Looking Autism in the Face:
Two New Perspectives on the Spectrum

by Robert B. Waltz

General Preface

This book was conceived as two separate items, one a journal article about Charles Dodgson, Alice Liddell, and autistic friendships; the other a book of famous examples of a particular sort of autistic, intended to demonstrate what these special people are like.

Unfortunately, the journal article grew out of control, and the book was hampered by the fact that I couldn't find enough information about one of the people I wanted to include. So I had one item too long to be a journal article, and another too short to be a book, both about autism. What could be more logical than combining them as two articles in one package?

The one complication is that the two contain common material. The section "Charles Lutwidge Dodgson: The Case for Autism" in *The Hidden Hall of Fame* is almost identical to the chapter ""A thought so dread, he faintly said, Extinguishes All Hope': Charles Dodgson and Autism" in *Alice's Evidence*. There is truly no reason to read both. So you can take any of several approaches:

- If you are interested in autism and autistics in general, read *The Hidden Hall of Fame* in its entirety, then skip to "'He stole those tarts, And took them right away': The Accusation" in *Alice's Evidence*.
- If you are interested specifically in autistic friendships, the strange, intense, troubling relationships experienced by autistics, read *Alice's Evidence* in its entirety.
- If you are interested specifically in Charles Dodgson/Lewis Carroll, and know the details of his life in outline, read *Alice's Evidence* in its entirety.
- If you are interested in Dodgson and *don't* know his history, read the Introduction to *The Hidden Hall of Fame* and the opening section on Dodgson in that book, then skip to "'He stole those tarts, And took them right away': The Accusation" in *Alice's Evidence*.
- If you want to read about some famous and important music-and-mathematics autistics, read *The Hidden Hall of Fame* and skip *Alice's Evidence*.

This book is really only a first draft. *Alice's Evidence* is mostly finished, but I had hoped to make *The Hidden Hall of Fame* much more complete. There are many more famous scientists, such as Albert Einstein and Henry Cavendish, who surely belong here (although my goal was to include only one example of each sort of "expression" of music-and-math-and-language autism). Many musicians, such as Ludwig van Beethoven, have been proposed as examples of the type. Several of us suspect that Francis James Child, perhaps the greatest scholar of folk music who ever lived, was autistic. Hans Christian Anderson has also been suggested, and Emily Dickinson. President James A. Garfield showed overwhelming signs of autism, and he was probably the most intelligent (though hardly the most successful) president in American history. Male autistics are more common than female, but there are some of the latter, and it would be nice to include them.

But to research all those people would take more time than I thought I had. Being myself autistic, I want people to see this work, and perhaps start to understand autistic friendships — and to eliminate the many vile speculations that have arisen about Charles Dodgson over the

years. More: I want people to realize that autistics are a very diverse group. This book is specifically about the sorts of autistics who specialize in music, mathematics, science, and language. There are good reasons to think that these autistics have other traits, in addition to their specialized skills, which are *not* shared with other autistics. I would hope to make it easier to find and recognize such people, and so give them the support they need.

There are two very deep lessons here. One is for the "neurotypicals" of the world — the non-autistics. It is that autistics are different — they have unusual emotions, and form very deep friendships, and deserve understanding and sympathy. The other is for the autistics themselves: That your friends probably *won't* have the same feelings as you do, and you need to respect that, and *ask* how to behave, so that the friendships can remain friendships. In the long run, this will be better for both of you.

If you are wondering about the rather poor poems that precede each book, I can only advise you to consider how Charles Dodgson dedicated his books....

In addition to the dedicatees, I owe many other thanks. Like many autistics, I'm a lone wolf, so I didn't get much research help, but I owe thanks to my parents, Dorothy and Frederick Waltz, for reference materials (among other things). Paul Stamler is most responsible for getting me to *finish* this thing. Ed Cray and David Engle also deserve credit for that. Don Nichols made suggestions about *Alice's Evidence.* Benji Flaming gave me another perspective on autism. Dr. Barbara Luskin helped me make sense out of many strange aspects of autism. And then there are the special friends from whom I learned so many lessons. Many of the lessons I learned were painful. But maybe you can learn them from me and be spared the pain. In the order I met them: Sally Amundson, Carol Anway, Barbara Edson, Mathea Erickson Bulander, Catie Jo Pidel, Elizabeth Rosenberg, Patricia Rosenberg, and "Sarah Jane."

May they live in a world in which all people find their skills and gifts fully appreciated!

Robert B. Waltz
August 2013

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The Hidden Hall of Fame:
Four Autistics Who Changed the World

by Robert B. Waltz

To

Elizabeth Rosenberg

Catie Jo Pidel

Patricia Rosenberg

Who showed me where I was wrong

and to

Sarah Jane and her son

wherever you are

in hopes it may help make a better world for them

Eyes so wide with wonder
Looking for the key,
In the tongues of others
Zealously she sees
A tale with hidden meaning
Battling to be free.

Ears will hear the story
Told where'er she goes;
How many other hearers
Rejoice in what she knows!
Oh, can we ever match
Such a blooming rose?

Ever may she tell the tale,
New words for the old,
Bearing on her journey
Each precious word untold,
Roving the world over
Giving gifts like gold.

✧✧✧✧✧

Passing minstrels tell a tale,
A tale of joy and love,
That is carried on the wind
Rung down from high above.
I would tell you this story,
Carried by flying birds,
It is a tale of treasure —
A treasure beyond words.

Read to me this story,
Oh, may it come to you!
Send this joy upon her;
Ever may it come true.
Now may your heart be joyful,
By land and sea and air,
Even amid the sorrows
Real folk ever must share,
Guard her from every care!

Preface to "The Hidden Hall of Fame"

It was clear from the start that I was different. I was slow to start to talk. I had trouble learning to tie my shoes, and to tell left from right. In elementary school, I had no friends. My parents were advised that it was not safe for me to go to a public junior high school; I simply did not have the defenses to deal with the bullies. My first time in college, I flunked out, despite what was, by every other measure, extremely high intelligence.

My parents persisted. They pushed me back into college, and this time, in a slightly different environment, I was able to earn my degree and go on to gainful, if not lucrative, work. But I still wasn't really right. In my thirties and forties, my life stagnated; I had lost my college friends, and had no ambitions, no plans — really, no life. My health deteriorated, but I did nothing. I did not find my own home until my parents forced me to. I watched as my income slowly fell.

It was not until I was forty-nine that circumstances changed. I met a person who caused me to try to take more control of my life — and I heard a story about Asperger's Syndrome (high-functioning autism, as it is now called) that described a condition very like mine.

I investigated, and it became quite clear that I did indeed suffer from Asperger's or something like it. In 2012, at the age of fifty-one, I was formally diagnosed as autistic.

So I finally had a name for what I suffered. But I had no cure. There is no cure for autism. All we can do is try to alleviate the effects. Hard to do, in my case — in the process of learning who and what I was, I had lost my job, and had formed and destroyed two friendships that meant a great deal to me. As a matter of fact, the only two close friendships I had.

As I fought through these problems, I sought to find people who were more like me. The obvious place to seek them was among other autistics. And yet, I found that I was no more like most autistics than I was like "neurotypicals" — ordinary people. If anything, I was *less* like them.

Which is extraordinarily odd, because the people I liked best — the handful of "special friends" who reshaped my life — had strong autistic traits themselves. In other words, my favorite people were autistics, and yet I didn't care for most autistics.

Autism is a very complex condition. The definition is of a disorder involving the emotions and social interactions — people with autism have a lot of trouble understanding other people. But the way to think about it is that the brain has been rearranged. In autistics, much of the processing power that normally is devoted to social interactions is devoted to — something else. *And that something else varies from autistic to autistic.* Most autistics have some area in which they are particularly good, even though they are likely to be very bad at life skills and areas outside their specialization: "[I]f we are not very, very good at something we tend to do it very poorly. Little comes naturally — except for whatever random, inexplicable, and often uncontrollable gifts we may have."[1]

[1] Page; full citation data lost.

It was Dr. Barbara Luskin who pointed out to me the logical consequence of this. Most people have similar abilities in most "typical" areas — that is, someone with average intelligence will have roughly average abilities in writing, mathematics, or art. It is not so for me; I am good at mathematics, and I hope you will find me a decent writer — but I can't draw for beans, and I hate small talk, and some forms of fiction are almost incomprehensible for me. Is there a pattern to this?

It was a comment of Temple Grandin's that resolved this contradiction for me. Grandin, who has met more autistics than almost anyone alive, believes that there are several common types. One of them is a group with particular skills in music and mathematics.

That is the key. *My* type of autistic is the "music and math" type.

Grandin does not mention language skills as a characteristic of this type. And yet, my close friends have included at least two extraordinarily gifted writers and at least three highly gifted linguists.

So perhaps there is a music-math-and-language type. Or perhaps the boundaries of the type are a little vague. The crucial point is that there is a kind of autistic to which I belong. What's more, many other autistics have belonged to this type — and some have accomplished very great things in their time. There is no hard-and-fast test for autism, so it is not possible to definitively prove that a dead person was autistic. But all four men profiled in this book had many autistic traits, and skills of the sort associated with my own music-math-and-language type. What sorts of work would you expect from people who naturally have special skills in music, mathematics, science, and language? Surely they would be musicians, scientists or mathematicians, linguists, or writers. I've picked one historical example of each type. So this book is an attempt to show what autistics can do — and also make a plea for understanding for those of us who try so hard and make so many mistakes. Perhaps, with a little help, we too can do great things....

Introduction: What Is Autism? A Personal Perspective

Autism is a psychological development disorder characterized by difficulties in communication and understanding. Most authors on the subject, starting from that, go on to explain some of the characteristics of the condition — but I would rather give a more "mechanical" description.

The human brain is an incredibly complex mechanism, with different parts serving different functions. For example, in most people, Broca's Area and Wernicke's Area are responsible for speech — talking and listening with comprehension. Each part of the brain has certain tasks which it performs, and for which it is tweaked. We can see this by watching which parts of the brain "light up" in brain scans when a person performs certain tasks.

Brain scans of autistics show that their brains *don't* work this way. A job that, in an ordinary person, would activate a particular area of the brain may, in an autistic, be scattered all over the brain, or be redirected to a different area. *Which* area varies from autistic to autistic. If the ordinary brain is a finely-tuned mechanism for performing the role of being part of human society, the autistic brain seems almost to have been assembled from a kit by someone who was unable to understand the instructions.

But now imagine that you are assembling that kit just by trying to guess how the pieces work. Say it's a prefabricated house. A lot of things will go wrong as you put it together. The roof might leak or have holes. The rooms will be the wrong sizes. If it's electrified, you may not be able to make all the electrical connections. But *some* parts are very likely to end up bigger and better-furnished and more attractive than in the "standard" house.

That's the way it is with autistics. A lot of parts are damaged or messed up. But there is usually some special part that gets a whole lot of extra brain power and ability. It isn't usually talked about, except as a sort of obsession (the "special interest") or the rare "savant" ability, but almost all autistics have specializations — particular subject areas in which they are best. Often they will be very good at this one particular thing.

Temple Grandin has said that most of the autistics she meets fell into one of three categories. One of them, the music and mathematics category, is clearly the type I belong to. It seems pretty clear that most of my friends are also of this type — and while all of them have a strong interest in music (and most of them are skilled musicians), their other interests are not confined to mathematics and the sciences. The majority are also polyglots — one of them speaks six languages, mostly learned quite casually, and many of them are interested in linguistics. This particular type of autistic should really be the music/mathematics/science/language type.

Of Grandin's other types I can say little. I hope they can find their voices, but I am not the one to speak for them.

There are some traits shared by most autistics. I am not going to go into detail here; I'll bring them out by example as we look at various autistics of the past. But an overview is probably good.

The key aspect of autism is trouble with social relationships. Most humans have a strong sense of empathy — an innate ability to understand other people, and to sympathize with their emotions.

Autistics do not. Many have *some* sense of empathy, but it is much weaker or more limited than that of ordinary people. This means that we find it hard to tell when we are boring people, or when we should offer sympathy or comfort — or when we are asking for too much or applying too much pressure.

This produces social failures and insecurities; with them often comes a strong sense of anxiety. There is good reason to think that autistics are inherently more anxious than normal people — some people compare it to built-in post-traumatic stress disorder. But social failure makes the anxiety worse — and, often, the anxiety causes the social failures to be more severe, in an ever-worsening cycle.

There are two other failings associated with autism that I would especially highlight: trouble with decision-making and trouble with emotions.

The problems with decisions perhaps have "mechanical" causes. The pre-frontal cortex of the brain is responsible for decision-making — and, in autistics, the cortex often shows significant abnormalities. And so autistics have trouble with making choices. At least, that's what neurotypicals say is happening It doesn't feel that way to me. It's not that I have a hard time making decisions; it's more a case of *not realizing decisions need to be made.* There is a *lack* — a lack of volition, of "get-up-and-go," of the simple urge to say, "Something must be done about this." The tendency is to simply plod on, not confronting the situation, until disaster strikes.

The emotional difficulties may also stem from physical causes. Emotions are largely determined by the amygdala — one might think of this as the brain's "emotion mixer," responding to situations by sending out mood-causing hormones. And the autistic amygdala is again abnormal — meaning that it produces unusual emotions. Sometimes it's just a normal emotion at an unusual time. Many autistics are subject to "meltdowns" — sudden bursts of anger for what seem like trivial reasons. These at least can be understood. The other emotions… are harder, perhaps because normal people don't get these emotional mixes. For instance, autistics form very strong, very permanent friendships — friendships so devoted that they are often interpreted as being in love, or being obsessed. Speaking only for myself, I can say that I have repeatedly suffered from having my emotions misinterpreted — at the cost of jobs and friends and much of my life.

So the key to understanding autistics can often consist of admitting that we *can't* understand their (our, my) emotions in ordinary terms, and accepting they are different. As the great people in the following pages were different....

Each of the four parts that follows gives a brief sketch of the life of the person involved. This is not intended as a full biography, and involves no original research. It's just to give you a feeling for the person's life. Then comes the evidence for autism. This will generally be fuller than the biography itself, because it involves a detailed look at who the person was. This is particularly true for the first part, about Charles Dodgson, because I am using him to illustrate most of the leading effects of autism.

The Writer: Charles Ludwidge Dodgson

Sentence first — verdict afterwards.
Charles Dodgson ("Lewis Carroll"), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* Chapter 12.

Who He Was

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was born on January 27, 1832, the third child and first son of Charles Dodgson (II) and his first cousin Francis Jane "Fanny" Lutwidge. Eight other children would follow. Dodgson's father had been an extremely gifted student at Oxford, but at this time was serving an impoverished parish in Daresbury, Cheshire.

In 1843, the Dodgson family moved to Croft Rectory in Yorkshire, a much better living. Soon after, young Charles left home for school for the first time; he attended the nearby Richmond School, where he was a successful student of classics. In 1846, he was transferred to Rugby School. This was a miserable experience for him; he seems to have suffered significant hazing. Still, he managed to do well academically.

In 1850, he was admitted to Christ Church College of Oxford University, his father's alma mater. As it turned out, he would spend the rest of his life there. He continued to study classics — but also began to seriously study mathematics, at which he showed even greater aptitude. When he earned his bachelor's degree in 1854, it was with first class honors in mathematics but only second class in classics.

Shortly after that, the old Dean of Christ Church, Thomas Gaisford, died. His successor was Henry George Liddell, a distinguished scholar who, with Robert Scott, had published a *Greek-English Lexicon* which was so authoritative that it remains the standard reference for classical Greek to this day.

This event was to prove pivotal to Dodgson in two ways. For starters, in 1855 Dodgson was appointed the new Mathematical Lecturer at Christ Church. But it was the family of Dean Liddell which would influence him the most.

Dodgson was fascinated by gadgets and inventions, and in April 1856, he was studying the still fairly new, and difficult, art of photography. The Deanery of Christ Church was a handsome building, and Dodgson tried to photograph it with his friend Reginald Southey. Unfortunately, the photos did not turn out well — but Dodgson spent enough time there to meet the three daughters of the dean, Lorina, Alice, and Edith Liddell. It was a fateful meeting; they would, over the next seven years, become his very close friends.

Dodgson had always had the urge to write, and especially to write humor and nonsense. Even as a boy, he had hand-edited a series of "magazines" at the rectory. Now, as an adult with a steady job, he began writing for publication. In May 1856, he offered "The Path of Roses" to editor Edmund Yates — but he wanted to write under a pseudonym. After some negotiations, they agreed on "Lewis Carroll" — a Latinized version of "Charles Lutwidge" with the names reversed. It would come to be a far more famous name than "Dodgson."

In 1857, Dodgson earned his Master of Arts, which was the highest degree he ever received. He continued to teach mathematics. In 1860, he published his first monograph, *Notes on the First Two Books of Euclid,* an instructional text.

Dodgson was also studying for the priesthood. At least officially; it was a requirement for his academic position. But he doesn't seem to have liked the idea. In 1861, having little choice, he was ordained a Deacon in the Church of England — a significant position in the Anglican Church. But he never went on to become a minister, even though that required him to get what amounted to a special waiver from Dean Liddell.

Although a handsome young man, Dodgson seems never to have sought a wife in this period. There is no sign he even thought about it. Insofar as he had a social life at all, it involved children — and especially the three daughters of Dean Liddell. During the summers, they often went on trips, or boating on the Thames. On one of those trips, in 1862 (perhaps July 4, although the date is somewhat uncertain), he told the three girls a tale in which he sent Alice plunging down a rabbit hole into a very strange world inhabited by talking caterpillars, animated cards, and a grin without a cat. Alice, the second daughter, liked it so much that she urged him to write it down.

It would be a very long time before she saw the result, and by that time, their relationship had changed utterly. We do not know why, but on about June 28, 1863, Dodgson was cut off from the Liddell children. The estrangement was not absolutely complete, but there were no more trips, no more gifts, no more storytelling. Some have suspected Dodgson of being in love with Alice, and perhaps trying to propose. More likely he made a social gaffe, and the parties blew it out of proportion until reconciliation seemed impossible. Whatever happened, Dodgson clearly remained devoted to Alice (and, probably, her sisters), but was not allowed much contact.

An ordinary person might have sought to change his life in some way after that disappointment. Dodgson did not. He continued his work at Christ Church — and continued to work on Alice's Adventures. He worked up an manuscript of the story, which he eventually gave to Alice — but he also showed it around, and was told that it should be published. He padded out the story, and hired John Tenniel to illustrate it. It was published in 1865 as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* and it became a worldwide hit. In 1871, he published a sequel, *Through the Looking Glass.*

After a few minor moves around campus, Dodgson had been granted in rooms in Christ Church's Tom Quad. He kept those rooms for the rest of his life — thirty years without ever changing his residence. But there seemed to be a dark stain on his soul. For years, we see signs of depression and sorrow in his diary. He was, in his view, worthless, selfish, flawed.

He tried to work it out in the only way he knew: By spending more time with children. He avoided adult social functions; he hated small talk. He made no attempt to seek a wife, nor did he try to achieve ordination as a minister. In 1876, he published his nonsense poem *The Hunting of the Snark,* but his muse was falling silent. He published mathematics books and political pamphlets, but no more fiction until his disastrous failure *Sylvie and Bruno.* Meanwhile, Alice Liddell had married Reginald Hargreaves, and although Dodgson kept sending gifts and letters, the friendship seemed never to revive. In 1881, he resigned his post as mathematical lecturer and contented himself with the income from his writing and other small jobs. He also watched over

the rest of his siblings after their father's death in 1868. He often visited them, and it was on one of those visits that he took ill with pneumonia. He died of it on January 14, 1898. He was buried with little ceremony, and Charles Dodgson is almost forgotten, except as a member of a freak show. But the *Alice* books live on.

It was, without doubt, the life of an eccentric. Was it the life of an autistic? This is, of course, what we want to learn. The case is presented in the next section. This is the longest chapter in the book, because I will also be using it to demonstrate some of the characteristics associated with autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

The Case for Autism

On November 11, 2011, I conducted a Google search for "Lewis Carroll" and "Asperger's [Syndrome]."

Google came back with more than half a million hits.

With so many sites to sift through, I wasn't able to find out who originated the suggestion that Dodgson was autistic — if, indeed, anyone knows. Clearly the idea is widespread.[2] It obviously is not possible to diagnose a man who was almost half a century dead when Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger published their research,[3] but the evidence is worthy of a detailed look. If Dodgson wasn't on the autism spectrum, he should have been.... The list below summarized the various autistic traits shown by the author of the "Alice" books.

Those who are not autistic should understand that there is no one trait in the list below is considered diagnostic for autism (indeed, there really *is* no single diagnostic trait for autism), but the characteristics listed are often associated with its victims.

Mathematical inclination. Dodgson was a professional mathematician — he seems to have been a mathematician born. His family loved to tell a story about how Dodgson, as a small boy, pestered his father to explain logarithms to him.[4] Although he never earned a doctorate, his credentials were significant: He was first in his class in mathematics in 1854, by a significant margin, and was one of five students earning a First Class degree.[5] The range of subjects he taught was diverse; in his first full year as a tutor, he had students studying differential calculus, conic sections, trigonometry, and "Euclid and Algebra." Although most of these are subjects now taught in high school, it would be a rare school where a single instructor was prepared to teach them all. It was none other than Dean Liddell, the father of Alice Liddell, who appointed him to his mathematics lectureship.[6]

Tony Beale wrote an article, "C. L. Dodgson, Mathematician,"[7] which denigrates his talents (while admitting that he was handicapped by being at Oxford when all the best English mathematicians were at Cambridge[8]). What Beale really demonstrates, however, is Dodgson's conservatism in established matters. Dodgson was fundamentally sound, and was often creative in areas not heavily explored.

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[2] See, e.g., Carley, p. 41.

[3] Kanner was responsible for first describing autism, while Asperger described what came to be called Asperger('s) Syndrome but is now listed as simple a form of autism. Both did their primary work in the 1940s.

[4] ClarkCarroll, p. 18.

[5] WilsonR, pp. 51-52.

[6] WilsonR, p. 61

[7] Included in Norton, pp. 294-302.

[8] Norton, pp. 295

Dodgson began his mathematical career as a lecturer at Christ Church college in 1855, spending the rest of his life at Oxford.[9] He only once changed jobs in his entire life, giving up his teaching post to write and take such odd jobs as curator of the Christ Church Common Room.[10]

Although not all autism victims are good at mathematics, "We… recognize that the personalities of some of the great mathematicians included many of the characteristics of Asperger's Syndrome."[11] And on tests of relationship between autism and mathematics, "The correlation between math and autism and/or Asperger's was proved again; mathematicians scored higher than other scientists [on tests for autism], who scored higher than students in the humanities, who scored roughly the same as random controls."[12]

Dodgson's work was solid although too conservative to contain major breakthroughs[13] — but it is noteworthy that one of his private examples actually anticipated von Neumann's and Morgenstern's creation of game theory by half a century, when he tried to create a "utility" system for measuring and comparing pleasure by creating a unit based on eating a particular food.[14] Dodgson may have had other hints of game theory; scholars find the forerunner of the two person zero-sum game in his work on voting theory.[15]

Dodgson's one real defect as a mathematician, apart from his failure to pursue the implications of some of his better ideas such as the utility system, was his rigidity in certain areas. His insistence on doing plane geometry just the way Euclid did it was a real limitation.[16] Reading about this is very reminiscent of the autistic trait of insisting on exact terminology — e.g. Liane Holliday Willey's insistence as a girl that she could not take a nap on her mat, because she did not *have* a mat, because the item she had been given was a *rug*.[17]

Dodgson was "an exceptionally capable and dedicated scholar who nonetheless lacked fundamental creative mathematical genius. Had he only mapped out for himself a career in logic, an almost uncharted sphere… his ultimate scholastic achievement might have been considerably greater."[18]

There is only one exception to his record of successes (which included several mathematics prizes),[19] but it is revealing. He was hoping to become the Mathematical Lecturer at Christ

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[9] CollingwoodLife, p. 24 (chapter II). Woolf, p. 39.

[10] Woolf, p. 276.

[11] Attwood, p. 240.

[12] Gessen, p. 176, citing Simon Baron-Cohen.

[13] See the article by Beale cited in note 16.

[14] Woolf, p. 48, although — as a non-mathematician — she does not observe the very great potential significance of Dodgson's idea. Sadly, he expressed it in a letter to a friend, Edith Denman, rather than in a mathematical publication, so no one followed up on the idea.

[15] Cohen, p. 428.

[16] WilsonR, pp. 81-97, although this attempts to justify Dodgson's conservatism.

[17] Willey, p. 23.

[18] ClarkCarroll, p. 69.

[19] Stoffel, p. 18.

Church, and was trying to study for a mathematics examination as a result. This was "independent study." He failed.[20] Not only did he fail to organize his studies properly but, having done poorly on the first part of the exam, he did not even attempt to finish it. This is typical of autism: "Executive Functioning (EF) is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of neuropsychological processes, including the ability to set goals, initiate a plan, inhibit distracting stimuli, monitor performance, and flexibly change from one focus to another. EF deficits in children with AS are now well documented."[21] Val Gil lists nine things autistic students have the most trouble with. The top two are "Too much choice" and "Open-ended, vague assignments/ tasks."[22]

Social isolation. As a young man, Dodgson is said to have had few friends outside his immediate family.[23] He "never ceased to find ordinary society a bore, and often a stressful bore."[24] Dodgson's own family was fond of quoting a characterization of him produced by a psychic, "diffident; rather shy in general society; comes out in the home circle; rather obstinate; very clever...."[25] This clairvoyant, "Miss Anderson," also said that he was good with numbers, would make a good actor, was witty, would like poetry, and might compose it. (Dodgson's nephew, who related the story, thinks it a remarkable prediction; more likely she either knew Dodgson or was coached. Either way, it became family lore.)

Dodgson was so shy that he could spend hours in a social gathering and not say a word.[26] Mark Twain once remarked, "he was the stillest and shyest full-grown man I have ever met except 'Uncle Remus.'"[27] His friend A. S. Russell declared, "Provided he knew you so his shyness was not involved," he was a brilliant conversationalist.[28] Isa Bowman spoke of his "extreme shyness."[29] Evelyn Hatch said he had "an almost morbid horro of being 'lionised' as the author of *Alice in Wonderland.*"[30] His obituary noted that he was "remarkable for his shyness and dislike of publicity."[31] Another source spoke of his "morbid dislike of publicity."[32]

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[20] Cohen, p. 51; Leach, pp. 173-174, speaks of this as "sloth" and quotes T. B. Strong as saying his inclination for work was "irregular" but fails to take into account how he tried to make plans and failed to implement them.
[21] Janine Manjiviona, "Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties"; Prior, p. 64.
[22] Val Gill, "Challenges Faced by Teachers Working with Students with Asperger Syndrome," Prior, p. 203.
[23] Hudson, p. 26.
[24] Woolf, pp. 219-220.
[25] CollingwoodLife, p. 28 [chapter II].
[26] Gardner, p. xvi [10].
[27] Woolf, p. 72
[28] Cohen, p. 285
[29] Bowman, p. 6.
[30] Hatch, p. 93.
[31] Hudson, p. 1.
[32] Quoted by Cohen, p. 295.

