Illustrating Nonsense: Edward Lear and the Shock of the New

'And what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?'

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

'My pictures never can be perfect: it is not their nature: they are born with one leg shorter than t'other, or one side of their nose crooked.'[1]

Lear in a letter to William Holman Hunt

British illustration and self-illustration have a strong tradition with certain images having become inseparable from the work and its creator. We can hardly imagine *Alice* books without Tenniel's illustrations and we only know how Peter Rabbit looks because Beatrix Potter has shown him to us through her watercolours. Just like Potter, Edward Lear is a gifted joiner of text and image with his nonsense verses, prose and letters almost always being accompanied by his nonsense drawings. Even some of Lear's 'serious' landscape paintings and sketches[2] are naughtily filled with nonsense elements, both visual and verbal (e.g. with lines from limericks), which straddle the blurred line between words and images, literature and art.

Many readers were brought up with Lear's original drawings and accept them as the definitive illustrations, having already formed mental images of the characters. Despite the closeness of his texts and images, illustrators keep finding inspiration in Lear, and brave attempts at new re-illustrations continue to appear, almost approaching Carroll's in their number. As Crispin

[1] *Edward Lear: Selected Letters*, ed. Vivien Noakes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 202.
[2] For instance, such painting as 'The Sirens Isles' (1844, Tate) and the drawing 'Outside Hania' (1864, from Lear's Cretan Drawings).

Fisher confesses in his review on Lear's re-illustrations: 'It's a bit of a *shock* to be confronted with this colourful glut of re-interpretation.'[3] In this dissertation I will look at those who dare to 'make it new' for Lear's texts and explore what is actually meant by this 'newness' by analysing and comparing various editions of Lear's nonsense works, illustrated both by British, Russian and other foreign artists, and exploring the ways in which these different versions can influence the reader's perception with a particular focus on how a shift in meaning through translation might affect illustrators' decisions and approaches, especially in the limericks. I will argue that Lear's limerick represents a single multimodal whole, the verbal and visual components of which are interacting with and affecting one another. I will show by analysing such interactions that new illustrations can both act as an intervention to such multimodality and as an equal or sometimes even more successful substitution of the visual part if they meet the required conditions established by the original textual and visual source. As the first attempts by other artists to re-illustrate Lear's works were made during his lifetime, it would be helpful to look at those early illustrations and, what is more important, Lear's and public attitude towards them.

Early Visual Responses to Lear's Texts

As an artist and illustrator,[4] Lear himself knew how tricky illustration could be: considering himself the best candidate to illustrate 'Tennyson's landscape lines and feelings,'[5] he spent about 35 years working on this project and never finished it.[6] The reason for this (apart from the eyesight and general health deterioration, of course) was Lear's proclivity to revise. He could spend endless

[3] 'A Load of Old Nonsense, Edward Lear Resurrected by Four Publishers,' *Growing Point*, Vol. 8, No. 5 (November 1969), p. 1419.

[4] Before embarking on illustrating his own limericks, Lear produced several illustrations for already existing limericks ('There was a sick man of Tobago' (See Fig. 1), 'There was an old man of Bicester' and 'There was an old person of Sparta'), as well as illustrations for various children's (and adult) stories and poems, usually for children of his friends and patrons (for details see *Lear in the Original*).

[5] From Lear's letter to Emily Tennyson, 5 October 1852, *Selected Letters*, p. 117. Lear was quite cautious about the word 'illustrations' considering it 'not a word fit for the matter' and preferring 'Painting = sympathizations' to it,' quoted in *Edward Lear 1812–1888* (London: Royal Academy of Arts and Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985), p. 129, 132.

[6] The best account of this ambitious project is given in Ruth Pitman's book *Edward Lear's Tennyson* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1988).

days 'altering, and condensing, and resurrecting, and reconsidering'[7] his works, whether it was landscapes, topographies or animal studies. The same applies to his nonsense drawings. Despite their seeming effortlessness, casualness and spontaneity, it only seems that 'no such labour accompanies his nonsense verses and drawings,' as Ann Colley put it.[8] Although Lear's diary entries show that he used to write and draw these humorous pieces as a distraction,[9] his nonsense drawings were prepared with what Robert McCracken Peck called an 'exacting care.' The traces of his anxious reworking can be found in numerous redrawn copies of limericks, as well as in Lear's instructions for wood engravers inscribed on the original drawings.

Knowing Lear's meticulousness and perfectionism, as well as his attitude towards the publishing industry ('endless beastly booksellers and pestiferous publishers'[10]), it might seem that he would not approve of such proliferation of illustrated editions of his works published without the author's original illustrations. Thus, Peck suggests that seeing 'his nonsense writing and illustration as inseparably interwoven, Lear would have been surprised, and undoubtedly distressed.'[11] However, Lear's three most famous nonsense songs were first published in an American children's magazine *Our Young Folks* accompanied by J.H. Howard's illustrations (Fig. 2) and not his own. The first to open the series[12] was *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* (No. 6.2, February 1870), which would later become one of the most popular among the illustrators. If we compare Howard's illustrations[13] with Lear's canonical drawings, we will notice that Howard only portrayed the main characters, leaving out the Pig and the Turkey and making an accent on the

[7] From Lear's diary, 20 February 1878, MS Eng 797.3 (21), Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[8] Ann C. Colley, 'Edward Lear's Limericks and the Reversals of Nonsense', *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Comic Verse (Autumn 1988), p. 286.
[9] From a diary entry dated 6 March 1861: 'I am unable from constant interruption to work – so I give it up and lead a life of idleness – drawing 'Nonsenses.' In an entry from 5 April 1861 we read: 'Quite too dark to work, drew nonsenses.' MS Eng 797.3 (4), Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[10] From Lear's letter to Emily Tennyson, 20 December 1883, quoted in *Edward Lear 1812–1888*, p. 136.
[11] *The Natural History of Edward Lear (1812–1888)* (Woodbridge: ACC Art Books, 2016), p. 144.
[12] The March issue of *Our Young Folks* (No. 6.3) presented *The Duck and the Kangaroo*, while *The Daddy Long-Legs and the Fly* was the last to close the series in the April issue (No. 6.4).
[13] There is no information whether Howard saw Lear's original drawings or not, but according to Vivien Noakes, Lear submitted an unillustrated copy for the publisher. See *The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse* (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 510.

moon-light dance of the newly-married couple. Lear, however, decided not to include the dancing scene in his printed version, even though in the manuscript version all four characters are shown holding hands and dancing (Fig. 3),[14] which according to Daniel Karlin would have been a 'more traditional ending for a romantic comedy.' The reason for Lear's rejection of this 'social' dance, as Karlin explains, was his desire not to 'restrict the imaginative play of characters and readers alike. Our final sight of the Owl and the Pussy-cat … signals their appropriation of the [social] convention [of marriage], as though the marriage licence gave them licence to do as they pleased.'[15] Stylistically, Howard's illustrations are more worked, animated and realistic. They have a rather elaborated background, which includes such details as the sky with seagulls, the disturbed water around the boat achieved though the swirling lines, and a perspectively correct horizon. They are finished pictures compared to Lear's mere referential doodles centred on the protagonists. To Lear, background was secondary, which is also true of his illustrations to the limericks with just a few of them having a semblance of a background. After receiving his copies of the magazine in May 1870 and noting that it was 'quaint' that these poems should be read in America first of all, Lear wrote to the publisher James Fields on 21 August: 'I thought the 3 poems very nicely printed, and capitally illustrated.'[16] As we can see, Lear was actually open to the idea of creative interaction with his works by other illustrators.

Another illustrated edition was published in 1872, when Lear was still alive, and this time in the UK: *The Owl and the Pussy-cat and Other Nonsense Songs* illustrated by Lord Ralph Kerr and published by Cundall and Company, London. The book consisted of two poems by Lear (*The Owl and the Pussy-cat*[17] and *The Duck and the Kangaroo*) and the poem *How the Beasts Got Into the Ark*. Although the publisher claimed that Lear's poems were 'printed, with permission, from

[14] MS Typ 55.14 (155), Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[15] Daniel Karlin, 'The Owl and the Pussy-Cat', and other Poems of Love and Marriage' in *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 222.
[16] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 505.
[17] For some reason, in this edition the Bong-tree was replaced with the less nonsensical 'Jam-tree' depicted as a lush tree covered with jam jars.

Mr. Lear's "Nonsense Songs and Stories," published by Robert John Bush, 32, Charing Cross, London,' according to Peck, there is no record of Lear's reactions to this publication, or whether he was even aware of it.[18] Lord Kerr's illustrations represent highly detailed and accurate pen and ink drawings with four leaves of illustrations for each poem with the text printed out separately on cards and laid-down to the centre of each plate (Fig. 4). His illustrations or decorative vignettes, if you will, can be compared to the pictorial records of fauna and zoological expeditions, evoking the nineteenth-century enthusiasm for discoveries, mixed up with whimsical fancy for the nursery. Both Howard's and Kerr's illustrations are engaged in realisation, they move towards the real, even though Kerr's Cat is more humanised as she is walking vertically on her feet, carrying a bag, and clinging to the Owl's wing as they promenade along the shore like a respectable Victorian couple.

The next attempt to re-illustrate Lear's nonsense works was made in 1889, just a year after his death. Frederick Warne & Co. decided to publish *Nonsense Drolleries* containing *The Owl and The Pussy-cat* and *The Duck and The Kangaroo,* following the 'almost general desire to have [these poems] in a distinct form from Mr. Lear's other Nonsense Drolleries' as the publisher explained in the preface to the edition. The poems were 'humorously illustrated' by William Foster (Fig. 5). What is interesting about his illustrations is that he depicted the cat as a groom and the owl as a bride despite the usual interpretation of the owl as a male and the cat as a female. This cross-dressing was possible because gender identities are not explicitly stated in the text of the poem: there are no pronouns hinting on the gender of the characters apart from the pig ('his nose'). Without pronouns there is nothing left for us but to guess at gender based on human stereotypes such as the Owl serenading to the Cat and calling her 'beautiful' rather than 'handsome.' We cannot know whether the artist was playing with the reader trying to add more 'nonsense' to the poem or whether he was paying homage to the theatrical tradition of role-swapping or if he just

[18] *The Natural History of Edward Lear*, p. 144.

treated the Cat's line 'Oh, let us be married' (*CN*, 238)[19] as a proposal to the Owl. However, Foster was the first to engage with the text in a new way rather than just supplying a depictive representation of the characters. As for the poem's gender confusion, the answer was provided by Lear himself: in the sequels[20] he wrote to the poem it is revealed that the owl is male and the pussy-cat female. This poem is not the only case of Lear not using the gender pronouns and thus being ambiguous: in at least eleven limericks about 'an old person' (which with rare exceptions Lear used in relation to male characters), there are no indications of the character's gender apart from Lear's picture. This ambiguity will later allow modern illustrators to engage with the text the way French-Canadian artist Michèle Lemieux did in her 1994 illustration for the limerick 'There was an Old Person of Nice' (Fig. 6), depicting an old person as a female. This limerick represents one of Lear's well-known 'doubles,' in which characters are drawn to look like the animals they are interacting with, although no such similarity is directly implied by the text itself. By using the same technique of distortion (an elongated neck and nose mimicking those of a goose), Lemieux follows Lear in what appears to be the process of metamorphosis, where if an old person continues to 'walk out together' with her Geese 'associates,' she will eventually turn into one. The choice of a female protagonist might have been based on the idea of the term 'goose' being applied to the female species (as opposite to the male 'gander'), or on an association with an old-fashioned English expression 'old/silly goose,' which was mostly used in relation to women (or in case with males, to stress the lack of manliness). Cross-dressing will also be used by some illustrators even when the character's gender is known from the text, like in a 1981 illustration by Dutch artist Juan Wijngaard for the 'Old Man of Melrose,' who is portrayed as a ballerina performing on the stage (Fig. 7). This choice is obviously based on the line 'Who walked on the tips of his toes,' and Lear's

[19] All quotations and illustrations from Lear's texts are taken from *The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse*, ed. Vivien Noakes (London: Penguin, 2006). All subsequent references shall be cited in the text by book (*CN*) and page number.

