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Uwe Baumann, Marion Gymnich
and Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp

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The Pleasures and Horrors of Eating

The Cultural History of Eating in Anglophone Literature

In cooperation with Klaus Scheunemann

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Angelika Zirker

Don't Play with Your Food? – Edward Lear's Nonsense Cookery and Limericks

A lobster wooed a lady crab, And kissed her lovely face, "Upon my soul," she crabless cried, "I wish you'd mind your place!"  
(A Nonsense Anthology 28)

Edward Lear is famous for his nonsense poems, especially for his limericks. In quite a few of his limericks, food and eating habits figure, and this is certainly the major topic of his Nonsense Cookery, first published in the Nonsense Gazette in August 1870. Lear's treatment of food is not serious, and the recipes in his Nonsense Cookery are not really meant to be instructions to cook. The basic ingredients in his nonsense cooking as well as in his limericks concerned with food and eating are language and wordplay: he combines words and phrases, and the outcome is a delightful dish that is, however, indelible - one literally can only 'eat the words' and digest them. Although it is commonly considered to be dangerous, or, at least, odd, to analyse jokes, an attempt will be made to find out how his nonsense cooking works and how he treats food in his limericks, i.e., in how far food contributes to their being nonsensical.

1. Nonsense Cookery

Lear's Nonsense Cookery contains three recipes, preceded by an introductory comment that presents them as written by Professor Boosh:

Our readers will be interested in the communications from our valued and learned contributor, Professor Boosh, whose labours in the fields of Culinary and Botanical

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2. See also "dish" as a book title, e.g., in MACDONALD, George. A Dish of Ovs. Whithorn, CA: Johannesen, 1996 [1893].
3. Cf. the essay by Matthias Bauer in this volume. The verb word 'game' indicates a relation to food.
4. It is somehow surprising that food in Edward Lear has not yet been considered as a topic: there are no results for the search entries "Edward Lear" and "food" in the MLA database.
something like "bilious" or "edulicious"; both words, bilious and edulious, are one way or another connected with food and digestion and have rather negative connotations (and both were already in Lear's lifetime more or less obsolete). The word "gosky" reads like blending of "gos" + suffix "sky". "Gosky" could refer to both the short form of "goshawk" and "a diminutive species of geese", both animals that might be eaten. Lear thus creates nonsense words that have the appearance of being nonsensical at first glance but show some reference to the semantic fields of eating and to the recipes that follow.

Whereas in the titles of the recipes, the nonsense stems from the combination of a 'nonsense' adjective with a familiar noun, in the recipes themselves, the nonsense is rather produced by inappropriate ingredients and procedures. "To Make Gosky Patties" reads as follows:

Take a pig, three or four years of age, and tie him by the off-hind leg to a post. Place 5 pounds of currants, 3 of sugar, 2 pecks of peas, 18 roast chestnuts, a candle, and six bushels of turnips, within his reach; if he eats these, constantly provide him with more. Then procure some cream, some slices of Cheshire cheese, four quires of foolscap paper, and a packet of black pins. Work the whole into a paste, and spread it out to dry on a sheet of clean brown waterproof linen.

When the paste is perfectly dry, but not before, proceed to beat the Pig violently, with the handle of a large broom. If he squeals, beat him again. Visit the paste and beat the Pig alternately for some days, and ascertain if at the end of that period the whole is about to turn into Gosky Patties.

If it does not then, it never will; and in that case the Pig may be let loose, and the whole process may be considered as finished. (Lear 124–25)

The first 'joke' lies in the fact that the pig is not being stuffed with or roast in the ingredients given — i.e. currants, sugar, peas, roast chestnuts, turnips — but is being fed with them; one wonders whether the candle is simply put before the pig or whether it is supposed to eat that as well as pigs were kept as 'domestic animals' especially because they were known for eating all sorts of rubbish.