We can also find instances of his shyness in his diaries. On one occasion, when he undertook to preach a sermon, he was so afraid that he went to the curate of the congregation involved to ask him to have a spare sermon ready, in case Dodgson couldn't go through with it.[33]

He disliked adult "small talk": "in my old age, I find dinner parties more and more fatiguing.... I much grudge giving an evening (even if it were not tiring) to bandying small-talk with dull people."[34] Small talk is often uncomfortable and difficult for those with autism. "He hated publicity, and tried to avoid it in every way."[35] Even in his early days at Oxford, he seems to have disliked crowds.[36] And his niece told a story of him becoming so uncomfortable at a party, where he had to meet a large number of people, that he simply fled, leaving his hostess and niece to make excuses.[37] Compare this to the tale of the autism sufferer who, in the middle of entertaining, "wants to go to another room and look through his favorite magazines or go for a walk or to bed.... Many women have become experts at making excuses for their partners...."[38]

Cohen reports that Dodgson was "Insensitive in some social situations[;] he could also be rude, rigid, and offputting"[39] — quite typical autistic behavior.

Dodgson's early schooling came at home, but he was eventually sent out to boarding schools — first the Richmond School,[40] then the more famous Rugby. The latter was known for the way the students bullied other students. A boy with autism could expect worse than most — and "From every point of view life at Rugby was a personal disaster for the young Dodgson. He could not accept the transition from the intimate family atmosphere of Richmond School… to the vast impersonality of Rugby."[41] Large schools are often very difficult for autism sufferers.[42]

Rugby was particularly bad in this regard, because the school rules didn't just ignore bullying, they actively encouraged it;[43] Dodgson would later declare that there was nothing that could induce him to return there.[44]

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[33] Hudson, p. 301.

[34] Quote from CollingwoodLife, p. 109 [Chapter VI]; cf. Woolf, p. 129. There are other examples of Dodgson's withdrawal in ClarkCarroll, p. 260, although she cites other reasons than simply dislike of social activities.

[35] Quote from CollingwoodLife, p. 130 [Chapter VII]. Cohen, pp. 297-299, reaches the same conclusion.

[36] Cohen, p. 61.

[37] Cohen, p. 301.

[38] Aston, p. 68 — a section significantly labelled "The deserter."

[39] Cohen, p. 301.

[40] ClarkCarroll, p. 36.

[41] ClarkCarroll, p. 41.

[42] Willey, p. 48. Speaking for myself, the only academic setting where I achieved success was in college. The school had a larger total student body than any other institution I attended, but the physics department was small enough that I was able to fit.

[43] ClarkCarroll, pp. 41-42; Cohen, pp. 20-22.

[44] Leach, p. 19; Stoffel, p. 18; Hudson, p. 46.

Dodgson, even though he attended a college noteworthy for the aristocrats who attended it and for their social activities, "did not join any of the 'sets' or clubs that were the rage; he preferred to stand apart and follow his own program of studies and recreation."[45]

In later years, he expressed a joking desire "to get imprisoned for 10 years, 'without hard labor,' and with the use of book and writing materials"[46] — a desire for isolated work which is clearly much more likely of an autistic than an ordinary person. He also declared that "Nature evidently meant me for a Hermit."[47]

Dodgson, indeed, seems to have disliked having to deal with more than one person at once; despite his adventures with the three Liddell sisters, in later years, he preferred to entertain one little girl at a time, at a dinner "party" with just two participants.[48] This, obviously, meant no chaperones — a point on which Evelyn Hatch says he had something of a a hangup.[49] Many autistics are convinced that they need only one friend.[50]

Despite his success with children, there seems no question that Dodgson's natural intellectual skills exceeded his natural skills with people; learning, for the most part, came easily to him; teaching did not.[51] This is typical of autism sufferers.

Even his close friend Gertrude Chataway commented, "He told me it was the greatest pleasure he could have to converse freely with a child and feel the depths of her mind.... I don't think he ever really understood that we whom he had known as children, could not always remain such."[52]

Chataway's insight is extremely deep. One of the most severe problems faced by autistics is their inability to understand the Theory of Mind — the idea that other people had different thought patterns. "The psychological term Theory of Mind (ToM) means the ability to recognize and understand thoughts, beliefs, desires and intentions of other people in order to make sense of their behavior and predict what they are going to do next. It has also been described as 'mind reading' or [the lack of it as] 'mind blindness' (Baron-Cohen 1995) or, colloquially, a difficulty in 'putting oneself in another person's shoes.'"[53] Dodgson had learned enough to realize that others did not think as he did, but he perhaps had a hard time understanding that they could *change* and yet still not think the way he did. We see another hint of this from Isa Bowman, who said "that

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[45] Cohen, pp. 36-37.

[46] Cohen, p. 458.

[47] Cohen, p. 460.

[48] Moses, p. 136, quoting Beatrice Hatch. Hatch, pp. 6-7, makes the same point. I recall that one of my own friends, who in hindsight showed many signs of autism, found it almost impossible to talk with more than one person at a time — if in a group of people, she always gave her full attention to just one.

[49] Hatch, p. 5.

[50] Willey, pp. 19-20, was in this situation in her youth, and described her feelings: "I had my friend. She had me. End of story. Anyone else was an obvious intrusion...."

[51] Leach, p. 20.

[52] Quoted by Phyllis Greenacre; Bloom, p. 111.

[53] Attwood, p. 112.

he was never quite as nice to her when she was playing bad characters, as when he saw her playing 'nice' girls."[54]

He had a hard time with social rituals, too; "He developed an annoying habit of descending unannounced on friends with his mountain of [photographic] equipment."[55] "He rarely accepted invitations to dine, but would 'drop in' at a less exactly appointed time...."[56] He often completely failed to understand his errors — on one occasion, for instance, he made an arrangement with Lorina Liddell and Miss Prickett to visit the Deanery, but failed to clear it with Mrs. Liddell and found himself largely barred from visiting the family for some months.[57]

Harold Bloom's conclusion about Dodgson's writings is that "What is repressed in them is his discomfort with culture."[58]

Concentration and time management problems; the Special Interest. Dodgson "always dislik[ed] to break off from the pursuit of any subject which interested him; apt to forget his meals and toil on for the best part of the night, rather than stop short of the object which he had in view."[59] Autism sufferers are generally much worse than "neurotypicals" at "multitasking."[60]

Also part of autism is the aforementioned failure of "executive function," which results in "behavior that is out of bounds. *You get stuck* and it is hard to get out of this. Further, you are *captured by incidentals.*"[61]

The above description also reminds us of the autistic "Special Interest": "Discussions [with autism victims] about their particular interests often include references to not being able to remove the thought from their mind, and parents and teachers report that they have great difficulty interrupting or distracting them when they are totally absorbed in the interest."[62] Other sources indicate that such problems with changing the pattern of thought can extend beyond the special interest to any topic of immediate concern.

As examples of Dodgson's unusual interests, we note that he was the English-speaking world's first real student in the theory of voting, arguing against a series of ballot "reforms" which he correctly predicted would result in increased partisanship and poorer representation of the interests of the people. His publication "A Discussion of the Various Methods of Procedure in Conducting Elections" is a famous treatise on voting which broke ground in various ways.[63] Dodgson came to advocate the "single transferrable vote" (now usually called Instant Runoff

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[54] Woolf, p. 202.
[55] Gordon, p. 88.
[56] Phyllis Greenacre, in Bloom, p. 108.
[57] ClarkAlice, p. 57.
[58] Bloom, p. 20.
[59] T. B. Strong, as quoted on p. 290 of Cohen.
[60] Dubin, p. 26.
[61] Frith, p. 64.
[62] Tony Attwood, "Understanding and Managing Circumscribed Interests," Prior, p. 136
[63] Szpiro, pp. 104-108; Poundstone, pp. 151-152; WilsonR, pp. 132-135

Voting) with multi-seat districts. He was also a pioneer of photography (he has been called an "obsessive photographer,"[64] which is interesting in light of the nature of special interests), and was the first to examine the need for seeding in tennis tournaments.[65] And he was a Euclid nut.

He also had managed to memorize pi to 71 decimal places.[66]

It is also reported that his letters to his sister Elizabeth were so long that even his family joked about them.[67]

A Rigid World View. It is very common for autism sufferers to see the world in rather rigid terms — there are rules, and that is the way things work, and people should conform to them.[68] Dodgson definitely had problems with this: "He had a curiously naïve belief that others could be converted to his way of thinking if only his arguments were logical enough. His own thought processes were startlingly precise.... If he failed to convince, he was both puzzled and dismayed, blaming himself unreasonably for inadequately conceived lines of argument, and privately going over his points again and again in hopes of finding where he had gone wrong."[69]

For autism sufferers, "A rule is a rule, no matter what. They operate in black-and-white terms, whereas we are so often in the gray. No wonder we confuse them — and vice versa."[70] We see an example of this sort of rigidity in one of the few known disputes between members of the Dodgson family; Charles and his brother Wilfred had a disagreement in 1857 about college rules — which Charles insisting that the rules should all be followed even if senseless.[71]

"Boundary" problems. One of the most famous characterizations of children with autism is "Aliens" (or "Martians") "in the Playground. "It is almost trite to say that Carroll remained a child to whom the world looked even madder than it does to most of us. He was too polite, or too cautious, to say so, and perfected a technique for getting around freely without any worse tag than 'eccentric,' but one of his logical dilemmas was, 'They are sane. I am not like them. I am insane.'"[72]

Dodgson "appears to have so closely identified with his dream heroine that his problems of identity, or establishing coherent selfhood in the face of the violent changes inherent in human life and the disorder at the heart of the order, seem mirrored in hers."[73]

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[64] Winchester, p. 69.

[65] Collins, p. 7, although the summary in Collins doesn't really correspond to what Dodgson wrote.

[66] Gordon, p. 88. Note that what brought Tammet to fame was memorizing even more digits of pi.

[67] Winchester, p. 27. I must confess to having the same problem of going on and on about things. Oh, you noticed?

[68] Val Gill, "Challenges Faced by Teachers Working with Students with Asperger Syndrome," Prior, p. 195. Compare Figure 4.2 on p. 100 of Myles/Simpson, which gives an example of this sort of rigid rule-following."

[69] ClarkCarroll, pp. 115-116.

[70] Prior, p. 195.

[71] Cohen, p. 201.

[72] Florence Becker Lennon, on p. 28 of Bloom. Much of Lennon's writing strikes me as romantic and silly, but this feels very right to me.

[73] Hough Haughton, on p. 201 of Bloom.

The problem of maintaining a complete identity is very severe for autistics. They lack "central coherence" — "a pre-set preference towards perceiving wholes rather than parts.... Weak central coherence (WCC) is a way of saying that context does not exert much force."[74] In other words, details are more important than the Big Picture. An example of how this works is the phrase "You go hunting with a knife and...." If you complete the sentence *with a knife and fork,* you have weak central coherence. If you hunt with a *knife and gun,* or *dog,* or *compass,* or something relevant to hunting, you have strong central coherence.[75]

All of this relates to Dodgson's problems with the distinction between himself, the real Alice, and his fictional Alice — he himself admitted more than once, although he never seems to have realized the implications, that he always thought of Alice Liddell as being seven years old.[76]

Devotion to a habitual plan. Dodgson's life, especially in his later years, followed an extremely strict routine — he maintained precise schedule even as an undergraduate, and it became more fixed over time.[77] His "life was devoted to tidiness and order."[78] He was quite cranky even about minor incidents.[79] Having achieved a comfortable set of rooms in 1868, he did not move again for the rest of his life.[80] "People with Asperger's syndrome often have difficulty establishing and coping with the changing patterns and expectations in daily life";[81] they have a desire to have ordered routines. "Doing the same thing, exactly the same thing, watching the same video, eating the same food, day after day, is the kind of excessive pattern that is found in autistic children."[82] Dodgson's habits were so strict that he demanded precise amounts of food — he is said to have measured the milk delivered[83] — and complained even when he was supplied with *more* than he wanted. Compare this to the autism sufferer who insisted on eating *precisely* 45 grams of porridge, which he actually measured with an electronic scale![84]

Nitpickiness. In a way typical of autism sufferers, Dodgson was much too finicky about details. The steward of Christ Church declared that "He was the most prolific malcontent."[85] In his later years, Dodgson — seemingly deliberately — made his curatorship tasks more complex than they needed to be, apparently for the sole purpose of making his life complicated! For other examples of his incredible persnicketiness, consider, his fulminations on the Christ Church belfry,[86] his

[74] Frith, p. 90.
[75] Example from Frith, p. 91. When I read that phrase, my first response was indeed to go hunting with a knife and fork!
[76] e.g. ClarkAlice, p. 208.
[77] Cohen, p. 37.
[78] Hugh Haughton, on p. 201 of Bloom.
[79] Woolf, pp. 62-63.
[80] Cohen, p. 233.
[81] Attwood, p. 185.
[82] Frith, pp. 11-12.
[83] Hudson, p. 256.
[84] Tammet, p. 2, speaking of his own daily habits.
[85] Woolf, p. 63.
[86] CollingwoodLife, pp. 73-74 [chapter IV]).

quarrel with a church about the size of hassocks,[87] his demand that Macmillan tie up the packages sent to him in a particular way,[88] or his absurd fight over service at Christ Church.[89]

Even his adoring, see-no-evil nephew admitted, "Mr. Dodgson was no easy man to work with; no detail was too small for his exact criticism."[90] Illustrators working with him found it "a distinctly wearying experience."[91] Indeed, when Harry Furniss, who illustrated *Sylvie and Bruno,* took the commission, John Tenniel warned him that he wouldn't last a week due to Dodgson's constant kibitzing.[92]

Trouble interacting with students. Dodgson's students apparently did not like his lectures very much; he seems to have had trouble interacting with them. This even though he clearly made overwhelming — and successful — attempts to help the students who *wanted* help.[93] He tried to use recreational topics in his lectures,[94] but this doesn't seem to have helped. Students talked of his "dry and perfunctory" lecturing style;[95] there are many instances instances of his students not showing up for his lectures.[96] "The general opinion of [his lectures] was that they were not only dull but that they were uninspiringly delivered."[97]

Emotional insensitivity and communication difficulty. Simon Baron-Cohen observes that "People with Asperger often put in too much detail. They don't know what to leave out. They are not taking into account what the listener needs to know."[98] If one looks at the problems Dodgson published as *A Tangled Tale,* they are often insufficiently specified — that is, not enough detail is provided to assure a particular answer. This was true of some of his other published works as well[99]— a disastrous defect for a mathematician.

Despite his obvious gifts with words, Dodgson could not always tell what would interest others. (Just read *Sylvie and Bruno* for an example....) And, while he was very good with the Liddell children early in life, he may have had more trouble entertaining young people later on.[100]

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87 Woolf, p. 63.
88 Phyllis Greenacre, on p. 107 of Bloom.
89 Cohen, p. 302.
90 CollingwoodLife, p. 59 [chapter IV].
91 Underground, p. 19.
92 ClarkCarroll, p. 242. Cohen, pp. 128-129, thinks Furniss was exaggerating, but it is noteworthy that Dodgson almost always found some major complain with the editions of his printed works — ClarkCarroll, pp. 249-250.
93 Woolf, p. 47.
94 WilsonR, pp. 65-66.
95 Cohen, p. 84
96 ClarkCarroll, p. 90
97 Hudson, p. 85.
98 Gessen, p. 179.
99 ClarkCarroll, p. 253
100 Cohen, p. 424; Gardner, p. xx [13-14]

Indeed, "continual misunderstandings and trivial grievances… bedevilled his personal relations."[101]

Truthfulness. He "tended to speak the truth, even if he spoke it in ways which were not clear to other people";[102] he also refused a small Christmas gift from a fruit supplier on the grounds that he could not accept a bribe.[103] Autism sufferers are often "remarkably honest."[104]

"He was extremely clever at saying exactly what he meant, yet not meaning what he appeared to say."[105] This might almost be called the autistic version of lying, or at least of dealing with social convention that demands "white lies": what an autistic says can usually be relied upon to be literally true, but it may not mean what you think it means....

Fairness and Justice. "Adults with Asperger's syndrome can be renowned for... having a strong sense of social justice,"[106] and Dodgson "opposed sham and greed wherever he saw it; he worried about the poor and the sick and did all he could to assuage hardships wherever he encountered them."[107]

The Need for Reassurance. "Carroll had a strong need for loving attention."[108] He showed it in the way he constantly sought out people who reassured him. Many autistics need constant reassurance; John Elder Robison, for instance, describes how he may ask his wife "Do you like your mate?" as many as four or five times a day, and ask her to touch him to reassure him.[109] This no doubt ties in with the anxiety that often comes with autism — and can be very off-putting to some people. But children, with their unfeigned affection, could give Dodgson the reassurance he needed.

Speech peculiarities. There is no record of Dodgson suffering any of the various speech peculiarities associated with autism such as excessive pedantry or monotonous delivery[110] — indeed, he was noted for his ability to vary his voice and act several parts when reading stories. But he was bothered all his life by a stammer — a genetic problem shared by most of his siblings (six of his seven sisters were said to stammer to some degree[111]), for which he is known to have

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101 Hudson, p. 266,

102 Woolf, p. 173; similarly p. 263, "telling outright lies seems to have been against his complicated inner code."

103 Cohen, p. 304.

104 Attwood, p. 117; compare Gerhardt's remark on p. xv of Carley that Asperger's sufferers are often honest to a fault because competent lying is a complex social skill.

105 Woolf, p. 58.

106 Attwood, p. 118.

107 Cohen, pp. xx-xxi.

108 Woolf, p. 133.

109 Robison, pp. 254-256.

110 Attwood, pp. 218-221. There is also a reported link between autism and dyslexia; Digby Tantam, "Assessment and Treatment of Comorbid Emotional and Behavioral Problems," Prior, p. 153.

111 Stoffel, p. 30.

sought professional help;[112] this might have concealed other speech problems. And there is a curious tale told by Isa Bowman, of a time when they were walking together and were interrupted. Afterward Dodgson "became very difficult to understand and talked in a nervous preoccupied manner."[113]

Autistics "tend to use idiosyncratic words and metaphors."[114] "Jabberwocky," anyone? How about *The Hunting of the Snark?* An early schoolmaster wrote of Dodgson's Latin that he was "moreover marvelously ingenious in replacing the ordinary inflexions of nouns and verbs, as detailed in our grammars, by more exact analogies, or convenient forms of his own devising."[115] And he insisted on a peculiar orthography for the use of apostrophes never seen before or since — e.g "ca'n't," "wo'n't," with two apostrophes, but nonetheless "don't."[116] Compare this to his habit of using fractions for hours — 6¼ for 6:15, or 5½ for 5:30, for instance.[117] Moses declares of his early writings, "The spelling was precise and correct, but the punctuation was peculiar, to say the least."[118] She also notes what many others have seen: his extreme use of italics.[119] Such tendency toward regularization of language has been seen in other autism sufferers.[120]

"His general writing was not very legible,"[121] and many autistics, who have trouble with fine motor control, have poor handwriting.[122]

Mood problems. Depression is a very common accompaniment of autism, with roughly a third of the victims suffering clinical cases.[123] Many more suffer from "dysthymia," which we might

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[112] The first reported visits came in 1859 when he consulted Dr. James Hunt; Cohen, p. 76. The visits would continue for years, and he would later see other specialists; Cohen, p. 259; Stoffel, pp. 30-31; Woolf, pp. 75-79.

[113] Bowman, p. 7; cf. Leach, p. 53. To be sure, Leach thinks that Bowman was inventing much of her material — after all, Bowman consistently portrayed herself as three or four years younger than her actual age (Leach, p. 55; Woolf, p. 106) — but why invent this? According to Helen Tager-Flusberg, "Effects of Language and Communications Deficits on Learning and Behavior," Prior, p. 89, "Clinicians often report that it is difficult to understand or follow conversations with a person with AS. To investigate this observation systematically, Fine, Bartollucci, Szatmari, and Ginsberg (1994) compared interviews conducted with adolescents... the group with AS would refer to individuals without introducing them appropriately, switch references without clear linguistic marking, and use pronouns with no clear antecedents."

[114] Michal Shaked & Nurit Virmiya, "Understanding Social Difficulties," Prior, p. 107; compare the section "Oral and Written Language" on pp. 36-39 of Myles/Simpson.

[115] Hudson, p. 44.

[116] For his justification, such as it is, see the Preface to *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded.*

[117] An example of this can be found on p. 319 of Hudson.

[118] Moses, p. 12.

[119] Moses, p. 147. This appears to me to be an attempt to recreate the actual rhythms of spoken language by elaborate orthography — which is something I am also prone to.

[120] See, e.g., the comments on inflections and Esperanto on pp. 167-170 of Tammet.

[121] Moses, p. 148.

[122] Janine Manjiviona, "Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties"; Prior, p. 61.

[123] Attwood, p. 140.

describe as a persistent state of the blues.[124] The latter state sounds like a good fit for Dodgson's feelings. There are several signs of depression in Dodgson's life,[125] including a statement by his nephew Collingwood to that effect.[126] Observers see a "disquieting despair" in his early poem "The Dear Gazelle,"[127] and Morton Cohen after cataloging Dodgson's early literary endeavors, concludes that "The serious poems are sentimental, traditional, glum.... Why the recurring themes of dashed hopes, disappointment in love, despair echoing despair? Something is gnawing away at him, and whatever it is will not lie quiet...."[128] Cohen adds that there is no evidence of disappointment in love, and it is before he became close to Alice Liddell. He used work to keep "from thinking about one's self and one's own troubles."[129]

Emotional outbursts. "Meltdowns" are a common problem for those with autism. Our accounts of Dodgson's life reveals few of these, but when they came, they were sudden and quite strong.[130] Another of Isa Bowman's tales is of a spontaneous outburst of anger over a trivial incident; Dodgson tore up a drawing she was making — then almost instantly repented of his anger.[131] Later, when Bowman told him she was getting married, Dodgson tore off the flowers she was wearing on her dress and threw them away — then entertained her and her husband-to-be the next day.[132]

Peculiarities of posture and motion. Dodgson clearly had the sort of movement difficulties often associated with autism; "adults with Asperger's syndrome may have a strange, sometimes idiosyncratic gait that lacks fluency and efficiency."[133] Isa Bowman declared that Dodgson "always seemed a little unsteady in his gait"[134] and said his movements were "singularly jerky and abrupt."[135] Alice Liddell Hargreaves, interviewed many years later, commented on his stiff posture, "as if he had a poker down his back."[136] Dodgson, asked by a young correspondent about dancing, declared, "I *never* dance, unless I am allowed to do it *in my own peculiar way*. There is no use trying to describe it: it has to be seen to be believed. The last house I tried it in, the floor broke through. But then it was a poor sort of floor —the beams were only six inches thick, hardly worth calling beams at all...."[137] This from a very slender man.... It is also worth noting that the White Knight of *Looking Glass*, believed to be Dodgson himself, is forever falling off his horse

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[124] Dubin, p. 61.
[125] see, e.g., Woolf, pp. 119, 222.
[126] cited by Woolf, p. 293; she does not say where Collingwood made this comment.
[127] Cohen, pp. 71-72
[128] Cohen, pp. 73-75
[129] Cohen, p. 459.
[130] Woolf, p. 28.
[131] Bowman, p. 9, and widely quoted, e.g. Norton, p. 311; Cohen, p. 298; Leach, p. 53.
[132] Cohen, p. 532; Leach, p. 297.
[133] Attwood, p. 259.
[134] Bowman, p. 5.
[135] Bowman, p. 6.
[136] Jones/Gladstone, p 102.
[137] Woollcott, p. 8.

and is very clumsy.[138] Some have suggested that the odd gait may have been caused by a knee condition, perhaps osteoarthritis.[139] — but Dodgson seems to have had the problem even when young.

His inaptitude for sports was so great that he played cricket only once, and was allowed to bowl only one ball before being removed.[140] Team sports are often hard for autistics.[141] But they are fond of inventing their own games and rules.[142] The number of games invented by Dodgson is simply astounding — he played "Castle Croquet" with the Liddells,[143] and also produced Doublets,[144] Lanrick,[145] Syzygies,[146] an assortment of backgammon variations, and many more.[147]

Sleep Disorders. Dodgson wrote a book, *Curiosa Mathematica, Part II, Pillow Problems Thought Out During Sleepless Nights,* to serve as a mathematical distraction to those suffering repeated bouts of worry and insomnia.[148] Dodgson's health, as shown by his diary, was generally good, but this is not the only indication that he was troubled by insomnia.[149] Sleep disorders are almost universal among autism sufferers.[150]

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[138] Gardner, pp. 234-247 [294-314].

[139] Woolf, p. 68; the arthritis suggestion is from ClarkCarroll, p. 259.

[140] Hudson, p. 48.

[141] Val Gill, "Challengers Faced by Teachers Working with Students with Asperger Syndrome," Prior, pp. 207-208; Carley, p. 94.

[142] Carley, p. 95. The author can attest to having done this — e.g. to reworking a board game based on the "Third Age" of *The Lord of the Rings* so that it could be used to replay the battles of the "Second Age."

[143] For the rules of this, see CollingwoodPictures, pp. 271-274. It is a form of croquet in which the balls, arches, and such are given meanings — soldiers, sentinals, castles. It looks to me as if the Liddell children wanted an active game, and Dodgson wanted a thinking game, and the result was a sort of compromise: An outdoor game requiring croquet skills but also planning.

[144] Rules and numerous examples in CollingwoodPictures, pp. 277-288. Doublets is a game in which one turns one word into another one letter at a time. Of Dodgson's various games, it is perhaps the most likely to be played today — the author once produced a collection of them on a tennis theme for a sports newsletter.

[145] A complex game, played on a modified checkers board, which I won't even try to summarize; rules in CollingwoodPictures, pp. 304-312.

[146] Like Doublets, a game in which one turns one word into another, but with more complicated rules based adding or subtracting different numbers of letters. Rules in CollingwoodPictures, pp. 289-303.

[147] It appears there are eight such games listed in the index on p. 566 of Cohen.

[148] Cohen, p. 198. The book pretty definitely failed of its purpose; the problems are simply too hard for most people to solve in their heads while trying to get to sleep.

[149] Hudson, p. 284.

[150] Simone, pp. 54-55. AMYANDJOANNE'S BLOG; link on Autism Hangout. Page, p. 17, reports suffering insomnia as early as age four, and continues to suffer it as a relatively contented man in his fifties (p. 189). Jackson, pp. 86-87, also describes insomnia from an early age. I seed to recall reading somewhere that about 80% of autistics have some sort of sleep problem, usually insomnia or sleep apnea or both.

Disinterest and ineptitude in ordinary tasks; generosity. The tenth chapter of Jenny Woolf's biography, "He offered large discount, he offered a cheque" is devoted to Dodgson's finances, and she finds that he "hardly cashed in financially on his fame at all, and his lack of interest in doing this suggests that he may have had a fundamental lack of interest in becoming rich."[151] This sort of non-ambition is typical of autism — and so is the inability to deal with rather mundane things.[152] His reaction to his publisher is also typical; it "could… have been used to demonstrate his twin loves of fussing and [of] winning arguments."[153] It is strange to note that this professional mathematician and notorious nitpicker seems to have made no effort at all to balance his checkbook![154]

That tendency to ignore his bank balance probably wouldn't have mattered except for his extraordinary generosity, especially to his young friends — he was said to engage in "boundless" giving.[155] Dodgson was forever "giving much of himself gratuitously in authentic, loving generosity to the countless Alices, Ediths, and Ethels of his wide acquaintance."[156] This desire to be helpful is common in autism sufferers — "Another social tool or activity that can repair feelings of despair is the act of helping someone and being needed — an altruistic act. I have noted that some children and, especially, adults with Asperger's syndrome can change their mood from self-criticism and pessimism to a feeling of self-worth and enthusiasm when helping others."[157]

One of Dodgson's last letters to Gertrude Chataway opened, "My dear old friend, I think there is no higher privilege given us in this life than the opportunity of doing something for *others,* and of bearing one another's burdens...."[158]

To Ellen Terry he wrote, "And so you have found out that secret — one of the deep secrets of life — that all, that is really *worth* the doing, is what we do for *others?*"[159]

When he published the facsimile edition of *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* he decided, with Alice Liddell's agreement and consent, to donate all proceeds to hospitals for children.[160]

"For much of his life he helped support his six unmarried sisters and a good many other people — relatives, friends, even strangers."[161]

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151 Woolf, p. 266.