[20] There are two known sequels to the poem: an unfinished sequel *The Children of the Owl and the Pussy-cat*, which was first published in 1938 in Davidson's *Edward Lear*, and *The Later History of the Owl and the Pussy-cat,* which was narrated in an 1884 letter addressed to Violet Grant, whose younger sister Maria had sent Lear a collar for the pussy-cat from the original poem (*CN*, 450). Both sequels tell the tragic story of the death of the feline mother.

original picture of a man, whose long legs and toes *en pointe* evoke associations with the ballet. Despite the difference in style, the facial expression of Lear's and Wijngaard's man is almost identical in its self-satisfaction with the caused mischief. The presence of the infamous 'they' (representatives of respectable society), who are not pleasant with the 'stupid' old man, is subtly replaced with the shepherd's crook pulling the man off the stage, probably from the wings. Thus, Wijngaard's illustration follows both the text and the original picture of the limerick and at the same time expands the boundaries of its interpretation and humour. As we can see, Lear's first illustrators charted the way and approaches, which will be later employed and developed by modern illustrators.

Returning to the early illustrators, mention should be made of Leonard Leslie Brooke, who was also commissioned by Frederick Warne & Co. to re-illustrate some of Lear's nonsense songs almost ten years after Foster's illustrations. According to the publisher's preface, the new visualisation was necessary 'to create a wider interest in verses which for so many years have given unwonted pleasure to thousands of readers.' The preface also hints that the publisher was not too pleased with Lear's own illustrations to his longer poems, saying that Lear had 'contrary to his usual custom, presented these songs … illustrated in the slightest manner only,'[21] which constitutes the main reason for this new collaboration that resulted in a comprehensive set of three volumes: the first to appear was *The Pelican Chorus* (c. 1899), which was followed in 1900[22] by *The Jumblies* and *Nonsense Songs* combining the poems from the first two volumes. The new

[21] From the Introductory to *Nonsense Songs* (London; New York: Frederick Warne & Co., [1900]).
[22] The publication chronology is taken from the *Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (1985, p. 85). As those editions are not dated, different sources tend to provide different dates of their publication. For instance, Robert Peck mistakenly put 1910 as the year when Warne & Co. approached Brooke asking to re-illustrate Lear. (*The Natural History of Edward Lear*, p. 144). According to Brooke's own recollections, *The Pelican Chorus* was drawn in London in 1899, while *The Jumblies* at Harvell in 1900. (Quoted in *Horn Book Sampler*, p. 65). However, this does not clarify the year of the actual publication. In *The House of Warne: One Hundred Years of Publishing* we read that '*Nonsense Songs* were published in 1900 in two parts as *The Pelican Chorus* and *The Jumblies*' (p. 42). *The Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books* states that Warne & Co. commissioned Brooke to illustrate these songs following the success, or to use the publisher's words 'cordial reception extended by Press and Public,' of *The Pelican Chorus* (Vol. 2, p. 648), but also gives 1900 as its year of publication. According to the periodicals of that time, *The Pelican Chorus* was indeed the first to appear, at least in the advertisements (as early as October 1899). Later in 1900 it was advertised both separately as well as together with *The Jumblies* and *Nonsense Songs*.

editions included full-page coloured plates and numerous black-and-white engravings and received widespread praise in the press: 'Mr Leslie Brooke has improved where there seemed no room for improvement;'[23] 'To attempt to make Mr Lear's nonsense more attractive would in most hands be a vain task, but Mr Brooke has certainly succeeded… They are the cleverest series of drawings that has been published for a long time.'[24] Richard Adams, the creator of *Watership Down,* remembers in his autobiography that 'our edition of Edward Lear was the one illustrated by Leslie Brooke, and I don't think there could be a better.'[25] However, not everyone shared this laudatory view. Critics from *The Athenaeum* believed that Brooke's illustrations 'do not seem adequately to hit off the nonsense world of extraordinary creatures in which Lear specially revelled.'[26] The rejection of these drawings is brief and gives us no clues as to why the author of the review disapproved of them. To get a better understanding, we need to look at those illustrations more closely, starting with the format. For each song Brooke drew a title page, a halftone colour-wash full-page picture, and line-block drawings to appear within the text – a combination, which will be later used in his most popular works. Coloured pictures as well as some of the black-and-white drawings are provided with detailed backgrounds. This is the first time when Lear's characters were presented in colour, finally bringing to life the unmistakable description of the Jumblies ('their heads are green, and their hands are blue'). The difference between Lear's sketchy style and Brooke's 'painstaking draughtsmanship' can be best demonstrated through the illustrations for *The Table and the Chair* (Fig. 8). As we can see, Brooke's representation is quite realistic, however, he bestowed personalities upon the inanimate characters, investing them with emotions and an actuality that can almost be believed in. Lear's simple table has transformed into a fine mahogany drop-leaf table with cabriole legs and a face on one of the leaves, while the chair has turned into an upholstered chair with the scrolls on the back creating its face and the towel – its hair. Based on the visual look, we might even say that the

[23] *The Bookman*, October 1900, p. 33.
[24] *The Scotsman*, 27 November 1900, p. 9.
[25] *The Day Gone By: An Autobiography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 106.
[26] 'Art for the Nursery,' No. 3816 (15 December 1900), p. 800.

furniture has climbed the social ladder, from the kitchen into the parlour. Compared to Lear, Brooke's illustration looks more animated as the cabriole legs give an impression of almost dancing movements. By humanising the table and the chair, Brooke has lost Lear's incongruity between text and image: as soon as we read 'Said the Table to the Chair' we imagine some sort of anthropomorphised furniture, but instead we see just an ordinary table and chair, which creates the humorous effect. There is the same incongruity in the way they are trying to walk, when all we can see is pieces of furniture tilted to one side. As for the illustrations for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* (Fig. 9), Brooke humanised animals the same way illustrators did before him, expressing human emotions in their faces and bodies. It is also hard not to notice that Brooke's black-and-white illustrations slightly resemble Foster's in style (the starry night scene, the striped cat, the way the owl holds the guitar) and according to John Vernon Lord 'almost look as though they follow one another in sequence.'[27] Indeed, if we place illustrations by both artists together, they will create a full storyboard. To sum up, Brooke is following other illustrators in fleshing out the image and thus leaving less space for the reader to inhabit.

Another nineteenth-century artist, who worked with Warne & Co. and who created her visual interpretation of Lear, was Beatrix Potter (Fig. 10). Potter was fascinated by Lear's nonsense rhymes since early childhood and especially by *The Owl and the Pussy-cat*, which she copied in several letters to children[28] and accompanied with her own illustrative drawings. Her depiction of the pussy-cat, for example, is based on her subtle sense of humour – the cat, as one would naturally suppose, seems to be more interested in the fish than in the owl's serenading. When Warne & Co. offered Potter to create illustrations for other writer's work, possibly having Lear in mind, she declined as she was focused on writing her own books. According to Derek Ross, she might have considered printing a small booklet containing her Lear-inspired drawings as she borrowed them

[27] *Illustrating Lear's Nonsense: Inaugural Lecture* (Brighton: Brighton Polytechnic, 1991), p. 21.
[28] These letters date back to 1894 and 1897. See *Letters to Children from Beatrix Potter* (London: Warne, 1992).

back from the Moore children to make copies of them, as she did others.[29] Despite those drawings never being published, Potter found a way to pay homage to Lear: in her final[30] book in the Peter Rabbit series *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson* (1930), she introduced a pig with a ring at the end of his nose and told his story of coming to the land of the Bong tree, quoting some lines from *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* and including their drawing (Fig. 11).

As we can see, Lear's poems with their scanter illustrations lead to the implicit invitation to other illustrators to step in. This invitation is also open to the reader. However, by creating a fuller image and thus threatening the evocative power of words, illustrators sometimes withdraw this invitation. Both Lear and the public were quite open to the new illustrated editions of the beloved verses. Lovely as they are, these early illustrations are very similar in style and primarily depictive. Their 'newness' is in adding detail, materiality and realism to the sparseness of Lear's line drawings, while their main function is to fill in the illustrative gaps left out by Lear and thus to satisfy publishers and readers and to secure further interest in his works. As we will see, the similar principles of filling in details will be continued throughout the history of Lear illustration by the artists illustrating his limericks in the 20th and 21st centuries, with some of them managing to maintain the interactive energy between text and image, and some – completely changing it.

It is no wonder that due to their more complex nature, limericks start to be re-illustrated later than the other poems. The first example of Lear's limerick being published without the author's picture, that I have been able to discover, is 'an Old Person of Anerley' illustrated by H.M. Bateman in Reed's *Complete Limerick Book*, 1924 (Fig. 12), which Cyril Bibby called 'a rare improvement on a Lear illustration' as it 'much better captures the conception 'he rushed.'[31] Indeed, Lear's character looks like he is just walking. Following the best traditions of the *Punch* cartoons, Bateman's illustration is not just more animated, but also slightly more realistic with an

[29] Quoted in *The Natural History of Edward Lear*, p. 193.
[30] Though the book was one of Potter's last publications, it was one of the first stories she wrote.
[31] *The Art of The Limerick* (London: Research Publishing Co., 1978), p. 131.

old man actually holding pigs (if it was not for the text, it would be impossible to identify animals from Lear's picture) in his hands, rather than holding them by their tails. The next attempt, as far as we know, will only be made in 1965, seven years after Lear's works came out of copyright, by an American illustrator Lois Ehlert (Fig. 13). Created in collage technique, Ehlert's illustrations represent block prints with overlays of shapes of colour and are clearly aimed at young audience. Stepping away from the traditional representation in pursuit of a more contemporary form, they, according to the *New York Times* review, are 'expressionist-derived semi-abstractions which seem to aim for spontaneity and achieve only confusion.'[32] This points to the general challenge of illustrating Lear's limericks given their complexity in terms of image-text relationship, as compared to the longer poems' form, where Lear, according to Thomas Byrom 'entrusts his meaning to the words and allows the pictures only an incidental force.'[33]

Lear's Limericks as a Multimodal Whole

In one of the earliest works on nonsense *The Poetry of Nonsense* (1925), Emile Cammaerts remarks that nonsense writers seem always want to illustrate their works: 'We are led to think that there is more than a coincidence in the fact that nonsense writers are also nonsense draughtsmen' (60). Indeed, Carroll, Gilbert, Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, Mervyn Peake, Edward Gorey have all illustrated their nonsense works themselves. Such one-man partnership suggests that their illustrations are not just mere supplements to the texts, or to use Lisa S. Ede's words, 'appendages to the word, slavish visual imitations or recreations of a literary event' (104). For quite a long time critics have been failing to find the right words to express the whole complexity of the Learian limerick, unfairly concentrating on just one aspect – either verbal or visual, claiming, for example, that drawings 'add a sort of sixth line to the limericks they illustrate'[34] or that *A Book of Nonsense*

[32] *NYT*, 7 November 1965, p. 63.
[33] *Nonsense and Wonder: The Poems and Cartoons of Edward Lear* (New York: Brandywine Press, 1977), p. 161.
[34] Janet Adam Smith, *Children's Illustrated Books* (London: Collins, 1948), p. 28.

'owes more of its success to pictures than to text.'[35] However, the relationship between nonsense verses and drawings is much more complex as their interaction is essential in the creation of meaning and thus nonsense illustrated texts can be considered as multimodal texts. The multimodal approach was postulated and popularised by, among others, Kress and van Leeuwen, who define a multimodal text as any text whose meanings are realised through more than one semiotic code and who suggest looking at the whole page as an integrated text (177). According to Constance W. Hassett, their approach 'extends readily to Lear's paired images and poems.'[36]

Here, we are also faced with a chicken-and-egg question: did Lear first write the verses and then draw pictures or vice versa? According to Colley, the illustrations are 'caught between the act of writing and drawing,'[37] which suggests that drawings and verses seem to have been conceived simultaneously. Although this idea is confirmed by Lear's own claim from the introduction to *More Nonsense* (1862) that 'every one of the illustrations [was] drawn by [his] own hand at the time the verses were made,' there are examples of some limericks that use reworked drawings either from the earlier versions of limericks, for instance, like 'an Old Man of Peru,' or from his other earlier pieces (Fig. 14). Visually the pictures might dominate in Lear's limericks, occupying a larger physical space on the page than the text and placing the limericks in an almost caption-like state, however it is the internal dynamics between the components that matters, and Lear's limericks proved that illustrations can not only enhance and supplement the text, but also significantly influence its perception. According to Thomas Dilworth, in some ways Lear develops Blake's traditions in giving the pictures equality with and sometimes even primacy over the text, and therefore, Lear's works should not be called 'illustrated limericks,' but rather 'picture-limericks.'[38] One might even use a term suggested by Ann Colley – 'visual-verbal puns.'[39]

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[35] Percy H. Muir, *Victorian Illustrated Books* (London: Batsford, 1971), p. 33.
[36] 'Does it Buzz?': Image and text in Edward Lear's Limericks', *Victorian Literature and Culture*. 45.4 (December 2017), p 687.
[37] 'Reversals of Nonsense', p. 297.
[38] 'Society and Self in the Limericks of Lear', *The Review of English Studies,* New Series, Vol. 45, No. 177, p. 42.
[39] 'Reversals of Nonsense', p. 297.