To make the paste, after the pig has been provided with a constant refuel of the ingredients enumerated in the recipe, in the next step, cream is needed as well as

6 Cf. OED ambage 1, 1.2.
7 Cf. OED ambiguous, s.v. "1899 Hooper, Med. Dict., Ambiguous, having the power to cause abortion": ambiguous, n.
8 Cf. OED about, s.v. 2a, "to bring to a premature end; to terminate without result or success".
Cheshire cheese; then foolscap paper and black pins are added, and these in-
gredients, after having been worked into a paste, need to dry, after which the pig
has to be beaten. Not only is the mixture of ingredients most unusual — the cream
and the cheese do still make sense — but the foolscap paper and the needles are
not only inedible but in the latter case even dangerous.15 Why the pig has to be
beaten is not clear either; usually a pig is considered to be an ideal food source
and hence is eaten, not beaten.16 But not here: eating the pig seems to be out of
the question; beating it becomes part of the recipe, and that has to be done
alternately with visiting the paste, and it must be done with the handle of a large
broom. The point probably is that the pig is to be "buffeted"; usually this would
refer to its being served on a buffet, which is here being misunderstood inten-
tionally and transformed into the notion of beating, as "to buffet" also means "to
beat, strike".17 The meaning of the word "buffet" that is related to food is set aside
and substituted by another meaning of it, namely "beating", which is then
translated into another word.18

Although the recipes are nonsensical, their apparent exactitude fulfils the
requirements of the genre. If one takes a closer look at the amounts of ingredients
that are (mostly) given in very exact numbers, one finds, however, that these are
simply enormous, e.g. five pounds of currants, four cauliflowers, four gallons of
sauce. What is not very exact and, in fact, unidentifiable, are some of the in-
gredients, as "amblogounges" that, however, need to be "fresh". Sometimes the
author diversts from his exact directions and tells his readers to add "any number
of oysters" (Lear 124) or does not want to set a definite number as in the case of
amblogouses: "Take 4 pounds (say 4 ½") (Lear 123). In a 'real' recipe, this may
lead to confusion and, in some cases, even to failure.

Despite some deviations from precise information as to numbers, the recipes
are mostly very exact, they are even exaggerated in their exactitude, for instance,
when it comes to the treatment of ingredients (as we have seen already in the case
of the pig): "Crumbobibbous cutlets" are made as follows: "procure some strips
of beef, and having cut them into the smallest possible slices, proceed to cut them
still smaller, eight or perhaps nine times" (Lear 124). This sounds like tiresome
work but can be considered still to be perfectly reasonable within a recipe. The

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13 One might read an allusion to Dickens' Great Expectations here, where sometimes a needle
gets, unintentionally, into Pip's bread-and-butter: "My sister had a trenchant way of cutting
our bread-and-butter for us, that never varied. First, with her left hand she jummed the lost
hard and fast against her bib — where it sometimes got a pin into it, and sometimes a needle,
which we afterwards got into our mouths." (Great Expectations 10)

14 JAMES. "Piggy in the Middle." 52.


16 Furthermore, the English vocabulary comes into play here again, to be more precise, the
Germanic/Roman distinction between the animal name and the name of the food: one can
beat pork (the butcher, for example, does) but not pigs.

17 Cf. ADAMSON, Melissa Weiss. "The Games Cooks Play: Non-Sense Recipes and Practical
Jokes in Medieval Literature." In: Melissa Weiss Adamson (ed.). Food in the Middle Ages. A
Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter. Tübingen: Francke, 1993. 431 - 33 for the
tradition of humorous recipes in the Middle Ages.

18 ADAMSON. "The Games Cooks Play." 177.

2. Strange Cooking, Wrong Use of Food and Overfeeding

Although Lear’s limericks mainly refer to eating habits whenever they deal with food, there are also two examples of cooking behaviour that may be linked to his recipes in *Nonsense Cookery*:

- There was a Young Lady of Poole,
  Whose soup was excessively cool;
  So she put it to boil by the aid of some oil,
  That ingenious Young Lady of Poole. (Lear 26)

- There was an Old Man of Peru,
  Who watched his wife making a stew;
  But once by mistake, in a stove she did bake,
  That unfortunate Man of Peru. (Lear 28)

The first example astounds by its ‘normality’: the lady’s soup is cool, that’s why she boils it “by the aid of some oil”, which, however, she would not use in the soup but to kindle the flames, – and is hence “ingenious”. In the second example, however, we are confronted with a piece of ‘real’ nonsense, especially if we also consider the illustration that goes along with it:

![Illustration of a woman putting a giant pan into the stove.](image)

We can see the wife shoving her husband into the oven in a huge pan. Although the limerick itself says she did bake him “by mistake”, the picture shows her pointing at him: it looks as if the baking of her husband were an intentional act.20 While she is laughing, her husband raises his arms as in an attempt of self-defence; she, however, only laughs. Another instance of nonsense in the illustration are the size relations: the husband is so small that he fits into the pan that the woman can easily handle, and the wife is far taller than him; he is under-sized (like a child) while all other proportions seem to be appropriate. The preparation of a dish, stew, here becomes the trigger for a limerick that differs from the illustration that comes with it: this means that not only the content of the poem is nonsensical but also the text-picture relation is incoherent.

