



## The Problem of Translating "Jabberwocky": The Nonsense Literature of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear and Their Spanish Translators

*By Pilar Orero*

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Lewis Carroll's Alice books and Edward Lear's limericks and nonsense writings have never been out of print since they first appeared and have gone through numerous editions and translations in many major languages. The reality of this universal appeal is perplexing due to the fact that the nonsense literatures of both of these men are filled with historical allusions to and parodies of Victorian era England. Without an understanding of their historical background, one would assume that these works lose a considerable amount of their original appeal. Full of Victorian whimsy, these books have nevertheless found an international readership both in English and in translations. The purpose of this enquiry is to explore the many different ways in which nonsense has been translated. Once this is done, differences among translations of the same source text have to be observed and noted. At this stage it may be appropriate to bring in external considerations of history, culture and publishers intentions, which can suggest motivations for existing differences in approaches and techniques of translation.

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#### Review

"What then is the overall achievement of this study? It shows what well-established translators have actually done with specific nonsense words and situations in the Alice books. It has also presented, in almost exemplary fashion, three quite distinct approaches to the translation of nonsense limericks, which faces the translator with some very difficult choices. This demonstration of translators' skills is a welcome contribution to our understanding of this seemingly impossible task, which simply needs a wide-ranging imagination and command of language to deal with the riches of nonsense." - Dr. Juan Sager Professor of Modern Languages Department of Language and Linguistics University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology "... Dr. Orero has given us for the first time a comprehensive account of nonsense literature and the translation problems associated with it. Her book will undoubtedly become compulsory reading in the field." - Dr. Marcel Ortin Department of Translation and Philology Universitat Pompeu Fabra "The principal finding of the book may perhaps be the simple recognition or affirmation that the translations of nonsense calls upon all available techniques of translation... to a much greater extent than other forms of translation, but that this diversity of techniques need not interfere with the overall cohesion of the translation and with the overall objective which motivates the translation." - Dr. Alberto Mira Reader in Spanish Oxford Brookes University"

#### About the Author

Dr. Pilar Orero received her M.A. in Translation from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Spain, and her Ph.D. in Translation from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. She lectures at UAB where she also coordinates the Online Master in Audiovisual Translation. Dr. Orero is the co-editor of *The Translator's Dialogue* (1997) and the editor of *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* (2004) both published by John Benjamins. Her research interests are Nonsense Literature, Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility

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**Jasper Parsons:**

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