Different scholars come up with different terms for picture-text pairings (Genette's 'paratext,'[40] Mitchell's 'imagetext'[41] or Louvel's 'iconotext'[42]), but what we need to understand is how multimodality is realised in Lear's limericks; and, for that, we need to look at the possible interactions between the drawings and verses. Once these interactions are established, we can explore what happens to a multimodal text, if one of its components, in our case, the visual part, is substituted by a creative work produced by another artist.

All Lear's limericks can be divided into three distinct types in terms of image-text relationship: first, limericks, where the illustration is an exact depiction of the text. There are surprisingly few of these throughout Lear's limericks. Thus, according to Thomas Byrom, there are only two instances in which text and image agree.[43] Although this suggestion is rather questionable, because it largely depends on the reader's perspective, on how we read a word and make sense of a picture, we cannot help but remember J. Hillis Miller's words about an illustration, 'always adding something more, something not in the text.'[44] One of these rare examples is 'There was an Old Man in a Tree' (Fig. 15, all limericks are fully quoted in the Appendix). Apart from a slight time discrepancy (despite the man's whiskers being plucked 'perfectly bare' by the birds, he still has plenty of them), this is a true illustration, set during the second line (*'Whose whiskers were lovely to see'*). It might seem that due to its straightforwardness, this type of limericks will attract a lot of interpretations by other artists. However, I only managed to find three versions by John Vernon Lord, Arthur Robins[45] and James Wines (Fig. 16). Apart from the obvious difference in the artistic styles, we can also see that the old men depicted by Lord and Wines blend in with the tree so much that they almost become a part of it, evoking associations with the Green Man.

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[40] *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[41] *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual* Representation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 89.
[42] *Poetics of the Iconotext* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).
[43] *Nonsense and Wonder*, p. 126.
[44] *Illustration*, p. 102.
[45] Lord and Robins are the only illustrators, who managed to provide pictures for the whole corpus of Lear's limericks, while other illustrators only focused on selected limericks.

In all three illustrations a different moment in a timeline is chosen: Lord follows Lear and portrays his old man with such fulsome whiskers and beard that even a Sikh would envy; Wines, perhaps trying to minimise the time discrepancy, shows the man with only half of his whiskers gone, while Robins in his very Quentin Blake-esque illustration depicts an old man with an almost bare chin. Although in Lear's picture the old man is almost smiling and quite happy to be of help to the birds, his emotions are not indicated in the text, which has allowed each artist to choose to display a variety of emotions for their protagonist. Thus, Lord's old man looks somewhat worried as if not fully realising what is happening, Robins' character is clearly very angry, while the old man depicted by Wines is surprisingly calm as if he accepted this mistreatment. As we can see, even in what seems to be the simplest type of image-text relationship, new illustrations bring new emotions and thus new experience for the reader, who can either laugh at the protagonist of feel sorry for him.

The second type is when the illustration adds essential information to the text, for example, it can develop the joke, implied by the text, as it occurs in the limerick 'There was a Young Lady of Tyre/Who swept the loud chords of a lyre' (Fig. 17). Here, it is only due to the illustration that we can see the hidden word play, as *sweep* means both 'to run one's fingers over the strings of a musical instrument' and 'to clean with a brush.' This limerick was not popular with illustrators either, with just Lord and Robins producing their versions. To begin with, Lear's 'young lady' is not at all young and appears to be dressed in a kind of a kimono. This is not the first case of Lear depicting an old lady instead of a young one, and this age-confusion will be followed by other illustrators (for instance, Michèle Lemieux, who presented an 'Old Lady of Chertsey' as a young ballerina). Both Lord and Robins stay faithful to the text and reveal us young ladies, however Robins fails to recognise the world play and his lady ends up playing the lyre just with her hand, which completely ruins the humour of the limerick. Compared to Lear and Robins, Lord's illustration is much more detailed: while Lear was using the ancient city just for a rhyme, Lord embraced the classical nature of the location as he was 'keen to place most of [Lear's] nonsense

subjects within a context'[46] and even dressed his lady in a period costume. Although the duster she holds looks not as funny as the broom from the original picture, Lord managed to save the interconnection between text and illustration. This is an instance of how visual styles determine what can be represented: the absurdity of sweeping a lyre with a broomstick would not really work as a joke in a more elaborated and realistic visual style.

Another example of this type can be found in the limerick about Young Lady of Portugal (Fig. 18), 'who climbed up a tree, to examine the sea.' Lisa S. Ede[47] with her sharp eye noticed that the lady's spyglass is actually aimed down at the end of the branch she is sitting on, and not at the sea, which might explain why she 'would never leave Portugal.' This limerick was illustrated by at least five different illustrators, and as we can see from the pictures, of all them, perhaps only Lord, being faithful to Lear as usual, managed to save this little joke even though his lady aims her spyglass not at the branch, but at the jellyfish. All illustrators portrayed their ladies much younger, compared to Lear's original drawing, and supplied a more detailed background (apart from Robins' child-like doodle). Just as Lord's young lady terrified of the jellyfish, other protagonists have their own reasons to stay in Portugal. In Michael Hague's illustration (the colour palette suggests the influence of Dali) the lady is not even looking at the sea, but rather at the reader: perhaps, she is more interested in the picnic waiting for her on the ground. Michèle Lemieux, whose modernised illustrations are indeed 'excessively nautical,' created the real drama: the sinking ship with two girls jumping right into the sea, the house going under the water, crab's claws and human's limbs, and even the Loch Ness Monster! Now that the scene to be scared of! It is also hard not to notice that two illustrators, Lemieux and Hague, used the image of an anchor to emphasise the idea of a young lady staying in Portugal. The most relaxed and somehow nostalgic illustration is the one made by Marta Monteiro, an artist from actual Portugal, who has illustrated a series of Lear's limericks, letterpress printed in two colours as part of the self-initiated project.

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[46] *Illustrating Lear's Nonsense*, p. 30.
[47] 'Edward Lear's Limericks and Their Illustrations' in *Explorations in the Field of Nonsense*, ed. Wim Tigges (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), p. 106.

Her young lady does not even have a spyglass (which is not mentioned in the text), instead she is dreamily observing the sea, while smoking a pipe. However, from Monteiro's illustration, it is not clear why the lady would never leave Portugal.

This type includes Lear's famous *doppelgänger* limericks, an example of which was mentioned earlier in the first section. As we remember, in such limericks Lear visually parodies the similarities between human and animal characters, usually birds, as he often associated himself with them in his numerous letters:[48] 'Frock coats stand out stiffly like tails, arms are flung back like vestigial wings, noses resemble beaks'[49] (Fig. 19). These limericks dominate in the second book of nonsense (seven against two in the first). One of such limericks, 'Old Man who said 'Hush,' is one of the most illustrated (Fig. 20), but do illustrators follow Lear in his human-animal travesties? As it turned out, of nine illustrators only two – P. Mark Jackson (1990) and Nikolai Vatagin (2017) – managed to preserve the resemblance between the man and the bird, with Jackson even showing that the man and his feathered companion are of the same size as in Lear's original picture. The humour in this limerick is based on the common expectations of size and scale, a technique often used by Lear: not only the bird is as big as a human, but its size contradicts the initial understanding of 'hush,' which was used as a warning not to scare the bird away and which with the progression of the limerick turns into an expression of a potential fear. Lord, John O'Brien (1991), Hague, Robins and Katerina Peschanskaya (2017) are all playing with the enormous size of a bird, its type (for example, Lord and Hague depicted it as a parrot, probably as an homage to Lear) and showing the whole range of emotions of the protagonists from fear to surprise. Some of them even introduced the curious 'them' into their illustrations. The funniest interpretation is perhaps the one offered by Wijngaard, who created his own visual joke: his bird is nothing but a

[48] As Lear wrote in an 1863 letter to Chichester Fortescue: 'Verily I am an odd bird.' Quoted in *Edward Lear's Birds* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 52.
[49] Ibid, p. 81.

topiary, which perfectly explains its size and makes us laugh at the two old men looking for the bird in the bush.

In the limerick 'Old Man in a Marsh' the humorous picture is followed by what can be called a parody of the standard form of the naturalists' descriptions, giving a detailed account of a place, habits and actions, as if the frog is inspecting the human, who in his turn inspects the frog. As we can see on Fig. 21, only Lemieux depicted the man looking as a frog, while others (Lord, Hague, Robins) preferred to portray the man as serenading to the frog (Hague's frog is even humanised wearing a dress and make-up like on a proper date), which evokes associations with frog-kissing fairy tales.[50] In Oleynikov's illustration, due to the translation the old man ended up conducting the whole orchestra of frogs. The scope of this dissertation does not allow for the detailed analysis of all limericks of this sub-type, however, it should be mentioned that apart from Lemieux and Jackson, such illustrators as James Wines (1994) and John O'Brien (1991) also chose to engage in Lear's metamorphosical mischief (Fig. 22).

Finally, there are limericks, where the illustration directly or indirectly contradicts the accompanying text, like in the limerick 'There was an Old Man of Ancona/Who found a small dog with no owner' (Fig. 23). Although the text labels the dog 'small,' the dog on Lear's picture is anything but small, and the man's anxiety to find the dog's owner is nothing compared to the anxiety about the dog's size. Unfortunately, this layer of humour was lost in illustrations by other artists. John Vernon Lord admitted straight away that he tried to avoid such discrepancies, 'unless it is suggested in the text, as [he] feels that this kind of visual humour is the special preserve of Lear.'[51] As a result, his illustration represents exactly what is said in the text: an anxious old man looking for the owner of a tiny dog. A well-travelled reader will, of course, recognise Ancona Cathedral in his highly-detailed background. Robins' illustration is also just a mere representation

[50] Russian versions of this fairy tale feature the Frog Princess instead of the Frog Prince, which probably can be explained by the feminine gender of the Russian word 'frog.'
[51] *The Nonsense Verse of Edward Lear* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. xvii.

of the text. In the illustration to the translated version of this limerick (which can be summarised as the boy found a stray dog and then regretted it), we can also see a dog of an average size, however the focus was made on damage caused to the boy's trousers. The translated text does not specify why the boy is regretting picking up the dog, it is only through the picture that we realise what a nasty creature this dog is, which suggests the second type of image-text relationship.

Lear creates multimodal texts, where the visual and the verbal interchange and interact. We can see that his illustrations engage in a direct dialogue with the text, create new jokes and contribute to the further development of a limerick, i.e. expand the boundaries of the interpretation and humour. If we look at the most illustrated limericks (see the list in Appendix 2), we will notice that the limericks belonging to the first type (Old Man with a beard, Old Man of the Hague, Young Lady whose bonnet) for obvious reasons appear to be more stimulating to illustrators than the others. Based on the above analysis of the three types of image-text interactions, three illustration approaches can be distinguished. First, dismissing the relationship between picture and text, illustrators just follow Lear's text and translate the contents of a limerick, so that the picture becomes a simple illustration, not performing any significant functions (for example, illustrations by Robins). Second, illustrators are trying to make their pictures as close as possible to Lear's pictures, without considering the image-text discrepancy (Lord). Finally, illustrators recognise the multimodality of Lear's limericks and aim at recreating it in their visual interpretations (Lemieux, Wijngaard).

Other Aspects of Multimodality

Multimodality of Lear's limericks can also be achieved through a range of other devices. Remembering Kress and van Leeuwen's appeal to look at the whole page as an integrated text, we might look at the limerick page layout. In their original publication, each of Lear's limericks is presented in a landscape orientation with the text being placed under the visually dominating picture, which suggests that we start reading from the top, focusing first on the picture, then reading

the text and after that returning to the picture. Most illustrators are trying to follow this format (for instance, Lord), however not necessarily using the landscape orientation (Hague, Wijngaard). Lemieux illustrations include both vertical and landscape (double-spread) formats, but the text is always underneath the picture. In Robins' illustrations the text and image occupy almost the same space, while the text can be placed both under the text and before it, with the exception of eight limericks, where the illustration spreads over two pages with the text being placed on the left top. The similar two-page format is used by Owen Wood (1978), Jackson and Valorie Fisher (2004), who place their illustrations on the right page and text on the left (Fig. 24). Wood chose to enclose his already over-decorated and action-packed illustrations within colourful frames, while limericks are contained inside, also within their own frames, which visually separates the limerick from its illustration. Jackson provided each limerick with a decorated initial and a headpiece containing a small fragment from the actual illustration, giving a hint at what the reader might expect. In Fisher's version, each verse is set off on the left-hand page with a scrolled black, silent movie-style border placed against the striped and patterned background, reminding one of vintage wallpapers. The contrast of the dark font set on a solid bright background makes the text almost jump at the reader. As it was rightly noticed by Colley, 'neither frame, nor setting, nor shadow supplements the drawings accompanying [Lear's] limericks.'[52] By imposing framings and other decorative elements, illustrators disturb the multimodal dynamics of the limerick, separating the verbal from the visual.

