

Sylvie and Bruno to Be Continued

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Abstract

This paper attempts to wrap up my analysis of the suppressed emotion of Lewis Carroll under Alice Liddell toward the publication of his final literary work, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* in 1893, 2 years after his last meeting with her. She had already been married for 11 years at that time. In the sequel to *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll finished the story with a very romantic reunion of the two main human characters, Lady Muriel Orme and Arthur Forester, a young doctor. Sylvie and Bruno, two fairies, celebrated them magically by inviting Angel's voice of "Love". As its title suggests, the story witnesses a happy ending. As far as its creative process was concerned, Carroll should have been satisfied with its completion, but he must still have been in a gloomy mood, which had annoyed him for a long time since her mother burned all his letters to Alice Liddell. The impressive last scene of the novel was his sentimental confession to free himself from his psychological shadow. For readers, the story was completed, but for Carroll, it was concluded to be continued.

Keywords : Shadow, Legend, Nonsense, Fairy, Sea

Key to Abbreviations of Lewis Carroll's four works, two names of Alice and Dodgson

AAW: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

TLG: *Through the Looking-Glass*

SB: *Sylvie and Bruno*

SBC: *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*

Alice: Alice in the stories

Alice Liddell: a friend of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson in her childhood

Dodgson: Charles Lutwidge Dodgson

1. Shadow

The Shadows were strong, and the brooding identity of everything I passed so powerful that I kept nervously looking back.

The Sea, The Sea, Iris Murdoch

Let me start with a simple comparison of

Lewis Carroll's two stories of Alice, *AAW* and *TLG*, and *SB* and its sequel, *SBC*, in terms of his psychologically different approaches to the two sets. The former is made up of Alice's visits to dream worlds, while the latter is also based on the two worlds: imaginative reality and fairyland, and there seems to be not much difference between them as far as their similar structures are concerned.

What I would like to emphasize on this point is not the mere and visible difference between them but an invisible dimension which was inserted casually and purposefully into *SB* and *SBC*. It is a conscious representation of Carroll himself in the disguise of the narrator.

He attempted to incorporate himself in the whole story to take the role of narration as the first person, but he intentionally blurred his identity in such a way that his presence sometimes became invisible suddenly not only to

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other characters in the story but to readers as well. He did not tell him his name even though he was asked about it by Bruno, the small-boy-like fairy.

In its original short story for children, entitled “Bruno’s Revenge” published in 1867, he identified himself by saying “My name’s Lewis Carroll” when he was asked about his name by Bruno when they met for the first time. In the same scene of the lengthened version, however, the story narrator answered to the same question from Bruno, but his name was not mentioned. In other words, Carroll hid his name and readers who have not read the original short story will never know who the narrator is. He decided to turn himself into penumbra in the novels when he started changing it into a much longer version in 1873. His disappearance is similar to that of Cheshire cat, which denied its physical existence in *AAW*.

Since his literary evaluation had already been well-established in those days due to the successful sales of the Alice stories, he might not have needed to make his name visible in his new work at that time. Was it the only reason for this simple twist? Or was it his playful imitation of “Rumpelstiltskin”, one of German fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm, to weaken the magical power that a name has. Carroll’s shadowy handling of his identity is the first key to unravel Carroll’s true intention toward the end of *SBC*.

“Shadow” often played a metaphysical role in ancient myths and legends in Europe. Modern writers have also adopted it as an impressive, decisive, and sometimes horrifying role in many of their great works. “Shadow” is usually described simply as physical phenomenon in contrast to brightness. In some stories, however, its image is being transformed into another entity such as a clown. Stephen King’s *It* is a typical example, in which a phantom circus

clown terrifies children.

In “A Jester and a Bear”, the Chapter IX of *SB*, the Vice-Warden, one of the side characters, showed his disguised figure as a jester proudly to his wife, while they were talking about conspiracy against the Warden of Outland, where fairies live.

