的建议》

乔纳森·斯威夫特(1667—1745)生于都柏林。父母都是英国人。他出生前父亲已经去世,因此他是在非常贫苦的环境中长大的。他曾就读于都柏林圣三一学院,行为举止惊世骇俗,只因“特殊恩惠”才获得学位。1689年前往英格兰和母亲团聚,并成了政治家、作家威廉·邓波尔爵士的秘书,开始写诗。1694年返回爱尔兰,当了牧师,积极参加政治和宗教论争。他以创作讽刺作品而著名,《格列佛游记》是他最受欢迎的讽刺作品。他成了文学名家,会晤过同时代的主要作家,如艾迪生、蒲柏及盖依等。因为安妮女王不喜欢他,他的宗教职业受到了妨碍。辞职后回到爱尔兰,孤独,失意,死后葬于都柏林圣帕特里克大教堂。

CONTENTS

A Modest Proposal	2
A Meditation upon a Broom-stick	26
A Tritical Essay upon the Faculties of the Mind	30
The Intelligencer	44
Hints Towards an Essay on Conversation	58

A MODEST PROPOSAL

FOR

Preventing the Children of poor People in Ireland, from being a Burden to their Parents or Country; and for making them beneficial to the Publick.

Written in the Year 1729

It is a melancholly Object to those, who walk through this great Town, or travel in the Country; when they see the *Streets*, the *Roads*, and *Cabbin-doors* crowded with *Beggars* of the Female Sex, followed by three, four, or six Children, *all in Rags*, and importuning every Passenger for an Alms. These *Mothers*, instead of being able to work for their honest Livelyhood, are forced to employ all their Time in stroling to beg Sustenance for their *helpless Infants*; who, as they grow up, either turn *Thieves* for want of Work; or leave their *dear Native Country*, to fight for the *Pretender in Spain*, or sell themselves to the *Barbadoes*. I think it is agreed by all Parties, that this prodigious Number of Children in the Arms, or on the Backs, or at the *Heels* of their *Mothers*, and frequently of their *Fathers*, is in the present deplorable State of the Kingdom, a very great additional Grievance; and therefore, whoever could find

Burden: weight, responsibility.

beneficial to: having a positive effect on. **Publick:** (18th century English) public.

melancholly: (18th century English) melancholy, sad.

this Great town: Dublin.

Cabbin-doors: (18th century English) doors of poor houses.

crowded: with large numbers of people. **Beggars:** people whose occupation is to ask others for money. **Rags:** old and ruined clothes.

importuning: asking aggressively. **Passenger:** (18th century English) people who are passing. **Alms:** money given to poor people.

Livelihood: living, occupation. **stroling:** walking without any direction. (Modern English: *strolling*). **beg:** ask people for money.

Sustenance: food and clothes. **helpless:** unable to look after themselves. **Infants:** children. **turn:** become. **Thieves:** people who take other people's money and property.

want: state of being without. **Pretender:** person who claims a royal throne, here last heir of the Stuart dynasty. **sell themselves to the Barbadoes:** go and work in the Caribbean. **Parties:** people.

prodigious: extraordinary, large. **at the Heels of:** running behind. **deplorable:** terrible.

out a fair, cheap, and easy Method of making these Children sound and useful Members of the Commonwealth, would deserve so well of the Publick, as to have his Statue set up for a Preserver of the Nation.

But my Intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the Children of *professed Beggars*: It is of a much greater Extent, and shall take in the whole Number of Infants at a certain Age, who are born of Parents, in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our Charity in the Streets.

As to my own Part, having turned my Thoughts for many Years, upon this important Subject, and maturely weighed the several *Schemes of other Projectors*, I have always found them grosly mistaken in their Computation. It is true a Child, *just dropt from its Dam*, may be supported by her Milk, for a Solar Year with little other Nourishment; at most not above the Value of two Shillings; which the Mother may certainly get, or the Value in *Scraps*, by her lawful Occupation of *Begging*: And, it is exactly at one Year old, that I propose to provide for them in such a Manner, as, instead of being a Charge upon their *Parents*, or the *Parish*, or *wanting Food and Raiment* for the rest of their Lives; they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the Feeding, and partly to the Cloathing, of many Thousands. There is likewise another great Advantage in my *Scheme*, that it will prevent those *voluntary Abortions*, and that horrid Practice of *Women murdering their Bastard Children*; alas! too frequent among us; sacrificing the *poor innocent Babes*, I doubt, more to avoid the Expence than the Shame; which would move Tears and Pity in the most Savage and inhuman Breast.