One of the most unusual interpretations in terms of format is a 1973 book *Whizz!* illustrated by Janina Domanska, a Polish illustrator, who emigrated to the United States in the mid-1950s (Fig. 25): six limericks are used as a continuous text, while familiar Lear characters (the old man in a tree, the young lady in blue, etc) march across a long narrow bridge. Each double-page spread introduces a new character entering the bridge (or should we rather say, a stage), until it is so crowded with people and animals that it collapses, plunging them all into the water. The procession

[52] 'Reversals of Nonsense', p. 289.

is being keenly observed by the town folks who hang out from the windows of the buildings on the background, which through the combination of Domanska's water colours and pen and ink line drawings reminds one of a patchwork quilt. The last page shows the characters lined up on the shore as if they are about to take a bow after their circus-like performance. With its amusing drawings filled with colourful characters and menagerie, the book is clearly targeted at young children, who will enjoy the cumulative effect of the parade and the final comic surprise. Apart from the new format and style, the main difference of Domanska's illustrations from Lear and other illustrators, is that they are not 'frozen' in time or bound up by the choice of moment, they show characters in development, inevitably reminding one of a flip book. The innovative use of double-page spread and pairing of limericks will be later echoed by some modern illustrators. For example, John Vernon Lord arranged all limericks into 'loosely connected themes, which bring together some of the topics that preoccupied Lear,'[53] so that the subjects with remarkable noses, the dancers, the tree-sitters and other limerick characters could 'throw light on one another.'[54] The similar thematic approach is used by John O'Brien (1992), James Wines (1994) and Igor Oleynikov (2014) (Fig. 26). Thus, O'Brien combines several limericks and places the characters up the same whimsical tree in a single comically imaginative spread. In Wines' illustrations Lear's characters bound across one page and frolic into the next 'to cause more mischief.' As the illustrator explained himself, he 'chose texts where the subject matter and imagery could visually interact across two pages at a time, creating visual relationships that Lear had not proposed when he wrote the poems.'[55] In Oleynikov's illustration the Space was used both to show how one hat can cover the whole country (in translation 'an Old Man of Dee-side' turned into 'an Old Man of Panama') and how far away can get an Old Person of Basing riding his steed at full speed. As we can see, limericks can be jointed together in illustrators' pursuit to turn them into longer narrative poems so that this 'serialisation' will give them more freedom to work with.

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[53] *The Nonsense Verse of Edward Lear*, p. xvii.
[54] Ibid, p. xvii.
[55] From personal correspondence, May 2018.

By changing the original formatting, illustrators not only change the way we read and engage with the text, but also bring Lear's limericks closer to modern children's picturebook editions, which generally are 'read' from left to right, and thus in some cases exclude the adult audience. Of course, different editions have different target audience. Some illustrators were aiming only at children (Domanska, Pym, Robins, Wood), while some were trying to appeal to both, like Lord, who was 'determined to keep hold of the dark and brooding side of some of [Lear's] more intense poems'[56] or like Wines, whose approach was to 'seek a kind of surreal middle ground that might be seen as funny/peculiar to the younger generation and psychological/perverse to an older group.'[57] Wines' illustrations executed in rich sepia-toned watercolours and featuring fantastic characters, who are 'often glum and sometimes ghostly,' were often accused by children's book reviewers of steering nonsense down a darker path. Indeed, the style and mood of his illustrations might remind one of Henry Moore's 'Shelterers in the Tube' or Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* characters, however, according to the illustrator, 'children rather liked '[his] sardonic reinforcement of Lear's messages. It was a compliment to their intelligence and maturity.'[58] The same audience division can be observed in the Russian editions with Vatagin's illustrations being clearly aimed at children and Oleynikov's considered as 'adult' and intended for book collectors rather than children.

The questions of format and framing are closely related to the issue of a background as one of the factors that change the image/text balance. As it was mentioned earlier, Lear's limericks have a semblance of a background with the limerick 'Old Person of Philae' (Fig. 27) being the only example of Lear using 'a formal landscape background'[59] based on his travel sketches. As it was noted by Colley, 'Not even the naming of the specific geographic location in the first line supplies a background.'[60] As we could see above, most of illustrators tend to provide highly-

[56] *Illustrating Lear's Nonsense*, p. 23.
[57] From personal correspondence, May 2018.
[58] From personal correspondence, May 2018.
[59] *CN*, p. 497.
[60] 'The Limerick and Metaphor', *Genre,* 21 (Spring 1988), p. 66.

detailed backgrounds (Hague, Lord, Oleynikov, Wijngaard), with Jackson and Lemieux being absolute leaders as their backgrounds represent almost separate paintings, over which one can spend hours, each time spotting new details. For some of the locations Lord, for example, used references based on Lear's topographical sketches, while other illustrators just used the toponym from the first line (Fig. 28). Forgetting, again, that Lear's pictures fight against this urge for 'completeness,' that they are not 'finished' as adults would expect, but are simple outlines, almost entirely two-dimensional, illustrators are filling in the gaps left by Lear, leaving even less space for the reader's imagination, compared to their nineteenth-century colleagues.

Just as the background, costumes in Lear's limerick re-illustrations can play a significant role in literally 'dressing old words new.'[61] Nonsense in general and Lear's in particular is created from images of concrete everyday things and hence is highly visual: clothes, food, furniture and 'all the artificial paraphernalia of man's existence' is described very precisely. As we know, Lear was fascinated with lists and numbers.[62] He often planted numbers in his limericks ('two owls and a hen, four larks and a wren,' Old Man of Apulia fed his 'twenty sons' upon nothing but buns, eighteen rabbits that were eaten by an Old Person, etc). Visually, this was reflected either by the depiction of the exact number of subjects, like in case with the Old Man with a beard, or by drawing potentially long lines of mirroring animals or people. As it was noted by Sewell, 'Lear pays much attention to what his characters wear.'[63] However, what is important here is the incongruity between 'clothes and wearer, or between one part of garment and another.'[64] We can say that illustrators are following Lear in his costume precision, with the only difference: some illustrators (Fisher, Hague, Jackson, Lord, O'Brien, Peschanskaya, Robins, Vatagin, Wines, Wood) dress their characters in Victorian or mock-Victorian costumes, or at least national costumes of that period

[61] Sonnet 76 from *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 261.
[62] In his letter to Fortescue, he calculated that he was corresponding with 'four hundred and forty-four individuals' (12 September 1873) from *Later Letters of Edward Lear to Chichester Fortescue (Lord Carlingford), Frances Countess Waldegrave and Others* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), p. 156.
[63] *The Field of Nonsense* (Victoria, TX: Dalkey Archive Press, 2015), p. 101.
[64] Ibid, p. 101.

(for example, Scottish), while others (Monteiro, Oleynikov, Pym, Wijngaard) prefer to freshen up their fashion choices and thus make them closer to modern readers, be it children or adults (Fig.30). Perhaps the most unusual interpretation is given by Wijngaard (Fig. 31), whose illustrations upon its release were expected to 'drew the crowds.'[65] Made in British seaside postcard style, his illustrations represent very modern and realistic characters, who wear flip-flops and jeans and in their simplicity and 'commonness' slightly remind those of Beryl Cook. Lemieux jungles between both times, with her funniest interpretations featuring modern items, like an inflatable goose and a swimming hat of an 'Old Man of Dunluce, who went out to sea on a goose' or a swim ring of an 'Old Man in a boat, who said, 'I'm afloat! I'm afloat!', which certainly add a sense of purpose and professionalism to the nautical adventures of the protagonists (Fig. 32) and make these limericks more acceptable to a contemporary young reader. As we can see, the illustrators can change, fill in and update all sorts of elements, including backgrounds and costumes, however the key thing is to maintain the multimodal interaction, rather than provide a merely reproductive illustration stuck in a particular period of time.

Despite being set in the past tense, Lear's limericks, to use Colley's words, are 'separated from time and memory,' which significantly complicates the task of an illustrator. According to Miller, 'the power of a picture is to detach a moment from its temporal sequence and make it hang there in a perpetual non-present representational present, without past or future.'[66] But how in this case can an illustrator detach a moment from its temporal sequence, if there is none? Apart from that, Lear's limerick narrative represents a circular closed structure, where the end refers back to the beginning rarely resolving into a climax. This brings us to the issue of the illustrator's choice. According to Hodnett, 'the most important decision an artist has to make about an illustration is the *moment of choice*… Before an illustration can be drawn, therefore, two related decisions have to be made – the passage, in a limited sense, and the precise moment at which, as in a still from a

[65] *The Bookseller*, 1980, p. 1644.
[66] *Illustration*, p. 66.

cinema film, the action is stopped.'[67] What choices, then, do Lear's illustrators make? Lord confesses that for him 'the perpetual state of some of Lear's limerick subjects had a bearing on choosing the particular moment of action in the text to draw.'[68] By looking at the illustrations for the limerick about an 'Old Man who when little/Fell casually into a kettle' (Fig. 29) we can try to trace the tendency behind the illustrator's choice. Based on the text, the illustrators have two options: first, to portray the old man in the process of 'falling casually into a kettle,' and second, to show the old man already stuck inside the kettle. If we look at the pictures, we will see that the second approach is dominating, although with various degrees of 'stuckness.' Robins, Lord and Wines stay faithful to Lear's original picture, while Lemieux, Jackson, Wood and Oleynikov are experimenting with the angle and thus develop Lear's game of size, scale and proportions. It is hard not to notice the strong resemblance between illustrations by Wood and Jackson. Although Wood's illustrations were created earlier, there is no way to establish if Wood influenced Jackson. As for Oleynikov, he also follows Lear's principle from his *doppelgänger* limericks, visually stressing out the similarity between the old man and the kettle.

Due to their sparseness, Lear's images look out of time, whereas those re-illustrations are located in the real moment, which sometimes changes multimodal dynamics, and instead of the text and image both being out of time and inviting the reader to fill in the gaps, they add concreteness and temporality, thus turning reading into a back-and-forth process. Now, as we have discussed the main issues of Lear's multimodal texts, we can proceed to the question of what happens to the interplay between the verbal and visual in the process of translation?

Multimodality in Translation

[67] *Image and Text: Studies in the Illustration of English Literature* (London: Scolar Press, 1982), p. 7.
[68] *Illustrating Lear's Nonsense*, p. 36.

The first Russian translations and visual interpretations of Lear appeared in the 1920s.[69] Once introduced to the Russian reader, Lear's works gained immediate popularity and have never been out of print. Starting from the middle of the twentieth century, Lear's works have been constantly re-translated and re-illustrated: at least 30 different translators and over 20 illustrators have tried their hands at interpreting and representing Lear's vast legacy.

Initially, Lear's pictures were not printed in Russian translations of limericks at all. This is explained by both a fragmentary study of Lear's works and publishing policies. Only the most successful translations of limericks were included into various anthologies and magazine articles (magazines *Literaturnaya Ucheba*, 1988, and *Soglasie*, 1993, *The Whole Book of Nonsense* translated by Klyuev, 1992, *The Book of NONsense. English Absurd Poetry* translated by Kruzhkov, 2000). It was only later that translations started to be accompanied by illustrations. Naturally, this meant that translators were complicating their task, as the picture not only conveys the semantic and emotional bearing, but also – as we have seen – introduces the contradiction, which clarifies or enforces the nonsense. In the foreword to his translations, Boris Arkhiptsev has rightly noted 'it is for a reason that some translators try by all means to avoid the bilingual format and even Lear's original pictures.'[70] In this dissertation I am looking at two editions of Lear's limericks illustrated by Igor Oleynikov[71] (2014) and Nikolai Vatagin (2017).

With the case of the illustrated versions of Lear's limericks, multimodality was affected on the visual level. Here we have both components completely changed. Do text-image interactions change with the change of both components or do illustrators manage to save them?