This scene is very important not in its indicative function in the development of story but in understanding the mentality of Carroll who chose such an outstanding professional whose job is to jest and joke. Historically speaking, the role of a jest is to pose a sharp contrast to that of a king as Edgar Allan Poe wrote, “His fool, or professional jester, was not only a fool, however. His value was trebled in the eyes of the king,..” in “Hop-Frog”. In the real society where Carroll lived, the king was Queen Victoria, and the queen for him was Alice Liddell.

Toward the end of *TLG*, Alice became the Queen, and then against her enthronement the jester was created by Carroll in his consciousness away from the story to make fool of his miserable life just after its publication of *TLG* in 1872, and he probably transferred his intension into his next work, which was *SB* and *SBC*.

It was also the time when he decided to make “Bruno’s Revenge”, its original short story into *SB*. When it was finally completed and printed for the public twenty years later, his attempt was, intentionally or unintentionally, hazed in so many other nonsense situations and the jester was degraded into one of unnecessary and uninteresting characters.

A careful reading of this chapter of *SB*, however, although it is not very important in the main story line, can find that Arthur, one of the main characters in real world, is mentioned by the narrator in his judgment, “It surely could not be Arthur,” when he heard the creaking of the

cupboard door in his room, where Arthur tried to help him as doctor. The strident sound was produced by the wife of Vice-Warden. The narrator found him transported to the room of Vice-Warden in a matter of seconds and saw the jester there. Of course Arthur disappeared at the same time.

On these rapidly changing stages, if it were play at a theater, readers would recognize the three figures; the narrator, Arthur, and jester appear in a very short time. They are actually different actors to the audience, but my third eye could witness them fusing into one person whose real name is Dodgson. This scene seems to be a symbolic prelude to the tree-fold dimensional space of *SBC*, the fairy world, the real world, and the consciousness of Carroll.

Here dual nature of Dodgson-Carroll was transformed into a more stable triangle.



Back to the time when Dodgson was gaining status as a literary celebrity, he recognized that Carroll, his other shadowy identity, had lost Alice Liddell as “Peter Schlemihl” sold his shadow to the devil and lost his home country in one of the famous German novelettes.

Carroll had to rely on a legendary figure to heal his injured mentality while he also needed a playful jester to make fun of his depressing life.

2. Legend

“You’ve created your comforting myths and fictions from history — like your idea of King Arthur”

The Unburied, Charles Palliser

“From England came the tales of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. Not only

were they artful narratives but they created a whole mythology that continues to influence the human dream.” This is an extract from *The Art of Being Human*, a popular textbook for American college students. Even today the legend of King Arthur is read, discussed, and excerpted. *The Buried Giant*, a fantasy novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, Nobel Prize-winning British writer, describes a post-Arthurian England, and it seems to me that his nostalgic approach to the romantic past contributed to his award-winning.

It is no wonder that Carroll had been interested in medievalism and romanticism since his early childhood due to the Gothic Revival during the early Victorian Era. It is just a mere coincidence that Alfred Tennyson published his first Arthurian poem “The Lady of Shalott” in 1832, when Carroll was born. When he began to read stories for himself, Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur* had been reprinted.

Carroll must have avidly read the legendary tales of King Arthur while he was a young boy in the quiet environment of Daresbury. According to the record of Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, one of his nephews, he not only waged warfare among earthworms but also owned toy theaters while he constructed his own marionettes. He acted as king of his domain.

His three-day family trip to the island of Anglesey, approximately 120 kilometers away from his home, inspired his imagination when he had a chance to explore the dark maze-like passages of Beaumaris Castle on the island constructed in the 13th Century, which was an outstanding ancient relic.

His interest in the magical king did not fade out even after he grew up to become a lecturer of mathematics at Christchurch, Oxford. He must have read *Idylls of the King*, retelling of the legends of King Arthur, composed by Alfred Tennyson between 1859 and 1885.

He might have memorized the famous Latin

phrase of the inscribed on the tomb of King Arthur. It is “Hic Jacet Arthurus, Rex Quondam, Rexque Futurus.”, which could be translated into “Here lies Arthur, King in the past, King in the future.” ‘

Not only Carroll but also other Victorian literary figures were intrigued by this legendary giant, whose spirit had encouraged Britons. John Ruskin, one of his literary friends, and William Morris made the best use of nostalgia toward the Middle Ages as the good memory of the better society in spite of the shared understanding that the greatest obstacle to the future during the advanced-oriented Victorian Era was the persistence of the past.