Quite a few of Lear’s limericks deal with the topic of food in the way of eating too much, overeating, and making fun of this:

- There was an Old Person whose habits,
  Induced him to feed upon Rabbits;
  When he’d eaten eighteen, he turned perfectly green,
  Upon which he relinquished those habits. (Lear 19)

Like in so many of Lear’s limericks, it is an Old Person who behaves strangely; in this case, the nonsense of the poem derives from the hyperbole of eating not only a few but “eighteen rabbits”: the Old Person becomes sick afterwards, which makes him change his habits. Eating too much, however, may also be fatal:

- There was an Old Man of Calcutta,
  Who perpetually ate bread and butter;
  Till a great bit of muffin, on which he was stuffing,
  Choked that hulid old man of Calcutta. (Lear 37)

If one considers that Lear’s first and foremost audience were children, one soon discovers one possible source of the fun in this poem21: the old man overeats

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21 Further cases are that of the "Old Man of the South": "There was an Old Man of the South, / Who had an immediate mouth; / But in swallowing a dish, that was quite full of fish, / He was choked, that Old Man of the South" (Lear 32); and the "Young Person of Kew": "There was a young person of Kew, / Whose vices and virtues were few; / But with blameless taste, she devoured some hot paste, / Which destroyed that young person of Kew" (Lear 179).
himself on something that children like to eat very much. His overfeeding is turned into children’s play: he is “horrid” and has to choke (as a sort of ‘punishment’ even); eating is part of the “imaginative play of children”, and may even become part of their role-playing; “Whatever way the limericks may have functioned for Lear, they can be coherently understood as extending to the child reader an invitation to imaginative role-playing. The dramatistic game they open up refers to basic areas of socialization – eating, dressing, grooming, speaking, and so on – and to the kinds of tensions inherent in familial relationships”. Thus, Violence and ‘death’ in the limericks are never shocking, but are part of the games Lear plays. Although it may appear to be violent that the man chokes on the muffin and the woman bakes “[t]hat unfortunate Man of Peru”, she at least, and the readers as well, seem to have fun.

Lear also shows that the overuse or ‘wrong’ use of food need not necessarily be fatal, and has some good advice and even medicine at hand:

There was an Old Man of Vienna,
Who lived upon Tincture of Senna;


23 MCEVILLING (“Don’t Play With Your Food.”) describes eating and playing as “two powerful human practices” that are usually dealt with by anthropologists in a serious way, as can be seen in Albin James’s article “Confession, Convocations and Conceitualization.” In: Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford 10 (1979): 83 – 95. – See also Remes and the likewise flesh food and drink to be very important in books for children (Braun, Christians. “The Importance of Eating and Drinking in British Children’s Classics.” In: Ingolds 17 (1999): 10 – 34.


26 The Violence in Lear is “that of a Tom & Jerry Cartoon” (Morris, Massimiliano. “How Pleasant to Know Mr. Lear?: Edward Lear and the Sympathetic Reader.” In: JSTJ 4:4 (1999): 93 – 109, 97); cf. also Thomas, Joyce. “There was an old man...” The Sense of Nonsense Verse.” In: Children’s Literature Association Quarterly 10:2 (1985): 119 – 22. – We face then two peculiarities of play: (a) that the messages or signals exchanged in play are in a certain sense untrue or not meant; and (b) that that which is denoted by these signals is nonexistent” (Barthes, Gregory. “A Theory of Play and Fantasy.” In: Gregory Barthes. Signs in an Ecology of Mind. New York: Ballantine, 1972 [1952], 177 – 93, 183).