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[69] In 1924 Samuil Marshak translated *The Table and the Chair*, the first edition of which was illustrated by the famous Russian painter Boris Kustodiev. The second edition (1928) was illustrated by Mikhail Tsekhanovsky, one of the leading experimental Soviet filmmakers, book illustrators, and animators.

[70] Edward Lear, *Polnyi nonsense* [Complete Nonsense], translated by Boris Arkhiptsev (Moscow: Moskva Magazine Publishing House, 2008), p. 15.

[71] With Oleynikov just recently receiving 2018 Hans Christian Andersen Award for illustration, this edition will be soon reissued.

In their joint interview with the translator Genrikh Vardenga, Oleynikov explains his approach to illustrating Lear's limericks. Thus, for the limerick 'Old Man of Nepaul' (Fig. 33), who in translation was given a name (John Wilson, see the back translation in the Appendix) and was miraculously cured by a doctor, he decided 'to follow exactly what is written in the text. But to draw a man who is split in two is morbid.[72] Therefore, John Wilson is a monument to a man who for some reason was split in two. And the doctor who glued him together is thus a welder.'[73] Although compared to Lear, Oleynikov's illustration is focused on the successful 'mending' (though he is mended back-to-front) and not on 'the terrible fall,' he managed to follow the text and at the same time introduced his own visual joke. As it turned out, almost in each illustration, there is hidden a little story from the artist, which even the author of the translation did not notice himself. Their book was published in a special 'modern illustration' series, and in his illustrations, Oleynikov gave Lear's limericks new sounding by using unusual angles and introducing the modern-day elements – from a Harley-Davidson motorcycle to the orbital space station.

The next example 'Old Person of Rye' was illustrated both by Oleynikov and Vatagin (Fig. 34). Surprisingly enough, both illustrations are presented on a double-spread with almost identical text/picture layout and feature air planes, even though one of them is vintage. The depicted protagonists also look similar with their beards, glassed and hats. Oleynikov's old man bears a remote resemblance with Lear himself, reinforced by the cat he is holding in his hands. This technique was also used by other illustrators, for example, Lord pictured Lear as an 'Old Man of Corfu.' The difference in these illustrations, however, is in the emotions of the protagonist and the representatives of 'they,' which are dictated by the translation. Vatagin's Old Man looks very angry, and his mood is exasperated by the nagging old women, who seem to chase him. To build up the humorous effect Vatagin used such inscriptions as 'Stay out of trouble!!!' and 'I'll fly

[72] The reluctance to depict something 'morbid' might be explained by the Russian Federal Law on Protection of Children from Harmful Information.
[73] Interview in Dubna, 24 September 2014, translation is mine. Available from http://pressdubna.ru/news_full_k.php?nid=13784 [Accessed 7 June 2018].

wherever I want.' Oleynikov's protagonist does not seem to be bothered by 'them,' who represent a line of all the characters from the previous limericks (as this is the last limerick in the book), who watch him from the ground. Again, we can observe the tendency to join limericks to create a feel of narrative, which seems to provide more inspiration for the illustrator.

Multimodality can be heightened in translation in order to reframe a text for a new audience – e.g. an edition with Vatagin's illustrations. The illustrations were part of an attempt to 'resurrect' Lear in Kruzkov's well-known translation with the help of some 'witty' textual inscriptions added by the illustrator himself (in 37 out of 39 limericks). These inscriptions include, among others, quotations and catchphrases from famous books or movies, which in several cases immersed Lear's characters into the context of the Russian culture (Fig. 35). For instance, 'an old man whose despair induced him to purchase a hare,' whom he rode wholly away, is shown as pronouncing the last phrase from Chatsky's famous monologue ('The coach! The coach!') from Griboyedov's comedy in verse *Woe from Wit*. The joke here lies in the common despair and desire to run away shared by Lear's character and Chatsky. As funny as it can be, unfamiliar readers will be surprised by Lear's profound knowledge of Russian culture. Sometimes these quotations were slightly changed to reflect the content of the limerick, as the caption 'The Last Tango in Verona' for the limerick about an 'Old Man of Whitehaven, who danced a quadrille with a Raven' as in translation Whitehaven was changed into Verona. As we can see, the multimodal affordances were necessary in order to supplement the humorous effect that the translated text and illustration could not supply. Similar inscriptions were also used in English editions, for example, in illustrations by Valorie Fisher, which represent a combination of Victorian cartoons, newspapers, signs and etchings. Her inscriptions contain the key words from the text, usually adjectives describing the protagonist (Fig. 36).

For Lear's Russian translations to achieve multimodal interactiveness, the presence of illustrations is an obligatory condition. In general, Russian illustrators follow their foreign colleagues in their approaches by either providing a mere transferal of narrative content from a

literary medium into a visual one, or by engaging with both text and image and creating their own jokes.

In Conclusion

Although the very character of nonsense literature is very visual, illustrating Lear does not by definition result in visual nonsense due to its complexity in terms of multimodal image-text relationship. As challenging as it can be, since the nineteenth century, Lear's works were re-illustrated numerous times by various artists. An exhibition commemorating the 100th anniversary of Lear's death was organised at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery in 1988[74] and included over twenty books with non-Lear illustrations. If we were to arrange such an exhibition today, this amount would have been significantly larger.

In *The Field of Nonsense*, Elizabeth Sewell has noted that the providing of pictures is 'a regular part of the nonsense game. They sterilize the mind's power of invention and combination of images while seeming to nourish it, and by precision and detail they contribute towards detachment and definition of the elements of the Nonsense universe' (112). This idea is echoed by Hendrik van Leeuwen claiming that 'Lear's child-like illustration does soothe the imagination before it can run wild in too grotesque a manner.'[75] But as we have discovered, rather than 'sterilising' or 'soothing' the reader's mind, it actually feeds the readers (and illustrators) with unfixed images that enrich the imagination. The history of Lear illustration shows an evolution from a mere depictive representation to extremely modern, sometimes even surreal, reinterpretations, with some illustrators managing to continue this interactive energy between text and image, and some – completely restructuring it. The sparseness and out-of-timeness of Lear's texts serve both as a stimulus for later illustrators, introducing the stylistic fashions of their time and filling in the gaps (which creates different multimodal interactivity), and a restriction: not only

[74] The exhibition 'How Pleasant to know Mr Lear' was held from 29 November 1988 to 29 January 1989.
[75] 'The Liaison of Visual and Written Nonsense', *Explorations in the Field of Nonsense*, p. 61.

the illustrator is bound to represent a pre-existent work, but also to recognise the rules of image/text interaction and try to recreate them. This challenge can also be accompanied by the intimidation of the previous illustrated versions. Although several illustrators (Lemieux, Monteiro, Peschanskaya, Wines) claimed that they never saw illustrations by other artists,[76] the works of some of the illustrators look like a response to each other works rather than to Lear's texts (Fig. 36).

Despite different artistic styles, some illustrators can be considered as more 'faithful' to Lear's original drawings in their basic representation, while others are trying to impose themselves and their techniques, in which case this is no longer Lear illustrated, but rather the illustrators' pictures with Lear's captions. Unless the artist is prepared to observe what is actually involved in the creation of multimodality, their illustrations would either 'represent' or 'decorate,' but not 'interpret.'[77] However, re-illustrations are always desirable as they create a wider interest in the author and thus give to the inspiring nonsense of Lear a continued existence that permeates into so many levels of world cultures.

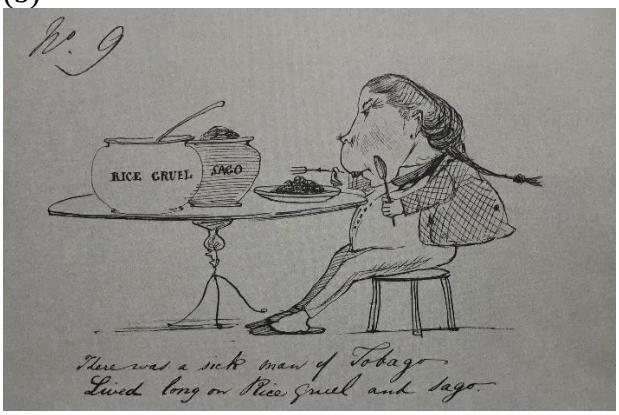
[76] From personal correspondences, May–June 2018.
[77] According to Hodnett, 'a true illustration does something of all three', *Image and Text,* p. 13.

Appendix 1

Figure 1. ‘There was a sick man of Tobago’ from *Anecdotes and Adventures of Fifteen Gentlemen* (c. 1822) illustrated by Robert Cruikshank (a) and Lear (b). Lear would later rework this drawing to use for his own limerick ‘There was an old man of Vienna’ (c). As we can see, the style of the latter is less representational and more characteristically ‘naïve’ as if Lear was discovering the form for his nonsense limericks through illustration first.

(a)

(b)



(c)

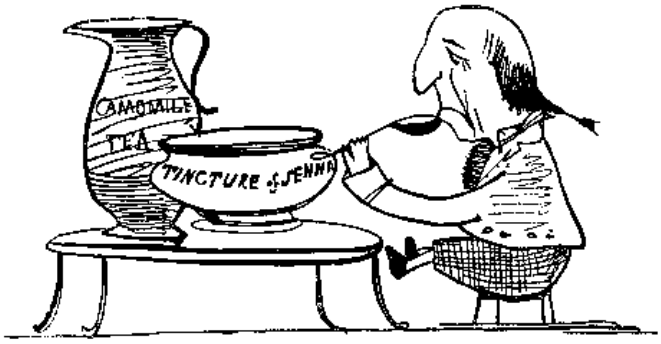
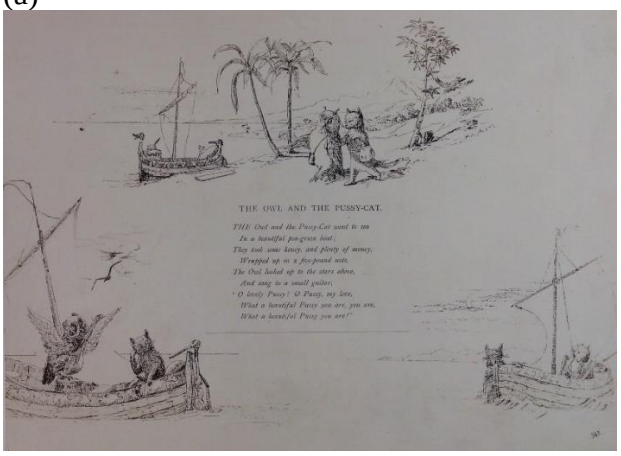


Figure 2. J.H. Howard’s illustrations for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* in *Our Young Folks* (No. 6.2, February 1870), pp. 111–122.

Figure 3. Lear's final illustrations for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* and a fragment of MS Typ 55.14 (155), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Figure 4. Illustrations for the title-pages for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* (a) and *The Duck and the Kangaroo* (b) by Lord Ralph Kerr (London: Cundall and Company, 1872).

(a)



(b)

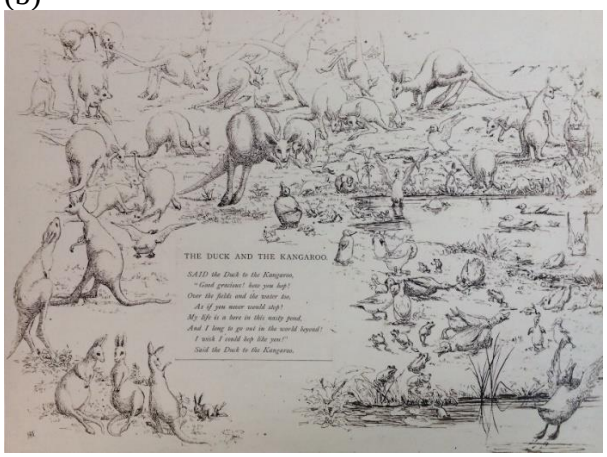


Figure 5. William Foster's illustrations for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* from *Lear's Nonsense Drolleries* (London; New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1889).