152 Many of them [autism sufferers] needed profound assistance in organizing their lives"; Gessen, p. 175.

153 Woolf, p. 268.

154 Woolf, p. 275

155 Cohen, pp. 308-311.

156 Donald Rackin, "Love and Death in Carroll's *Alice,* " in Bloom, pp. 135-136.

157 Attwood, p. 162. Dubin, p. 114, gives a personal example of his willingness to offer gifts on relatively minor pretexts. In my own case, the first real social success I had was instructing others in computer programming.

158 CohenLetters, p. 239.

159 CohenLetters, p. 200.

160 ClarkAlice, p. 201.

161 CohenLetters, p. xi.

Based on his checkbook, in the last decade and a half of his life, he was giving to about thirty different charities each year.[162]

Selflessness in negotiation and friendship. In 1880, at a time when budgets were tight, Dodgson proposed that Christ Church *cut* his pay.[163] Although Dodgson may have been feeling discontent on other grounds; he resigned not much after proposing that pay cut.

When the Liddell children were trying to give away some of their kittens in 1863, Alice was too shy to press one upon the royal family — but Dodgson, the shyest of the shy, who would surely never have done such a thing for himself, undertook it upon her behalf.[164]

The Urge to Organize. Hans Asperger himself noted that his patients often had a love of cataloging and organizing collections.[165] Dodgson himself cataloged his correspondence; he reportedly had more than 98,000 cross-references.[166] He even indexed his own diary![167] He also tried to organize all of mathematics into 26 broad areas with 400 specific topics and 2000 examples.[168] Donald Rackin refers to his behavior as an "extraordinary need for order."[169]

Not only do autistics often like to organize things, they often organize them in peculiar ways. For example, instead of organizing a record collection by the artist's name, they might organize it by the number of *letters* in the artist's name. When Dodgson in 1863 cataloged the girls he had in his photo collection, he organized them by *first* name rather than last.[170]

Several critics have observed that Dodgson's acrostics contain some of his best poetry. Few other poets have achieved much success in this art form — in a quick check of six encyclopedias of literature, not one cited a proper example of the form although most described them. But autistics like order and a clear plan. Could it be that the underlying structure of the acrostic made it easier for Dodgson to compose?

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[162] Woolf, p. 285.

[163] CollingwoodLife, p. 97 [Chapter V]; WilsonR, p. 139. This is very familiar to the author; in salary negotiations I have always argued for the other side — I twice in the course of 13 months resigned a job to defer to other people in the organization.

[164] Cohen, p. 98; Gordon, p. 119, citing Dodgson's diary for the day. I know this reaction — the one thing that gets me to overcome *my* shyness is the need to help a friend in a social situation.

[165] Attwood, p. 178. This is another I can testify to myself: I have cataloged the folk songs of the English-speaking world (The Traditional Ballad Index), all traditional folk songs found in Minnesota (*The Minnesota Heritage Songbook),* all the words in a medieval romance (*The Gest of Robyn Hode),* and all Middle English romances (*Romancing the Ballad).* Plus, of course, I'm cataloging Charles Dodgson's autistic traits. Come to think of it, this footnote consists of a catalog of the catalogs I've made. Dodgson would have loved it....

[166] CollingwoodLife, p. 127 [Chapter VII]; cf. Woollcott, p. 5;

[167] Leach, p. 33.

[168] WilsonR, p. 105.

[169] Norton, p. 398.

[170] Gernsheim, p. 51.

Dodgson made only one trip outside England, a European tour that took him as far as Russia. "Dodgson's preparations for the journey were minute; he had made an exact science of packing"[171] — something typical of autistics when they travel.[172]

Family history. The character of Dodgson's family is interesting. Autism has a strong genetic component,[173] and Dodgson's brother Skeffington had an unidentified learning difficulty[174] and even a possible "special interest" in fishing.[175] Skeffington was also apparently the subject of one of the pages that was cut out of Dodgson's diary: "a document already in the Dodgson family archive... made it clear that the May-June 1879 page had been... about his younger brother Skeffington";[176] a three word summary of the page which declares that it "is about SHD" — i.e. Skeffington.[177] Only one of Dodgson's seven sisters married, which might also indicate social dysfunctions; the third sister was particularly shy and retiring.[178] Several sisters shared his interest in mathematics — Louisa Dodgson was said to be Charles's equal as a mathematician.[179] This is of particular note because Charles Dodgson Sr. and Frances Lutwidge Dodgson were first cousins,[180] (so their children would have had an unusually high number of shared genes). Indeed, a photo of the Dodgson sisters[181] shows seven women so alike that they might almost be identical septuplets. They all lived into old age, so they can't have had too many real genetic defects, but they certainly had their peculiarities!

Charles's father had also had unusual skills in mathematics; Charles Dodgson Sr. was a clergyman, and he translated the Latin Church Father Tertullian into English, but his grandson declares that "mathematics were *(sic.)* his favorite pursuit."[182] Like his son, Charles Dodgson Sr. was for a time a tutor at Christ Church.[183] And he had taken a double first class degree, in mathematics and in classics.[184] Charles Jr.'s brother Edwin displayed a rather obsessive desire to help others.[185]

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171 Hudson, p. 163.

172 Tammet, p. 121, describes feeling sick with worry on his first trip abroad, and several times refers to the details of how he travelled.

173 Myles/Simpson, p. 15.

174 Woolf, pp. 16, 18; Cohen, pp. 326-327 discusses his father's responses to Skeffington's "repeatedly failed examinations." Cohen, p. 459, notes that Skeffington had epileptic attacks in 1881; see the note on Dodgson's own "epileptiform" attack on p. 33.

175 Woolf, p. 18.

176 Leach, p. 126.

177 Leach, p. 329.

178 Woolf, p. 17.

179 ClarkCarroll, p. 81.

180 ClarkCarroll, pp. 10-1

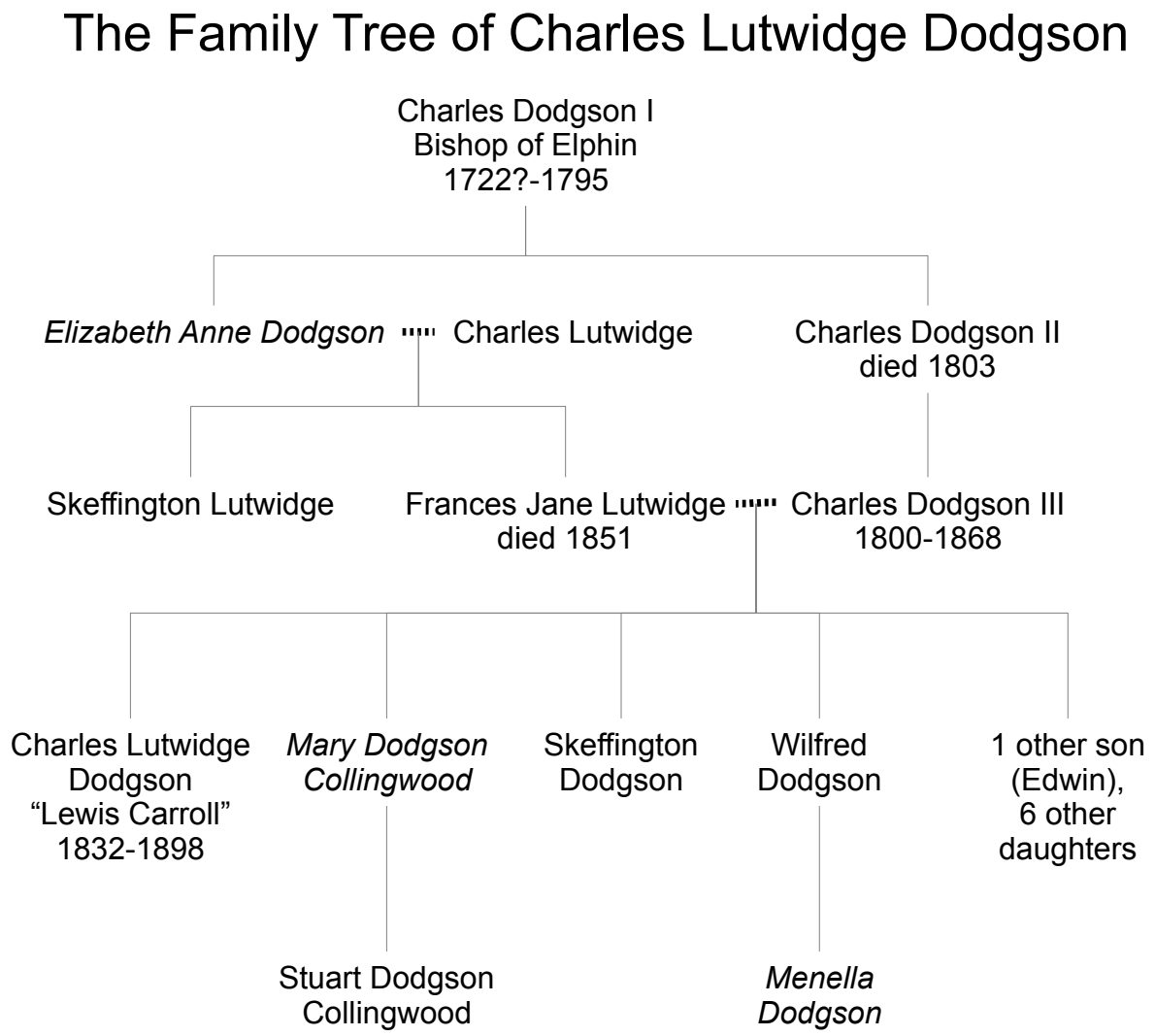
181 Shown, e.g., on p. 105 of Stoffel

182 CollingwoodLife, p. 10 (chapter I)

183 ClarkCarroll, p. 10

184 Stoffel, p. 14

185 Woolf, p. 18.



Genealogy of Lewis Carroll, showing the degree of inbreeding. Only some names shown.

Skeffington Lutwidge, Dodgson's much-admired uncle (the brother of his mother), also had interesting traits: He never married and he loved gadgets.[186] This is noteworthy because Ridley observes that "children with Asperger's syndrome are often better than normal at folk physics [i.e. the operations of the natural world, such as the operation of mechanical objects]. Not only are they frequently fascinated by mechanical things, from light switches to airplanes, but they generally take an engineering approach to the world, trying to understand the rules by which things — and people — operate."[187] Dodgson, like Uncle Skeffington, loved gadgets — Isa

[186] ClarkCarroll, pp. 73-74.
[187] Ridley, p. 61.

Bowman spoke of his ability to tinker with damaged music boxes until they worked again.[188] One recent commentator says that "It might therefore be symbolically important that Dodgson's hobbies were usually ordered not naturally, but mechanically — photography, music boxes, mechanical toys, cerebral puzzles and games."[189] He had a printing press, sundry optical instruments, exercise machines, a typewriter he had modified himself, and his own "Nyctograph" for writing messages at night.[190] In addition, Dodgson is reported to have had a large library of medical books; the contents is unknown,[191] but from Woolf's description of his attempts to find a cure for his stammer, it sounds as if he was trying very hard to find mechanical explanations for a number of human traits.

Repetitive behaviors. Obsessive-compulsive problems are common in autism.[192] We see few signs of this in recorded accounts of Dodgson, but there is an interesting item in the allegorical drama "Cakeless," which seems to describe Dodgson's reactions to the marriage of Alice Liddell.[193] This piece repeatedly refers to "Kraftsohn" (Dodgson) biting his nails in what sounds like an obsessive behavior.[194] To be sure, this is extremely weak evidence.

Dodgson gave "an impression of extreme cleanliness."[195] Some Asperger's victims show an obsessive-compulsive tendency toward cleanliness; [196] Also, Dodgson normally wore gloves on social occasions;[197] the most likely explanation for this is to hide the stains from darkroom chemicals, but it also kept him from being touched, and we know that he purchased gloves at Rugby before he went into photography.[198]

A different perspective. Jenny Woolf considers Dodgson, beginning around 1880, to have become a man "in a world of his own"[199] — and Attwood observes that those "with Asperger's syndrome can develop vivid and complex imaginary worlds."[200] To be sure, Woolf attributes this to an epileptic condition[201] — his doctors called an incident of 1885/1886 an "epileptiform" attack,[202] and there was another attack in 1891.[203] Dodgson's brother Skeffington, the family's black sheep, also had epileptic attacks. There are signs of a connection between epilepsy and

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188 Bowman, p. 10; Norton, p. 310; Woolf, pp. 129, 282, and Cohen, p. 288, give additional examples.
189 Donald Rackin, Norton, p. 399.
190 Gordon, p. 86.
191 ClarkCarroll, p. 258; Woolf, p. 79.
192 Attwood, p. 138.
193 Cohen, p. 516; Hudson, p. 205; the text of "Cakeless" is printed in ClarkAlice, pp. 256-262.
194 The fullest description of this is probably Hudson, pp. 205, 217-218.
195 Gardner, p. xx [13], quoting Irene Barnes.
196 Attwood, p. 13
197 Stoffel, p. 36.
198 ClarkCarroll, p. 53.
199 Woolf, pp. 86-87.
200 Attwood, p. 24.
201 Woolf, p. 89.
202 ClarkCarroll, p. 257.
203 Cohen, p. 459.

autism — "Epilepsy is more common in people with AS, affecting perhaps as many as one in five… a substantially increased risk compared to the general population."[204]

Even when talking about subjects other than mathematics, a future Dean of Christ Church declared that "he still presented you with unexpected and frequently perplexing points of view."[205] This sort of unorthodoxy is widely regarded as one of the greatest intellectual assets of autism sufferers.

Dodgson was a genuinely funny man, but it has been suggested that he used humor as a mask[206] — it made it easier to deal with people who otherwise might be hard to understand.

Feminine Traits. "His effeminacy was sufficiently obvious that some of his less sympathetic students once wrote a parody of his parodies and signed it 'Louisa Caroline.'"[207] "Nobody has (yet) written a serious book accusing him of being homosexual or a closet transvestite, but he has been described variously as womanish, tender, gentle, nun-like, shy, or like a 'mother hen'.... The ostentatiously manly qualities that were so important in Victorian social life left Carroll cold, and he rejected them."[208] Sufferers from autism often show significant traits of the other gender.[209]

Sensory Issues. Many autistics have difficulties with particular sensations — a particular color, sound, or texture, e.g.: "Many children with autism have some unusual sensory responses and interested, for example, being over- or undersensitive to the extraneous environment.... some sounds that you might not even notice will drive the child to distraction."[210] "In the sense of taste we find almost invariably very pronounced likes and dislikes. It is no different with the sense of touch. Many children have an abnormally strong dislike of particular tactile sensations. They cannot tolerate the roughness of new shirts, or of mended socks. Washing water too can often be a source of unpleasant sensations and, hence, of unpleasant scenes. There is hypersensitivity too against noise."[211] Dodgson reportedly preferred pink and gray colors,[212] and asked at least one

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[204] Digby Tantam, "Assessment and Treatment of Comorbid Emotional and Behavioral Problems," Prior, p. 159, although no source is cited. See also p. 31 of Tammet, an Asperger's victim who suffered from temporal epilepsy in his youth and was told that as many as a third of Asperger's sufferers experienced it at some time; also the article headlined "Refractory Seizures Common in Autism"; link at Autism Hangout.

[205] Cohen, p. 286, quoting T. B. Strong.

[206] Woolf, p. 291. The author can say, from experience, that almost half my physics and mathematics professors in this regard were very like Dodgson, as is the author — and, of course, physics and mathematics are some of the fields most associated with Asperger's.

[207] Phyllis Greenacre, reprinted in Bloom, p. 106. Hesitant as I am to accept a Greenacrean assessment, this one sounds right. CollingwoodPictures, pp. 361-364, prints the "Louisa Caroline" poem "The Vulture and the Husbandman," which is an obvious parody of "The Walrus and the Carpenter"; it begins "The rain was raining cheerfully, As if it had been May" and ends "And this was scarcely odd, because, They'd ploughed them every one."

[208] Woolf, p. 132.

[209] Aston, p. 64; there are examples in Attwood, p. 81.

[210] Volkmar & Wiesner,, pp. 483-484.

[211] Attwood, p. 271, quoting Hans Asperger's own observations on this point.

[212] Woolf, p. 52.

girl not to wear red.[213] (On the other hand, Dodgson once posed Agnes Weld as "Little Red Riding Hood,"[214] and wanted a red binding for the first edition of *Wonderland*.[215])

Literal traits. Finally, people with autism are often very literal:[216] "People with AS are described as being very literal... and several studies provide support for this view. Kerbel and Grunwell (1998) reported that children with AS performed poorly on a task that assessed idiom comprehension; they gave significantly more inappropriate interpretations than age- or language-matched controls.... Children with AS also have difficulty interpreting language in social context."[217]

Isa Bowman describes how much Dodgson hated exaggeration: "'I nearly died of laughing,' was another expression that he particularly disliked; in fact any form of exaggeration generally called from him a reproof, though he was sometimes content to make fun."[218] Another story he was reportedly fond of was the account of the seven bishops accused of supporting the Old Pretender. One of them, when asked about his guilt and that of his colleagues, replied, "I am fully persuaded, your Majesty, that there is not one of my brethren who is not [as] innocent in the matter as myself."[219] And much of the humor in the "Alice" books is literal — consider, for instance, the exchange between the White King and Alice when the king is feeling faint:

"Another sandwich!" said the King.

"There's nothing left but hay now," the Messenger said, peeping into the bag.

"Hay, then," the King murmured in a faint whisper.

Alice was glad to see that it revived him a good deal. "There's nothing like hay when you're faint," he remarked to her, as he munched away.

"I should think throwing cold water over you would be better," Alice suggested, "—or some sal-volatile."

"I didn't say there was nothing *better,"* the King replied. "I said there was nothing *like* it."[220]

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213 Greenacre, reprinted in Bloom, p. 106.

214 Photo in Gernsheim, plate 10.

215 ClarkAlice, p. 106.

216 Attwood, p. 115.

217 Helen Tager-Flusberg, "Effects of Language and Communications Deficits on Learning and Behavior," Prior, p. 89-90.

218 Bowman, p. 12.

219 Moses, p. 18.

220 Gardner, pp. 224-225 [281].

The Linguist: John Ronald Reuel Tolkien

May you say the things I have tried to say long after I am not there to say them.
— G. B. Smith to Tolkien shortly before Smith was killed in World War I.

Who He Was

It may seem odd to file J. R. R. Tolkien as a linguist, since everyone knows him as an author. But a linguist is what he *was;* his writing merely made him famous. He would never have written what he did without the languages in his head. And his work on language was well-known in the field.

It is equally peculiar that Tolkien, that most English of writers, was born not in England but in South Africa.

This was an improbable side effect of coming from a musical family. Tolkien's grandfather John had been a piano-maker and music seller — but the business had failed.[221] Tolkien's father Arthur therefore had gone into banking.

His home was in Birmingham, but Arthur Tolkien found it impossible to make a good living in the local bank, so in 1888 he decided on the radical step of taking a job in Bloemfontein in what was then the Orange Free State,[222] leaving his much younger fiancee Mabel Suffield, who was herself the daughter of an impoverished former business owner,[223] behind. Fortunately, Arthur found enough success in South Africa that he was able to summon his wife-to-be there in 1891, and they went on to marry on April 16 of that year.[224] Their first son, John Ronald Reuel, whom the family called "Ronald," was born on January 3, 1892;[225] a second son, Hilary Arthur Reuel, followed in 1894.

But all was not well with the Tolkien family. The African climate did not suit Mabel at all, and her boys were regarded as delicate. Finally it was decided that she would take her sons and return to Birmingham.[226] Arthur would remain in Africa awaiting their return.

Then the tragedies began. Arthur died at age thirty-eight of "rheumatic fever" in February 1896,[227] leaving his not-quite-twenty-six-year-old widow with two young boys and only a very small inheritance. Instantly Mabel found herself in straitened circumstances — and they became even more straitened when she decided to convert from the Church of England to Catholicism in 1900.[228] She and her sons would be staunch Catholics all their lives — but her parents and

[221] White, p. 10.
[222] Grotta-Kurska, p. 13.
[223] White, p. 11.
[224] Carpenter, p. 18.
[225] TolkienFamily, p. 13.
[226] TolkienFamily, p. 17; Grotta-Kurska, p. 16.
[227] TolkienFamily, p. 19; this page also shows an obituary.
[228] TolkienFamily, p. 22

step-parents both rejected her after the conversion. The trickle of money they had been able to supply stopped.

It grew worse. Mabel Tolkien developed diabetes and died in 1904 at the age of thirty-four,[229] when Ronald was only twelve and Hilary ten. Her Catholicism meant that she was still estranged from her relatives. She left the two orphans under the guardianship of Father Francis Xavier Morgan.[230] It must have been a difficult situation for Father Morgan, who although dedicated seems not to have been very bright or creative.[231] Plus he had only a small amount of money to raise the boys, who would have had little support from their families because of their religion — the first relative to take them in, their aunt by marriage Beatrice Suffield, "showed them no affection";[232] she was still mourning the death of her husband, Mabel's brother William.[233]

Nonetheless there were consolations for Ronald at least. He had earned a scholarship at Birmingham's prestigious King Edward's School,[234] and was learning Latin and Greek.[235] And, after escaping Beatrice Suffield, he was lodged at a boarding house managed by a Mrs. Faulkner, another Catholic.[236] Also residing there was another orphan, an illegitimate girl three years Tolkien's senior[237] named Edith Bratt. She was a skilled piano player,[238] like Tolkien's grandfather, and by 1909 the two teenagers had fallen in love.[239]

The course of true love definitely did not run smooth. Father Morgan did not approve of the liaison at all; he wanted Tolkien to give all his attention to getting a college scholarship.[240] He steadily tightened the screws on Tolkien to try to break up the romance, and saw to it that Edith was moved to another dwelling.[241] For her, it meant a more comfortable life — but Tolkien merely found himself without the love of his life. And Morgan's Big Plan didn't work — Tolkien's first attempt for a scholarship was a failure.[242] Nor did it change Tolkien's feelings for Edith; he kept trying to see her — until, when he was eighteen, Father Morgan laid down the

229 TolkienFamily, p. 25; White, pp. 27-29.
230 Grotta-Kurska, p. 21.
231 Carpenter, p. 52. Plus he
232 TolkienFamily, p. 25.
233 White, p. 32.
234 TolkienFamily, p. 25.
235 TolkienFamily, p. 26.
236 TolkienFamily, p. 26; White, pp. 35-37.
237 Pearce, p. 27; according to Carpenter, p. 26, none of Tolkien's children ever learned their grandfather's name although there was a photograph of him. Edith's mother died about five years before Edith met Tolkien.
238 White, p. 36.
239 Pearce, p. 27.
240 White, p. 38.
241 Grotta-Kurska, p. 24.
242 White, p. 39.

law entirely: No contact at all until Tolkien was twenty-one and no longer under Morgan's guardianship.[243]

Tolkien, although depressed, seems to have obeyed, and devoted all his energy to his schoolwork. He won an Exhibitionship — a low-prestige scholarship[244] — to Exeter College in Oxford in 1911.[245] There he studied Classics — in essence, Greek and Latin Literature — without much joy.[246] It showed in his results; when he took his "Moderations" (second-year exams), he earned only a second-class result.[247] Fortunately, he was able to shift to the English department and study Comparative Philology (i.e. the study of languages), where he did much better.[248]

In 1913, Tolkien reached the age of twenty-one — meaning that he was at last free to contact Edith Bratt. He wrote to her the moment his birthday arrived.[249] To his horror, she had become engaged to another man.[250] He at once set out to find her at Cheltenham, and somehow convinced her to change her mind.[251] They finally were able to announce their engagement — but the marriage would still have to wait until Tolkien finished his degree.[252] This caused some discomfort for Edith, since her decision to adopt Tolkien's Catholicism brought her trouble with her family.[253]

And then the First World War came. Tolkien still had not finished his degree, and even as his classmates were rushing to join Kitchener's Army, he waited to earn his B.A. (although he did start training to be an officer as well[254]). In 1915, he earned a First Class degree[255] — and immediately joined the army as an officer in training. He was posted to the Lancashire Fusiliers.[256] He chose to study signalling — after all, it involved languages and codes and alphabets.[257] On March 22, 1916, knowing that he would soon be on his way to the front,[258] he and Edith were finally married.[259] (It was, apparently, the first time she told him she was

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243 White, p. 39.
244 Grotta-Kurska, p. 26.
245 TolkienFamily, p. 31; White, p. 42, notes that an Exhibition brought a stipend of £60, compared to £100 for a full scholarship.
246 TolkienFamily, p. 33.
247 White, p. 50.
248 TolkienFamily, p. 33.
249 White, p. 48.
250 TolkienFamily, p. 34.
251 White, p. 49.
252 Grotta-Kurska, p. 40.
253 TolkienFamily, p. 36.
254 Carpenter, p. 80.
255 TolkienFamily, p. 38; Grotta-Kurska, p. 41, notes that his was one of only two first-class degrees handed out by Oxford's decimated English departments in that year.
256 White, p. 63.
257 Carpenter, pp. 85-86.
258 White, p. 65.
259 Grotta-Kurska, p. 45.

illegitimate; fortunately, it made no difference to him.[260]) On June 2, he was ordered to France — just in time to serve at the Battle of the Somme.

Tolkien's service was honorable but brief. Late in 1916, after five months in the trenches,[261] he came down with trench fever — a severe enough case that he had to be sent home.[262] He took a long time to recover,[263] and never returned to France.[264] He left the army having reached the rank of First Lieutenant.

Even though he survived with no permanent injuries, the war was still a tragedy for Tolkien. As he reported himself, all but one of his close friends died in the war.[265] That, and his time in the trenches, probably changed his outlook permanently.

As soon as the war ended, Tolkien left the army and returned to Oxford. He worked for a time on the staff of the new *Oxford English Dictionary*.[266] This didn't pay very well, and Tolkien probably found it dull,[267] but it doubtless gave him more insight into philology, and helped him prepare for his academic work. In 1921, he accepted a post at the University of Leeds.[268] When he was made Professor in 1924, he was the youngest professor in the University.[269]

By this time, his family was starting to grow. His first son, John, had been born in 1917, with Tolkien absent due to his military service;[270] Michael followed 1920, Christopher in 1924, and his only daughter, Priscilla, in 1929. By the time she was born he was back at Oxford. Leeds had been a severe trial — although Edith enjoyed the company of her fellow University wives (which she never did at Oxford), Leeds was an industrial city, and the pollution made life very difficult for the family.[271] When Oxford offered Tolkien the Professorship of Anglo-Saxon in 1925, he hastened to accept.[272]

Tolkien was not a good lecturer — he was too quiet and talked too quickly[273] — but everyone knew he was brilliant.[274] His publications became classics — "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" is, to this day, the most-quoted and most-significant item of Beowulf scholarship ever

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260 Carpenter, p. 87.
261 White, p. 72.
262 TolkienFamily, p. 40.
263 White, pp. 73-77.
264 Grotta-Kurska, p. 52.
265 TolkienFellowship, Foreword, p. 7.
266 TolkienFamily, p. 42.
267 White, p. 101.
268 TolkienFamily, p. 44.
269 Grotta-Kurska, p. 65.
270 Carpenter, p. 104.
271 TolkienFamily, p. 45.
272 TolkienFamily, p. 50.
273 TolkienFamily, p. 53.
274 Grotta-Kurska, pp. 118-119, cites examples.

published,[275] and the annotated edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* that he published with E. V. Gordon was a landmark in the field.[276] He also produced a dictionary of Middle English that is still in print. Unfortunately, that didn't translate into a large income. So he took in some extra cash in the summers by grading Examination papers — in essence, University applications.[277] It was a task he liked not at all, and one day, finding an empty page in one of the forms, he jotted down the line that popped into his head, "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit."[278]

He didn't know, then, what it meant, but it proved to be the key that unlocked a great trove. For twenty years and more, Tolkien, in addition to studying languages, had been *inventing* them — creating a grammar, a vocabulary, and a sound system. But as he did so, he was realizing that a language was more than just a set of sounds. It also conveys a history — a social history of the people who speak it. More: It tells their myths and their beliefs. To take a very simple and obvious example, people who live on the equator won't generally have a word for "snow," since it doesn't snow there. If they *do* have such a word, it implies that they once had a use for it — and so lived in a place where snow fell. An in-depth examination of a language and its literature can provide a deep insight into its culture, and vice versa.

