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Marysa Demoor, *A Cross-Cultural History of Britain and Belgium, 1815–1918*, Britain and the World,
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Another example of the literary fantastic as influenced by Flemish painting is again found in the work of Lewis Carroll's *Hunting of the Snark*. The illustrator was inspired by a multilayered drawing by Marcus Gheeraert, *Allegory of Iconoclasm* ("The Image Breakers") (Figs. 7.8 a, b).

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This is translated into Henry Holiday's illustrations for the absurd Carroll story *Hunting of the Snark*.²⁰ Although Holiday's illustration was inspired by many image sources, it was Gheeraert's painting especially that he seems to have drawn on for the illustration of the banker's fate described in the poem as:

He was black in the face, and they scarcely could trace
The least likeness to what he had been:
While so great was his fright that his waistcoat turned white—
A wonderful thing to be seen!
To the horror of all who were present that day.
He uprose in full evening dress,
And with senseless grimaces endeavoured to say
What his tongue could no longer express.
Down he sank in a chair—ran his hands through his hair—
And chanted in mimsiest tones
Words whose utter inanity proved his insanity,
While he rattled a couple of bones.²¹

a



b



Fig. 7.8 a Marcus Gheeraert, *Allegory of Iconoclasm* (1566–1568). British Museum, London (© Trustees of the British Museum). **b** Henry Holiday, for *The Banker's Fate* in Lewis Carroll's *Hunting of the Snark* (1876) Private collection (© Out of copyright/Bridgeman Images)

Interestingly, Holiday is also considered to have been a later generation Pre-Raphaelite painter, so we could conclude that Flemish painting remained an inspiration for the different generations subsumed under “Pre-Raphaelitism.”

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In the final analysis, it is safe to say that the visits of British travellers to the Low Countries had a huge impact on the artistic production in Britain. The most artistic expert of tourists would look for art treasures to enrich their overview and knowledge of northern art that had been based on the collections in Britain. Consequently and naturally, the art in Britain, starting with the visual art, was influenced by what those visitors saw in the Low Countries, and they were absolutely fascinated by the more quirky and more fantastic expressions of Flemish art. So while the artists and writers visiting Belgium on their way to Waterloo might have written that the culture they were confronted with was nothing like their own, the influences of their contact, either consciously or unconsciously, seeped through in their art. We notice obvious influences in the paintings, in the poetry and the practice of the Pre-Raphaelites, and in the illustrations to such renowned fantasy works as *Alice in Wonderland* and the *Hunting of the Snark*. It is recognised that British authors such as Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear indulged in the absurd, the grotesque, or even pure nonsense. This mindset recognised itself when confronted with a very kindred type of surrealist wit that expressed itself mainly in visual art.

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20. In January 1874, Holiday was commissioned by Lewis Carroll to illustrate *The Hunting of the Snark*. He remained friends with the author throughout his life. As well as containing pictorial references to the etching *The Image Breakers* by Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, Holiday’s illustration is said to refer to William Sidney Mount’s painting *The Bone Player* and to a photograph by Benjamin Duchenne used for a drawing in Charles Darwin’s *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872).
21. Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark: An Agony in Eight Fits* (London: Macmillan, 1876), 73–75.

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Comment by Goetz Kluge (2022-10-22):

Marysa Demoor did not mention in her book that she referred to my findings, which she probably found using in the Wikipedia.

I found the reference by Henry Holiday to *The Image Breakers* by Marcus Gheeraerts the elder in 2009. The reference to William Sydney Mount's painting I found in 2014 in Mahendra Singh's blog (<https://justtheplaceforasnark.blogspot.com/2012/01/fit-7-pg-752-drive-your-snark-and-your.html>).

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Links:

- ✂ <https://snrk.de/knight-letter-links/kl-fall2017/>
- ✂ https://snrk.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Nose_is_a_Nose_is_a_Nose_OCR.pdf
- ✂ <https://archive.org/details/knightletterno9929lewi/page/n33/mode/2up>
- ✂ https://www.academia.edu/35895087/Nose_is_a_Nose_is_a_Nose

Nose Is a Nose Is a Nose

GOETZ KLUGE



Figure 1 Henry Holiday illustration for Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*

Henry Holiday's illustration for Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark* shown in Figure 1 indicates that the Banker didn't feel too well after his encounter with the Bandersnatch. Holiday faithfully put into artistic form what Carroll wrote:

He was black in the face, and they scarcely could trace
The least likeness to what he had been:
While so great was his fright that his waistcoat
turned white—
A wonderful thing to be seen!