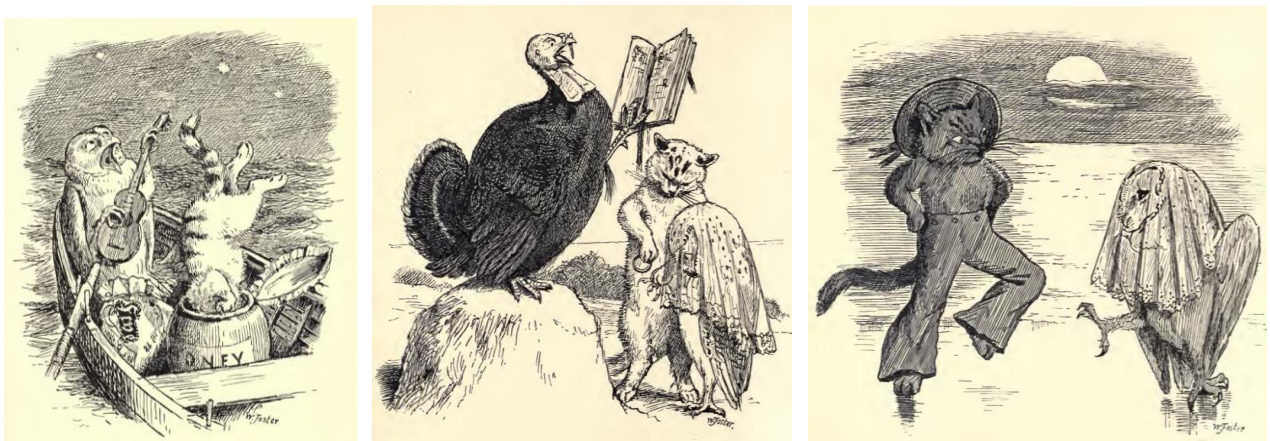


Figure 6. ‘There was an Old Person of Nice’ illustrated by Lear and Michèle Lemieux (1994).

There was an Old Person of Nice,
Whose associates were usually Geese.
They walked out together in all sorts of weather,
That affable person of Nice!

Figure 7. ‘There was an Old Man of Melrose’ illustrated by Lear and Juan Wijngaard (1981).

There was an Old Man of Melrose,
Who walked on the tips of his toes;
But they said, “It ain’t pleasant to see you at present,
You stupid Old Man of Melrose.”

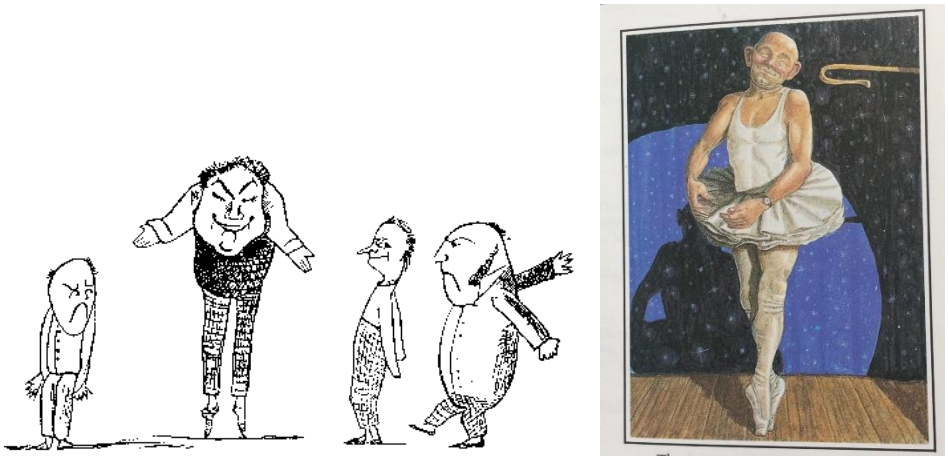


Figure 8. Lear’s and Leslie Brooke’s illustrations for *The Table and the Chair* from *Nonsense Songs* (London; New York: Frederick Warne & Co., [c. 1900]).

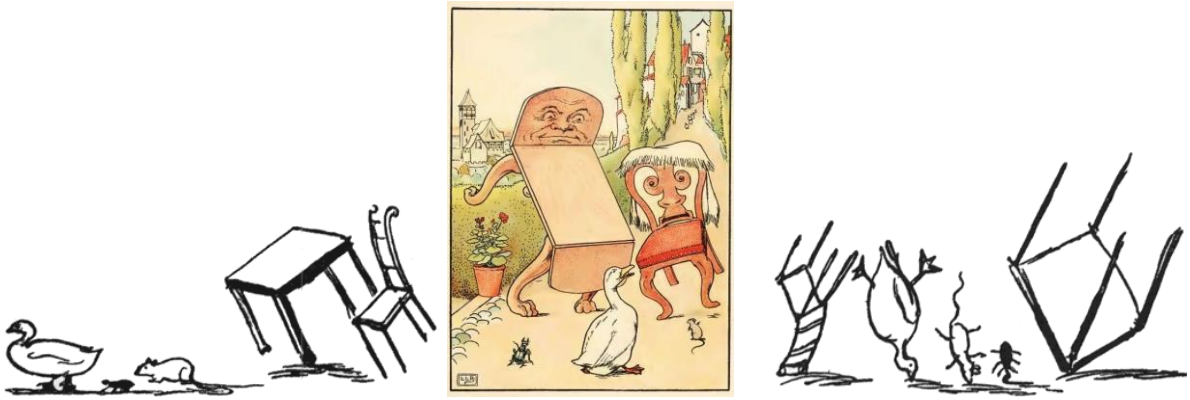


Figure 9. Brooke's illustrations for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* from *Nonsense Songs* (London; New York: Frederick Warne & Co., [c. 1900]).

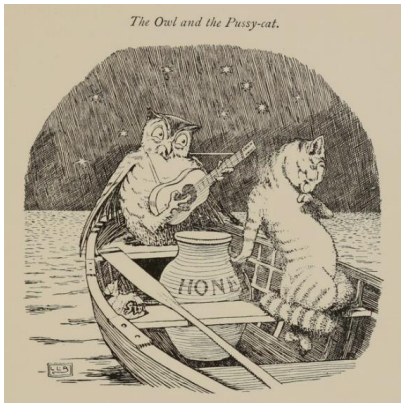


Figure 10. Beatrix Potter's drawings for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* from a letter to Molly Gaddum, 6 March 1897, and from a letter to Nöel Moore, 4 March 1897 from *Letters to Children from Beatrix Potter* (London: Warne, 1992).

Figure 11. Beatrix Potter's drawing for *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* from *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson* (London; New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1930).

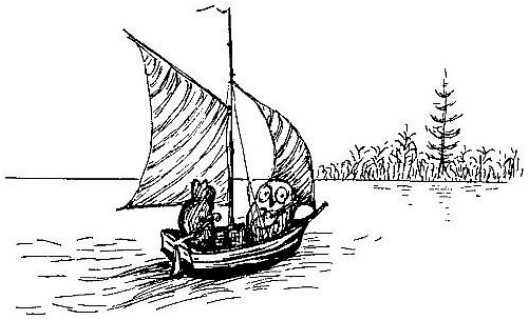


Figure 12. 'There was an Old Person of Anerley' illustrated by Lear (*CN*, 174) and H.M. Bateman from Langford Reed's *The Complete Limerick Book* (London: Jarrolds Publishers Limited 1925), p. 36.

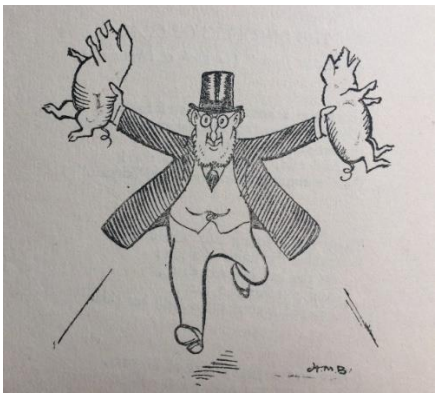


Figure 13. Lois Ehlert's illustrations from *Limericks by Lear* (Cleveland; New York: World Pub. Co., 1965).

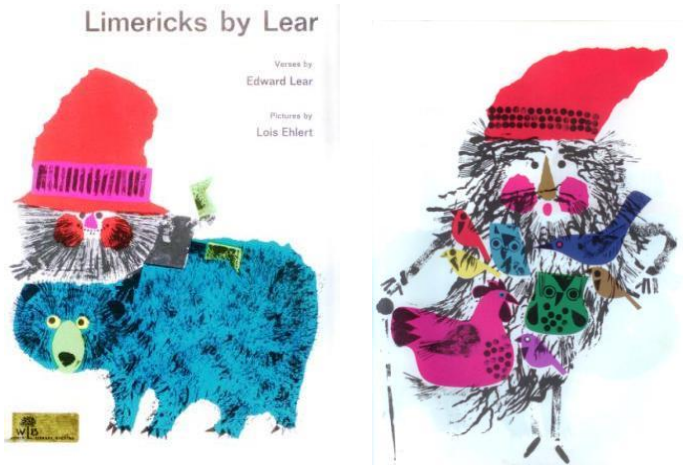
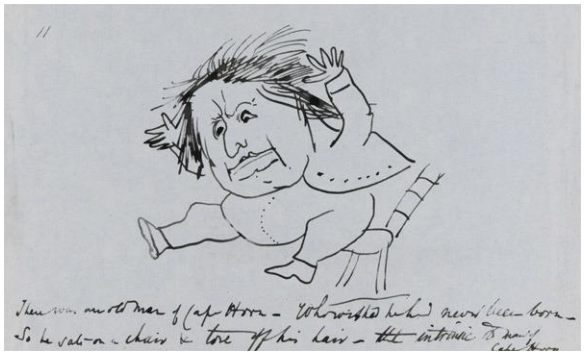


Figure 14. (a) Early 'hair-tearing' variant of 'Old Man of Cape Horn' (Sotheby's) and the final version of 'Old Man of Peru' (*CN*, 87).



(b) 'Mr. L. sets out for a walk – but is amazed at the high wind' from *Illustrated Story in Eight Scenes*, 28 February 1842 (GEN MSS 601, Frederick R. Koch Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University) and the final version of 'Old Man of Coblenz' (*CN*, 71).

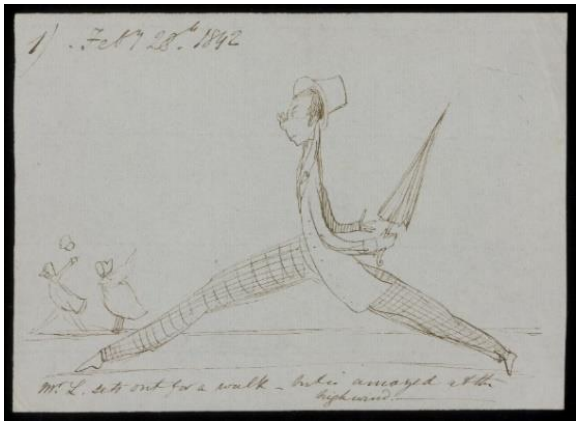
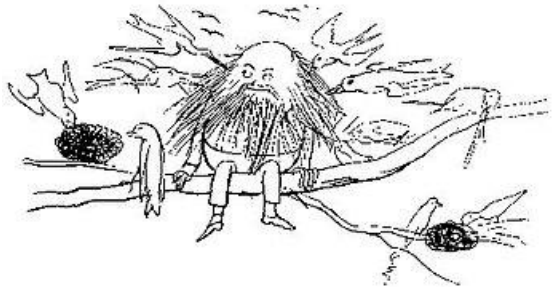


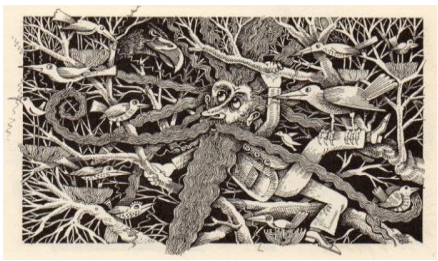
Figure 15. ‘There was an Old Man in a Tree’ (*CN*, 372).



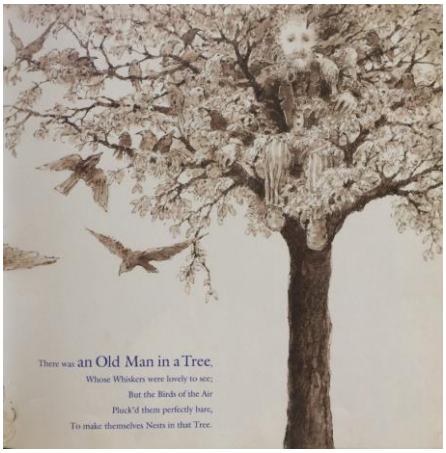
There was an Old Man in a tree,
Whose whiskers were lovely to see;
But the birds of the air pluck’d them perfectly bare,
To make themselves nests in that tree.

Figure 16. ‘Old Man in a Tree’ illustrated by John Vernon Lord (1984), James Wines (1994) and Arthur Robins (2014).