Tolkien was also a student of folklore — one of his favorite books had been Andrew Lang's *Red Fairy Book,*[279] and he had some hypotheses about oral tradition[280] — and he knew that England was relatively impoverished in terms of a national myth.[281] France had the Roman Empire, and Charlemagne, and Roland. The Scandinavian countries had the Norse myths. Finland had the *Kalevala* — which, like Tolkien's own tales, was an assembled epic rather than a true native myth.[282] England had… very little except the Arthurian legend, and as Tolkien knew well, that was one part Welsh (the earliest substantial tales of Arthur come from Welsh myth), one part fake (Geoffrey of Monmouth made up most his version, which became the basis for everything that followed), and one part French (Chrétien de Troyes was responsible for adding massively to the legend);[283] the result was about as English as a cheeseburger. Tolkien's observation was that "Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly

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[275] ShippeyAuthor, p. xi.

[276] All of these works remain available; the Middle English Glossary is printed with Kenneth Sisam's equally classic *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose;* the *Green Knight* text in a revised edition by Norman Davis, and the "Beowulf" essay in almost any collection of works about Beowulf.

[277] Grotta-Kurska, p. 78.

[278] Grotta-Kurska, pp. 39-40; White, pp. 8-10. The date of this event is often given as 1930, but there is much uncertainty about when Tolkien first began telling "Hobbit" tales.

[279] White, p. 20.

[280] Students of traditional song will be fascinated by Tolkien's comment: "my views on oral tradition (at any rate in early stages): sc. that the 'hard words' are well preserved, and the more common words altered, but the metre is often disturbed"; TolkienLetters, p. 162.

[281] Carpenter, p. 67.

[282] ShippeyAuthor, p. xxxiv.

[283] OxfordCompanion, p. 52; Stevens, p. 238.

naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing."[284] He set out to supply the lack. Tolkien, starting during the First World War, had started creating legends to go with his invented languages.[285]

With *The Hobbit,* Tolkien began to mine that material for public use. At first it was intended only for his children, as many of his other tales had been — but it came into the hands of the staff of the publishers at Allen & Unwin, and eventually he was persuaded to publish. And he instantly gained a following. There were requests for a sequel. Tolkien first tried to submit the legends that came to be called *The Silmarillion.* Since they were a collection of legends rather than a proper novel, they could not serve. He tried again, but it was long before the result would be finished.

The ten years after *The Hobbit* was published in 1937 were years of distraction for Tolkien. He continued to teach, but there were few new scholarly publications.[286] He had an automobile for a while, but he was not a safe driver,[287] and in time gave it up — he didn't like the way roads were messing up the countryside. Then came World War II. Tolkien was too old to serve on the front lines, but two of his sons went into the army[288] (the oldest, John, went into the Catholic priesthood[289]), and he himself was involved in the air defenses for Oxford.[290] In 1945, he received a promotion to Merton Professor of English Language and Literature (until then, he had been Pembroke Professor of Anglo-Saxon).[291] With his children leaving home, he also moved into a smaller house.[292] Only very slowly did he work his way through *The Lord of the Rings.*

He finally received his first honorary doctorate in 1954 (two of them, in fact), but not from English schools;[293] that would come later. He also played a role in translating the acclaimed *Jerusalem Bible* from French into English (although he downplayed his role, noting that the only book he translated was Jonah).[294] Most of the translations in the *Jerusalem Bible* are pretty pedestrian — rather than a direct translation, it was translated from Hebrew and Greek into French, then into English; the value lies in the notes — but Tolkien's edition of Jonah is unusually vivid.

The publication of *The Lord of the Rings* was an experiment by the publishers. Rayner Unwin, the son of the company's manager, thought it a work of genius but, because it was so unlike anything

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284 TolkienLetters, p. 144.
285 Grotta-Kurska, p. 39; White, p. 79.
286 Grotta-Kurska, p. 69.
287 White, p. 115.
288 TolkienFamily, p. 71.
289 TolkienFamily, p. 70
290 TolkienFamily, p. 71.
291 TolkienFamily, pp. 74, 76; Grotta-Kurska, p. 105.
292 Grotta-Kurska, p. 105. The Tolkiens went through several periods when they made repeated moves, with the first and most extreme being in World War I; most of these are not noted here.
293 Grotta-Kurska, p. 118.
294 TolkienLetters, p. 378.

else in existence, guessed it would cost Allen & Unwin £1000 — a good chunk of a year's profit. He had to convince his father Sir Stanley to publish it.[295] As a result, the publishers pushed Tolkien to take a 50% cut of the profits (assuming there were any) rather than a royalty on each copy[296] — a decision which eventually made Tolkien rich but which at the time seemed to imply he would earn very little money at all. Even under that arrangement, Rayner Unwin felt it had to be broken up into three volumes with small print runs.[297] Still, Allen & Unwin brought it out in 1954-1955. Tolkien's life would never be the same. His very first royalty check, in 1956, was for more than a year's worth of his professor's salary — in excess of £3500.[298] That was the good; the bad was that he gained a cult following of people he frankly did not understand but who always wanted more of his time.

In 1959, Tolkien retired from his professorship.[299] By this time, Edith was seventy and starting to suffer from arthritis;[300] she had to abandon the piano and found it difficult even to move about. Ronald took a fall and needed surgery.[301] Happily, the income from *The Lord of the Rings* made it possible for them to buy a home in Bournemouth which was more comfortable for them;[302] moving there also made it easier for them to evade all the fans who now wanted to contact them.[303] Tolkien himself probably felt lonely, cut off from his intellectual colleagues, but Edith at least had peace — and more friends than she had had in their entire married life.[304] When she died on November 29, 1971, Tolkien returned to Oxford.[305] The Queen awarded him a CBE in this time, and Oxford finally gave him an honorary doctorate.[306] But it was a short stay. He died on September 2, 1973 of complication from an acute bleeding gastric ulcer,[307] with *The Silmarillion,* which he had begun more than fifty-five years before, still unfinished, but with *The Lord of the Rings* on its way to being voted the single most important written work of the twentieth century.[308]

Tolkien's influence goes beyond a few awards. He effectively created fantasy as a modern genre for adults.[309] And the man who once worked on the *Oxford English Dictionary* is now one of its most important sources of words — its editors count at least nine words for which he is the

[295] Grotta-Kurska, p. 112.
[296] ShippeyAuthor, p. xviii; White, p. 194.
[297] Grotta-Kurska, p. 113.
[298] White, p. 217.
[299] TolkienFamily, p. 80; Pearce, p. 184.
[300] TolkienFamily, p. 82.
[301] TolkienFamily, p. 83; Carpenter, p. 251.
[302] TolkienFamily, p. 83.
[303] Pearce, p. 202.
[304] TolkienFamily, p. 86; Carpenter, pp. 248-249; Pearce, p. 203; White, p. 227.
[305] TolkienFamily, p. 86; Pearce, p. 206.
[306] Pearce, p. 206.
[307] TolkienFamily, p. 88; White, p. 232.
[308] ShippeyAuthor, p. xx.
[309] ShippeyAuthor, pp. xvii-xviii, xxiv-xxvi.

original source and eleven for which he has caused the entry to be reframed;[310] this doesn't even count the many others for which he is cited.

[310] The nine words cited by GilliverEtAl as included due to Tolkien are *elf-friend* (GilliverEtAl, p. 116), *hobbit* (pp. 142-143), *mithril* (p. 166), *south-away* (p. 172), *orcish/orkish* (p. 176), *staggerment* (p. 193), *sub-creation/sub-creator* (p. 198), *unassembly* (p. 206), and *warg* (pp. 206-207); presumably *eucatastrophe* will be added soon. The words for which the definition has been modified (usually expanded) include *elf* (p. 114), *maid-child* (p. 155), *mathom* (p. 162), *morrowless* (p. 168), *north-away* (p. 171), *orc* (p. 175), *pipe-weed* (p. 176), *rune* (pp. 183-184), *sister-son* (p. 189), and *unlight* (p. 205)

The Case for Autism

J. R. R. Tolkien is by no means the obvious candidate for autism that Charles Dodgson was. He had none of the movement difficulties usually associated with autism, for instance; he is said to have liked sports and to have been good at them.[311] He had few of Dodgson's personal difficulties, either; while a lot of students ignored his lectures, most seem to have liked him personally. He was much more likely to go out "with the boys" than Dodgson.

And yet, the subtle signs of autism are there.

For starters, there is his skill in, and love for, languages. It should be remembered that he didn't think of himself primarily as an author; he was a *philologist,* or at least a linguist. And one of the greatest of all time. He was able to read at age four.[312] He reportedly could translate old Icelandic fluently, idiomatically, and with attention to the style of the author, orally and at speed, for twenty pages at a time.[313] No one seems to have compiled a precise list of all the languages he spoke, but we know that it includes Old English (several dialects, including the Old Mercian of which he was particularly fond), Icelandic, Gothic, German, Old Norse, Swedish, Welsh, Finnish, Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, Italian, and some Russian and Polish[314] — plus, of course, the tongues he invented (Quenya and Sindarin, his "Elvish" languages, being based on the sound systems of Finnish and Welsh, respectively[315]).

His interest — his *special* interest — in languages emerged early: "I invented several languages when I was only about eight or nine, but I destroyed them. My mother disapproved."[316] How many other people invent their own languages for their own use? The only one I know is Daniel Tammet, who is autistic.[317]

Tolkien's memory was such that he could memorize and recite a whole tale from *The Canterbury Tales.*[318]

Like Charles Dodgson, he liked to invent games — in Tolkien's case, new versions of Patience ("Solitaire," the one-person card game).[319]

Tolkien's sense of humor wasn't as literal as Charles Dodgson's, but it sometimes tended that way. He told his sons tales about a lawbreaker named Bill Stickers, and his hapless pursuer, Major

311 White, p. 34.
312 Carpenter, p. 29.
313 Grotta-Kurska, p. 74.
314 Grotta-Kurska, p. 57; Carpenter, p. 106; TolkienLetters, p. 67.
315 TolkienLetters, p. 176.
316 Grotta-Kurska, p. 18,
317 Tammet's discussion of language begins on p. 167. His is less original than Tolkien's; its main distinction is that it is a construct with many regular features.
318 Carpenter, p. 218.
319 Carpenter, p. 242.

Road Ahead. Both names came from roadside signs; there was a notice on an Oxford gate which read "BILL STICKERS WILL BE PROSECUTED."[320]

There is no formal evidence that Tolkien suffered from a sleep disorder, but he rose early, worked late, and rarely got more than a few hours' sleep.[321] His son John seems to have been an insomniac from an early age.[322]

Tolkien had the standard autistic problem with explaining what he was talking about; "He often automatically assumed that his audience knew everything about the subject on which he was talking."[323] "Tolkien was sometimes exasperating because he would change a subject without warning, or end a thought in mid-sentence and refuse to elaborate further; and once he left a subject or brought up a new one, there was no going back."[324]

He also had some of the speech difficulties associated with autism: "Conversation with Tolkien was a difficult, demanding task because it was often very difficult to understand exactly what he was saying. He spoke in a low-pitched, soft-spoken, rapid voice, not bothering to enunciate or articulate clearly. Tolkien mumbled constantly, his speech often seemed garbled...."[325] "He has a strange voice, deep but without resonance, entirely English but with some quality in it that I cannot define.... [F]or much of the time he does not speak clearly. Words come out in eager rushes."[326] When the BBC tried to make a documentary about him, most of the footage was unusable because Tolkien was incomprehensible.[327]

In describing their interviews, Carpenter says that in addition to his odd speech patterns, Tolkien's eye movements seemed unusual, although he does not explicitly state that Tolkien did not look him in the eye.[328]

Tolkien had an autistic love of routine: He "had a strong fear of being interrupted. The slightest unexpected intrusion upon his or deviation from his prearranged daily schedule had an immediately detrimental effect on his writing."[329]

In his first year in school, Tolkien missed many days of classes. This was attributed to ill health,[330] but I can't help but recall the days of school that *I* missed due to simply being out of my depth....

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320 Carpenter, p. 164.
321 White, p. 118.
322 Carpenter, p. 164.
323 Grotta-Kurska, p. 55; compare Carpenter, p. 12, where Tolkien assumed that Carpenter would know *The Lord of the Rings* as well as the author himself.
324 Grotta-Kurska, p. 10.
325 Grotta-Kurska, p. 9; additional tales of his difficult speaking style are on pp. 54-55.
326 Carpenter, p. 13.
327 Grotta-Kurska, p. 142.
328 Carpenter, p. 13.
329 Grotta-Kurska, p. 8.
330 Carpenter, p. 32.

As a boy, he seems to have been an alien: "He was a shy, almost awkward lad… he never became close friends with the other children… as much as he apparently wanted to be like them, he remained an outsider."[331] Even before he achieved fame, he was a very private person; the Tolkiens "became increasingly inaccessible except to close friends, neighbours, and favoured students."[332]

From his childhood, he suffered "dark, depressed periods during which he could hardly bring himself to work."[333] There may have been another bout with depression after he retired,[334] in which he fell into "appalling depths of gloom."[335] It probably didn't reach a clinical level, but dysthymia seems possible. Carpenter thinks he had two sides, one of them "capable of bouts of profound despair.... Nothing was safe. Nothing would last."[336] And, contrary to what many maintain, *The Lord of the Rings* does *not* have a happy ending. The "eucatastrophe" averts disaster, but the world is still diminished — the Three Rings lose their power and the Elves depart. Galadriel refers to the history of Middle-Earth as "the long defeat."[337] It is a world without long-term hope (or, in Tolkien's personal view, no hope until Jesus comes as redeemer), in which all victories are partial.[338] Tolkien in fact once declared that there could be no such thing as victory; "Wars are always lost."[339]

Although not a scientist — indeed, his Catholicism was so strong and mystical as to be almost cultish — the clarity of Tolkien's thought in his preferred fields was astounding. Most people would have been thrilled to listen to and comment on early versions of C. S. Lewis's "Narnia" books. Tolkien hated them. "It really won't do," he declared.[340] Narnia was inconsistent — a bunch of unrelated myths all mashed up. As an autistic, I know exactly what Tolkien meant. Narnia has no real rules or logical underpinnings — it even contains some heretical leanings. I find that a problem with the Harry Potter books as well.

Because the Tolkiens were so private, our knowledge of their personal emotions is limited, but he and Edith apparently had quite a few temperamental rows.[341] Joy Hill, the secretary who worked for Tolkien in his final years, records a very autistic-sounding meltdown he had over a book cover;[342] he blew up, railed at her — and then, when she pointed out that it wasn't her fault, he instantly calmed down.

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331 Grotta-Kurska, p. 17.
332 Grotta-Kurska, p. 70.
333 White, p. 32.
334 White, p. 226.
335 Carpenter, p. 243;
336 Carpenter, p. 39.
337 TolkienFellowship, p. 372.
338 W. H. Auden notes that this is in fact the way of the real world; Isaacs & Zimbardo, pp. 60-61.
339 TolkienLetters, p. 116, in a letter to Christopher Tolkien.
340 White, p. 140.
341 White, p. 55.
342 Grotta-Kurska, p. 143.

His desire for precision was absolute; he admitted to an interviewer, "Among my characteristics that you have not mentioned is the fact that I am a pedant devoted to accuracy, even in what may appear to others unimportant matters."[343]

At times, Tolkien's precision turned into true nitpickiness, as when he wrote a three page rebuttal to a four sentence blurb written for *The Hobbit.*[344] (Another instance of a meltdown?) "Tolkien was picky, obsessive and must at times have been quite insufferable to work with.... [H]e was also other-worldly, completely unable to sympathize with anyone working in the publishing business, or any other; indeed, the entire business world was alien to him.... [H]e just believed that everyone thought the same way he did."[345]

He "was especially sensitive to official rejection."[346] The negative reviews of *The Lord of the Rings* bothered him greatly.[347] Tolkien's response to criticism seems to have been a constant source of frustration to his friends. Autistics are almost always intensely self-critical, and Tolkien certainly was — e.g. he was very harsh in his description of himself as a parent despite great efforts on behalf of his children.[348] Yet external criticism often had no influence at all upon his behavior. C. S. Lewis declared that "[H]e has two reactions to criticism; either he begins the whole thing over again from the beginning or else he takes no notice at all."[349] At other times, he treated constructive criticism or suggestions as absolute rejection and buried the work entirely. This is what happened with *The Silmarillion,* for instance. This all-or-nothing view is very autistic.

His negotiations with his publishers were problematic in other ways. He seems to have truly had trouble understanding what they were asking of him. *The Hobbit* seems to have sat in his drawer for years before he let it be published, despite friends telling him that it should be available to the wider world. No one really understands why.[350] The answer seems clear to me: It was just another of those executive function things. Tolkien didn't have an idea how to go about publishing. So he did nothing — until others in effect took over the project. He also needed help to finally get *The Lord of the Rings* through the publishing process.[351]

His self-imposed honesty also played a role in that problem. Tolkien apparently was very unhappy with his publishers at Allen & Unwin; he thought they hadn't done enough with *Farmer Giles of Ham.* (In fact they seem to have done all that was reasonably possible, but Tolkien just didn't understand.) His behavior is typical of the "Asperger's pre-emptive strike."[352] He

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[343] TolkienLetters, p. 372.

[344] White, p. 158; the text of Tolkien's comments is in TolkienLetters, pp. 21-22.

[345] White, p. 159.

[346] Grotta-Kurska, p. 55.

[347] Grotta-Kurska, p. 117.

[348] Pearce, pp. 199-200.

[349] Grotta-Kurska, p. 93.

[350] Grotta-Kurska, pp. 82-83.

[351] Grotta-Kurska, p. 110.

[352] Simone, pp. 121-123, explains this phenomenon, in which an autistic who feels distrusted will disengage from an activity or job and eventually quit.

therefore started shopping *The Lord of the Rings* to another publisher — but felt enough of a debt to Allen & Unwin that he was slow to make the deal, and *The Lord of the Rings* fell between two stools for almost half a decade,[353] until Tolkien had to humbly come back to Allen & Unwin.[354]

Autistics often find it hard to view themselves honestly, or even take compliments,[355] and Tolkien "was in fact very humble. This is not to say that he was unaware of his own talents.... But he did not consider that these talents were very important… and he certainly took no personal pride in his own character. Far from it: he took an almost tragic view of himself as a weak man."[356]

His desire to help his students was immense, often "help[ing] them so much that work they published… was really his own. Yet he never took credit for this, only pleasure for his pupils."[357] Owen Barfield, who knew him well, declared, "I could never see him outside the university. He was never practical or handy.... I would think that to call him a man of the world would be the very last thing."[358] He certainly wasn't good at managing money, as his financial troubles proved.[359] He apparently had trouble working out his taxes.[360] Nor did he have any investing acumen — e.g. he sold the manuscript of *The Lord of the Rings* very quickly, for a mere £1250, to help finance a house;[361] had he waited a few years, he could have received many times what he actually was paid for the manuscript. He also hated administration.[362]

Autistics love to organize, but usually only one sort of thing; everything else is a mess. So it was with Tolkien; he never managed to organize his writings, which were scribbled on anything and filed anywhere; "Rayner Unwin saw bits of the *Ring* manuscript stuffed away in cupboards, filing cabinets, and desk drawers."[363] But when dealing with languages, he had "a flair for detecting patterns and relations,"[364] which is often an autistic gift.

The intellectual gap between Tolkien and his brother Hilary was great; Hilary won no scholarships, left school early, and ended up as a fruit farmer[365] — the sort of "talent gap" which rarely exists unless one sibling is autistic and the other not.

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353 White, pp. 188-192.

354 Carpenter, p. 216. Tolkien's cranky letters to Stanley Unwin, in which he attempted to force his way out of the agreement with them, and some other letters regarding this debacle, can be found in TolkienLetters, pp. 134-142; his humble letters to Rayner Unwin, which resulted in the publication of *The Lord of the Rings,* begin on p. 161.

355 Carley, p., 179.

356 Carpenter, p. 134.

357 Grotta-Kurska, p. 65.

358 Grotta-Kurska, p. 77.

359 Grotta-Kurska, pp. 78-80.

360 Carpenter, p. 227.

361 Grotta-Kurska, p. 119; Carpenter, p. 227.

362 White, p. 115.

363 Grotta-Kurska, p. 108.

364 Carpenter, p. 140.

365 Carpenter, pp. 57, 113, 180, 255.

For a man who was to become perhaps the greatest philologist of the century, his results in preparatory school were unimpressive. Rather than winning a scholarship to Oxford, he earned a mere exhibitionship — which still got him into the school and paid his tuition, but which was far less prestigious. "[B]y the high standards of King Edward's School the award 'was tolerable rather than praiseworthy.' Certainly there was little sign of the exceptional abilities that would later mark him out."[366] As late as his first year at Oxford, he was still producing poor results and a seeming lack of effort — being on his own for the first time, he gave the impression of having no idea how to manage his life. His diary, which he seems to have kept for Edith, has remarks about his failures but few plans for *how* to do better.[367] Tolkien blamed his failure on "folly and slackness," — and indeed wrote a short story which seems almost an account (both explanation and apology) for his failure. This is "Leaf by Niggle," in which Niggle represents Tolkien,[368] who "was sensitive to accusations of laziness, but it is clear enough that he was a perfectionist, and also easily distracted."[369] Even C. S. Lewis declared him a "great but dilatory and unmethodical man."[370] But it is very common for autistics to underachieve in school until something activates their abilities, and they are highly distractable and are "perfectionist[s]. We will always be looking for a better way of doing something."[371]

Concentration was never Tolkien's strong suit, and he never seemed to know when he was finished.[372] It has been suggestion that he did not *want* to finish *The Book of Lost Tales.*[373] This was what doomed *The Silmarillion,* and very nearly doomed *The Lord of the Rings* as well. This is another feeling I know well; I have always hated to declare a book to be done. This tendency to keep fiddling showed even in some of his diaries; he wrote them in Elvish before he had finished settling the alphabet, meaning that at times he had trouble understanding his own writing![374] This is not unusual; one of the other autistics I know has also invented his own writing system, although without a whole language behind it.

Autistic relationships tend to be strong and permanent. According to his children, "Both [Edith and Ronald Tolkien] had a gift for enduring friendships."[375] This sort of permanent attachment is typical of autism; ; one victim writes, "I remain friends with most of the people I was friends with thirty years ago, and I worry about them daily."[376]

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366 Pearce, p. 32.

367 Carpenter, p. 66.

368 Priscilla Tolkien called "Leaf by Niggle" the "'most autobiographical' of all her father's work"; Pearce, p. 174. Tolkien himself wrote that "was the only thing I have ever done which cost me absolutely no pains at all" (TolkienLetters, p. 113) — an obvious hint that it came directly from his own experience.

369 ShippeyRoad, p. 43.

370 Grotta-Kurska, p. 7.

371 Simone, p. 20.

372 White, p. 183; on p. 98, he says that Tolkien could not *make* himself finish *The Silmarillion.*

373 Carpenter, p. 113.

374 Carpenter, p. 107.

375 TolkienFamily, p. 67.

376 Page, p. 182.

Tolkien's version of this constancy perhaps shows most in his relationship with his wife. His affections were almost unchangeable; although ordered to stay away from his beloved Edith Bratt for three years, his feelings never altered. And yet, he followed the rules, as autistics almost always do: Despite the absolute despair at being separated from Edith, he obeyed Father Francis and made no direct efforts to keep in contact.[377] His obedience was absolute; Charles Mosely called it a *geas,* an unbreakable vow, laid upon him.[378]

I find it fascinating to note that, in this period, Tolkien consoled himself with the Chaucerian tag, "Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe"[379] — which just happens to be the motto that I myself adopted the moment I learned it. "Trouthe" is not simply "troth" or "truth"; it has those aspects, but it also involves integrity, self-honesty, and virtue.[380] Like extraordinarily strong friendships, it seems to be a peculiarly autistic emotion.

When Tolkien and Edith Bratt finally were able to reunite, he insisted that she convert to Catholicism for him — and, when she consented but wanted to wait until they were married (so that she would not lose her home), he insisted that she do it *quickly.*[381] Not only was this an instance of his rigid world view, but it also shows his difficulties in understanding her.[382] Tolkien seems to have been entirely happy to be married to Edith — like many autistics, he seems never even to have considered straying — but it was not a particularly joyful relationship for her; she never became fond of his church[383] or, seemingly, of his friends. At one point during his army service, she refused to move to be near him.[384] They usually slept in separate beds — although the official reason for this was his snoring and odd hours.[385]

Humphrey Carpenter suggested that Tolkien's forceful demand was also a test of faith: After the long separation, in which she became engaged to another man, would Edith meet the test he imposed on her?[386] This sounds depressingly likely to me — in my anxiety, I have also asked my friends to do something to ease my fear that they do not care for me. And they generally have refused, and rejected me as a friend as a result. Tolkien was very, very lucky that Edith agreed — for what would he have done had she refused?

Tolkien has been charged, with reason, with failing to understand romantic love.[387] There are instances of marriage in *The Lord of the Rings,* but of courtship effectively none. Faramir loves Éowyn at first sight; Éowyn loves Aragorn just as quickly, then turns to Faramir in a period of

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377 Pearce, p. 29-30.

378 Pearce, p. 31. For the autistic adherence to rules, see A Rigid World View on p. 22.

379 Pearce, p. 31; the quote is from Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales,* "The Franklin's Tale," line 1479.

380 Stevens, pp. 63-65,

381 Pearce, pp. 34-35.

382 For this as an autistic trait, see Emotional insensitivity and communication difficulty. on p. 24.

383 Pearce, p. 35.

384 Carpenter, p. 106.

385 Carpenter, p. 120.

386 Carpenter, p. 73; Pearce, p. 35, and White, p. 53, accept the interpretation.

387 White, p. 202.

days. Sam Gamgee marries Rose Cotton, but most of their courtship apparently preceded the main action of the book. The courting of Aragorn and Arwen also took place mostly off-stage — and has strong parallels to Tolkien's own life; Aragorn courted a dark-haired woman much older than he; like Tolkien, Aragorn was an orphan whose mother outlived his father; as with Tolkien, there was family opposition to the marriage of Aragorn and Arwen. Even the great love story of Tolkien's legendarium, the courtship of Beren and Lúthien (whose names Tolkien engraved on his own and his wife's tombstones) is a case of love at first sight, with little real courting. The only real sign of family life in *The Lord of the Rings* is in the very last chapter; of children we see almost none.[388]

He had a "rather immature vision of modern, practical romance,"[389] and autistics are often labelled immature. "Tolkien also found it hard to express his love for Edith other than in sentimental and slightly patronizing ways."[390] And yet, when Edith died, he seems to have refused to admit that he was a widower; he regarded himself as still married.[391] How romantic can you get?