The Number of Souls in *Ireland* being usually reckoned

fair: just. **cheap:** not expensive.

sound: in good condition. **Commonwealth:** state.

deserve: merit. **Publick:** (18th century English) public.

set up: erected **Preserver:** person who helps or saves.

confined: limited.

provide for: help. **professed Beggars:** people who admit that their occupation is asking for money. **Extent:** dimension, size.

in effect: in reality.

able to: capable of, who can. **support:** look after, care for.

demand: ask for. **Charity:** money given to poor people.

my own Part: myself.

maturely: in the light of experience. **weighed:** considered.

Schemes: plans, ideas. **Projectors:** people who plan.

grosly: (18th century English) very, greatly. **Computation:**

calculation. **dropt:** (18th century English) come out, born. **Dam:**

(18th century English) mother. **Solar Year:** 365 days.

Nourishment: food and drink. **Value:** quantity of money

corresponding to an object. **Shillings:** in the old system in England

(until 1971) a pound was divided into 20 shillings. **Scraps:** pieces

of food. **lawful:** legal. **Begging:** asking for money or food in the

street. **provide for:** look after. **Manner:** way. **Charge:** weight,

responsibility. **Parish:** religious administrative district which had

responsibility for the poor. **wanting:** without. **Raiment:** clothes.

Feeding: giving food. **Cloathing:** giving clothes.

likewise: similarly. **Scheme:** plan, idea. **voluntary:** done

intentionally. **Abortion:** death of an unborn baby.

murdering: killing. **Bastard:** born outside marriage. **alas!:** exclamation of sadness. **Babes:** babies.

doubt: do not think. **to avoid:** not to pay. **Expence:** cost. **Shame:**

disgrace, embarrassment. **Tears:** liquid in eyes which comes out

when someone cries. **Pity:** feeling sorry for someone. **Savage:**

wild. **inhuman:** not like a man. **Breast:** body, region around heart.

Souls: people. **reckoned:** calculated.

one Million and a half; of these I calculate there may be about Two hundred Thousand Couple whose Wives are Breeders; from which Number I subtract thirty thousand Couples, who are able to maintain their own Children; although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under *the present Distresses of the Kingdom*; but this being granted, there will remain an Hundred and Seventy Thousand Breeders. I again subtract Fifty Thousand, for those Women who miscarry, or whose Children die by Accident, or Disease, within the Year. There only remain an Hundred and Twenty Thousand Children of poor Parents, annually born: The Question therefore is, How this Number shall be reared, and provided for? Which, as I have already said, under the present Situation of Affairs, is utterly impossible, by all the Methods hitherto proposed: For we can *neither employ them in Handicraft or Agriculture*; we neither build Houses, (I mean in the Country) nor cultivate Land: They can very seldom pick up a Livelyhood *by Stealing* until they arrive at six Years old; except where they are of towardly Parts; although, I confess, they learn the Rudiments much earlier; during which Time, they can, however, be properly looked upon only as *Probationers*; as I have been informed by a principal Gentleman in the County of *Cavan*, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two Instances under the Age of six, even in a Part of the Kingdom *so renowned for the quickest Proficiency in that Art*.

I am assured by our Merchants, that a Boy or a Girl before twelve Years old, is no saleable Commodity; and even when they come to this Age, they will not yield above Three Pounds, or Three Pounds and half a Crown at most, on the Exchange; which cannot turn to Account either to

Couple: husband and wife.

Breeders: fertile, able to have children. **subtract:** take away.

maintain: find food and clothes for.

although: even if. **apprehend:** know, realise.

Distresses: difficulties. **Kingdom:** Nation. **granted:** accepted.

Breeders: fertile women, able to have children. **subtract:** take away. **who miscarry:** whose child spontaneously dies before birth. **Disease:** illness. **within the Year:** before the children are one year old. **annually:** every year.

therefore: for this reason.

reared: brought up. **provided for:** looked after.

Situation of Affairs: circumstances, conditions. **utterly:** completely. **hitherto:** until now.

employ them: give them work. **Handicraft:** the making of local products. **Agriculture:** farming. **build:** construct. **cultivate:** grow things. **seldom:** rarely. **pick up:** make. **Livelihood:** living.

Stealing: taking other people's property.

towardly: favourable. **although:** even if. **confess:** admit.