Carroll's Snark ballad was published in 1876. In 1872, Edward Lear wrote this limerick:

There was an old man of Port Grigor,
Whose actions were noted for vigour;
He stood on his head
till his waistcoat turned red,
That eclectic old man of Port Grigor.

Did Carroll allude to Lear's waistcoat poetry in *Snark*? That would be a textual allusion. Could there be pictorial allusions as well?

Figure 2a shows a close-up of the Banker's head. Figure 2b depicts (after slight horizontal compression)

Figure 2a shows a close-up of the Banker's head. Figure 2b depicts (after slight horizontal compression) *The Imagebreakers* (c. 1567), an etching by Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder. It has some surprising resemblances to Holiday's illustration: note the similar mouths and right eyes. Other details match well, too, but the noses do not—or at least not at first glance. But take the nose (highlighted by the rectangle in Figure 2b) and invert it, and you'll get Figure 2c, which more closely matches the Banker's face. If Holiday did indeed use the etching as his inspiration, he perhaps gave one of the Banker's nostrils an almost rectangular shape because he found that shape in the inverted nose from Gheeraerts' etching as well.

I first made this comparison in 2009. It was among the findings that prompted my "Snark hunt" a couple of years ago. Does it really show that Holiday had been influenced by Gheeraerts' print? Or was my finding an illusion? It's a matter of opinion, and there's no evidence to decide whether Holiday was indeed alluding to Gheeraerts' print. There probably never will be any clear evidence. Thus, this is the place for us to decide. As Heinz von Foerster once said, "Only those questions that are in principle undecidable, we can decide" (von Foerster: "Ethics and Second-Order Cybernetics," *Systeme et therapie familiale*, Paris, 1990).

There are indeed other possible inspirational sources for Holiday's image. I first found William Sydney Mount's painting *The Bone Player* (1856) on Mahendra Singh's blog. Figure 3 shows a mirror image of the painting, which bears many resemblances to the Banker image. Note the similar poses and the bones in their hands held in nearly identical positions. Henry Holiday and Lewis Carroll may well have seen this painting in London in 1875 when Goupil

& Cie promoted lithographic reproductions by Jean-Baptiste Adolphe Lafosse.

There is a possible third source, involving the Bellman's arm: a Benjamin Duchenne photo taken in or before 1868 and used in Charles Darwin's *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*. It is shown in Figure 4, and it might have inspired Henry Holiday as well. For more information, visit <http://kl.snrk.de> in my blog.



Figure 2a Detail of the Banker's face

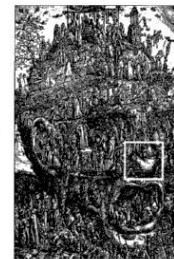


Figure 2b *The Imagebreakers*, a 1567 etching by Marcus Gheeraerts (the nose is highlighted in white)

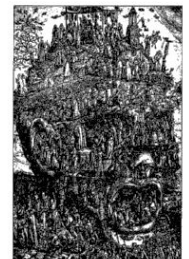


Figure 2c *The Imagebreakers* with the nose inverted



Figure 3 *The Bone Player*, an 1856 painting by William Sydney Mount



Figure 4 Benjamin Duchenne photograph used in Darwin's *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*

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[...]

In January 1874, Holiday was commissioned by [Lewis Carroll](#) to illustrate [The Hunting of the Snark](#). He remained friends with the author throughout his life.^[12] Holiday's illustration to the chapter *The Banker's Fate* might contain pictorial references to the etching *The Image Breakers* by [Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder](#), to [William Sidney Mount](#)'s painting *The Bone Player* and to a photograph by [Benjamin Duchenne](#) used for a drawing in [Charles Darwin](#)'s [The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals](#).^[14]

[...]

14. Goetz Kluge (December 2017). "Nose Is a Nose Is a Nose". *Knight Letter*. Number 99: 30. [ISSN 0193-886X](#).
The article (with four additional images) is available [online](#).

[...]

Source: Wikipedia (2019-12-05): https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Henry_Holiday&oldid=929444271