It is ironic that the writer of the greatest Romance of the twentieth century, in the correct critical sense of the word "Romance," could not write romance in the common sense of the word! It is about as autistic a set of tales as one can imagine.

It is noteworthy that Tolkien — who had devotedly pursued Edith Bratt for five years, even though a three year span with no contact at all — seems hardly to have believed in true love: "only the rarest good fortune brings together the man and woman who are really as it were 'destined" for one another, and capable of a very great and splendid love."[392] Edith was never comfortable with Tolkien's friends, and although he was a truly dutiful father, he seems to have been happiest in the company of those who shared his closest interests. Edith "still felt that his affections were elsewhere and that there were needs in his life that she was unable to satisfy. Sadly she began to realize that there was one side of her husband's character that only came alive when he was in the company of men of his own kind."[393] Even his children admit that "Parts of J. R. R. T.'s life at this time were in many ways separate to his life with his family."[394]

His friendships also lasted long. One of his "Father Christmas Letters" shows how he hated to see a relationship end: "We always keep the names of our old friends, and their letters, and later on we hope to come back when they are grown up and have houses of their own and

[388] Hugh T. Keenan, on p. 72 of Isaacs & Zimbardo; although I am sure Tolkien would have utterly rejected Keenan's interpretation, on this point Keenan seems right.
[389] White, p. 55.
[390] White, p. 55.
[391] Grotta-Kurska, p. 138.
[392] TolkienLetters, p. 52, in a letter from Tolkien to his son; also in Pearce, p. 50.
[393] Pearce, p. 52.
[394] TolkienFamily, p. 66.

children...."[395] In his later years, he and C. S. Lewis drifted apart, yet Tolkien was deeply grieved by Lewis's death in 1963.[396]

Tolkien, in writing to W. H. Auden on his linguistic abilities, said that they gave him a "particular pleasure… [which was] not quite the same as the mere perception of beauty… it is more like the appetite for a needed food."[397] This sounds indicative of the special interest — but it also sounds like my own personal reaction to playing music. There is no great joy in it, at least when playing alone, but it's sort of a necessity: I need to keep my fingers working. This is, I think, an autistic sort of an "itch."

Tolkien created probably the most detailed, thought-out "secondary world" of any author ever. And those with autism "can develop vivid and complex secondary worlds."[398] Humphrey Carpenter, interviewing him in 1967, found that he acted as if he actually believed in the truth of *The Lord of the Rings,* "talking about his book not as a work of fiction but as a chronicle of actual events."[399]

The Lord of the Rings famously produces divergent reactions — it is either a great book or juvenile trash.[400] Both sides seem to maintain their viewpoint for the same reason: That good and evil are simple, unmixed, and openly opposed.[401] In a complex world, this can seem simplistic. And in a world which rejects heroes in literature, a book in which "all the heroic issues of the western world, from *Beowulf* to D. H. Lawrence, are enacted"[402] is unlikely to gain acceptance from the critics brought up on un-heroic literature. But it is very, very autistic: Black and white, with little in between.

His emotions were strong; "he was never moderate."[403] There were no mixed feelings; whatever he felt, be it love, anger, or guilt, it was his only emotion at the time. This again is typical of the black-and-white views of autistics.

Temple Grandin's three classes of autistics are "Visual thinker mind," "Music and math mind," and "Verbal logic mind."[404] It might be tempting to label Tolkien a "verbal logic mind." And yet, Grandin declares that the verbal logic type is "poor at drawing." Tolkien illustrated *The Hobbit*

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395 Pearce, p. 170.

396 Pearce, pp. 187-188.

397 TolkienLetters, pp. 213-214.

398 Attwood, p. 24.

399 Carpenter, p. 12.

400 Samples of reviews on both sides in Carpenter, pp. 225-226, White, pp. 197-200.

401 C. S. Lewis made this point explicitly in his review of *The Lord of the Rings,* although he denied that it was in fact a valid criticism; see his article in Isaacs & Zimbardo, p. 12.

402 Roger Sale, in Isaacs & Zimbardo, p. 247.

403 Carpenter, p. 133.

404 Grandin & Barron, p. 102.

himself, as well as illustrating several of the stories he wrote for his children. And he enjoyed calligraphy and drawing intricate designs on any paper than came to hand.[405]

Was Tolkien more than a linguist? Was he a musician also? The evidence is conflicting. It has been claimed that Tolkien was not interested in music.[406] He said himself that musical talent "unfortunately did not descend to me."[407] He never took to the piano.[408] And yet, his writings are full of lyrics which are said to be songs. "The most important part of *The Silmarillion* is its account of the Creation of Middle Earth by the One"[409] — and the name of this account is "Ainulindalë," or "The Music of the Ainur,"[410] because the world was created as a representation of the music of these angelic beings. He is said to have handed around texts of his own songs for colleagues to sing.[411] In a tribute to his wife after her death, he recalled her singing,[412] and it was her dancing — which can hardly be separated from music! — which inspired his tale of Beren and Lúthien.[413] (Edith Bratt in fact had been such a good pianist that there had been talk of a professional career — except that her guardian did not do anything to support her ambitions.[414]) In at least one of the songs in *The Road Goes Ever On,* he offered a tune to Donald Swann.[415] A group he belonged to before college discussed language, mythology — and classical music.[416] He is said to have loved the music of the Welsh language,[417] and he once described a performance of "Rigoletto" as "perfectly astounding."[418] His parents had often met covertly at musical gatherings.[419] Carpenter claims that, as a boy, Tolkien longed to own a banjo such as his uncle-to-be Edwin Neave played.[420]

Tolkien certainly was not a musician, but this seems more a lack of opportunity than a lack of desire. I suspect there was more music in his head than he ever revealed.

It is true that Tolkien never showed any professional interest in mathematics — but he did, oddly enough, use occasional mathematical analogies: "How stupid everything is!, and war multiplies the stupidity by 3 and its power by itself: so one's precious days are ruled by $(3x)^2$ where x=normal

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405 Carpenter, p. 242.
406 White, p. 21.
407 TolkienLetters, p. 218.
408 Carpenter, p. 30.
409 Pearce, p. 84.
410 TolkienSilmarillion, p. 13.
411 Grotta-Kurska, p. 61.
412 Pearce, p. 205.
413 ShippeyRoad, p. 244.
414 Carpenter, p. 47.
415 Grotta-Kurska, p. 139.
416 White, p. 41.
417 Grotta-Kurska, p. 22.
418 Pearce, p. 182.
419 Carpenter, p. 17.
420 Carpenter, p. 26, although he does not reveal a source for this.

human crassitude (and that's bad enough)."[421] And he admitted to a "childish amusement with arithmetic," going on to point out that he had created a Númenórean calendar that was almost nine seconds per year more accurate than the Gregorian![422] These are frankly the sorts of games that I like to play — much more interesting than, say, a calculus problem.

He generally disliked technology; his only "scientific" interest was an ecological interest in trees and wild places.[423] (Although, interestingly, his mother's sister Jane Neave, the wife of the man who had played the banjo for him a lifetime before, was one of the first women ever to earn a science degree[424] — she taught him geometry before he went to school.[425]) But Tolkien liked trees so much that he was reported to have talked to them, and is said to have been good at botany.[426] His interest in what we would now call "ecology" was substantial[427] — and I have noticed that an interest in ecology seems to have some connection with an interest in language among my friends. What's more, Tolkien was interested in codes — and history shows that linguists are almost as good at cryptography as are mathematicians; the skill sets seem to be similar. Also, Tolkien was never really exposed to mathematics when he was young, so we cannot know how mathematical he would have been given the chance.

If it weren't for his linguistic skills, the traits assembled here might not add up to autism. But it is a rare "neurotypical" who would show both Tolkien's skill in and devotion to language. There are good reasons to think he at least leaned toward music-and-math-and-language autism.

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421 TolkienLetters, p. 75, in a letter to Christopher Tolkien commenting on how badly the military was wasting the younger man's time.

422 TolkienLetters, p. 229.

423 White, p. 230, although he frames this more as an opposition to change and progress.

424 White, p. 124. She also caused Tolkien to publish *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil;* Carpenter, p. 245.

425 TolkienLetters, p. 377n.

426 Carpenter, p. 30.

427 As a token in his fiction, observe that, in *The Silmarillion,* the original source of light was not the Sun and Moon, but the Two Trees — in this cosmology "the Sun is not a divine symbol, but a second-best thing, and the 'light of the Sun' (the world under the sun) become terms for a fallen world" — TolkienLetters, p. 148.

The Scientist: Sir Isaac Newton

The great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.
— Isaac Newton.

Who He Was

For Isaac Newton, the line between life and death was thin indeed. He was conceived very soon after his parents married — indeed, it is thought he might have been conceived before they married.[428] He was probably born prematurely, and was a sickly boy.[429]. And his father died before he was born,[430] which in England at that time often meant no future for the children.

To make things worse, his mother, the former Hannah Ayscough, remarried before he reached the age of four,[431] leaving him to the care of her parents.[432] This abandonment is thought by many to have left psychological scars. At least he didn't have to worry about poverty. His family wasn't rich, but his father and stepfather left him enough to get by on — one of the conditions of his mother's remarriage was that her new husband Barnabas Smith bequeath a certain amount of land to young Isaac.[433]

He seems to have been naturally mechanical, creating gadgets such as clocks and a mill that could be driven by a mouse or other small animal.[434]

At the age of twelve, he was sent to the King's School at Grantham, a few miles east of his home of Woolsthorpe in Lincolnshire.[435] But his mother's second husband (who was much older than she) died in 1658;[436] his mother took him from the school with the intent of having him manage the farm at Woolsthorpe. He proved "the world's worst farmer"[437] — his mind wandered too much, and the family was fined when he let the animals wander[438] — and his uncle William Ayscough convinced his mother to let him go back to school.[439] He lodged with an apothecary

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428 Levy, p. 11.

429 Levy, p. 11. He is usually said to have been born on Christmas day 1642. This was under the "old style" calendar, i.e. the Julian. Under the Gregorian, he was born on January 4 1643; Asimov, p. 134. Unfortunately, this calendar confusion crops up in many of the dates in Newton's life; this, combined with the then-current habit of starting the year on March 25, means that many of Newton's dates seem to have a one year "slush."

430 Levy, p. 10.

431 Levy, p. 12.

432 Berlinski, p. 6.

433 Bell, p. 91; Gribbin, p. 176,

434 Porter, p. 513.

435 Porter, p. 513.

436 Gribbin, p. 177.

437 Asimov, p. 135,

438 Gribbin, p. 177.

439 Bell, p. 91.

at this time, where he probably learned the skills which he later used in his study of alchemy.[440] He supposedly was involved with a local girl, Catherine Storer,[441] at this time, but nothing came of it, and he never had a liaison with a girl again;[442] some think the alleged romance was just wishful thinking on her part. In any case, Newton soon left the area. In June 1661, he entered Trinity College at Cambridge — although, not being of the nobility, or even the gentry, he had to work as a servant to other students.[443] (He should not have had to do this, given his mother's affluence, but his mother refused to supply him with enough money to pay his way.[444]) He graduated in 1665 "without particular distinction."[445]

Then the plague came. Newton spent eighteen months at home in Woolsthorpe — a time referred to as his *annus mirabilis* because of all the results he produced. Apparently his mother had ceased nagging him about farm work, so he was able to sit around and just *think*[446] — and in that time he worked out the basis of most of classical physics,[447] although universal gravitation came later. There is no evidence that an apple fell on his head to inspire his ideas; indeed, there may not have been an apple at all.[448] But he worked out the composite nature of white light by his prism experiments in this period,[449] and also did most of the work involved required to create his system of mechanics, i.e. motion.

"Classical physics," that is, physics as it existed from the time of Newton until Max Planck and Albert Einstein started the quantum revolution, was essentially predictive: Throw a ball *this* hard in *that* direction and it will land *there*. The whole idea was to present an accurate, usable model of how objects behaved.

But physics as Newton inherited it was not like that. It was starting to break the (mostly descriptive) model proposed by Aristotle; it was both observational (the work of men like Galileo and Robert Hooke) and mathematical (due to Kepler and Galileo again and other). But it had not entirely adopted the scientific method of hypothesis, experiment, verification, and did not yet have a set of defined, measurable, basic units.[450] To imagine what this was like, imagine trying to convey a design for a house without using measurements: Instead of something like "walls eight

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[440] Gribbin, p. 177.

[441] Berlinski, p. 9. The name is sometimes spelled "Storey."

[442] Bell, p. 92.

[443] Levy, p. 32; Bell, p. 96. In Cambridge at the time, there were two classes of students who did menial work, the "sizars" and the "subsizars." The "sizars" served the staff; the "subsizars," the wealthier students. Newton was a "subsizar," the lowest class, and was forbidden to mix with the students who paid their own way.

[444] Levy, p. 32.

[445] Asimov, p. 135; Porter, p. 513.

[446] Levy, p. 47.

[447] Porter, p. 513.

[448] Levy, p. 6; Berlinski, p. 5. Brumwell & Speck:, p. 266, says that it was Voltaire who popularized the idea of the apple. However, the evidence that Newton *told* the apple story is strong; Crease, p. 89. My guess would be that he used an apple as an example but that his hearers took it as being his inspiration.

[449] Asimov, p. 136.

[450] Crease, p. 59.

feet high, six inches thick, windows every six feet," try "walls a manheight, plus a little, windows three-quarters that apart, walls a twelfth that thick...." What physics needed was a set of basic units — and units that could be interrelated.

This Newton supplied. His famous summation of this is his "Second Law," $F=ma$, that is, *force equals mass times acceleration.* That isn't really the correct statement; it should be

$$F = \frac{d}{dt}(mv)$$

This formula is twice important. First, Newton had invented the calculus (or co-invented it, with Leibnitz) — and he had inserted it into physics. And then he had simplified it down to three simple terms, F, m, and a or v. And all the terms are defined and measurable — they have *units*.[451] The velocity v, for instance, is distance covered divided by time taken, so it can be miles per hour, or meters per second, or kilometers per minute, or whatever you like. Acceleration a is distance divided by time divided by time again, so meters per second per second. And so forth. The details don't matter unless you're a physicist. The point is, starting with Newton's rules, *everything worked.* And, when this was coupled with his theory of universal gravitation, Newton had a system for predicting motion both on earth and in the sky.

Nor was that all. Among his other discoveries, in 1664 or 1665, was the binomial theorem, one of the most important results in probability theory.[452] He also was responsible for "Newton's Method" for finding numeric solutions to equations.[453]

Newton's skills were so great that he was granted a minor fellowship at Trinity in 1667.[454] Granted his M.A. in 1668, he was at once appointed the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics. At 26 or 27, he was one of the youngest professors in history — supposedly Isaac Barrow, his predecessor (himself still only 38, and the very first holder of the post[455]) resigned the chair because Newton was so much better a mathematician.[456] (To be sure, that also let Barrow take a useful post as a royal chaplain, so there was something in it for him, too.[457] It had already been a pretty fruitful relationship — Barrow lured ideas out of Newton, who otherwise might have sat on them; the combination produced more than either would have alone.[458]) The chair was given to Newton even though he had to be given a special exemption because he did not wish to be a priest.[459]

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[451] Crease, p. 60.
[452] Boyer, p. 393.
[453] Boyer, p. 411.
[454] Levy, p. 54.
[455] Levy, p. 42.
[456] Porter, p. 513.
[457] Levy, p. 57.
[458] Levy, p. 56.
[459] Asimov, p. 136.

At about this time, Newton also constructed the first reflecting telescope,[460] which had the double advantage of making it easier to get a good image (it solved the problem of "chromatic aberration")[461] and of making it possible to build a stronger telescope that required less space. He was rewarded by being elected to the Royal Society in 1672.[462] He effectively withdrew from the society in 1678, however, when his enemy Robert Hooke was elected secretary.[463]

He had been taking time off from science in this period anyway, devoting much of his attention to theology. This had a singularly unfortunate result: He ceased to believe in Christian orthodoxy. Instead of accepting the doctrine of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three united as one), he adopted the Arian heresy[464] — the belief that Jesus the Son, although in some sense divine, was inferior to God the Father. The Son, in the Arian view, was a *created* thing, even if it was the first thing created.[465] The heresy dated back to the fourth century, meaning that it was more than a thousand years old when Newton rediscovered it — but it was still unacceptable (as it is to this day in most denominations), and it could have cost him his position in college. Happily, he was given a royal dispensation against having to take clerical orders,.[466] so he didn't have to risk revealing his views. Some have thought that he went on from Arianism to Deism. He certainly spent many years fooling around with Biblical chronology and attempts to decipher its prophecies.[467]

In 1677, a fire in his laboratory destroyed many of his papers, although we do not know in detail what was destroyed.[468] Probably much of it had to do with his alchemical researches.

In 1679, his mother died, leaving him a fairly substantial inheritance. He spend some months straightening that out — but after that, he seems to have farmed out the land and not paid it much attention.[469]

In 1687, Newton published (in Latin) the *Principia Mathematica,* a book financed by his wealthy friend Edmund Halley. It was Newton's single most important work and arguably the most important book ever published in the field.[470] It would eventually make his international reputation.

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460 Bell, p. 107.
461 Asimov, p. 137.
462 Asimov, p. 137. Bell, p. 107; Levy, p. 63.
463 Levy, p. 69.
464 Gribbin, p. 183.
465 BakerDict, p. 63.
466 Gribbin, p. 184.
467 Levy, p.p. 141-146.
468 Levy, p. 83.
469 Levy, p. 92.
470 Porter, p. 513.

He helped defend Cambridge University from the interference of the Catholic King James II at in 1687.[471] Religiously, this may not seem significant, but it was an important stand for academic freedom.

Soon after, he met Nicolas Fatio de Duillier, who briefly became his closest friend and follower.[472]

Newton was elected to parliament for Cambridge University in 1689,[473] quite possibly as a reward for his stand against James II.[474] Dealing with this task proved beyond his abilities — either that, or another fire in his papers which was blamed on his dog Diamond[475] or the ending of his relationship with Fatio de Duillier was more than he could handle.[476] Or maybe it was mercury poisoning.[477] Whatever the reason, he went into a severe depression and was said to have lost his mind.[478] It took him two years to fully recover, and it has been argued that he was never quite the same.[479]

In 1696, he became Warden of the Mint,[480] then in 1699 was promoted to Master of the Mint.[481] This was probably intended as a sinecure, but Newton took it seriously.[482] Although scientists often regard it as unfortunate, because it took Newton away from science, he proved a very good mintmaster, doing much to clean up the coinage.[483] It has been argued — with a fair amount of justice — that his reforms saved the British economy;[484] after his reforms, coins finally had the value they said they had. "The recoinage led to a shortage of specie and much hardship, but the new coinage restored confidence, having milled edges to discourage clipping."[485]

He spent another term in parliament in 1701-1702.[486]

When Queen Anne took the throne, the Whigs lost power, and Newton with them — but he had a fallback. He was formally elected President of the Royal Society in 1703, retaining the office until he died. His most important book other than the *Principia,* the *Opticks,* followed the

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471 Gribbin, p. 188.
472 Levy, p. 113.
473 Bell, p. 111; Porter, p. 513.
474 Berlinski, p. 144.
475 Berlinski, p. 148.
476 Levy, p. 115.
477 Levy, p. 118.
478 Boyer, p. 413; Porter, p. 513.
479 Asimov, p. 140.
480 Bell, p. 114.
481 Bell, p. 112.
482 Berlinski, p. 152.
483 Asimov, p. 140.
484 Levy, p. 122.
485 Brumwell & Speck:, p. 322.
486 Gribbin, p. 190.

next year — and, unlike the *Principia,* it was easy to understand (and written originally in English).[487]

He was knighted by Queen Anne in 1705[488] — although this was reportedly for political reasons, not as a reward for his science or even for his work in the mint.[489]

He continued to work for the next twenty years, mostly on theological topics, but none of his works in this period had any lasting significance.

Newton died on March 20, 1727, at the age of 84, of what the doctors thought was urinary stones, although this does not explain all his symptoms.[490] He refused to accept the final sacraments of the church.[491] He was nonetheless buried in Westminster Abbey — a singular honor for a scientist.[492]

[487] Levy, p. 128.
[488] Bell, p. 114; Porter, p. 513.
[489] Gribbin, p. 190.
[490] Berlinski, p. 1.
[491] Berlinski, p. 2.
[492] Asimov, p. 141.

The Case for Autism

Of all the people profiled in this book, Isaac Newton is the one most often labelled as autistic.[493] After all, scientists are the people most associated with autism, and socially peculiar scientists most of all — and Newton was certainly that! There really isn't much doubt about the condition in his case, but let's look at the data anyway.

Even as a boy, he liked the company of girls more than that of boys: "He put [his] tools to use making cunningly crafted dolls' houses for the female playmates he preferred over male company."[494]

At least he had playmates at home; in school, he had no such fortune: "Even after a few years he was not well liked. Stukeley recounts that he cared not for the 'trifling sports' of his schoolfellows, but tried to 'teach them… to play philosophically.' Here can be read evidence of a boy set apart by his intellect, yet without the social or emotional intelligence to make friends; evidence that could be an indication that Newton suffered from some form of Asperger's Syndrome."[495]

College was no better; he seems to have been isolated despite attempts to make friends: "Despite… apparent attempts to ingratiate himself with higher-ranked students, the evidence is that he was miserable and solitary."[496] He seems to have had only one college friend, his long-time roommate John Wickens.[497]

As is so often the case with autistics, his early school performance was poor until something motivated him. In Newton's case, it was being attacked by a bully (being bullied a common fate for autistics). Newton, interestingly, was able to beat the bully in a fair fight — but then decided to trump him again by becoming the best student in the class.[498]

"A hypersensitivity to criticism and possessiveness about his work made conflicts with other scientists a prominent feature of his later life."[499] When attacked by Hooke, "From bewilderment he quickly passes to cold anger and a hurt, somewhat childish resolution to play by himself in future. He simply could not suffer malicious fools gladly."[500] Eventually he all but gave up on physics and mathematics to fool around with alchemy and theology.[501]

"[H]e was also very liberal with his money and was always ready to help a friend in need as unobtrusively as possible."[502]

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[493] E. g. Carley, p. 41.
[494] Levy, p. 22.
[495] Levy, p. 17.
[496] Levy, p. 33.
[497] "John" is the first name used by Levy and others; Gribbin, p. 178, calls him "Nicholas."
[498] Asimov, p. 134; Bell, p. 92.
[499] Porter, p. 513.
[500] Bell, p. 107.
[501] Bell, p. 108.
[502] Bell, p. 109; Levy, p. 148, notes an instance of him giving £4000 to a relative by marriage.

Newton's work on the *Principia* appears to have been as obsessive as any autistic in the grip of a special interest: "Newton seems to have forgotten that he had a body which required food and sleep when he gave himself up to the composition of his masterpiece. Meals were ignored or forgotten, and on arising from a snatch of sleep he would sit on the edge of the bed half-clothed for hours, threading the mazes of his mathematics."[503] This was typical of him: "In all the history of mathematics Newton had no superior… in the ability to concentrate all the forces of his intellect on a difficulty at an instant's notice."[504]

But he wasn't much as a publisher; his friend Edmund Halley had to see the *Principia* through to publication.[505] (Of course, Halley also paid for it, but the point is, Newton didn't really do the work of overseeing the book.)

"He was ridiculously absent-minded and perpetually preoccupied with matters other than his immediate surroundings. He was also extremely sensitive to criticism and childish in his reaction to it."[506]

He tended to avoid public arguments, but when he did get involved, he had a tendency to become furious and rail at his opponents.[507] His comments read very much like those of someone in the grip of an autistic meltdown.

A fair amount of his work was simply written in dirt or mud puddles, for when he had a thought, he wanted to write it down at once[508] — yet it doesn't seem to have occurred to him to carry a notepad or the like.

When he fell into mental illness in 1692, one of the symptoms was extreme insomnia.[509] Even in ordinary times, Humphrey Newton reported that he got only four or five hours of sleep a night.[510]

For much of his life, he had a "desire for withdrawal" from society.[511] Many autistics have this — often to the point of developing an actual hiding place. Liane Holliday Willey, for instance, found an "alcove" under her bed where she could get away from the world and find herself.[512] Newton has been called "pathologically" shy, and often kept his work concealed for many years.[513]

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503 Bell, p. 109.
504 Bell, p. 116.
505 Gribbin, p. 188.
506 Asimov, p. 136.
507 Levy, pp. 67-68.
508 Levy, p. 59.
509 Bell, p. 112.
510 Levy, p. 81.
511 Berlinski, p. 7.
512 Willey, p. 28.
513 Levy, p. 56.

As a professor, he was expected to give lectures, but his second lecture had no one in attendance at all, and he seems to have made no efforts whatsoever to bring in more students.[514] Humphrey Newton reported, "He alwayes kept close to his studyes, very rarely went a visiting & had as few Visitors.... I never knew him to take any Recreation or Pastime.... He very rarely went to Dine in the Hall... if He had not been [re]minded, would go very carelessly, with shoes down at Heels, stockins unty'd, surplice on, & his Head scarcely comb'd."[515]

Humphrey Newton adds that he could only recall one instance of Isaac Newton laughing. Others also report a very poor sense of humor if any at all.[516]

We often find autistics having a lot of trouble planning or organizing for their future. This happened repeatedly with Newton. When he was trying to get into the mathematics program at Trinity, he proved not to have studied Euclid or Euclidean Geometry in any depth.[517] Even though his academic future, and hence his career, was on the line, he did very little to try to assure his election as a fellow of Cambridge.[518]

Newton's negotiating skills were effectively non-existent. His management style is a case in point. When he was in charge of something, he wanted to be in complete charge. It showed in his management of the mint,[519] and also in the fight he had with John Flamsteed at the Royal Society.[520] His dispute with Leibnitz over the invention of the calculus was petty and stupid, but Newton used all his prestige and power to try to discredit Leibnitz.[521]

It is noteworthy that, when Newton left Cambridge after more than three decades at the University, he seems to have kept no contacts at all — not one letter survives to anyone.[522] Who but an autistic could spend half a lifetime in one place and not have any friends whatsoever?

His relationship with his young friend Nicolas Fatio de Duillier (1664-1753) was extremely close. "This was surely the most intimate relationship of his adult life."[523] Newton was intensely interested in Fatio's travels, and devastated when there were difficulties;[524] it may have brought on his depression. They were so close that a homosexual relationship is widely suggested.[525] And yet, Newton was by now in his late forties, and had never hinted at a relationship before. He seems never to have shown romantic interest in anyone, unless it was Miss Storer, thirty years

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514 Levy, p. 58.
515 Levy, p. 58.
516 Levy, p. 59, although Newton's fan William Stukeley denied this; Levy, p. 150.
517 Levy, pp. 42-43.
518 Levy, p. 54.
519 Levy, p. 134.
520 Levy, p. 132.
521 Boyer, p. 414.
522 Levy, p. 121.
523 Levy, p. 113.
524 Levy, pp. 114-115.
525 Levy, p. 115. Others — e.g. Gribbin, p. 178 — have suggested a homosexual relationship with his long-time roommate John Wickens, but there is no hint of this in their surviving correspondence.

earlier. And his playmates had been girls. What odds of a homosexual affair at this stage of his life? It's not impossible, but we should allow at least the possibility that his relationship with Fatio de Duillier was just one of those incredibly intense friendships autistics often have. I can state categorically, from my own experience, that *every behavior of Newton's* will be shown by an autistic who is abandoned by one of his special friends. It doesn't require love. although it is of course possible that Newton was in love with Fatio.

Newton, despite a rather prolonged final illness and a large estate of some £32,000 pounds, died without a will.[526] What sort of man, in his situation, would not have left some sort of testament?