Arthur, the young doctor in *SB* and *SBC* is undeniably the reincarnation of King Arthur although he confessed to be a coward in the story. When Carroll implied this contrivance at the end of Chapter XXIII of *SB*, in which Arthur Forester decided to go to India to work there in broken-heartedness that Lady Muriel Orme, for whom he had affection, was engaged to Eric Lindon, her cousin.

Arthur said to the narrator, “This life of mine I guard as God's high gift, from scathe and wrong, not greatly care to lose!” This is an excerpt from *Idylls of the King*, a cycle of twelve narrative poems by Alfred Tennyson. To his statement, the narrator replied by saying, “Your name-sake bore as heavy a blow, and lived through it.” to console and comfort the young doctor, who was struggling on his lost love.

Here Arthur is Carroll and the narrator is also Carroll. These encouraging comments remind me of ventriloquism of a jester, and this positive posture led both of them to the happy ending. *SBC* witnesses Eric Lindon canceled his engagement with Lady Muriel Orme and Arthur married her.

More fantastic and miraculous is the return of Arthur, who was reported to be dead during his

courageous medical involvement in rescuing infected patients in the pandemic area. He tried to act as a heroic and courageous rescuer, like King Arthur, while he knew that he would step into a very risky job, but he got out of death and returned to his newly-wed wife.

The narrator was also very happy about his revival and saw that Sylvie and Bruno joined their reunion. The lengthy novel with the two sets of 25 chapters ends with “IT IS LOVE”. This sentence is simple but very profound in uppercase, implying Carroll's cry to Alice Liddell from the bottom of his heart.

Looking back in the storyline of *SB* and *SBC*, Carroll should have combined and shortened them to complete one simpler story if he had considered young readers. What they found, however, in the unnecessarily lengthened and complicated structure is a bunch of nonsense phrases, scenes, and characters, which seem to hamper smooth and enjoyable reading, which might have lowered the literary evaluation.

He had to incorporate meaningless and unnecessary aspects in the story with dexterity to provide the whole story with 50 chapters. His purpose was in numerology.

3. Nonsense

A real English man never tells a joke.

Around the World in Eighty Days, Jules Verne

Carroll has been famous and evaluated not only as the creator of Alice worlds but also for his genuine handling of words and expressions to be transformed into unrealistic nonsense. Portmanteau words such as “slithy” and “chortle” coined by Humpty Dumpty in *TLG* are now in English dictionaries.

SB and *SBC* also provide readers with similar frabjous, recondite, or simply derailed scenes in a more unfunctional approach. The long story of

SB and *SBC* combined looks like a showcase in which abstract and unrelated expressions are displayed in an unorganized way.

In these novels Carroll seems to have made more effort to destroy the well-balanced arrangements of words. Did he attempt to finalize his life-long curiosity about play on words in his last work?

Since his early childhood Carroll had been a genius of producing games and plays on words. His creative talent helped him enjoy leisure time with his sisters and in later years it led him to publication of a mind-boggling book like *Game of Logic*. Creation of twisted questions in mathematics and funny characters and obfuscate poems in *SB* and *SBC* is another remarkable evidence of Carroll's literary and mathematical ingenuity.

On the other hand, Elizabeth Sewell, a British critic and professor, wrote in *The Field of Nonsense*, one of her works that the sense of isolation is perhaps the one emotion permissible in nonsense, since it emphasizes the unattached nature of the player.

Her statements can be applied to the loneliness that Carroll suffered from throughout his life. During his first eleven years at Daresbury he spent most of his time with two older and five younger sisters. Wilfred, his younger brother, who was born six years later than Carroll could not have been a big help to dilute the femininity of his family.

Carroll lost his beloved mother at the age of 19, leaving the memorable poem entitled "Solitude." Alice Liddell's mother refused his meeting with her while he was working on his first book, *AAW*. After such a shocking incidence he went to London to see *Hamlet* to share his isolation with loneliest man in history at least six times according to his diary.