Don’t Play with Your Food? – Edward Lear’s Nonsense Cookery and Limericks

When that did not agree, he took Camomile Tea,
That nasty Old Man of Vienna. (Line 18)

There was an old person of Fife,
Who was greatly disgusted with life;
They sang him a ballad, And fed him on salad,
Which cured that old person of Fife. (Line 19)

In these limericks, Lear has people eat and consume the strangest things. The old man of Vienna lives on tincture of senna, which works as a purgative and is replaced with camomile tea, when it no longer agrees with him – which is a natural consequence of senna. The habit does not seem to be too pleasant if one looks at his facial expression in the illustration. But Lear also introduces the strangest causal relations: the old person of Fife is cured from his disgust of life because a ballad is sung to him and he is being fed on salad. In this limerick, the combination of the two, ballad and salad, leads to an internal agreement: first of all within the line, as they are rhyming words, but also with regard to the person of Fife, who feels better and with whom this treatment ‘agrees’. In his Anatomy of Melancholy, Burton does indeed recommend music as a remedy against being disgusted with life, “salad”, however, is counted among those things that should not be eaten. It is therefore basically the language which determines the treatment of the person of Fife here: the agreement of words and their sound is all that counts.

Eating is therefore often introduced in Edward Lear’s limericks for more linguistic reasons. As regards content and the playful mode that is so typical of his writing, food and eating habits may also serve as signs of oddity:

27 Further examples include the following limerick: “There was an Old Person of Leeds, / Who was famished with greed; / She sat on a stool, and ate gooseberry fool, / Which agreed with that person of Leeds” (Line 12): “There was an old person of Pett, / Who was partly consumed with regret; / He ate in a cart, and ate cold apple tart, / Which relieved that old person of Pett” (Line 12).

28 OED “senna”: “2. Phares, The dried leaves of various species of Cassia, used as a carthatic and emetic.”


31 Some are of opinion that sallat bred melancholy mood” (Burow, The Anatomy of Melancholy 1.2.2.1.1 (1: 212)): “sallat” was a variant spelling of salald until the nineteenth century; cf. OED “sallat, salald(e)”.

244 Angeikis Zirkes

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This is certainly one of the instances when "old" is used not necessarily as a literal reference to age only but also as a slightly "disparaging term." Furthermore he is an old bird, i.e. in the jocular use for a man, 'a cove.'

The concept that eating has an effect on a person's outer appearance, i.e. whether someone is thin or fat, is here extended to a concept of "sympathy": one adopts a whole set of attitudes and even one's looks through the food one consumes. Strange behaviour in the realm of food can furthermore consist not only in eating but also in feeding:

There was a young lady of Cornica,
Who purchased a little brown sassy-cur;
Which she fed upon ham, and hot raspberry jam,
That expensive young lady of Cornica. (Lear 191)

As she feeds her dog upon ham and hot raspberry jam, this young lady is no longer simply a "young lady" in the last line but changes into an "expensive lady", which mirrors her peculiar, even eccentric behaviour and entails at least some degree of value-judgment.

Something very similar can be seen in Lear's depiction of the "old person of Bray":

Who sang through the whole of the day
To his ducks and his pigs, whom he fed upon figs,
That valuable person of Bray. (Lear 192)

He is a "valuable" person as he sings all day, but perhaps even because he feeds his pigs upon figs. In this case, the form of the limerick and the genre of nonsense rhyme allow for and lead to the introduction of edible: pigs rhyme with figs.

32 The idea might go back to the proverb "He that eats least eats most", which means that eating less at the occasion will lead to a longer life, so that one eats more that way eventually: cf. OEDEP II.4.

33 Thomas BYROM comments on this phenomenon of metamorphosis in the images (BYROM.

34 See OED2 old 5.s.n.
35 See OED bird I.4.
37 See also the following example: "There was an Old Man of Apulia / Whose conduct was very peculiar / He fed twenty sons, upon nothing but beans. / That whimsical Man of Apulia" (LEAR 24).
38 This variation of the adjective in the first line is typical of Lear, although sometimes he even uses adjectives that seem to be out of context, e.g. when he suddenly calls an "old man" "innocent": "Lear's wildly inappropriate adjectives are paradigmatic instance of one of the fundamental activities the limericks perform: the world of Lear's nonsense is a playground" (RECHER, "Lear's Limericks." 49). - Brayton reads this limerick as follows: "Her [the young lady's] relation with the creatures nearly always involves food or eating, but there is no oral gratification for her. Rather, the association of animals and eating gives her anxiety. She has a strange demonic dog which she must appease" (Reclus, Nonsense and Wonder: 114).
This interpretation, however, overlooks the fun and playful mode that is characteristic of Lear's writing.
They form a minimal pair, as we know from Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, where the Cheshire Cat asks Alice whether the baby she carried away from the Duchess' kitchen has changed into a "pig" or a "fig". Their phonological resemblance is the reason why the "valuable person of Bray" feeds the pigs with figs and not with apples or anything else. The constraints given by the form, i.e. that a limerick has to follow a certain pattern, thus likewise determine what is being eaten and by whom:

There was an old man who screamed out
Whenever they knocked him about;
So they took off his boots, and fed him with fruits,
And continued to knock him about. (Lear 171)

Having his boots taken off and being fed with fruits actually seems to delight this old man; it is therefore all the more surprising that some critics actually read this limerick seriously: "In one exceedingly strange limerick, They punish him, and at the same time, to his masochistic glee, provide him with a salve for the pains They inflict". That Lear's limericks are supposed to be fun and depend on (linguistic and also conceptual) play seems to be out of the question: "[The] agitation of the verse is quietened in the cartoon, which presents a more ameliorative state of affairs. [...] the image calms the word". Such a reading does not at all consider that words are the basic components of Lear's nonsense and that they are employed for their own sake, not to make statements about 'the world': nonsense, although it can be very serious, is usually supposed to be fun.

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40 BYRON. Nonsense and Wonder, 93. Cf. also DALWORTHY, who categorises this limerick as "what may be the most fascinating of the limericks of social accommodation. [...] Accommodated in these ways he is verbally and visually high, 'elated', though the beating continues" (DALWORTHY, Thomas. "Society and the Self in the Limericks of Edward Lear." In: The Review of English Studies 43 (1994), 62–62. 77 – 58).
41 BYRON. Nonsense and Wonder, 114. 123.

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Apparently, "fruits" are only introduced to rhyme with "boots". The choice of words thus gives the impression of being random, "approximate sounds of the rhymes draw objects together". As Rieder explains with regard to content, "the limericks tend to expose the arbitrariness or artificiality of convention rather than laying down the law. The limericks on eating, for instance, include stories of starvation and gluttony, of 'old men' who sink into alcoholic depression and of others who enjoy pleasantly recuperative snacks, of accidental cannibalism but also of miraculous cures". But, what is even more important, Lear's limericks are mainly based on language: those dealing with food are not so much about describing or even sanctioning eating behaviour; this is only part of the fun. Their major ingredients are words and the play with words.

3. Wordplay

Whenever the language of Lear's nonsense writing is considered by critics, they refer to its apparent arbitrariness: the choice of words is declared to be random and to follow merely a pattern of rhyme. This, however, makes the choice already less random, if not on a semantic, then at least on a phonological level. And as we can see in the context of his Nonsense Cookery, especially the titles "Ambrousing Pie", "Crumbobobblous cutlets", and "Gosky Patties" have semantic connotations that are not utterly 'nonsensical' in the sense of being without any meaning. Although none of the modifiers in these compounds exist, they can be traced back to some origins that attribute meaning to them. Thus Lear combines known food – pie, cutlets, patties – with neologisms and apparent non-words: "The Lear formations are word-like non-words, since they activate neither two meanings nor new meanings but several potential meanings". These potential

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43 An alternative would have been to feed him with 'roots'. This, however, would not have changed the nonsensical combination of events in this limerick.
45 Rieder, "Edward Lear's Limericks." 52. This is actually the only reference I have found about Lear's treatment of food in his limericks.
meanings can be derived from single morphemes that are put together into apparent 'non-words'. One is hence able to form a certain idea about the ingredients as all these words are pronounceable, they 'phonetically fit their context', and they are recognized as having some similarity to English words. ‘Phonetical fitting’ seems to be very important in Lear’s limericks because of the rhyme that defines the genre. In the following example, however, his wordplay goes even further:

There was an Old Person of Chilli,
Whose conduct was painful and silly.
He ate on the stairs, eating apples and pears;
That imprudent Old Person of Chilli. (Lear 6)

"Apples and pears" is an expression from Cockney rhyming slang that originated around 1840 and which means 'stairs': the original word is replaced by one that rhymes with it, i.e. pears; these are combined with apples because apples are not pears – which makes this sound very nonsensical (other combinations with apples are e.g. apple and banana – piano; apple pie – sky). What we find here is a sort of doubling which points to the "painful and silly" conduct of this person who actually has misunderstood the dialect. The word stairs and its synonym "apples and pears" are not recognized as synonimous, and hence results the action of the old person: he sits down and eats the very thing that, in a non-literal sense, signifies the object he is sitting on.