There is no evidence that Newton was interested in music. He wrote in Latin, but we have no indication that he was interested in the language as a language. He doesn't really seem like a "music-and-mathematics-and-language" autistic. But he certainly showed plenty of autistic traits — the lack of friends, the wild temper, the special interests, the depression, the shyness, the dislike of conflicts, and of course the genius. And he was perhaps the greatest mathematician and physicist who ever lived. So if Temple Grandin's classification is correct, it is surely among this class of autistics that he belongs.

[526] Levy, p. 151.

The Composer: Stephen Collins Foster

Thou art gone, alas! like the many That have bloomed in the summer of my heart.
— Stephen C. Foster, "Gentle Annie."

Who He Was

"America's most popular composer was born on the Fourth of July, 1826, at Lawrenceville, near Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. His parents were average, well-to-do people, completely baffled by early signs of musical talent in their son, and never quite able to comprehend his highly original, sensitive soul."[527]

"Stephen was the last child to survive infancy in a large, lively, and musical family," the oldest child, Charlotte Susanna, having been born in 1809.[528] Although reasonably well-off they married, the Fosters lost their home in 1826, and young Stephen would live a rather precarious life, with the family often on the move.[529] Foster's father William spent much of his life involved in lawsuits about money — indicating both his unstable character and his financial insecurity.[530] There are also indications of alcohol abuse;[531] he took the temperance pledge in 1833.[532]

Stephen Foster's sister Charlotte is also said to have been a musical prodigy, being an excellent pianist at an early age — but she at least had the advantage of exceptional teachers.[533] Stephen didn't even have that. "Although Stephen showed musical talent from earliest childhood, little was done to encourage it and no effort was made to give the lad musical training."[534] Even his knowledge of music theory and notation was almost entirely self-taught. Yet he learned swiftly, playing among other things flageolet (a recorder-like instrument).[535] His brother reported that, at age seven, he "accidentally took up a flageolet… and in a few minutes so mastered its stops and sounds that he played Hail Columbia in perfect time and accent."[536] He had been fooling around with the guitar at age two (and eventually became proficient with it), and went on to play piano and flute.[537]

His first composition was a piece for flutes called "The Tioga Waltz," debuted in 1841, although we do not have a reliable transcription of it.[538]

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[527] Spaeth, p. 103.
[528] Emerson, p. 21.
[529] Emerson, p. 29.
[530] Emerson, p. 31.
[531] Emerson, p. 32.
[532] Emerson, p. 52
[533] Emerson, p. 33.
[534] Howard, p. 741.
[535] Spaeth, p. 103.
[536] Emerson, p. 50.
[537] Emerson, p. 51.
[538] Emerson, p. 78.

Foster's first published composition was a song called "Open thy Lattice, Love" — a poem by George P. Morris for which Foster set a tune. It was published in 1844.[539] As a melody it was not exceptional, and not especially popular, but it was a start.... And it was soon followed by "Lou'siana Belle," which is about as blatantly sexual as was permissible in the 1840s, but which introduced Foster to writing minstrel songs, where he would eventually make his mark[540]

Foster loved music, but he doesn't seem to have viewed it as a career at first — although it's not clear what, if anything, he expected to do with his life. An attempt to get him into West Point in 1846 failed.[541] "Which is why, sometime at the close of 1846 or very beginning of 1847, he moved [from Pittsburg] to Cincinnati... and reported to work as a bookkeeper for Irwin & Foster. He was a twenty-year-old college dropout (having lasted less than a week at Jefferson College) whose only job had been briefly pushing a broom or toting bales at a warehouse. He was a drag on a family struggling to stay financially afloat. It was time to earn a living and unlikely that anyone would offer him higher wages than his own brother."[542]

But no job could keep him away from music; despite the lack of prospected, he just *wrote,* and, having gone to work for his brother Dunning, his song "Oh! Susanna" was premiered on September 11, 1847.[543] It was a hit — but Foster *gave* it to the music publisher W. C. Peters, along with "Old Uncle Ned," in 1848. Peters got rich off of them — they reportedly brought in $10,000[544] — but Foster didn't.

Still, it wasn't long before Foster was publishing enough songs that he thought he could make it on his own as America's first professional popular songwriter. Early in 1850, he quit his job and headed back to Pittsburg.[545] But doing so also put him back under the family roof — he had not yet gained financial or social independence.[546]

In 1850, after a very short courtship,[547] Foster married Jane McDowell.[548] He seems to have been devoted to her — witness "[I Dream of] Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair," which in the draft spoke of "Jennie," her nickname — but "their life, after the birth of a daughter, was a series of separations and reconciliations."[549] Their one child, Marion Foster, was born on April 18, 1851.[550]

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539 Spaeth, p. 102.
540 Emerson, pp. 105-106.
541 Howard, p. 742.
542 Emerson, p. 115.
543 Emerson, p. 127.
544 Spaeth, p. 103.
545 Emerson, p. 148.
546 Emerson, p. 149.
547 Emerson, p. 152.
548 Spaeth, p. 104.
549 Spaeth, p. 104.
550 Emerson, p. 168.

Foster's one major piece of good fortune was to hook up with E. P. Christy and the Christy Minstrels — although even that had its down side as Christy bought the right to be listed as composer of "Old Folks at Home" ("Swanee River").[551] But Foster at least got the royalties.

However, he didn't *like* that sort of work. "Blackface" songs sold, but they weren't "respectable." So, in 1850 and 1851, he tried to write sentimental ballads, piano melodies, even opera. And went broke doing it.[552] Even "I Dream of Jeanie" (which came a little later) didn't do very well at the time; it became popular later.[553] "Highbrow" material didn't sell.

Unfortunately, he was already starting to slip. He published only four songs in 1852[554] — clearly too few to make a living unless one was a colossal hit. It is noteworthy that Jane moved out on him about a year later — whereupon he headed to New York for a time, then Hoboken (where Jane joined him[555]), before heading back west.[556] The Fosters would reunite, split again, and reunite again,[557] but clearly something was deeply wrong. It is not clear when he started drinking heavily, but Emerson's suspicion is that it had to do with the 1852 decline in his output.[558]

When his mother died in 1855, Foster had less to contribute to her funeral expenses than any of his brothers, even though he was said to have adored her. [559] Even though his name carried great value at this time, he wasn't able to convert that into financial success. He was behind on his rent and bills to his brother. Nor were those his only troubles; his father died soon after,[560] then his brother Dunning.[561]

He was only thirty when, in 1857, he and his family lost their home; he ended up in a cheap hotel in Pittsburg.[562] This at a time when he was in a colossal songwriting slump — only one song published in twenty-four months, and it not a success; he seems to have been forced to accept a new, somewhat less favorable publishing contract.[563]

In 1856, although he produced the beautiful melody "Gentle Annie" (which was popular enough to inspire a new arrangement in 1857 as well as a song collection based on it),[564] there were only

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551 Spaeth, p. 104. The song was not listed under Foster's name until it went out of copyright in 1879, according to Emerson, p. 183.

552 Emerson, p. 174, observes that, in 1851 and 1852, Foster published nineteen songs in standard English — and earned an average of less than $31 per song on those nineteen. His blackface songs averaged $319.44.

553 Emerson, p. 218.

554 Emerson, p. 185.

555 Emerson, p. 220.

556 Emerson, p. 201.

557 Emerson, p. 202.

558 Emerson, p. 203.

559 Emerson, p. 227.

560 Emerson, p. 230.

561 Emerson, p. 231.

562 Emerson, p. 243.

563 Emerson, pp. 243-244.

564 Saunders & Root, p. 3; Emerson, p. 232.

two other songs published — and they were political, written on behalf of the Democratic party (Foster was actually appointed "musical director" of the "Allegheny Buchanan Glee Club," which campaigned for Democratic candidate James Buchanan).[565]

By 1858, depression seems to have settled on him deeply. There were six songs that year, but all have a despairing feel (and not even a *good* despairing feel; they're very poor): "Lula is gone" ("With a heart forsaken I wander, In silence, in grief and alone");[566] "Linger in Blissful Repose" (which ends "Dreaming, dreaming, unfettered by the day, In melody, in melody, I'll breathe, I'll breathe my soul away");[567] "Where has Lula gone?" ("Little voices laughing free, Laughing on the lawn, Tell me can you answer me, where has Lula gone?");[568] "My loved one and my own, or Eva" ("Bloom bright flowers around the white stone Where sleepeth my Eva");[569] "Sadly to mine heart appealing" ("Sadly to my heart appealing, Sadly sadly welladay");[570] and "My Angel Boy, I cannot see thee die" (words by H. Brougham, and not published until 1865). One suspects that Firth, Pond & Co. published most of them only because they carried Foster's name; had they been submitted by anyone else, they would surely have been rejected.

"My Angel Boy" was not the only instance in this period of Foster setting someone else's poetry to music,[571] which is fairly reasonable given that his greatest ability was his tunewriting — but this raises the question of why he didn't choose better lyrics. There is no obvious answer.

He was moving around a lot by this time, apparently taking cheaper and cheaper rooms. But with only $267.05 in royalties in 1859,[572] he could not afford even the cheapest lodgings for long.

In 1860 Foster moved permanently to New York, spending his few remaining years there.[573] He did manage to write two good songs in that year; "The *Glendy Burk*" is historically inaccurate but has a fine tune, and "Old Black Joe" is a sentimental song, not in dialect even though it is presumably about a slave, which evokes all the old Foster emotions. But it was a last hurrah.

He seems to have fallen into alcoholism at a very young age,[574] and he had no business skills at all; "he sold many of his songs outright for a pittance and wasted the money on drink, meanwhile barely subsisting in the poorest of quarters."[575] It was so bad that he had to write his compositions on the brown paper he picked up in taverns![576] He even scribbled notes on his

[565] Emerson, p. 235.
[566] Saunders & Root, p. 23.
[567] Saunders & Root, p. 31.
[568] Saunders & Root, p. 33.
[569] Saunders & Root, pp. 38-39.
[570] Saunders & Root, pp. 43-44.
[571] Emerson, p. 248.
[572] Emerson, p. 249.
[573] Howard, p. 742.
[574] Howard, p. 743.
[575] Spaeth, p. 104.
[576] Emerson, p. 283.

thumbnail when nothing else came to hand.[577] We do not know much of what he did in this period — early in his career, he had kept good record, but if he continued to keep an account book at this time, it has not survived;[578] odds are that he gave up. His wife, who had already walked out on him twice in the 1850s, left him permanently in 1861,[579] eventually finding work as a telegrapher.[580] Firth, Pond and Co. had reached the point where they no longer accepted most of his submissions; they went to less prestigious publishers.[581] Hard to blame them when Foster was spewing out things like "Lizzie Dies To-Night" (a setting of a poem by Mary Bynon Reese). He eventually wrote a handful of Civil War songs, but as a dedicated Democrat, "he couldn't get into the spirit of it."[582] Not one of the many great songs of the war was from his pen.

In 1862, he had fallen so far that he was selling even his clothing to buy alcohol.[583] He did write one song in this year that is remembered; "Beautiful Dreamer" was set in type at that time — but not issued until 1864 when it could be advertised as "composed but a few days previous to his death"![584] All his other songs from 1862 on have been completely forgotten, even though he cranked out fully forty-eight items in 1863 alone.[585] Ironically for a man who had always avoided churches, many of these were hymns.[586] Even more ironically, Horace Waters, who published most of these, seems not to have approved of him; his office staff kept Foster at a distance and even reportedly laughed at him when he visited.[587]

Foster wrote several songs with George Cooper[588] in this period, and Cooper recorded that, when he first brought in a text, Foster took out a piece of paper and scribbled out a tune and piano accompaniment, occasionally making motions as if playing a piano but never actually going

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[577] Emerson, p. 272.

[578] Emerson, pp. 269-270.

[579] Howard, p. 743.

[580] Emerson, p. 274.

[581] Emerson, p. 270. Of the songs listed as being from 1861 in Saunders & Root, the publishers were as follows: Root & Cady: 1; Firth, Pond & Co: 4; Clark's School Visitor: 1; John J. Daly: 8; Horace Waters: 2. Clearly Foster was offering things to anyone who would take them — and, mostly, those who took them were not very good publishers. Daly, according to Emerson, pp. 270-271, was known for taking rejected materials and apparently paying cash only, no royalties.

[582] Emerson, p. 279.

[583] Emerson, p. 280.

[584] Fuld, p. 135.

[585] List on pp. 4-5 of Saunders & Root. Emerson, p. 282, counts forty-nine song for that year, but this counts "The Pure, the Bright, the Beautiful" and "We'll Tune Our Hearts" as two songs; they were published on one sheet and use the same tune; see Saunders & Root, p. 344.

[586] Emerson, pp. 283-284.

[587] Emerson, p. 286, quoting Mrs. Parkhurst Duer.

[588] Cooper eventually had a substantial hit with "Sweet Genevieve" — but that came out in 1869, with music not by Foster but by Henry Tucker (Fuld, p. 543), who also composed the very popular "When This Cruel War Is Over."

to an instrument. They then headed off to find someone to buy it.[589] The whole business of writing "Willie Has Gone to the War," published in 1863, took only a few hours, and Foster sold it without ever having actually played or heard it!

By the end of 1863, Cooper was more Foster's guardian than his collaborator; he was one of those summoned when Foster took his final injury.[590]

Stephen Foster died accidentally in 1864, having fallen across a washbasin at the American Hotel on the Bowery in New York. The fall cut his throat, and he died in Bellevue Hospital on January 13, two days after his injury.[591] He was found with thirty-eight cents, an old purse, and a tiny note on which was scribbled "dear friends and gentle hearts." That was all.[592] He was not yet thirty-eight years old.

Foster's two hundred or so songs included half a dozen that have became a long-term part of American culture, and half a dozen more that did well enough to become traditional:

- Oh! Susanna (1848; first official publication by W. C. Peters and Co., although there apparently was an earlier unauthorized edition)[593]
- Old Uncle Ned (1851; published by W. C. Peters and Co.; later by Firth, Pond & Co.)[594]
- Camptown Races (1850; published by F. D Benteen as "Gwine to Run All Night")[595]
- Old Folks at Home (Swanee River) (1851; published by Firth, Pond & Co)[596]
- My Old Kentucky Home (1853; published by Firth, Pond & Co. as "My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night")[597]
- Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair (1854, published by Firth, Pond & Co)[598]
- Old Dog Tray (1854, published by Firth, Pond & Co)[599]
- Hard Times Come Again No More (1854; published by Firth, Pond & Co)[600]

589 Emerson, pp. 286-287, quoting Cooper himself.
590 Emerson, p. 298.
591 Spaeth, p. 105.
592 Emerson, p. 301.
593 Fuld, pp. 404-405.
594 LoC Sheet Music, link checked July 24, 2013.
595 Fuld, pp. 158-159.
596 Fuld, pp. 407-408.
597 Fuld, pp. 384-385.
598 Fuld, pp. 311-312.
599 LoC Sheet Music, link checked July 24, 2013.
600 LoC Sheet Music, link checked July 24, 2013.

- Gentle Annie (1857; published by Firth, Pond & Co.)[601]
- The *Glendy Burk* (1860; published by Firth, Pond & Co.)[602]
- Old Black Joe (1860; published by Firth, Pond & Co)[603]
- Beautiful Dreamer (1862; published 1864 by William A. Pond & Co.)[604]

I know of no formal estimate of the value of Foster's works, but I make the approximate value of just the songs listed to be about $85,000 1850s dollars. Extend that over the lifetime of the copyright and it becomes perhaps $150,000. That's in 1850s dollars. Foster, had he been able to collect, would have been a millionaire by today's standards. Even he would have had a hard time drink his way through *that*....

[601] Saunders & Root, p. 7.
[602] Saunders & Root, p. 93.
[603] Fuld, p. 407.
[604] Fuld, p. 135.

The Case for Autism

The great question, in the case of Stephen Foster, is whether he was autistic, or "merely" depressive and alcoholic. He certainly was the latter — but, of course, autistics are prone to depression, and also prone to substance abuse. The alcoholism certainly destroyed his career — but he had been in trouble even before the heavy drinking. There is no automatic reason why we should prefer one diagnosis to the other.

But Foster had two traits which seem more likely to be autistic than merely depressive. One was his talent; the other was his utter, total inability to manage his business. Even an alcoholic would learn that he had salable talents. Foster *flatly never figured that out.* The very concept of negotiating seems to have been beyond him — which is pretty typical autistic behavior.

His poor head for business is particularly surprising since his brothers were all "practical business men."[605] His brother William had become a wealthy officer of the Pennsylvania Railroad.[606] Yet Foster himself was so incompetent that in 1857 he sold off most of his copyrights. "He had sold [Firth, Pond] his interest in all the music they had published — 'Old Folks at Home,' 'My Old Kentucky Home,' 'Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair,' songs of incalculable value — for roughly two-thirds of his own myopic estimate of their eternal worth....This might qualify as the worst business deal in the history of the popular music business had Foster not given 'Oh! Susanna' to Peters for free. Foster cut a similar deal with Benteen, selling all future rights to 'Camptown Races,'"Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway!,' and fourteen other songs for two hundred dollars."[607]

His musical skill has never been questioned. "Of the nearly 200 songs that he wrote, largely without collaboration, a sufficient number had the quality known as inspiration to stamp him as an almost unique genius."[608]

And yet, he also produced an incredible quantity of garbage. There seems to be some sort of rule that busy composers can't tell their good stuff from their bad, but in Foster's case the contrast was incredible. The man who, in 1848, produced "Oh, Susanna!," and followed with "Camptown Races" in 1850, "Old Folks at Home" and "Sweetly She Sleeps, My Alice Fair" in 1851, "My Old Kentucky Home" and "Old Dog Tray" in 1853, and then "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair" and "Hard Times Come Again No More," and finally "Old Black Joe" in 1860, managed to publish only one new song in 1857 ("I Still See Her In My Dreams"), and in 1859 managed only five, one of them the unbelievable "Parthenia to Ingomar."[609] The early 1860s saw more titles, but apart from "Beautiful Dreamer," they were all forgettable, and mostly just plain bad.

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[605] Emerson, p. 155.

[606] Emerson, pp. 260-261.

[607] Emerson, pp. 241-242.

[608] Spaeth, p. 103.

[609] Saunders & Root, p. 3. The title isn't the only problem with "Parthenia to Ingomar"; it offers lines such as "Break not my spirit, Think of my youth, Cherish my tender heart, Doubt not my truth."

He had immense trouble in school; once, when learning the alphabet, he actually fled the building. "It was not the last time Stephen would drop out of school."[610] And when he *did* go to a boarding school, a classmate recalled that he "kept much to his room and did not join the boys in their sports. I do not remember that he spent any time in society."[611]

His problem was not mathematical. He was able to keep meticulous books on the royalties received from each song, and also to calculate expected future income[612] (some of these guesses were bad, but the calculations appear to have been fine). He simply wasn't producing enough songs, and had gotten bad deals on too many of the important ones.

His daughter reported that he had concentration problems: "He could not bear the slightest noise or interruption in his work."[613]

He had the usual autistic devotion to his wife: Jane McDowell Foster "was the first and the last women with whom Stephen Foster is known to have ever been romantically involved."[614]

Alcohol wasn't the only addiction he suffered. He was a heavy smoker, and chewed tobacco; he once came very close to overdosing on nicotine.[615]

Interestingly, it is reported that, toward the end of his life, he could remember the melodies of all his songs, but almost none of the words.[616] Presumably the drink was rotting his brain, but the musical part was a lot stronger than the rest....

We don't really know enough about his relations with his family to make a firm statement, but I find it interesting that Foster's real financial problems began in the period when his parents and siblings were dying. Many autistics survive because someone helps them out when they are confused and uncertain. As Foster had fewer people to rely on, his problems seem to have gotten worse....

He seems to have been withdrawing into himself at that time; a journalist who talked with him in 1862 recorded, "He would walk, talk, eat and drink with you, and yet always seem distant, maintaining an awkward dignity."[617]

Foster's decline and death was surely the result of alcoholism. The question is, why did the decline start? As with J. R. R. Tolkien, Foster's autistic traits by themselves are not sufficient to constitute a diagnosis. But those traits, *when combined with his musical fascination and genius,* made a very strong case that America's first great popular composer was also one of its great autistics.

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[610] Emerson, p. 51.
[611] Emerson, p. 77.
[612] Emerson, p. 241.
[613] Emerson, p.203.
[614] Emerson, p. 150.
[615] Emerson, p. 188.
[616] Emerson, p. 285.
[617] George W. Birdseye, quoted in Emerson, p. 283.

Conclusion: The Effects of Autism

The more we look at history, the more possible autistics we see. And not all of them positive models. King John of England, for instance, seems to have had a lot of autistic traits (at minimum, he had an obsessive-compulsive disorder involving finger-biting) — and he was one of the least successful kings in English history. Edward II, another very unsuccessful king, also had autistic traits. President James A. Garfield was almost certainly autistic — and was widely said to be too indecisive to be a good president.

And yet, we also see autistics accomplishing great things. Albert Einstein was probably autistic, as were many others of the great scientists of history. And many great musicians seem to have leaned that way.

To me, it is hard to deny that most of our subjects are autistic. Charles Dodgson and Isaac Newton were patently so, J. R. R. Tolkien probably so, and Stephen Foster must have leaned that way. And yet, does it *matter?*

I think it does. Twice. Both for our understanding of them and for our understanding of modern autistics. Most of these men were badly plagued by personal problems. Charles Dodgson has been accused for decades of being a pedophile and a freak. But all is explained if we assume he was autistic. Autism means peculiar emotions — and one of those emotions is unusual and extremely strong friendships. Dodgson was better at understanding children than adults, and so that is where he sought his friendships. We should try to understand and forgive. As the next book shows....

Alice's Evidence: Lewis Carroll and Autism

by Robert B. Waltz

To
Catie Jo Pidel
Since it's really all her fault

Can you hear the music
Afar upon the wind?
The lonesome fiddle playing
In the newgrass string band?

Every note is perfect;
Joy in every tune —
Old songs, new songs, stories,
Played under sun and moon.

Inspired is the music —
Dreams are in her hands;
Ever may they come true,
Like songs of many lands.

"A secret, kept from all the rest, Between yourself and me": Preface

In the summer of 2011, at the age of forty-nine, I began to suspect I was autistic. In December 2012, I was formally diagnosed. And as I began to realize that I really wasn't quite like other people, I started to research Asperger's Syndrome and autism.

It was mere coincidence that I picked up a biography of Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) at that time. After all, many people with mathematical inclinations have been drawn to his whimsical yet logical worlds, and I wanted to learn more. But as I simultaneously read about Dodgson and about autism, I noticed that Dodgson had many traits typical of those on the autism spectrum.

More: I noticed that Dodgson shared many traits with *me.* It isn't just a matter of autism — autistics are no more alike than are ordinary people; if anything, they are *less* alike. I speak not of his autism but of the nature of his friendships. As I read Dodgson's words, and his biographers' tales, I feel it more and more: More than anyone else I have ever known or read about, I feel as if I *understand* Dodgson — understand those strange friendships he had which brought him so much trouble. I understand his self-hate that comes from rejection. That endless desire to *make things right,* even when the other person is not interested. Autistics are a very diverse population. But Charles Dodgson, in some deep way, was like me. Damaged. A misfit. A man who, despite his great successes, probably never really fulfilled his potential.

This is not to claim that I am a a genius such as Dodgson was; he was both a greater mathematician and a greater writer than I. But in the century and more since his death, I think Dodgson has come to be deeply misunderstood. I have faced that same misunderstanding; it has cost me deeply. This is my small attempt to reclaim the greatness of a great man.

This book contains a capsule biography of Alice Liddell Hargreaves, and much biographical information about Charles Dodgson also. I should emphasize that none of this is based on any original research I have done; it is all from published biographies. My only original research was on Dodgson's library, and while that produced some interesting results (e.g. a strong interest in folklore), it did not materially affect what is written here. I am not bringing new facts, merely (I hope) a new perspective.

Much of what is found here is based on personal experience. This is difficult for me; I am a very private person. If I could, I would use other examples. But I know of no other autistics as like to Dodgson as I am. So, perforce, I become my own leading example. There are doubtless many others like us, but, like Dodgson, they have never told their stories. The most important instances of my own opinions and experiences are labelled ***Personal Viewpoint*** or ***Speculation***.

Although this book is designed to be read continuously, the different chapters have different purposes. The first, "Charles Dodgson and Autism," marshals the very strong evidence that the author of *Alice in Wonderland* was on the autism spectrum; if you are willing to accept this point, it is not necessary to read the chapter. The second, "Alice Liddell," is a short biography of the young woman who inspired Dodgson, and reveals just how intelligent, capable, and purposeful was the girl who inspired his work; this chapter can again be skipped if you are willing to accept the point. The third chapter, "The Accusation," discusses some of the charges laid against

Dodgson in the last century and a half. "Which Alice?" offers the clear evidence that the Alice of the "Alice" books really is Alice Liddell and not some made-up creature. "So What Happened?" documents the fact that Dodgson and the Liddell daughters ceased to have contact with each other in 1863. "Why the Problem?" looks at what might have caused the "break-up." "The Emotion in Question" is the key chapter: It proposes an *answer* to the "Liddell Riddle" that, to me at least, clears up all the loose ends left by other explanations. The conclusion naturally attempts to wrap everything up. If you want to get straight to the heart of the problem, you can probably start with "So What Happened?" and read from there to the end.

A note on terminology: I have used the terms "Asperger's Syndrome," "autism," "high-functioning autism," and "autism spectrum disorder" somewhat interchangeably. When I began writing, "Asperger's Syndrome" was still considered a proper clinical diagnosis. By the time I was done, "Asperger's" had been deprecated and all who displayed certain traits were placed on the "autism spectrum." Those who were formerly diagnosed as "Aspies," or sufferers from "Asperger's Syndrome," are autistics who have fairly high intelligence but suffer social defects which often limit their success in society. But it should be understood that all these conditions are essentially the same, the distinction being in the severity and the detailed expression of the condition.

Robert B. Waltz
July, 2013

Sources of Chapter Names: The chapter headings in this book are all quotes from Lewis Carroll's fiction. The sources are as follows:

- A secret, kept from all the rest, Between yourself and me.": *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* chapter 12, "Alice's Evidence."
- "A thought so dread, he faintly said, Extinguishes All Hope": *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded,* chapter 20, "Gammon and Spinach."
- "It's as large as life, and twice as natural": *Through the Looking Glass,* chapter 7, "The Lion and the Unicorn."
- "He stole those tarts, And took them right away": *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* chapter 11, "Who Stole the Tarts?"
- "That's what the name is called. The name really is....": *Through the Looking Glass*, chapter 8, "It's My Own Invention"
- "He had softly and suddenly vanished away": *The Hunting of the Snark,* Fit the Eighth, next to last line
- "Crocodiles, when fasting, Are not all they seem": *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded,* chapter 23, "The Pig-Tale."
- "For I'm sure it is nothing but love": *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded,* chapter 19, "A Fairy-Duet."
- "Unless you leave this house," he said, "I'll send for the Police": *Sylvie and Bruno,* chapter 6, "The Magic Locket."
- "Sentence first — verdict afterwards": *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* chapter 12, "Alice's Evidence."

"A thought so dread, he faintly said, Extinguishes All Hope": Charles Dodgson and Autism

On November 11, 2011, I conducted a Google search for "Lewis Carroll" and "Asperger's [Syndrome]."

Google came back with more than half a million hits.

"[In his biographies,] rather than seeming like a real person, Carroll the human being came across almost as a sort of space into which commentators poured their *own* heartaches, yearnings, or fears."[618] Thus Jenny Woolf describes the way in which many writers have tried to remake Charles Dodgson in the Procrustean bed of their own opinions. It seems to me, however, that there is one explanation that fits most of the oddities about his personality: Autism.