John Vernon Lord



James Wines

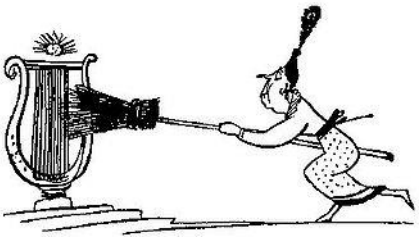


Arthur Robins

Figure 17. ‘Young Lady of Tyre’ illustrated by Lear (*CN*, 83), Lord and Robins.

There was a Young Lady of Tyre,
Who swept the loud chords of a lyre;
At the sound of each sweep she enraptured the deep,
And enchanted the city of Tyre.

Edward Lear



John Vernon Lord

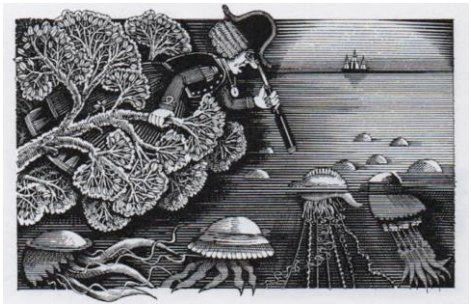
Arthur Robins

Figure 18. ‘Young Lady of Portugal’ illustrated by Lear (*CN*, 163), Lord, Robins, Michèle Lemieux (1994), Michael Hague (1995) and Marta Monteiro (2013).

There was a Young Lady of Portugal,
Whose ideas were excessively nautical;
She climbed up a tree to examine the sea,
But declared she would never leave Portugal.

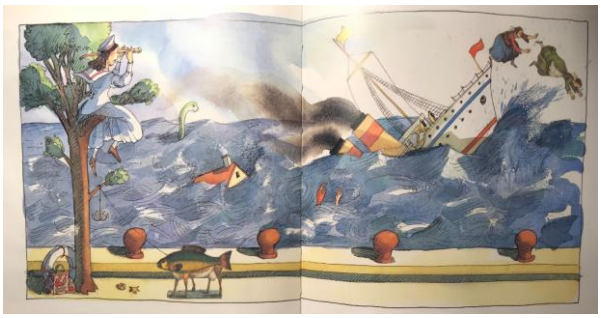
Edward Lear

John Vernon Lord



Arthur Robins

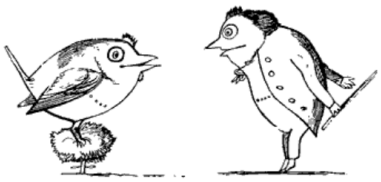
Michèle Lemieux

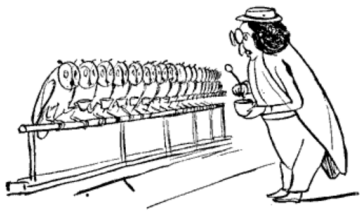


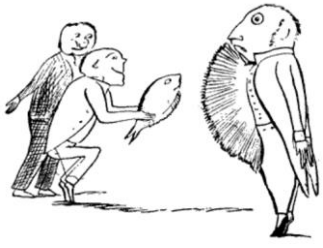
Michael Hague

Marta Monteiro

Figure 19. Lear’s drawing from an 1864 letter to Nora Decie (*Selected Letters*, p. 196) and illustrations for ‘animal’ limericks.







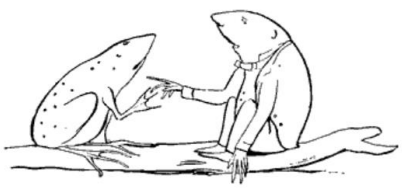
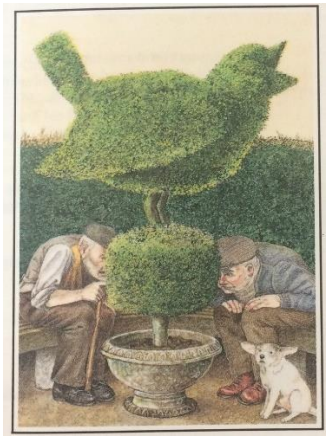


Figure 20. ‘Old Man who said, ‘Hush!’ illustrated by Wijngaard, Lord, P. Mark Jackson (1990), John O’Brien (1991), Lemieux, Hague, Robins, Nikolai Vatagin (2017) and Katerina Peschanskaya (2017). [See Lear’s version above, first row in the middle]

There was an Old Man who said, “Hush!
I perceive a young bird in this bush!”
When they said, “Is it small?” he replied, “Not at all;
It is four times as big as the bush!”

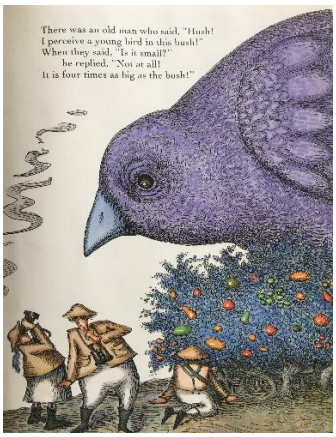
Juan Wijngaard



John Vernon Lord

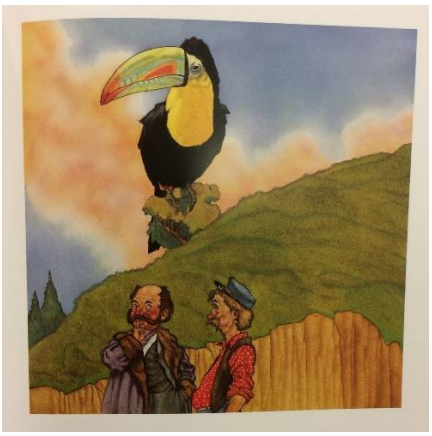
P. Mark Jackson

John O’Brien



Michèle Lemieux

Michael Hague



Arthur Robins

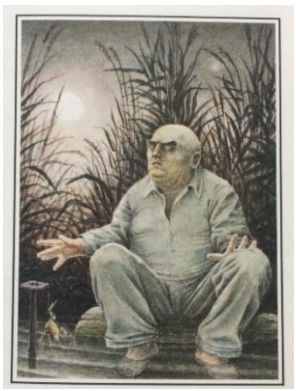
Nikolai Vatagin

Katerina Peschanskaya

Figure 21. ‘Old Man in a Marsh’ illustrated by Wijngaard, Lord, Lemieux, Hague, Robins and Igor Oleynikov (2014).

There was an Old Man in a Marsh,
Whose manners were futile and harsh;
He sate on a log, and sang songs to a frog,
That instructive old man in a Marsh.

Juan Wijngaard



John Vernon Lord

Michèle Lemieux

Michael Hague

Arthur Robins

Igor Oleynikov

Figure 22. Other exampes of illustrators engaging in Lear’s visual joke (Jackson, O’Brien, Lemieux, Wines).

P. Mark Jackson

John O’Brien

Michèle Lemieux

James Wines

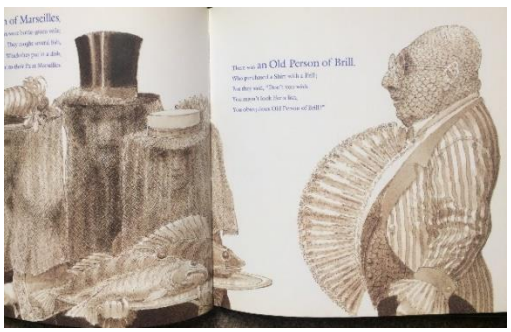
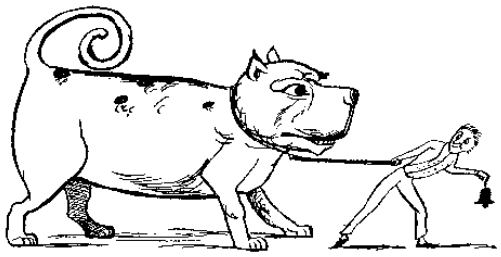


Figure 23. ‘There was an Old Man of Ancona’ illustrated by Lear (*CN*, 363), Lord, Robins and Vatagin.

There was an Old Man of Ancona,
Who found a small dog with no owner,
Which he took up and down all the streets of the town,
That anxious Old Man of Ancona.

Edward Lear



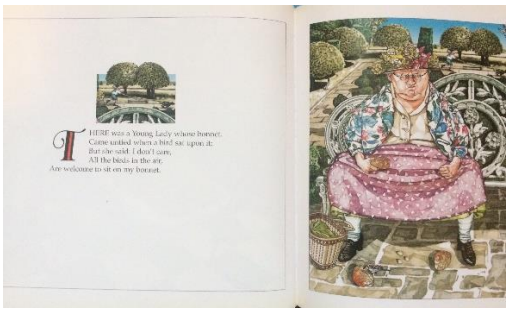
Arthur Robins

Nikolai Vatagin

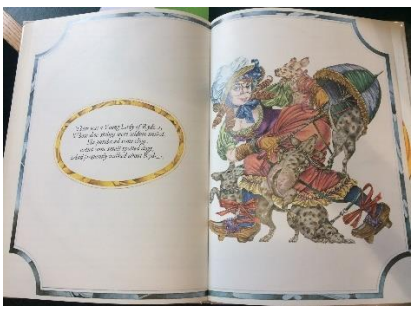
John Vernon Lord

Figure 24. Limerick formats by P. Mark Jackson (1996), Owen Wood (1986) and Valorie Fisher (2004).

P. Mark Jackson



Owen Wood



Valorie Fisher

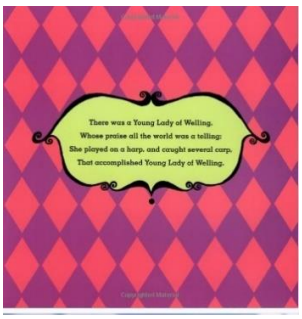
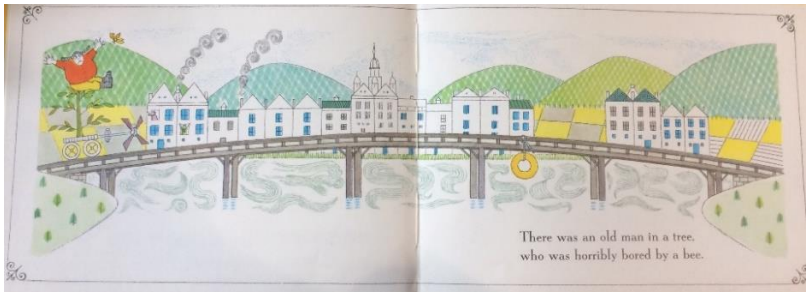


Figure 25. Illustrations by Janina Domanska from *Whizz*! (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974).



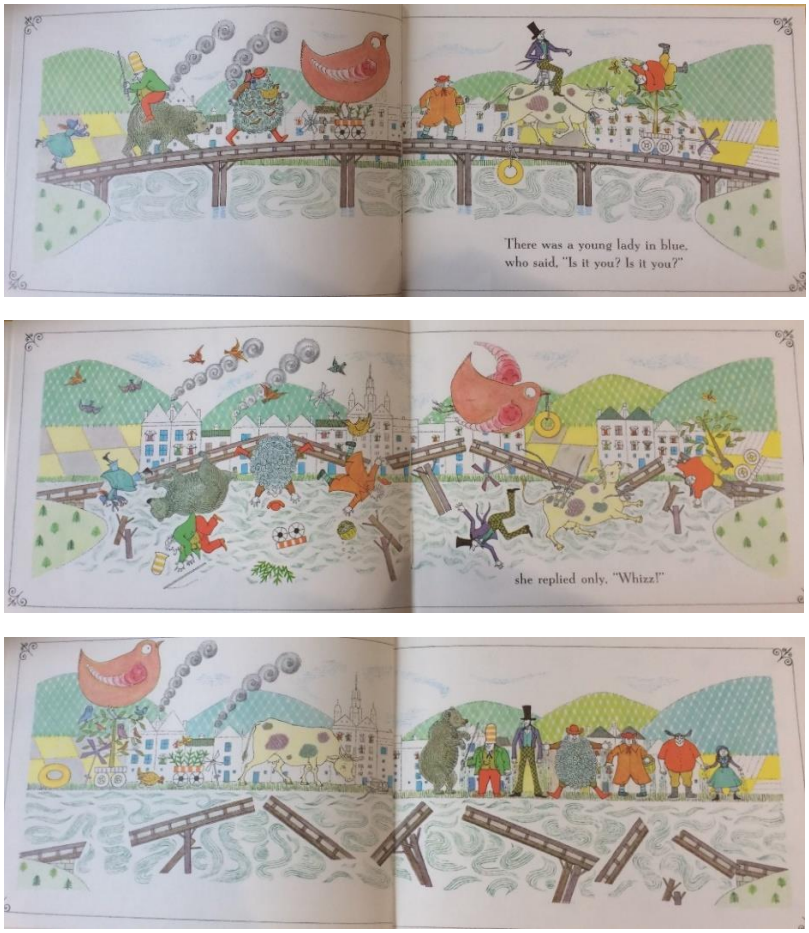
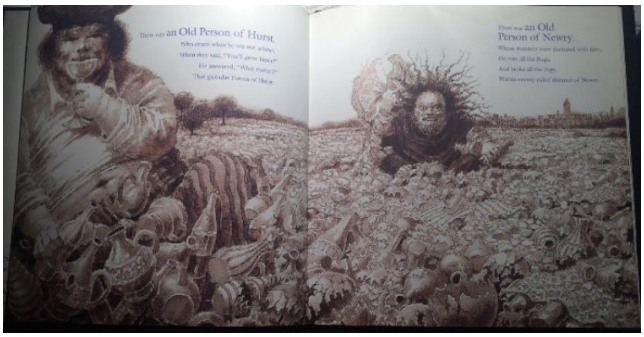


Figure 26. Examples of double-spreads by John O'Brien (1992), James Wines (1994) and Igor Oleynikov (2014).