He also shared the similar emotional depression with John Ruskin, who failed to be

engaged with a 16-year old girl in 1864. It was the year when Carroll presented "Alice's Adventures Under Ground", the original hand-written short story of *AAW*, to Alice Liddell.

His sense of loneliness enforced him to step into another world, which had been perceptible among people in Europe since ancient times, and he wisely incorporated it into his final work. It was the world of folklore and works of Shakespeare, another dimension where fairies romped. It was an enchanting sphere which could enfold his runaway isolation spurred by his sense of nonsense.

4. Fairy

"I thought all the fairies were dead," Mrs. Darling said.

Peter Pan, J.M. Barrie

"From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,"
The Sonnets, William Shakespeare

On May 11, 1889, he wrote, "went to *Macbeth*." It is the only reference to the most tragic and darkest play of Shakespeare in his diary, although he quoted it in *SB*, and had mentioned it in some of his private letters before.

1889 is the year when *SB* was published and he intentionally described his theater visit for the first time as his official record. He might unconsciously have realized the time had come to express his achievement based on the play.

Macbeth shouted, "Life's but a walking shadow." when he was informed of the death of his wife, who had been suffering from incurable noctambulism. When Carroll listened to this confession of King of Scotland at the theater in 1889, he must have reviewed his shadowy role in *SB*, which would be in bookstores soon.

The core of *Macbeth* is an evil prediction told by three witches that Macbeth will become King of Scotland, being abetted by this seduction he murders the king with Lady Macbeth, his wife, to realize it. It is the witches that dominates the play

Away from theaters, these legendary supernatural beings also continued to influence the life of people in Europe until the advent of science and technology came into tangible existence during the age of Enlightenment. Occultism, however, survived into the post Victorian Era.

Even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a logical detective story writer with medical education, was much interested in spiritualism, and believed the photograph of fairies as real.

Carroll himself stated, in the preface to *SBC*, that fairies really existed and also that consciousness of human beings could be transferred into the Fairy-world as they experience in Esoteric Buddhism. Since *SB* and *SBC* are categorized as fairy tales for children, he did not need to mention such an alien mysticism to young readers in Britain.

Carroll, however, purposefully mentioned the ancient Asian religion in the preface simply because it was necessary to let readers know, as the background of the story plot, that *SBC* ends with the unbelievable resurrection of dead Arthur.

Esoteric Buddhism, with its mysticism-oriented nature, presupposes afterlife. Carroll must have found it very magical and attractive in a circular perspective, compared with linear geometry of Euclid, in which eternity is possible in a number line but impossible to catch up with its endless extension.

On the contrary, in a mandala space he assumed he would regain his life after death. The sphere, although it is depicted two-dimensionally on paper, inspired him as the

perfect and utopian spiritual world, which could embrace him as part of the whole universe. This concept is not contrary to the Renaissance world-view that God is a sphere.

Having considered young readers in mind, however, he acknowledged that more familiar assistance was necessary. Fairies were still acceptable in those days.

The other reason why Carroll relied on two small fairies, which associate with the most beautiful, in his last work is that these imaginative and cute creatures were crucial for his survival as a lonely literary celebrity to compensate his lifelong mental emptiness.

Their presence was helpful for Carroll to fill in the awkward fissure caused by nonsensical phrases and scenes in *SB* and *SBC*. The fairies were powerful guides to assist him in making a sensical and romantic conclusion. Their appearances connecting different worlds enabled Carroll to construct a mathematically well-balanced structure with 25 chapters in each part respectively and 50 chapters as a whole.

“50” is changed into “L” in Roman numeral. The number means “half” when we think about a circular pie chart. This is a hidden message from not Carroll but Dodgson behind the author based on his mathematical knowledge, and it indicates that when Alice Liddell makes up with the other empty half, the combined number will turn into 100, which is “C” in Roman numeral, expressing a mandala universe.

“L” and “C” could represent Love Concluded, “love promised” in other words, and it is also the initials of Lewis Carroll.