With so many sites to sift through, I wasn't able to find out who originated the suggestion that Dodgson was autistic — if, indeed, anyone knows. Clearly the idea is widespread. It obviously is not possible to diagnose a man who was almost half a century dead when Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger published their research,[619] but the evidence is worthy of a detailed look. If Dodgson wasn't on the autism spectrum, he should have been.... The list below summarized the various autistic traits shown by the author of the "Alice" books.

Those who are not autistic should understand that there is no one trait in the list below is considered diagnostic for autism (indeed, there really *is* no single diagnostic trait for autism), but the characteristics listed are often associated with its victims.

Mathematical inclination. Dodgson was a professional mathematician — he seems to have been a mathematician born. His family loved to tell a story about how Dodgson, as a small boy, pestered his father to explain logarithms to him.[620] Although he never earned a doctorate, his credentials were significant: He was first in his class in mathematics in 1854, by a significant margin, and was one of five students earning a First Class degree.[621] The range of subjects he taught was diverse; in his first full year as a tutor, he had students studying differential calculus, conic sections, trigonometry, and "Euclid and Algebra." Although most of these are subjects now taught in high school, it would be a rare school where a single instructor was prepared to teach them all. It was none other than Dean Liddell, the father of Alice Liddell, who appointed him to his mathematics lectureship.[622]

Tony Beale wrote an article, "C. L. Dodgson, Mathematician,"[623] which denigrates his talents (while admitting that he was handicapped by being at Oxford when all the best English

[618] Woolf, p. 5. For sources cited, see the biography.

[619] Kanner was responsible for first describing autism, while Asperger described what came to be called Asperger('s) Syndrome but is now listed as simple a form of autism. Both did their primary work in the 1940s.

[620] ClarkCarroll, p. 18.

[621] WilsonR, pp. 51-52.

[622] WilsonR, p. 61

[623] Included in Norton, pp. 294-302.

mathematicians were at Cambridge[624]). What Beale really demonstrates, however, is Dodgson's conservatism in established matters. Dodgson was fundamentally sound, and was often creative in areas not heavily explored.

Dodgson began his mathematical career as a lecturer at Christ Church college in 1855, spending the rest of his life at Oxford.[625] He only once changed jobs in his entire life, giving up his teaching post to write and take such odd jobs as curator of the Christ Church Common Room.[626]

Although not all autism victims are good at mathematics, "We… recognize that the personalities of some of the great mathematicians included many of the characteristics of Asperger's Syndrome."[627] And on tests of relationship between autism and mathematics, "The correlation between math and autism and/or Asperger's was proved again; mathematicians scored higher than other scientists [on tests for autism], who scored higher than students in the humanities, who scored roughly the same as random controls."[628]

Dodgson's work was solid although too conservative to contain major breakthroughs[629] — but it is noteworthy that one of his private examples actually anticipated von Neumann's and Morgenstern's creation of game theory by half a century, when he tried to create a "utility" system for measuring and comparing pleasure by creating a unit based on eating a particular food.[630] Dodgson may have had other hints of game theory; scholars find the forerunner of the two person zero-sum game in his work on voting theory.[631]

Dodgson's one real defect as a mathematician, apart from his failure to pursue the implications of some of his better ideas such as the utility system, was his rigidity in certain areas. His insistence on doing plane geometry just the way Euclid did it was a real limitation.[632] Reading about this is very reminiscent of the autistic trait of insisting on exact terminology — e.g. Liane Holliday Willey's insistence as a girl that she could not take a nap on her mat, because she did not *have* a mat, because the item she had been given was a *rug*.[633]

Dodgson was "an exceptionally capable and dedicated scholar who nonetheless lacked fundamental creative mathematical genius. Had he only mapped out for himself a career in logic,

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624 Norton, pp. 295

625 CollingwoodLife, p. 24 (chapter II). Woolf, p. 39.

626 Woolf, p. 276.

627 Attwood, p. 240.

628 Gessen, p. 176, citing Simon Baron-Cohen.

629 See the article by Beale cited in note 81.

630 Woolf, p. 48, although — as a non-mathematician — she does not observe the very great potential significance of Dodgson's idea. Sadly, he expressed it in a letter to a friend, Edith Denman, rather than in a mathematical publication, so no one followed up on the idea.

631 Cohen, p. 428.

632 WilsonR, pp. 81-97, although this attempts to justify Dodgson's conservatism.

633 Willey, p. 23.

an almost uncharted sphere… his ultimate scholastic achievement might have been considerably greater."[634]

There is only one exception to his record of successes (which included several mathematics prizes),[635] but it is revealing. He was hoping to become the Mathematical Lecturer at Christ Church, and was trying to study for a mathematics examination as a result. This was "independent study." He failed.[636] Not only did he fail to organize his studies properly but, having done poorly on the first part of the exam, he did not even attempt to finish it. This is typical of autism: "Executive Functioning (EF) is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of neuropsychological processes, including the ability to set goals, initiate a plan, inhibit distracting stimuli, monitor performance, and flexibly change from one focus to another. EF deficits in children with AS are now well documented."[637] Val Gil lists nine things autistic students have the most trouble with. The top two are "Too much choice" and "Open-ended, vague assignments/ tasks."[638]

Social isolation. As a young man, Dodgson is said to have had few friends outside his immediate family.[639] He "never ceased to find ordinary society a bore, and often a stressful bore."[640] Dodgson's own family was fond of quoting a characterization of him produced by a psychic, "diffident; rather shy in general society; comes out in the home circle; rather obstinate; very clever...."[641] This clairvoyant, "Miss Anderson," also said that he was good with numbers, would make a good actor, was witty, would like poetry, and might compose it. (Dodgson's nephew, who related the story, thinks it a remarkable prediction; more likely she either knew Dodgson or was coached. Either way, it became family lore.)

Dodgson was so shy that he could spend hours in a social gathering and not say a word.[642] Mark Twain once remarked, "he was the stillest and shyest full-grown man I have ever met except 'Uncle Remus.'"[643] His friend A. S. Russell declared, "Provided he knew you so his shyness was not involved," he was a brilliant conversationalist.[644] Isa Bowman spoke of his "extreme shyness."[645] Evelyn Hatch said he had "an almost morbid horro of being 'lionised' as the author

634 ClarkCarroll, p. 69.
635 Stoffel, p. 18.
636 Cohen, p. 51; Leach, pp. 173-174, speaks of this as "sloth" and quotes T. B. Strong as saying his inclination for work was "irregular" but fails to take into account how he tried to make plans and failed to implement them.
637 Janine Manjiviona, "Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties"; Prior, p. 64.
638 Val Gill, "Challenges Faced by Teachers Working with Students with Asperger Syndrome," Prior, p. 203.
639 Hudson, p. 26.
640 Woolf, pp. 219-220.
641 CollingwoodLife, p. 28 [chapter II].
642 Gardner, p. xvi [10].
643 Woolf, p. 72
644 Cohen, p. 285
645 Bowman, p. 6.

of *Alice in Wonderland.*"[646] His obituary noted that he was "remarkable for his shyness and dislike of publicity."[647] Another source spoke of his "morbid dislike of publicity."[648]

We can also find instances of his shyness in his diaries. On one occasion, when he undertook to preach a sermon, he was so afraid that he went to the curate of the congregation involved to ask him to have a spare sermon ready, in case Dodgson couldn't go through with it.[649]

He disliked adult "small talk": "in my old age, I find dinner parties more and more fatiguing.... I much grudge giving an evening (even if it were not tiring) to bandying small-talk with dull people."[650] Small talk is often uncomfortable and difficult for those with autism. "He hated publicity, and tried to avoid it in every way."[651] Even in his early days at Oxford, he seems to have disliked crowds.[652] And his niece told a story of him becoming so uncomfortable at a party, where he had to meet a large number of people, that he simply fled, leaving his hostess and niece to make excuses.[653] Compare this to the tale of the autism sufferer who, in the middle of entertaining, "wants to go to another room and look through his favorite magazines or go for a walk or to bed.... Many women have become experts at making excuses for their partners...."[654]

It is ironic to note that he shared this trait with his boss Dean Liddell. The two, although often on opposite sides in administrative matters, had much in common; both had had a difficult time in boarding school,[655] both were undergraduates at Christ Church,[656] neither smoked, both kept very regular hours, neither liked empty talk, both disliked lies (it is said that this was the only thing for which Liddell punished students at Westminster school[657]), and both enjoyed walking for exercise.[658] The Dean was so punctual that it was said he even sneezed on schedule, every day at noon.[659] Liddell was nervous in the company of strangers, even when they were students

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646 Hatch, p. 93.
647 Hudson, p. 1.
648 Quoted by Cohen, p. 295.
649 Hudson, p. 301.
650 Quote from CollingwoodLife, p. 109 [Chapter VI]; cf. Woolf, p. 129. There are other examples of Dodgson's withdrawal in ClarkCarroll, p. 260, although she cites other reasons than simply dislike of social activities.
651 Quote from CollingwoodLife, p. 130 [Chapter VII]. Cohen, pp. 297-299, reaches the same conclusion.
652 Cohen, p. 61.
653 Cohen, p. 301.
654 Aston, p. 68 — a section significantly labelled "The deserter."
655 Gordon, pp. 29-31; Thompson, pp. 3-6, 10.
656 Thompson, p. 13.
657 Thompson, p. 111.
658 Thompson, pp. 253-254.
659 Gordon, p. 134; ClarkAlice, p. 99.

subordinate to him;[660] Liddell himself said that he was "very shy."[661] There are some hints that Liddell might have suffered slightly from depression.[662]

Cohen reports that Dodgson was "Insensitive in some social situations[;] he could also be rude, rigid, and offputting"[663] — quite typical autistic behavior.

Dodgson's early schooling came at home, but he was eventually sent out to boarding schools — first the Richmond School,[664] then the more famous Rugby. The latter was known for the way the students bullied other students. A boy with autism could expect worse than most — and "From every point of view life at Rugby was a personal disaster for the young Dodgson. He could not accept the transition from the intimate family atmosphere of Richmond School… to the vast impersonality of Rugby."[665] Large schools are often very difficult for autism sufferers.[666]

Rugby was particularly bad in this regard, because the school rules didn't just ignore bullying, they actively encouraged it;[667] Dodgson would later declare that there was nothing that could induce him to return there.[668]

Dodgson, even though he attended a college noteworthy for the aristocrats who attended it and for their social activities, "did not join any of the 'sets' or clubs that were the rage; he preferred to stand apart and follow his own program of studies and recreation."[669]

In later years, he expressed a joking desire "to get imprisoned for 10 years, 'without hard labor,' and with the use of book and writing materials"[670] — a desire for isolated work which is clearly much more likely of an autistic than an ordinary person. He also declared that "Nature evidently meant me for a Hermit."[671]

Dodgson, indeed, seems to have disliked having to deal with more than one person at once; despite his adventures with the three Liddell sisters, in later years, he preferred to entertain one

660 Thompson, p. 255.
661 Thompson, p. 14.
662 Thompson, p. 49.
663 Cohen, p. 301.
664 ClarkCarroll, p. 36.
665 ClarkCarroll, p. 41.
666 Willey, p. 48. Speaking for myself, the only academic setting where I achieved success was in college. The school had a larger total student body than any other institution I attended, but the physics department was small enough that I was able to fit.
667 ClarkCarroll, pp. 41-42; Cohen, pp. 20-22.
668 Leach, p. 19; Stoffel, p. 18; Hudson, p. 46.
669 Cohen, pp. 36-37.
670 Cohen, p. 458.
671 Cohen, p. 460.

little girl at a time, at a dinner "party" with just two participants.[672] This, obviously, meant no chaperones — a point on which Evelyn Hatch says he had something of a a hangup.[673]

Despite his success with children, there seems no question that Dodgson's natural intellectual skills exceeded his natural skills with people; learning, for the most part, came easily to him; teaching did not.[674] This is typical of autism sufferers.

Even his close friend Gertrude Chataway commented, "He told me it was the greatest pleasure he could have to converse freely with a child and feel the depths of her mind.... I don't think he ever really understood that we whom he had known as children, could not always remain such."[675]

Chataway's insight is extremely deep. One of the most severe problems faced by autistics is their inability to understand the Theory of Mind — the idea that other people had different thought patterns. "The psychological term Theory of Mind (ToM) means the ability to recognize and understand thoughts, beliefs, desires and intentions of other people in order to make sense of their behavior and predict what they are going to do next. It has also been described as 'mind reading' or [the lack of it as] 'mind blindness' (Baron-Cohen 1995) or, colloquially, a difficulty in 'putting oneself in another person's shoes.'"[676] Dodgson had learned enough to realize that others did not think as he did, but he perhaps had a hard time understanding that they could *change* and yet still not think the way he did. We see another hint of this from Isa Bowman, who said "that he was never quite as nice to her when she was playing bad characters, as when he saw her playing 'nice' girls."[677]

He had a hard time with social rituals, too; "He developed an annoying habit of descending unannounced on friends with his mountain of [photographic] equipment."[678] "He rarely accepted invitations to dine, but would 'drop in' at a less exactly appointed time...."[679] He often completely failed to understand his errors — on one occasion, for instance, he made an arrangement with Lorina Liddell and Miss Prickett to visit the Deanery, but failed to clear it with Mrs. Liddell and found himself largely barred from visiting the family for some months.[680]

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672 Moses, p. 136, quoting Beatrice Hatch. Hatch, pp. 6-7, makes the same point. I recall that one of my own friends, who in hindsight showed many signs of autism, found it almost impossible to talk with more than one person at a time — if in a group of people, she always gave her full attention to just one.

673 Hatch, p. 5.

674 Leach, p. 20.

675 Quoted by Phyllis Greenacre; Bloom, p. 111.

676 Attwood, p. 112.

677 Woolf, p. 202.

678 Gordon, p. 88.

679 Phyllis Greenacre, in Bloom, p. 108.

680 ClarkAlice, p. 57.

Harold Bloom's conclusion about Dodgson's writings is that "What is repressed in them is his discomfort with culture."[681]

Concentration and time management problems; the Special Interest. Dodgson "always dislik[ed] to break off from the pursuit of any subject which interested him; apt to forget his meals and toil on for the best part of the night, rather than stop short of the object which he had in view."[682] Autism sufferers are generally much worse than "neurotypicals" at "multitasking."[683]

Also part of autism is the aforementioned failure of "executive function," which results in "behavior that is out of bounds. *You get stuck* and it is hard to get out of this. Further, you are *captured by incidentals.*"[684]

The above description also reminds us of the autistic "Special Interest": "Discussions [with autism victims] about their particular interests often include references to not being able to remove the thought from their mind, and parents and teachers report that they have great difficulty interrupting or distracting them when they are totally absorbed in the interest."[685] Other sources indicate that such problems with changing the pattern of thought can extend beyond the special interest to any topic of immediate concern.

As examples of Dodgson's unusual interests, we note that he was the English-speaking world's first real student in the theory of voting, arguing against a series of ballot "reforms" which he correctly predicted would result in increased partisanship and poorer representation of the interests of the people. His publication "A Discussion of the Various Methods of Procedure in Conducting Elections" is a famous treatise on voting which broke ground in various ways.[686] Dodgson came to advocate the "single transferrable vote" (now usually called Instant Runoff Voting) with multi-seat districts. He was also a pioneer of photography (he has been called an "obsessive photographer,"[687] which is interesting in light of the nature of special interests), and was the first to examine the need for seeding in tennis tournaments.[688] And he was a Euclid nut.

He also had managed to memorize pi to 71 decimal places.[689]

It is also reported that his letters to his sister Elizabeth were so long that even his family joked about them.[690]

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681 Bloom, p. 20.
682 T. B. Strong, as quoted on p. 290 of Cohen.
683 Dubin, p. 26.
684 Frith, p. 64.
685 Tony Attwood, "Understanding and Managing Circumscribed Interests," Prior, p. 136
686 Szpiro, pp. 104-108; Poundstone, pp. 151-152; WilsonR, pp. 132-135
687 Winchester, p. 69.
688 Collins, p. 7, although the summary in Collins doesn't really correspond to what Dodgson wrote.
689 Gordon, p. 88. Note that what brought Tammet to fame was memorizing even more digits of pi.
690 Winchester, p. 27. I must confess to having the same problem of going on and on about things. Oh, you noticed?

A Rigid World View. It is very common for autism sufferers to see the world in rather rigid terms — there are rules, and that is the way things work, and people should conform to them.[691] Dodgson definitely had problems with this: "He had a curiously naïve belief that others could be converted to his way of thinking if only his arguments were logical enough. His own thought processes were startlingly precise.... If he failed to convince, he was both puzzled and dismayed, blaming himself unreasonably for inadequately conceived lines of argument, and privately going over his points again and again in hopes of finding where he had gone wrong."[692]

For autism sufferers, "A rule is a rule, no matter what. They operate in black-and-white terms, whereas we are so often in the gray. No wonder we confuse them — and vice versa."[693] We see an example of this sort of rigidity in one of the few known disputes between members of the Dodgson family; Charles and his brother Wilfred had a disagreement in 1857 about college rules — which Charles insisting that the rules should all be followed even if senseless.[694]

"Boundary" problems. One of the most famous characterizations of children with autism is "Aliens" (or "Martians") "in the Playground. "It is almost trite to say that Carroll remained a child to whom the world looked even madder than it does to most of us. He was too polite, or too cautious, to say so, and perfected a technique for getting around freely without any worse tag than 'eccentric,' but one of his logical dilemmas was, 'They are sane. I am not like them. I am insane.'"[695]

Dodgson "appears to have so closely identified with his dream heroine that his problems of identity, or establishing coherent selfhood in the face of the violent changes inherent in human life and the disorder at the heart of the order, seem mirrored in hers."[696]

The problem of maintaining a complete identity is very severe for autistics. They lack "central coherence" — "a pre-set preference towards perceiving wholes rather than parts.... Weak central coherence (WCC) is a way of saying that context does not exert much force."[697] In other words, details are more important than the Big Picture. An example of how this works is the phrase "You go hunting with a knife and...." If you complete the sentence *with a knife and fork,* you have weak central coherence. If you hunt with a *knife and gun,* or *dog,* or *compass,* or something relevant to hunting, you have strong central coherence.[698]

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[691] Val Gill, "Challenges Faced by Teachers Working with Students with Asperger Syndrome," Prior, p. 195. Compare Figure 4.2 on p. 100 of Myles/Simpson, which gives an example of this sort of rigid rule-following."

[692] ClarkCarroll, pp. 115-116.

[693] Prior, p. 195.

[694] Cohen, p. 201.

[695] Florence Becker Lennon, on p. 28 of Bloom. Much of Lennon's writing strikes me as romantic and silly, but this feels very right to me.

[696] Hough Haughton, on p. 201 of Bloom.

[697] Frith, p. 90.

[698] Example from Frith, p. 91. When I read that phrase, my first response was indeed to go hunting with a knife and fork!

All of this relates to Dodgson's problems with the distinction between himself, the real Alice, and his fictional Alice — he himself admitted more than once, although he never seems to have realized the implications, that he always thought of Alice Liddell as being seven years old.[699]

Devotion to a habitual plan. Dodgson's life, especially in his later years, followed an extremely strict routine — he maintained precise schedule even as an undergraduate, and it became more fixed over time.[700] His "life was devoted to tidiness and order."[701] He was quite cranky even about minor incidents.[702] Having achieved a comfortable set of rooms in 1868, he did not move again for the rest of his life.[703] "People with Asperger's syndrome often have difficulty establishing and coping with the changing patterns and expectations in daily life";[704] they have a desire to have ordered routines. "Doing the same thing, exactly the same thing, watching the same video, eating the same food, day after day, is the kind of excessive pattern that is found in autistic children."[705] Dodgson's habits were so strict that he demanded precise amounts of food — he is said to have measured the milk delivered[706] — and complained even when he was supplied with *more* than he wanted. Compare this to the autism sufferer who insisted on eating *precisely* 45 grams of porridge, which he actually measured with an electronic scale![707]

Nitpickiness. In a way typical of Syndrome sufferers, Dodgson was much too finicky about details. The steward of Christ Church declared that "He was the most prolific malcontent."[708] In his later years, Dodgson — seemingly deliberately — made his curatorship tasks more complex than they needed to be, apparently for the sole purpose of making his life complicated! For other examples of his incredible persnicketiness, consider, his fulminations on the Christ Church belfry,[709] his quarrel with a church about the size of hassocks,[710] his demand that Macmillan tie up the packages sent to him in a particular way,[711] or his absurd fight over service at Christ Church.[712]

Even his adoring, see-no-evil nephew admitted, "Mr. Dodgson was no easy man to work with; no detail was too small for his exact criticism."[713] Illustrators working with him found it "a distinctly

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699 e.g. ClarkAlice, p. 208.
700 Cohen, p. 37.
701 Hugh Haughton, on p. 201 of Bloom.
702 Woolf, pp. 62-63.
703 Cohen, p. 233.
704 Attwood, p. 185.
705 Frith, pp. 11-12.
706 Hudson, p. 256.
707 Tammet, p. 2, speaking of his own daily habits.
708 Woolf, p. 63.
709 CollingwoodLife, pp. 73-74 [chapter IV]).
710 Woolf, p. 63.
711 Phyllis Greenacre, on p. 107 of Bloom.
712 Cohen, p. 302.
713 CollingwoodLife, p. 59 [chapter IV].

wearying experience."[714] Indeed, when Harry Furniss, who illustrated *Sylvie and Bruno,* took the commission, John Tenniel warned him that he wouldn't last a week due to Dodgson's constant kibitzing.[715]

Trouble interacting with students. Dodgson's students apparently did not like his lectures very much; he seems to have had trouble interacting with them. This even though he clearly made overwhelming — and successful — attempts to help the students who *wanted* help.[716] He tried to use recreational topics in his lectures,[717] but this doesn't seem to have helped. Students talked of his "dry and perfunctory" lecturing style;[718] there are many instances instances of his students not showing up for his lectures.[719] "The general opinion of [his lectures] was that they were not only dull but that they were uninspiringly delivered."[720]

Emotional insensitivity and communication difficulty. Simon Baron-Cohen observes that "People with Asperger often put in too much detail. They don't know what to leave out. They are not taking into account what the listener needs to know."[721] If one looks at the problems Dodgson published as *A Tangled Tale,* they are often insufficiently specified — that is, not enough detail is provided to assure a particular answer. This was true of some of his other published works as well[722]— a disastrous defect for a mathematician.

Despite his obvious gifts with words, Dodgson could not always tell what would interest others. (Just read *Sylvie and Bruno* for an example....) And, while he was very good with the Liddell children early in life, he may have had more trouble entertaining young people later on.[723] Indeed, "continual misunderstandings and trivial grievances… bedevilled his personal relations."[724]

Truthfulness. He "tended to speak the truth, even if he spoke it in ways which were not clear to other people";[725] he also refused a small Christmas gift from a fruit supplier on the grounds that he could not accept a bribe.[726] Autism sufferers are often "remarkably honest."[727]

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[714] Underground, p. 19.

[715] ClarkCarroll, p. 242. Cohen, pp. 128-129, thinks Furniss was exaggerating, but it is noteworthy that Dodgson almost always found some major complain with the editions of his printed works — ClarkCarroll, pp. 249-250.

[716] Woolf, p. 47.

[717] WilsonR, pp. 65-66.

[718] Cohen, p. 84

[719] ClarkCarroll, p. 90

[720] Hudson, p. 85.

[721] Gessen, p. 179.

[722] ClarkCarroll, p. 253

[723] Cohen, p. 424; Gardner, p. xx [13-14]

[724] Hudson, p. 266,

[725] Woolf, p. 173; similarly p. 263, "telling outright lies seems to have been against his complicated inner code."

[726] Cohen, p. 304.

[727] Attwood, p. 117; compare Gerhardt's remark on p. xv of Carley that Asperger's sufferers are often honest to a fault because competent lying is a complex social skill.

"He was extremely clever at saying exactly what he meant, yet not meaning what he appeared to say."[728] This might almost be called the autistic version of lying, or at least of dealing with social convention that demands "white lies": what an autistic says can usually be relied upon to be literally true, but it may not mean what you think it means....

Fairness and Justice. "Adults with Asperger's syndrome can be renowned for... having a strong sense of social justice,"[729] and Dodgson "opposed sham and greed wherever he saw it; he worried about the poor and the sick and did all he could to assuage hardships wherever he encountered them."[730]

The Need for Reassurance. "Carroll had a strong need for loving attention."[731] He showed it in the way he constantly sought out people who reassured him. Many autistics need constant reassurance; John Elder Robison, for instance, describes how he may ask his wife "Do you like your mate?" as many as four or five times a day, and ask her to touch him to reassure him.[732] This no doubt ties in with the anxiety that often comes with autism — and can be very off-putting to some people. But children, with their unfeigned affection, could give Dodgson the reassurance he needed.

Speech peculiarities. There is no record of Dodgson suffering any of the various speech peculiarities associated with autism such as excessive pedantry or monotonous delivery[733] — indeed, he was noted for his ability to vary his voice and act several parts when reading stories. But he was bothered all his life by a stammer — a genetic problem shared by most of his siblings (six of his seven sisters were said to stammer to some degree[734]), for which he is known to have sought professional help;[735] this might have concealed other speech problems. And there is a curious tale told by Isa Bowman, of a time when they were walking together and were interrupted. Afterward Dodgson "became very difficult to understand and talked in a nervous preoccupied manner."[736]

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728 Woolf, p. 58.

729 Attwood, p. 118.

730 Cohen, pp. xx-xxi.

731 Woolf, p. 133.

732 Robison, pp. 254-256.

733 Attwood, pp. 218-221. There is also a reported link between autism and dyslexia; Digby Tantam, "Assessment and Treatment of Comorbid Emotional and Behavioral Problems," Prior, p. 153.

734 Stoffel, p. 30.

735 The first reported visits came in 1859 when he consulted Dr. James Hunt; Cohen, p. 76. The visits would continue for years, and he would later see other specialists; Cohen, p. 259; Stoffel, pp. 30-31; Woolf, pp. 75-79.

736 Bowman, p. 7; cf. Leach, p. 53. To be sure, Leach thinks that Bowman was inventing much of her material — after all, Bowman consistently portrayed herself as three or four years younger than her actual age (Leach, p. 55; Woolf, p. 106) — but why invent this? According to Helen Tager-Flusberg, "Effects of Language and Communications Deficits on Learning and Behavior," Prior, p. 89, "Clinicians often report that it is difficult to understand or follow conversations with a person with AS. To investigate this observation systematically, Fine, Bartollucci, Szatmari, and Ginsberg (1994) compared interviews conducted with adolescents... the group with AS

Autistics "tend to use idiosyncratic words and metaphors."[737] "Jabberwocky," anyone? How about *The Hunting of the Snark?* An early schoolmaster wrote of Dodgson's Latin that he was "moreover marvelously ingenious in replacing the ordinary inflexions of nouns and verbs, as detailed in our grammars, by more exact analogies, or convenient forms of his own devising."[738] And he insisted on a peculiar orthography for the use of apostrophes never seen before or since — e.g "ca'n't," "wo'n't," with two apostrophes, but nonetheless "don't."[739] Compare this to his habit of using fractions for hours — 6¼ for 6:15, or 5½ for 5:30, for instance.[740] Moses declares of his early writings, "The spelling was precise and correct, but the punctuation was peculiar, to say the least."[741] She also notes what many others have seen: his extreme use of italics.[742] Such tendency toward regularization of language has been seen in other autism sufferers.[743]

"His general writing was not very legible,"[744] and many autistics, who have trouble with fine motor control, have poor handwriting.[745]

Mood problems. Depression is a very common accompaniment of autism, with roughly a third of the victims suffering clinical cases.[746] Many more suffer from "dysthymia," which we might describe as a persistent state of the blues.[747] The latter state sounds like a good fit for Dodgson's feelings. There are several signs of depression in Dodgson's life,[748] including a statement by his nephew Collingwood to that effect.[749] Observers see a "disquieting despair" in his early poem "The Dear Gazelle,"[750] and Morton Cohen after cataloging Dodgson's early literary endeavors, concludes that "The serious poems are sentimental, traditional, glum.... Why the recurring themes of dashed hopes, disappointment in love, despair echoing despair? Something is gnawing away at him, and whatever it is will not lie quiet...."[751] Cohen adds that there is no evidence of

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would refer to individuals without introducing them appropriately, switch references without clear linguistic marking, and use pronouns with no clear antecedents."