John O'Brien

James Wines



Igor Oleynikov

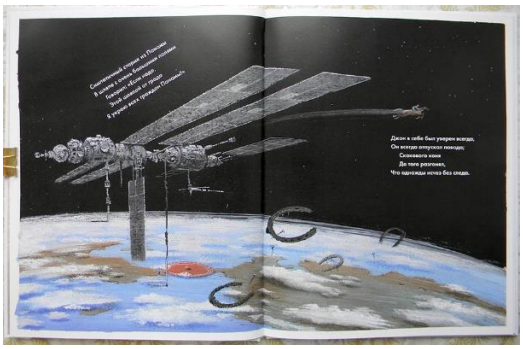


Figure 27. Lear's illustration for 'Old Person of Philae' (*CN*, 167) and one his sketches of Philae (31 January 1854) from 'Edward Lear's Lines of Flight', *Journal of the British Academy*, Plate 12, p. 62.

Figure 28. Topographically-based backgrounds:

'Old Person of Dundalk' (P. Mark Jackson)

'Old Person of Cromer' (Juan Wijngaard)

'Old Man of Kamschatka'

Michèle Lemieux

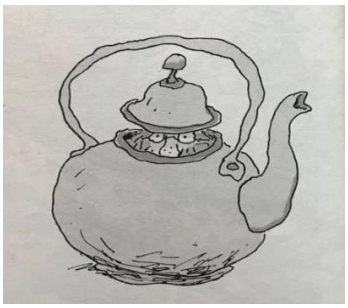
Juan Wijngaard

Figure 29. 'Old Man, who when little' (*CN*, 329).

There was an Old Man, who when little
Fell casually into a kettle;
But, growing too stout, he could never get out,
So he passed all his life in that kettle.

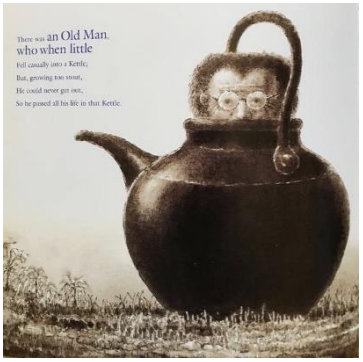
Edward Lear

Arthur Robins

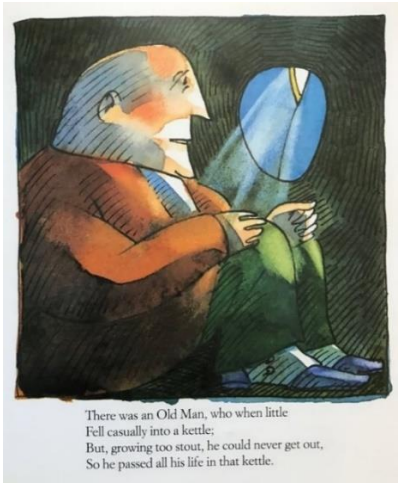


Lord John Vernon

James Wines



Michèle Lemieux



P. Mark Jackson

Owen Wood

Igor Oleynikov

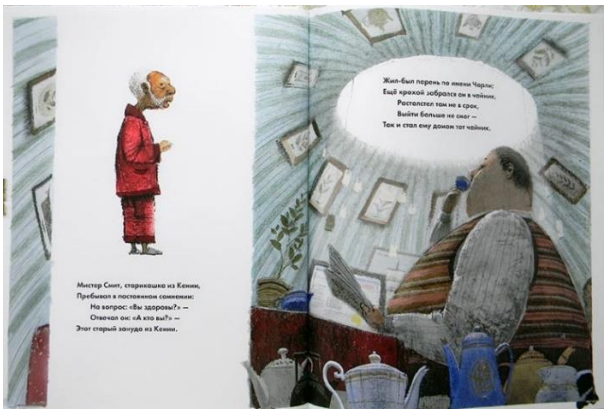


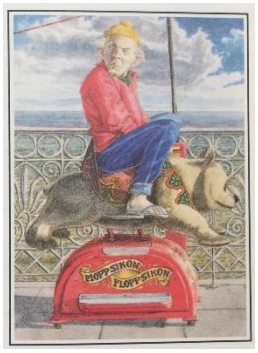
Figure 30. Unexpected fashion solutions from modern illustrators:

Hipster-like
'Old Man of Coblenz'
by Marta Monteiro

Audrey Hepburn-like
'Young Lady of Ryde'
by Christine Pym

Suited up biker
'Old Person of Dutton'
by Igor Oleynikov

'Old Person of Ware' and 'Young Lady of Wales' illustrated by Juan Wijngaard.



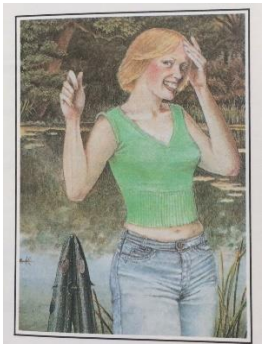
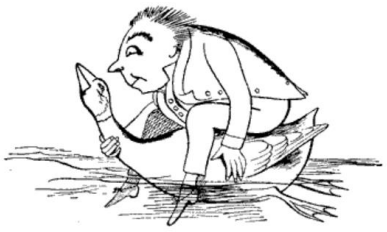
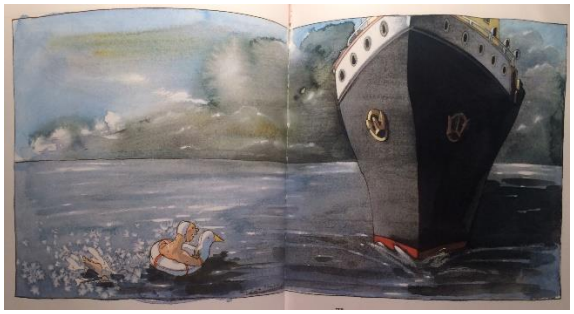


Figure 31. 'Old Man of Dunluce' (*CN*, 335) and 'Old Man in a boat' (*CN*, 163) illustrated by Lear and Michèle Lemieux.





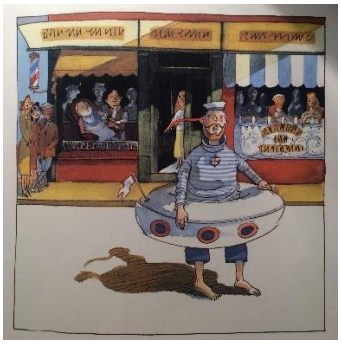


Figure 32. ‘Old Man of Nepaul’ (*CN*, 81) illustrated by Lear and Igor Oleynikov.

Back Translation from Russian (word-for-word)

There was an Old Man of Nepaul,
From his horse had a terrible fall;
But, though split quite in two,
with some very strong glue
They mended that man of Nepaul.

Having fallen from the horse, old John Wilson
Split in two, like a cane,
Fortunately, a miraculous doctor
Applied a miraculous glue,
And John Wilson was reunited.

Figure 33. ‘Old Person of Rye’ (*CN*, 370) illustrated by Lear, Nikolai Vatagin and Igor Oleynikov.

There was an Old Person of Rye,
Who went up to town on a fly;
But they said, “If you cough, you are safe to fall off!
You abstemious Old Person of Rye!”

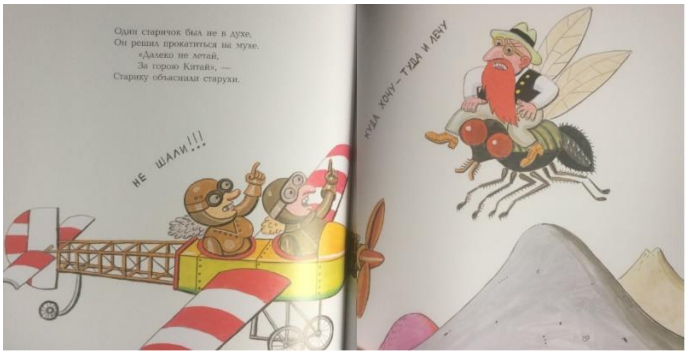
Back Translation from Russian (word-for-word)

Kruzhkov’s Translation

One old man was out of sorts,
He decided to ride a fly.
“Do not fly far,
As China is behind the mountain,”
The old women explained to the old man.

Vardenga’s Translation

An old man from Sukha
Went up to town on a fly;
But they shouted, “If you cough,
You are sure to fall off!
You abstemious old man from Sukha!”



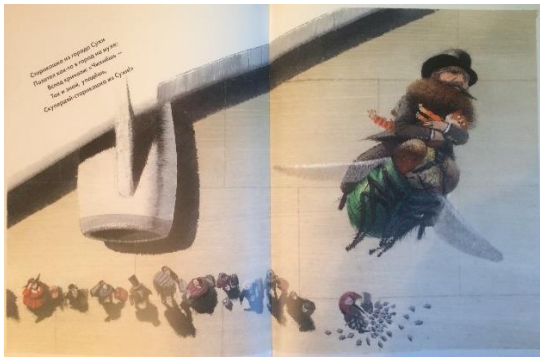


Figure 34. Examples of inscriptions from Vatagin's illustrations.

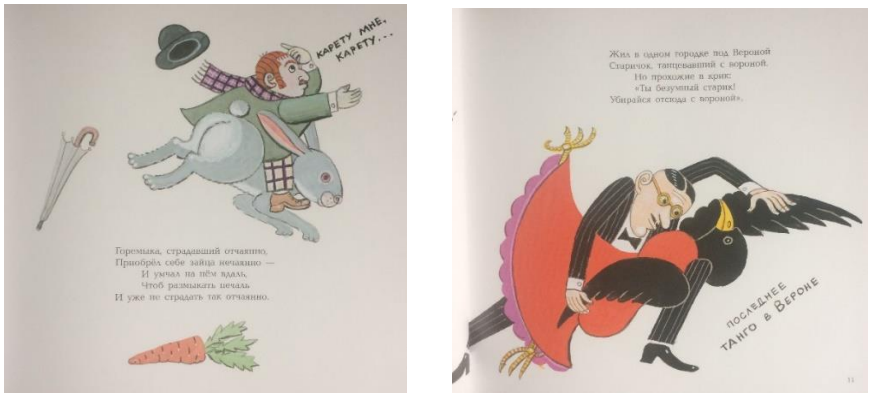


Figure 35. Examples of inscriptions from Valorie Fisher's illustrations.

Figure 36. 'Young Lady whose bonnet' illustrated by Michèle Lemieux and Igor Oleynikov.

Appendix 2

List of the Most Illustrated Limericks

1. There was an Old Man with a beard (12 versions)
2. There was an Old Man who said, “Hush!” (10)
3. There was an Old Man of the Hague (9)
4. There was an Old Person of Ware (9)
5. There was a Young Lady whose bonnet (8)
6. There was an Old Man, who when little (8)
7. There was an Old Man on the Border (7)
8. There was an Old Man of Dunluce (7)
9. There was an Old Man of Coblenz (7)
10. There was a Young Person of Ayr (6)
11. There was an Old Person of Dutton (6)
12. There was an Old Man in a tree (Bee) (6)
13. There was an Old Lady of Chertsey (6)
14. There was an Old Man in a Marsh (6)
15. There was an Old Man of Blackheath (6)

List of Illustrations

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