This is the reason why *SBC* is not “Sylvie and Bruno Completed”, which seems to be more reasonable in terms of its production process, but *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*.

Sylvie and Burno encouraged his dream to marry Alice Liddell to be continued and fulfilled in afterlife, which would wait for him several

years later.

5. Sea

The sea is one thing, she thought. Unitary.
Whole.

Evolution's Shore Ian McDonald

Bathing at a beach was not an active pastime yet during the Victorian Era, but a printed version of medical advice that the salty breeze was beneficial to health gradually encouraged emerging middle-class people living and working in a crowded and stuffy condition to visit a beach in summer.

Carroll's diary says that it was on August 19, 1870 when he visited Eastbourne, a seaside resort, approximately 100km away from London, for the first time and found it as a good coastal town for summer holidays, and then it became his favorite place to enjoy the refreshing air during his repeated visits there. "Eastbourne" was written down more than thirty times in his diary. The Plaque in the town to commemorate his stays still attracts holidayseekers even today.



In July, 1879, he had an opportunity to spend a memorable time with his family members in bygone days there. He got together with Wilfred, his young brother, and his children, and also Mary, Elizabeth and Margaret, three of his seven sisters.

It must have been a nostalgic reunion of the brother and sisters in such a beautiful and comfortable town closer to the sea, all of whom Carroll spent his innocent days with, when they were children. -

According to the ancient Gothic myth, the sea is the place souls reside and some

etymologists say that "soul" and "sea" derived from the same origin. It seems that Carroll learned that Old English is a dialect of German. His linguistic knowledge helped him create the mysterious scholar named Mein Herr in *SBC*. His name means "my lord" in German.

The legendary atmosphere of everlasting nature from time immemorial, huge mass of water, rhythmical winds and waves, lyrical singing of seabirds, inspired his curiosity in the relaxing and comfortable seaside town. Literally he felt his depressed mentality being cured.

His creative imagination was also enhanced by the name of Eastbourne itself. In those days the most popular beach resort was Brighton, 76 km south of London, and it was natural that Carroll would have chosen this popular port-town but he preferred Eastbourne most probably because it reminded him of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The name of the place was a simple but profound portmanteau to him, east and born combined.

His intuition is evidently described in *SB* and *SBC*. The last chapter of *SB* is "Looking Eastward" and *SBC* ends with "Life Out of Death". It was Eastbourne where Carroll consolidated the main plot of his final work, death and reincarnation of a soul, and the soul is the fusion of the two identities of Dodgson and Carroll, and to soften the conflict based on the duality, he disguised himself as an invisible narrator, playing the role of ventriloquism and presenting nonsense scenes as a jester.

This triangular geometry was not possible as long as the author was sticking to Oxford. With more open space his mind traveled over the sea and beyond the horizon. His imagination invited Mein Herr, one of the eccentric side characters in Chapters 12 and 13 of *SBC*. He is a traveler who came from another planet. His participation adds a little scientific tinge to the story and also entails an effective addition to make the story consist of 25 chapters.

The final chapter of *SBC* presents a romantic, fantastic, and memorable finale in a very impressive way, in which we find the true and genuine message to Alice Liddell from Carroll. As I have mentioned in this paper that Carroll created the shadowy self in *SB* and *SBC* to leave the wishful message in numbers to Alice Liddell,

Everything seems to fit all, implying a perfect circle of 100 in his mind. Unity is also the symbol of sea.

His doppelgänger did not betray his genuine intension unlike the miserable ending of “William Wilson” written by Edgar Allan Poe. Carroll might have been satisfied with not the completion but the conclusion of his final and lengthy set of novel toward the end of his life. To Dodgson the ending of Carroll’s final literary work was not the destination of his life but the new departure for everlasting Alice.

My research to explore the depth of his mentality, however, does not stop here, either. I will have to go back in time to 1874, when Carroll wrote the famous nonsense verse *The Hunting of the Snark* at the age of 42.

It consists of eight fits, and they seem to represent his agony during the darkest period of his life. I am going to join the hunting party across the sea in my next paper in order, audaciously, to reach the bottom of Dodgson-Carroll duality from a *manierismo* viewpoint.

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