Samuel Johnson's***Letter to Lord Chesterfield***

两个译本

【背景】约翰逊于1747年计划编撰首部标准权威辞典，乃致信切斯特菲尔德公爵，然只获十英镑及避而不见。约翰逊终于1755年完成。菲尔德知悉此辞典备受推崇，旋二度撰文，冀约翰逊在献词中写上其名字。

【黄继忠译本】

My Lord,

伯爵大人阁下：

I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of The World, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

 近闻《人世间》主人言：阁下曾两度撰文，将仆之辞典推荐于世，曷胜荣幸。然仆生平鲜蒙贵人恩典，是以受宠若惊，不知何以答谢。

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre;*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

 昔者偶为人所动，初度造府晋谒；于君之谈吐，一似世人之倾慕无已。实望一登龙门，身价百倍；并冀能博得阁下之青睐，此天下人争相罗致者也。然仆之趋侯，颇遭冷遇；其后遂裹足不前，半以孤芳自赏，半以自惭形秽也。仆本一介寒士，不求闻达于世，不善逢迎之术。前者于大庭广众之间得与阁下共语，曲尽所能，以期取悦于君，终不可得。人之竭尽绵薄，辱遭鄙夷而复能怡然自得者，鲜矣哉！

Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

 忆昔伫候于室外，见拒于侯门，岁月荏苒，春秋七易。七岁之间，仆励志孟晋，披荆斩棘，致力于辞书之编著；个中艰辛，今日言之何益？所幸功垂于成，刊行在即，其间未尝获君一臂之助，一言之勋，一笑之惠。惟此等殊遇，原非所期，盖仆生平迄未受恩主之惠。

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

 弗吉儿诗中之牧者，其后终得悉“爱童”之为人，方知其为铁石心肠之辈也。

Is not a Patron，my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it: till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which providence has enabled me to do for myself.

 伯爵阁下：见人挣扎于水中则漠漠然袖手旁观，见其安然登岸则遽遽乎殷勤相助，此非恩主之为人乎？阁下于拙著之锦注，若在昔年，诚不失为美意；惜于姗姗其来迟，今仆已兴味索然，难以欣赏；仆已孑然一身，无人分享；仆已薄有声名，不劳垂颐矣。且仆既未受惠于人，自不欲对其感恩戴德；仆借天助独立完竣之功业，自不欲天下人误以为恩主所赐；此言谅不致失之于尖酸刻薄耳。

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

  仆自编撰辞书以还，既未受惠于任何学术赞助人于前，则于今大功垂成之日，即无丝毫恩赐于后，亦当不以为憾耳。盖仆昔时固尝陶醉于希望之美梦，今则梦醒久矣。

My Lord,

Your lordship's most humble,

most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

仆

山谬尔·约翰逊顿首再拜

【辜正坤译本】

**伯爵大人：**

近日从《世界报》馆主得知，该报刊载了两篇文章，对拙编词典颇多举荐滥美之词，这些文章据悉均出自阁下您的手笔。承蒙您如此的推崇，本应是一种荣耀，只可惜在下自来无缘得到王公大人的青睐，所以真不知道该如何来领受这份荣耀，也不知道该用些什么言辞来聊表谢意。

回想当年，也不知哪来的勇气，我竟第一次拜访了大人阁下。我像所有的人一样，深为大人的言谈丰采所倾倒，不禁玄想他年能口出大言“吾乃天下征服者之征服者也。”——虽知此殊荣是举世学人所欲得，仍希望有朝一日能侥幸获取。然而我很快发现自己的趋走逢迎根本没有得到鼓励。不管是出于自尊也好，自矜也好，我反正无法再周旋下去。我本是一个与世无争、不善逢迎的书生，但那时我也曾用尽平生所学的阿谀奉承的言辞，当众赞美过阁下。能做的一切我都做了。如果一个人在这方面付出的一切努力（不管是多么微不足道）受到完全的忽视，他是绝不会感到舒服的。

大人阁下，从我第一次候立于贵府门下，或者说被您拒于门外时算起，已经7年过去。7年多来，我一直苦苦地撑持着我的编撰工作。这些苦楚，现在再来倾诉，已经没有用处。所幸我的劳作而今终于快要出版，在这之前我没有获得过一个赞助的行为，一句鼓励的话语，一抹称许的微笑。我固然不曾指望这样的礼遇，因为我从未有过一位赞助人。

维吉尔笔下的牧童最后终于和爱神相识，这才发现所谓爱神只不过是岩穴土人而已。

大人阁下，有的人眼见落水者在水中拼命挣扎而无动于衷，等他安全抵岸之后，却才多余地伸出所谓援手，莫非这就叫赞助人么？大人而今忽有雅兴来关照在下的劳作，这原本是一桩美意，只可惜太迟了一点。迟到我已经意懒心灰，再无法快乐地消受；迟到我已经是孤身一人，无从与家人分享；迟到我已经名闻海内，再不需阁下附丽张扬。我既然本来就没有得到过实惠，自然母需怀感恩之心；既然是上帝助我独立完成这桩大业，我自然不愿让公众产生错觉，似乎我曾受惠于某一赞助人。但愿上面这番话不致被认为太苛刻、太不近人情。

我已经在根本没有所谓学术赞助人赞助的情况下使自己的工作完成到目前这个地步，那么，尽管我将要在更艰难无助的情况下—假如还有可能更艰难无助的话—完成全稿，我也绝不会感到沮丧。因为我已经早就从那个赞助的美梦里幡然猛醒；曾几何时，我还在那梦中得意非凡地自诩是大人

                                                       您门下最卑微  
                                                       最驯顺的仆人

                                                         塞缪尔·约翰逊  
                                                         1755年2月7日