Very often the whole content of Lear’s limericks thus relies, as we have already seen, on the combination of words that fit phonetically and that rhyme:

49 " [... ] meaningful nonsense syllables were attributable in large measure to the degree to which the novel stimulus in question accorded with or departed from the rule structures of syllable and word formation in English (for English speaking subjects)?" (BEERMAN, James I., "Nonsense Syllables: Comprehending the Almost Incomprehensible Variation." In: Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition 11,2 (1985): 435 - 460. 495.)
50 PONTIETTO calls them "well-formed but meaningless" (PONTIETTO, "Rule-Breaking and Meaning-Making in Edward Lear," 157); this, however, seems to be slightly simplistic given the complexity with regard to the combination of lexical and morphological units.
50 See MATTHEWS, William. Cockney Past and Present: A Short History of the Dialect of London. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972 [1958]. MATTHEWS calls Cockney "the most creative form of English" (155), a judgment that certainly explains Lear's use of it. Lear in, however, not mentioned by Matthews, nor is Cockney an issue in Lear criticism. "[I]t was originally the language of bullad-sellers [...] and seems to have begun as a secret language" (133). Lear probably adopted elements from it because of its basic playfulness. Around the 1950s a whole variety of dictionaries of modern slang appeared in England (cf. MATTHEWS. Cockney Past and Present, 150 - 333).
51 In a shortened version, stairs are merely called “apples” in Cockney: cf. PERKINS, Derek and Jean PERKINS, Cockney Rhyming Slang. Illustrated by Anthony Jones, Swansons, Dominic Books, 2002. 9 - “The expert use of rhyming slang consists in the abbreviation of the term by the omission of the rhyme.” (MATTHEWS. Cockney Past and Present, 153).

There was an Old Person of Rheims,
Who was troubled with horrible dreams;
So, to keep him awake, they fed him with cake.
Which amused that Old Person of Rheims. (Lear 33)

The man is troubled with nightmares – “horrible dreams” as they are called so that they rhyme with the city of “Rheims” – and the only possible remedy is to keep him awake: if he does not sleep at all, he will not dream badly. The reasoning of this is rather doubtful, but Lear moves in the realm of nonsense anyway. This goes even further as “awake” needs a rhyming word that also fits the context semantically. Hence, the Person of Rheims is fed with cake so that he will not sleep, simply because “awake” rhymes with “cake”. He is “amused” at the therapy, and it does seem quite tempting; luckily, “awake” rhymes with something delicious. This is not the case with another “old person” that the reader meets in Lear’s limericks:

There was an old person of Brondley,
Whose ways were not cheerful or comely.
He sat in the dust, eating spiders and crust,
That unpleasing old person of Bromley. (Lear 201)

He is less fortunate than the old person of Rheims; as he sits in the dust, there is nothing left for him but to eat “spiders and crust”. Instead of being amazed or happy, he is described as being “unpleasing”: whether this is a result of his eating behaviour or whether his eating habits result from this is not explained and, one might presume, irrelevant. Lear’s limericks are not primarily about logical causal relations but they are concerned with and based on language and wordplay.

The apparent horrors of eating in some of the limericks and also in Lear’s Nonsense Cookery turn out to be expressions of linguistic pleasures. Lear’s wordplay is part of the overall playful mood of his writing. There are quite a range of examples in his limericks where he bases his nonsense texts on strange eating habits, overfeeding and dietary cures for ridiculous behaviour. Food in Lear thus very often serves as a means to make a text nonsensical, by the combination of words that do not fit in content (but, for instance, in regard to sound) and make the mere action of eating ridiculous, as well as by the invention of new words that are combined with elements of food. Very often these culinary elements are merely introduced for the sake of rhyme. By mixing all these different bits and pieces together and stirring them carefully, Lear succeeds in presenting his readers with very palatable nonsense texts that ought not to be taken seriously but understood and interpreted as sheer fun.

52 Rheims is pronounced [R[i:m] in English.
References