Rudiments: basic principles.

looked upon: considered. **Probationers:** people who are still only learning the job. **principal:** important.

Cavan: administrative region in Ireland.

above: more than. **Instances:** examples, cases.

Kingdom: Nation (*here Ireland*). **renowned:** famous.

Proficiency: skill, ability in doing something. **that Art:** stealing.

Merchants: tradesmen, people selling goods.

no saleable Commodity: something which cannot be sold.

yield: give money.

half a Crown: two shillings and sixpence in old money.

Exchange: central organization for buying and selling. **turn to**

Account: make a profit.

the Parents or the Kingdom; the Charge of Nutriment and Rags, having been at least four Times that Value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own Thoughts; which I hope will not be liable to the least Objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing *American* of my Acquaintance in *London*; that a young healthy Child, well nursed, is, at a Year old, a most delicious; nourishing, and wholesome Food; whether *Stewed, Roasted, Baked, or Boiled*; and, I make no doubt, that it will equally serve in a *Fricasie, or Ragoust*.

I do therefore humbly offer it to *publick Consideration*, that of the Hundred and Twenty Thousand Children, already computed, Twenty thousand may be reserved for Breed; whereof only one Fourth Part to be Males; which is more than we allow to *Sheep, black Cattle, or Swine*; and my Reason is, that these Children are seldom the Fruits of Marriage, a *Circumstance not much regarded by our Savages*; therefore, *one Male* will be sufficient to serve *four Females*. That the remaining Hundred thousand, may, at a Year old, be offered in Sale to the *Persons of Quality and Fortune*, through the Kingdom; always advising the Mother to let them suck plentifully in the last Month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good Table. A Child will make two Dishes at an Entertainment for Friends; and when the Family dines alone, the fore or hind Quarter will make a reasonable Dish; and seasoned with a little Pepper or Salt, will be very good Boiled on the fourth Day, especially in *Winter*.

I have reckoned upon a Medium, that a Child just born will weigh Twelve Pounds; and in a solar Year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to twenty eight Pounds.

I grant this Food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very

Kingdom: Nation (*here Ireland*). **Charge:** cost. **Nutriments:** food. **Rags:** poor clothes. **Value:** quantity of money. **therefore:** for this reason. **humbly:** without being proud, simply. **liable:** open. **least Objection:** smallest criticism. **assured:** told for certain. **knowing:** well-informed. **of my Acquaintance:** that I know. **healthy:** in good physical condition. **nursed:** given milk, fed. **nourishing:** good food. **wholesome:** having good effects on physical condition. **whether:** if. **Stewed:** cooked in a casserole. **Roasted:** cooked in the oven. **Baked:** cooked in the oven. **Boiled:** cooked in hot water. **make no doubt:** am certain. **Fricasie:** type of fried food. **Ragoust:** type of meat sauce. **humbly:** simply, without pride. **publick:** (18th century English) public. **computed:** calculated. **Breed:** making more animals. **whereof:** of which. **Fourth Part:** quarter. **allow:** permit. **Cattle:** cows. **Swine:** pigs. **seldom:** rarely. **Fruits:** results. **regarded:** considered. **Savages:** wild people. **therefore:** for this reason.

Persons of Quality and Fortune: rich people. **Kingdom:** Nation (*here Ireland*). **advising:** telling. **suck:** drink mother's milk. **plentifully:** in abundance. **plump:** with lots of meat. **Dishes:** cooked courses. **Entertainment:** party. **dines:** has dinner. **fore:** front. **hind:** back. **Quarter:** part. **reasonable:** quite good. **seasoned with a little Pepper or Salt:** with a little P. or S. added to taste. **Boiled:** cooked in hot water. **reckoned:** calculated. **upon a Medium:** on average. **Twelve Pounds:** about 5 and a half kilos. **solar Year:** 365 days. **tolerably nursed:** given enough to eat and drink. **encreaseth:** (18th century English) increases. **twenty eight Pounds:** about thirteen kilos. **grant:** admit. **somewhat:** a little. **dear:** expensive.

proper for Landlords; who, as they have already devoured most of the Parents, seem to have the best Title to the Children.

Infants Flesh will be in Season throughout the Year; but more plentiful in *March*, and a little before and after: For we are told by a grave Author, an eminent *French Physician*, that *Fish being a prolific Dyet*, there are more Children born in *Roman Catholick Countries* about Nine Months after *Lent*, than at any other Season: Therefore reckoning a Year after *Lent*, the Markets will be more glutted than usual; because the Number of *Popish Infants*, is, at least, three to one in this Kingdom; and therefore it will have one other Collateral Advantage, by lessening the Number of *Papists* among us.

I have already computed the Charge of nursing a Beggar's Child (in which List I reckon all *Cottagers, Labourers*, and Four fifths of the *Farmers*) to be about two Shillings *per Annum*, Rags included; and I believe, no Gentleman would repine to give Ten Shillings for the *Carcase of a good fat Child*; which, as I have said, will make four Dishes of excellent nutritive Meat, when he hath only some particular Friend, or his own Family, to dine with him. Thus the Squire will learn to be a good Landlord, and grow popular among his Tenants; the Mother will have Eight Shillings net Profit, and be fit for Work until she produceth another Child.

Those who are more thrifty (*as I must confess the Times require*) may flay the Carcase; the Skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable *Gloves for Ladies*, and *Summer Boots for fine Gentlemen*.

As to our City of *Dublin*; Shambles may be appointed for this Purpose, in the most convenient Parts of it; and

proper: suitable, appropriate. **Landlords**: people who own land.
devoured: eaten (*Swift refers to the Landlords asking for impossibly high rents from their tenants*). **Title**: right.

Infants: children's. **Flesh**: meat. **in Season**: fresh, available.
throughout the Year: during all of the year. **plentiful**: abundant.
grave: serious. **Author**: writer. **eminent**: famous.

Physician: doctor. (*This is a satirical reference to Rabelais*)
prolifick: (18th century English) increasing fertility. **Dyet**: (18th century English) diet. **Catholick**: (18th century English) Catholic.

Lent: period of penitence 40 days before Easter. **reckoning**: calculating. **glutted**: full. **Popish**: Catholic. **Infants**: children.

Kingdom: Nation (*here Ireland*). **therefore**: for this reason.

Collateral: incidental. **Advantage**: benefit, positive effect.
lessening: reducing. **Papists**: Catholics.

computed: calculated. **Charge**: cost. **nursing**: looking after, feeding. **Beggar's Child**: child of a person whose occupation is asking others for money. **reckon**: count, include **Cottagers**.

agricultural workers. **Labourers**: workers. **Farmers**: people who cultivate land **per Annum**: every year. **Rags**: poor clothes, falling to pieces. **repine**: decline, not want. **Carcase**: dead body. **Dishes**: cooked courses. **nutritive**: healthy. **hath**: has.

dine: eat

Squire: local landowner. **Landlord**: person who rents his land.
grow: become. **Tenants**: people who rent land from a landlord.

net Profit: difference between what is earned and the cost of producing it. **fit**: in good physical condition. **produceth**: (18th century English) produces. **thrifty**: careful with money **confess**:

admit. **flay**: take the skin off a dead animal. **Carcase**: dead body.
dressed: treated. **admirable**: fine. **Gloves**: coverings for hands.

Boots: type of shoes

Shambles: a place where animals are killed and meat is prepared.

appointed: created. **Purpose**: aim, goal.

Butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the Children alive, and dressing them hot from the Knife, *as we do roasting Pigs.*

A very worthy Person, a *true Lover of his Country*, and whose Virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this Matter, to offer a Refinement upon my Scheme. He said, that many Gentlemen of this Kingdom, having of late destroyed their Deer; he conceived, that the Want of Venison might be well supplied by the Bodies of young Lads and Maidens, not exceeding fourteen Years of Age, nor under twelve; so great a Number of both Sexes in every County being now ready to starve, for Want of Work and Service: And these to be disposed of by their Parents, if alive, or otherwise by their nearest Relations. But with due Deference to so excellent a Friend, and so deserving a Patriot, I cannot be altogether in his Sentiments. For as to the Males, my *American*, Acquaintance assured me from frequent Experience, that their Flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our School-boys, by continual Exercise, and their Taste disagreeable; and to fatten them would not answer the Charge. Then, as to the Females, it would, I think, with humble Submission, *be a Loss to the Publick*, because they soon would become Breeders themselves: And besides it is not improbable, that some scrupulous People might be apt to censure such a Practice (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon Cruelty; which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest Objection against any Project, how well soever intended. But in order to justify my Friend; he confessed, that this Expedient was put into his Head by the famous *Salma-naazor*, a Native of the Island *Formosa*, who came from thence to *London*, above twenty Years ago, and in Conver-