737 Michal Shaked & Nurit Virmiya, "Understanding Social Difficulties," Prior, p. 107; compare the section "Oral and Written Language" on pp. 36-39 of Myles/Simpson.

738 Hudson, p. 44.

739 For his justification, such as it is, see the Preface to *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded.*

740 An example of this can be found on p. 319 of Hudson.

741 Moses, p. 12.

742 Moses, p. 147. This appears to me to be an attempt to recreate the actual rhythms of spoken language by elaborate orthography — which is something I am also prone to.

743 See, e.g., the comments on inflections and Esperanto on pp. 167-170 of Tammet. Tammet in fact has invented his own language, producing a construct with many regular features.

744 Moses, p. 148.

745 Janine Manjiviona, "Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties"; Prior, p. 61.

746 Attwood, p. 140.

747 Dubin, p. 61.

748 see, e.g., Woolf, pp. 119, 222.

749 cited by Woolf, p. 293; she does not say where Collingwood made this comment.

750 Cohen, pp. 71-72

751 Cohen, pp. 73-75

disappointment in love, and it is in any case before he became close to Alice Liddell. He used work to keep "from thinking about one's self and one's own troubles."[752]

Emotional outbursts. "Meltdowns" are a common problem for those with autism. Our accounts of Dodgson's life reveals few of these, but when they came, they were sudden and quite strong.[753] Another of Isa Bowman's tales is of a spontaneous outburst of anger over a trivial incident; Dodgson tore up a drawing she was making — then almost instantly repented of his anger.[754] Later, when Bowman told him she was getting married, Dodgson tore off the flowers she was wearing on her dress and threw them away — then entertained her and her husband-to-be the next day.[755]

Peculiarities of posture and motion. Dodgson clearly had the sort of movement difficulties often associated with autism; "adults with Asperger's syndrome may have a strange, sometimes idiosyncratic gait that lacks fluency and efficiency."[756] Isa Bowman declared that Dodgson "always seemed a little unsteady in his gait"[757] and said his movements were "singularly jerky and abrupt."[758] Alice Liddell Hargreaves, interviewed many years later, commented on his stiff posture, "as if he had a poker down his back."[759] Dodgson, asked by a young correspondent about dancing, declared, "I *never* dance, unless I am allowed to do it *in my own peculiar way*. There is no use trying to describe it: it has to be seen to be believed. The last house I tried it in, the floor broke through. But then it was a poor sort of floor —the beams were only six inches thick, hardly worth calling beams at all...."[760] This from a very slender man.... It is also worth noting that the White Knight of *Looking Glass*, believed to be Dodgson himself,[761] is forever falling off his horse and is very clumsy.[762] Some have suggested that the odd gait may have been caused by a knee condition, perhaps osteoarthritis.[763] — but Dodgson seems to have had the problem even when young.

His inaptitude for sports was so great that he played cricket only once, and was allowed to bowl only one ball before being removed.[764] Team sports are often hard for autistics.[765] But they are

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[752] Cohen, p. 459.
[753] Woolf, p. 28.
[754] Bowman, p. 9, and widely quoted, e.g. Norton, p. 311; Cohen, p. 298; Leach, p. 53.
[755] Cohen, p. 532; Leach, p. 297.
[756] Attwood, p. 259.
[757] Bowman, p. 5.
[758] Bowman, p. 6.
[759] Jones/Gladstone, p 102.
[760] Woollcott, p. 8.
[761] see note 1097 below.
[762] Gardner, pp. 234-247 [294-314].
[763] Woolf, p. 68; the arthritis suggestion is from ClarkCarroll, p. 259.
[764] Hudson, p. 48.
[765] Val Gill, "Challengers Faced by Teachers Working with Students with Asperger Syndrome," Prior, pp. 207-208; Carley, p. 94.

fond of inventing their own games and rules.[766] The number of games invented by Dodgson is simply astounding — he played "Castle Croquet" with the Liddells,[767] and also produced Doublets,[768] Lanrick,[769] Syzygies,[770] an assortment of backgammon variations, and many more.[771]

Sleep Disorders. Dodgson wrote a book, *Curiosa Mathematica, Part II, Pillow Problems Thought Out During Sleepless Nights,* to serve as a mathematical distraction to those suffering repeated bouts of worry and insomnia.[772] Dodgson's health, as shown by his diary, was generally good, but this is not the only indication that he was troubled by insomnia.[773] Sleep disorders are almost universal among autism sufferers.[774]

Disinterest and ineptitude in ordinary tasks; generosity. The tenth chapter of Jenny Woolf's biography, "He offered large discount, he offered a cheque" is devoted to Dodgson's finances, and she finds that he "hardly cashed in financially on his fame at all, and his lack of interest in doing this suggests that he may have had a fundamental lack of interest in becoming rich."[775] This sort of non-ambition is typical of autism — and so is the inability to deal with rather mundane things.[776] His reaction to his publisher is also typical; it "could… have been used to demonstrate his twin loves of fussing and [of] winning arguments."[777] It is strange to note that this

[766] Carley, p. 95. The author can attest to having done this — e.g. to reworking a board game based on the "Third Age" of *The Lord of the Rings* so that it could be used to replay the battles of the "Second Age."

[767] For the rules of this, see CollingwoodPictures, pp. 271-274. It is a form of croquet in which the balls, arches, and such are given meanings — soldiers, sentinals, castles. It looks to me as if the Liddell children wanted an active game, and Dodgson wanted a thinking game, and the result was a sort of compromise: An outdoor game requiring croquet skills but also planning.

[768] Rules and numerous examples in CollingwoodPictures, pp. 277-288. Doublets is a game in which one turns one word into another one letter at a time. Of Dodgson's various games, it is perhaps the most likely to be played today — the author once produced a collection of them on a tennis theme for a sports newsletter.

[769] A complex game, played on a modified checkers board, which I won't even try to summarize; rules in CollingwoodPictures, pp. 304-312.

[770] Like Doublets, a game in which one turns one word into another, but with more complicated rules based adding or subtracting different numbers of letters. Rules in CollingwoodPictures, pp. 289-303.

[771] It appears there are eight such games listed in the index on p. 566 of Cohen.

[772] Cohen, p. 198. The book pretty definitely failed of its purpose; the problems are simply too hard for most people to solve in their heads while trying to get to sleep.

[773] Hudson, p. 284.

[774] Simone, pp. 54-55. AMYANDJOANNE'S BLOG; link on Autism Hangout. Page, p. 17, reports suffering insomnia as early as age four, and continues to suffer it as a relatively contented man in his fifties (p. 189). Jackson, pp. 86-87, also describes insomnia from an early age. I seed to recall reading somewhere that about 80% of autistics have some sort of sleep problem, usually insomnia or sleep apnea or both.

[775] Woolf, p. 266.

[776] Many of them [autism sufferers] needed profound assistance in organizing their lives"; Gessen, p. 175.

[777] Woolf, p. 268.

professional mathematician and notorious nitpicker seems to have made no effort at all to balance his checkbook![778]

That tendency to ignore his bank balance probably wouldn't have mattered except for his extraordinary generosity, especially to his young friends — he was said to engage in "boundless" giving.[779] Dodgson was forever "giving much of himself gratuitously in authentic, loving generosity to the countless Alices, Ediths, and Ethels of his wide acquaintance."[780] This desire to be helpful is common in autism sufferers — "Another social tool or activity that can repair feelings of despair is the act of helping someone and being needed — an altruistic act. I have noted that some children and, especially, adults with Asperger's syndrome can change their mood from self-criticism and pessimism to a feeling of self-worth and enthusiasm when helping others."[781]

One of Dodgson's last letters to Gertrude Chataway opened, "My dear old friend, I think there is no higher privilege given us in this life than the opportunity of doing something for *others,* and of bearing one another's burdens...."[782]

To Ellen Terry he wrote, "And so you have found out that secret — one of the deep secrets of life — that all, that is really *worth* the doing, is what we do for *others?*"[783]

When he published the facsimile edition of *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* he decided, with Alice Liddell's agreement and consent, to donate all proceeds to hospitals for children.[784]

"For much of his life he helped support his six unmarried sisters and a good many other people — relatives, friends, even strangers."[785]

Based on his checkbook, in the last decade and a half of his life, he was giving to about thirty different charities each year.[786]

Selflessness in negotiation and friendship. In 1880, at a time when budgets were tight, Dodgson proposed that Christ Church *cut* his pay.[787] Although Dodgson may have been feeling discontent on other grounds; he resigned not much after proposing that pay cut.

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[778] Woolf, p. 275

[779] Cohen, pp. 308-311.

[780] Donald Rackin, "Love and Death in Carroll's *Alice,* " in Bloom, pp. 135-136.

[781] Attwood, p. 162. Dubin, p. 114, gives a personal example of his willingness to offer gifts on relatively minor pretexts. In my own case, the first real social success I had was instructing others in computer programming.

[782] CohenLetters, p. 239.

[783] CohenLetters, p. 200.

[784] ClarkAlice, p. 201.

[785] CohenLetters, p. xi.

[786] Woolf, p. 285.

[787] CollingwoodLife, p. 97 [Chapter V]; WilsonR, p. 139. This is very familiar to the author; in salary negotiations I have always argued for the other side — I twice in the course of 13 months resigned a job to defer to other people in the organization.

When the Liddell children were trying to give away some of their kittens in 1863, Alice was too shy to press one upon the royal family — but Dodgson, the shyest of the shy, who would surely never have done such a thing for himself, undertook it upon her behalf.[788]

The Urge to Organize. Hans Asperger himself noted that his patients often had a love of cataloging and organizing collections.[789] Dodgson himself cataloged his correspondence; he reportedly had more than 98,000 cross-references.[790] He even indexed his own diary![791] Donald Rackin refers to his behavior as an "extraordinary need for order."[792]

Not only do autistics often like to organize things, they often organize them in peculiar ways. For example, instead of organizing a record collection by the artist's name, they might organize it by the number of *letters* in the artist's name. When Dodgson in 1863 cataloged the girls he had in his photo collection, he organized them by *first* name rather than last.[793]

Several critics have observed that Dodgson's acrostics contain some of his best poetry. Few other poets have achieved much success in this art form — in a quick check of six encyclopedias of literature, not one cited a proper example of the form although most described them. But autistics like order and a clear plan. Could it be that the underlying structure of the acrostic made it easier for Dodgson to compose?

Dodgson made only one trip outside England, a European tour that took him as far as Russia. "Dodgson's preparations for the journey were minute; he had made an exact science of packing"[794] — something typical of autistics when they travel.[795]

Family history. The character of Dodgson's family is interesting. Autism has a strong genetic component,[796] and Dodgson's brother Skeffington had an unidentified learning difficulty[797] and

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[788] Cohen, p. 98; Gordon, p. 119, citing Dodgson's diary for the day. I know this reaction — the one thing that gets me to overcome *my* shyness is the need to help a friend in a social situation.

[789] Attwood, p. 178. This is another I can testify to myself: I have cataloged the folk songs of the English-speaking world (The Traditional Ballad Index), all traditional folk songs found in Minnesota (*The Minnesota Heritage Songbook),* all the words in a medieval romance (*The Gest of Robyn Hode),* and all Middle English romances (*Romancing the Ballad).* Plus, of course, I'm cataloging Charles Dodgson's autistic traits. Come to think of it, this footnote consists of a catalog of the catalogs I've made. Dodgson would have loved it....

[790] CollingwoodLife, p. 127 [Chapter VII]; cf. Woollcott, p. 5;

[791] Leach, p. 33.

[792] Norton, p. 398.

[793] Gernsheim, p. 51.

[794] Hudson, p. 163.

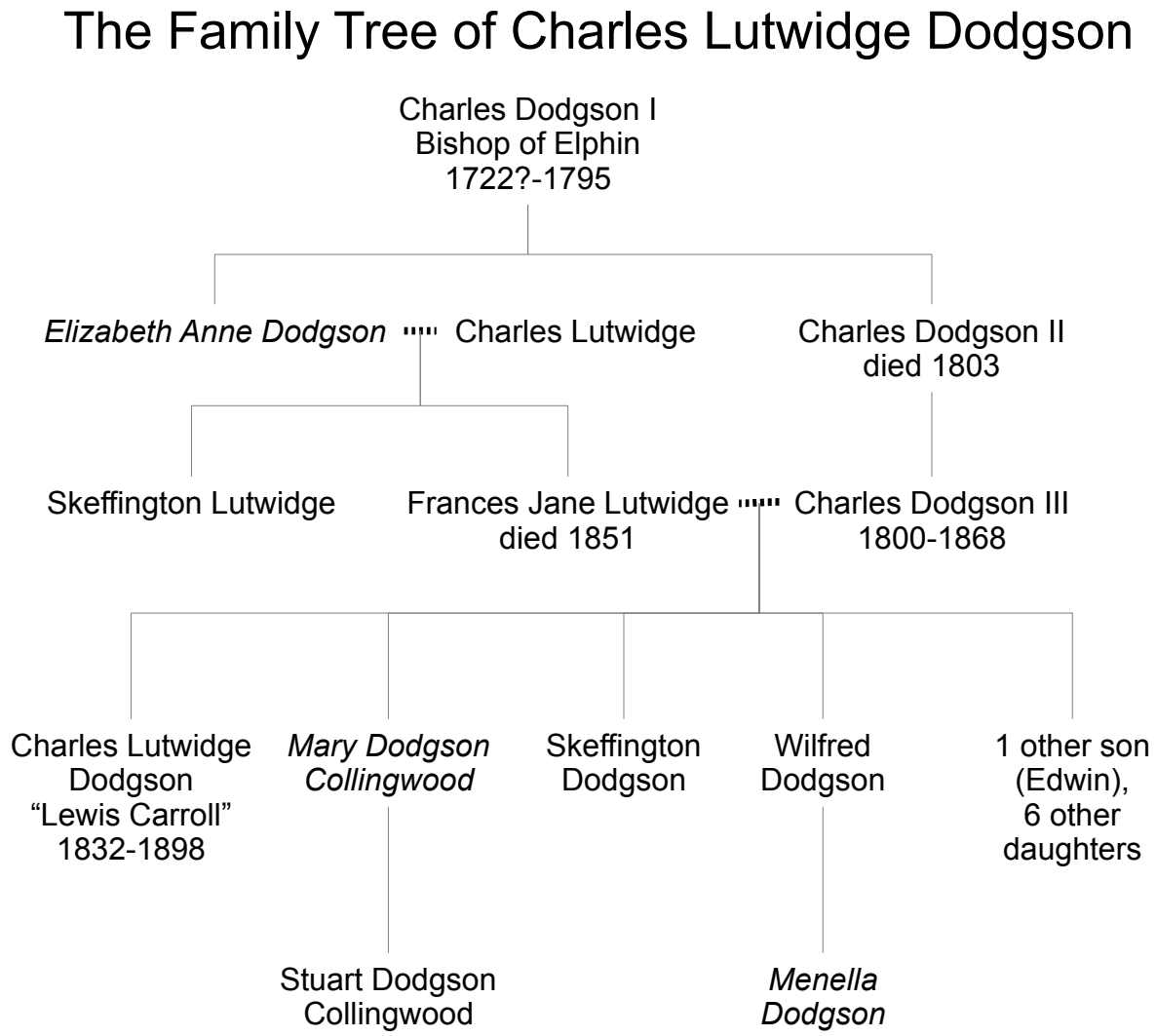
[795] Tammet, p. 121, describes feeling sick with worry on his first trip abroad, and several times refers to the details of how he travelled.

[796] Myles/Simpson, p. 15.

[797] Woolf, pp. 16, 18; Cohen, pp. 326-327 discusses his father's responses to Skeffington's "repeatedly failed examinations." Cohen, p. 459, notes that Skeffington had epileptic attacks in 1881; see the note on Dodgson's own "epileptiform" attack on p. 100.

even a possible "special interest" in fishing.[798] Skeffington was also apparently the subject of one of the pages that was cut out of Dodgson's diary: "a document already in the Dodgson family archive... made it clear that the May-June 1879 page had been... about his younger brother Skeffington";[799] a three word summary of the page which declares that it "is about SHD" — i.e. Skeffington.[800] Only one of Dodgson's seven sisters married, which might also indicate social dysfunctions; the third sister was particularly shy and retiring.[801] Several sisters shared his interest in mathematics — Louisa Dodgson was said to be Charles's equal as a mathematician.[802] This is of particular note because Charles Dodgson Sr. and Frances Lutwidge Dodgson were first cousins,[803] (so their children would have had an unusually high number of shared genes). Indeed, a photo of the Dodgson sisters[804] shows seven women so alike that they might almost be identical septuplets. They all lived into old age, so they can't have had too many real genetic defects, but they certainly had their peculiarities!

[798] Woolf, p. 18.
[799] Leach, p. 126.
[800] Leach, p. 329.
[801] Woolf, p. 17.
[802] ClarkCarroll, p. 81.
[803] ClarkCarroll, pp. 10-1
[804] Shown, e.g., on p. 105 of Stoffel



Genealogy of Lewis Carroll, showing the degree of inbreeding. Only some names shown.

Charles's father had also had unusual skills in mathematics; Charles Dodgson Sr. was a clergyman, and he translated the Latin Church Father Tertullian into English, but his grandson declares that "mathematics were *(sic.)* his favorite pursuit."[805] Like his son, Charles Dodgson Sr. was for a time a tutor at Christ Church.[806] And he had taken a double first class degree, in mathematics and in classics.[807] Charles Jr.'s brother Edwin displayed a rather obsessive desire to help others.[808]

[805] CollingwoodLife, p. 10 (chapter I)
[806] ClarkCarroll, p. 10
[807] Stoffel, p. 14
[808] Woolf, p. 18.

Skeffington Lutwidge, Dodgson's much-admired uncle (the brother of his mother), also had interesting traits: He never married and he loved gadgets.[809] This is noteworthy because Ridley observes that "children with Asperger's syndrome are often better than normal at folk physics [i.e. the operations of the natural world, such as the operation of mechanical objects]. Not only are they frequently fascinated by mechanical things, from light switches to airplanes, but they generally take an engineering approach to the world, trying to understand the rules by which things — and people — operate."[810] Dodgson, like Uncle Skeffington, loved gadgets — Isa Bowman spoke of his ability to tinker with damaged music boxes until they worked again.[811] One recent commentator says that "It might therefore be symbolically important that Dodgson's hobbies were usually ordered not naturally, but mechanically — photography, music boxes, mechanical toys, cerebral puzzles and games."[812] He had a printing press, sundry optical instruments, exercise machines, a typewriter he had modified himself, and his own "Nyctograph" for writing messages at night.[813] In addition, Dodgson is reported to have had a large library of medical books; the contents is unknown,[814] but from Woolf's description of his attempts to find a cure for his stammer, it sounds as if he was trying very hard to find mechanical explanations for a number of human traits.

Repetitive behaviors. Obsessive-compulsive problems are common in autism.[815] We see few signs of this in recorded accounts of Dodgson, but there is an interesting item in the allegorical drama "Cakeless," which seems to describe Dodgson's reactions to the marriage of Alice Liddell.[816] This piece repeatedly refers to "Kraftsohn" (Dodgson) biting his nails in what sounds like an obsessive behavior.[817] To be sure, this is extremely weak evidence.

Dodgson gave "an impression of extreme cleanliness."[818] Some Asperger's victims show an obsessive-compulsive tendency toward cleanliness; [819] Also, Dodgson normally wore gloves on social occasions;[820] the most likely explanation for this is to hide the stains from darkroom chemicals, but it also kept him from being touched, and we know that he purchased gloves at Rugby before he went into photography.[821]

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809 ClarkCarroll, pp. 73-74.
810 Ridley, p. 61.
811 Bowman, p. 10; Norton, p. 310; Woolf, pp. 129, 282, and Cohen, p. 288, give additional examples.
812 Donald Rackin, Norton, p. 399.
813 Gordon, p. 86.
814 ClarkCarroll, p. 258; Woolf, p. 79.
815 Attwood, p. 138.
816 Cohen, p. 516; Hudson, p. 205, and see the information about "Cakeless" on p. 135.
817 The fullest description of this is probably Hudson, pp. 205, 217-218. "Cakeless" is printed in ClarkAlice, pp. 256-262.
818 Gardner, p. xx [13], quoting Irene Barnes.
819 Attwood, p. 13
820 Stoffel, p. 36.
821 ClarkCarroll, p. 53.

A different perspective. Jenny Woolf considers Dodgson, beginning around 1880, to have become a man "in a world of his own"[822] — and Attwood observes that those "with Asperger's syndrome can develop vivid and complex imaginary worlds."[823] To be sure, Woolf attributes this to an epileptic condition[824] — his doctors called an incident of 1885/1886 an "epileptiform" attack,[825] and there was another attack in 1891.[826] Dodgson's brother Skeffington, the family's black sheep, also had epileptic attacks. There are signs of a connection between epilepsy and autism — "Epilepsy is more common in people with AS, affecting perhaps as many as one in five… a substantially increased risk compared to the general population."[827]

Even when talking about subjects other than mathematics, a future Dean of Christ Church declared that "he still presented you with unexpected and frequently perplexing points of view."[828] This sort of unorthodoxy is widely regarded as one of the greatest intellectual assets of autism sufferers.

Dodgson was a genuinely funny man, but it has been suggested that he used humor as a mask[829] — it made it easier to deal with people who otherwise might be hard to understand.

Feminine Traits. "His effeminacy was sufficiently obvious that some of his less sympathetic students once wrote a parody of his parodies and signed it 'Louisa Caroline.'"[830] "Nobody has (yet) written a serious book accusing him of being homosexual or a closet transvestite, but he has been described variously as womanish, tender, gentle, nun-like, shy, or like a 'mother hen'.... The ostentatiously manly qualities that were so important in Victorian social life left Carroll cold, and he rejected them."[831] Sufferers from autism often show significant traits of the other gender.[832]

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[822] Woolf, pp. 86-87.

[823] Attwood, p. 24.

[824] Woolf, p. 89.

[825] ClarkCarroll, p. 257.

[826] Cohen, p. 459.

[827] Digby Tantam, "Assessment and Treatment of Comorbid Emotional and Behavioral Problems," Prior, p. 159, although no source is cited. See also p. 31 of Tammet, an Asperger's victim who suffered from temporal epilepsy in his youth and was told that as many as a third of Asperger's sufferers experienced it at some time; also the article headlined "Refractory Seizures Common in Autism"; link at Autism Hangout.

[828] Cohen, p. 286, quoting T. B. Strong.

[829] Woolf, p. 291. The author can say, from experience, that almost half my physics and mathematics professors in this regard were very like Dodgson, as is the author — and, of course, physics and mathematics are some of the fields most associated with Asperger's.

[830] Phyllis Greenacre, reprinted in Bloom, p. 106. Hesitant as I am to accept a Greenacrean assessment, this one sounds right. CollingwoodPictures, pp. 361-364, prints the "Louisa Caroline" poem "The Vulture and the Husbandman," which is an obvious parody of "The Walrus and the Carpenter"; it begins "The rain was raining cheerfully, As if it had been May" and ends "And this was scarcely odd, because, They'd ploughed them every one."

[831] Woolf, p. 132.

[832] Aston, p. 64; there are examples in Attwood, p. 81.

Sensory Issues. Many autistics have difficulties with particular sensations — a particular color, sound, or texture, e.g.: "Many children with autism have some unusual sensory responses and interested, for example, being over- or undersensitive to the extraneous environment.... some sounds that you might not even notice will drive the child to distraction."[833] "In the sense of taste we find almost invariably very pronounced likes and dislikes. It is no different with the sense of touch. Many children have an abnormally strong dislike of particular tactile sensations. They cannot tolerate the roughness of new shirts, or of mended socks. Washing water too can often be a source of unpleasant sensations and, hence, of unpleasant scenes. There is hypersensitivity too against noise."[834] Dodgson reportedly preferred pink and gray colors,[835] and asked at least one girl not to wear red.[836] (On the other hand, Dodgson once posed Agnes Weld as "Little Red Riding Hood,"[837] and wanted a red binding for the first edition of *Wonderland*.[838])

Literal traits. Finally, people with autism are often very literal:[839] "People with AS are described as being very literal... and several studies provide support for this view. Kerbel and Grunwell (1998) reported that children with AS performed poorly on a task that assessed idiom comprehension; they gave significantly more inappropriate interpretations than age- or language-matched controls.... Children with AS also have difficulty interpreting language in social context."[840]

Isa Bowman describes how much Dodgson hated exaggeration: "'I nearly died of laughing,' was another expression that he particularly disliked; in fact any form of exaggeration generally called from him a reproof, though he was sometimes content to make fun."[841] Another story he was reportedly fond of was the account of the seven bishops accused of supporting the Old Pretender. One of them, when asked about his guilt and that of his colleagues, replied, "I am fully persuaded, your Majesty, that there is not one of my brethren who is not [as] innocent in the matter as myself."[842] And much of the humor in the "Alice" books is literal — consider, for instance, the exchange between the White King and Alice when the king is feeling faint:

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833 Volkmar & Wiesner,, pp. 483-484.

834 Attwood, p. 271, quoting Hans Asperger's own observations on this point.

835 Woolf, p. 52.

836 Greenacre, reprinted in Bloom, p. 106.

837 Photo in Gernsheim, plate 10.

838 ClarkAlice, p. 106.

839 Attwood, p. 115.

840 Helen Tager-Flusberg, "Effects of Language and Communications Deficits on Learning and Behavior," Prior, p. 89-90.

841 Bowman, p. 12.

842 Moses, p. 18.

"Another sandwich!" said the King.

"There's nothing left but hay now," the Messenger said, peeping into the bag.

"Hay, then," the King murmured in a faint whisper.

Alice was glad to see that it revived him a good deal. "There's nothing like hay when you're faint," he remarked to her, as he munched away.

"I should think throwing cold water over you would be better," Alice suggested, "—or some sal-volatile."

"I didn't say there was nothing *better,"* the King replied. "I said there was nothing *like* it."[843]

It should be emphasized that we cannot test Dodgson for autism. Indeed, there is no black-and-white test for the condition. Diagnostic tests for autism and Asperger's generally give a list of possible symptoms and require than the person under investigation have more than a certain number of them. Several such tests are in existence.[844] Taking a typical example, the DSM-IV test, it appears Dodgson meets the criteria, although just barely:

A. Qualitative impairment in social interaction (must have at least two of four criteria):
   * Failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
   * Lack of social or emotional reciprocity
B. Restrictive repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior (must have at least one):
   * apparently inflexible adherence to specific... rituals
C. Clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas
D. No clinically significant delay in language
E. No clinically significant delay in cognitive development
F. Criteria not met for other development disorders or schizophrenia

And, as the list above shows, he had very, very many of the secondary traits associated with autism. It isn't proof. It is very strong evidence.

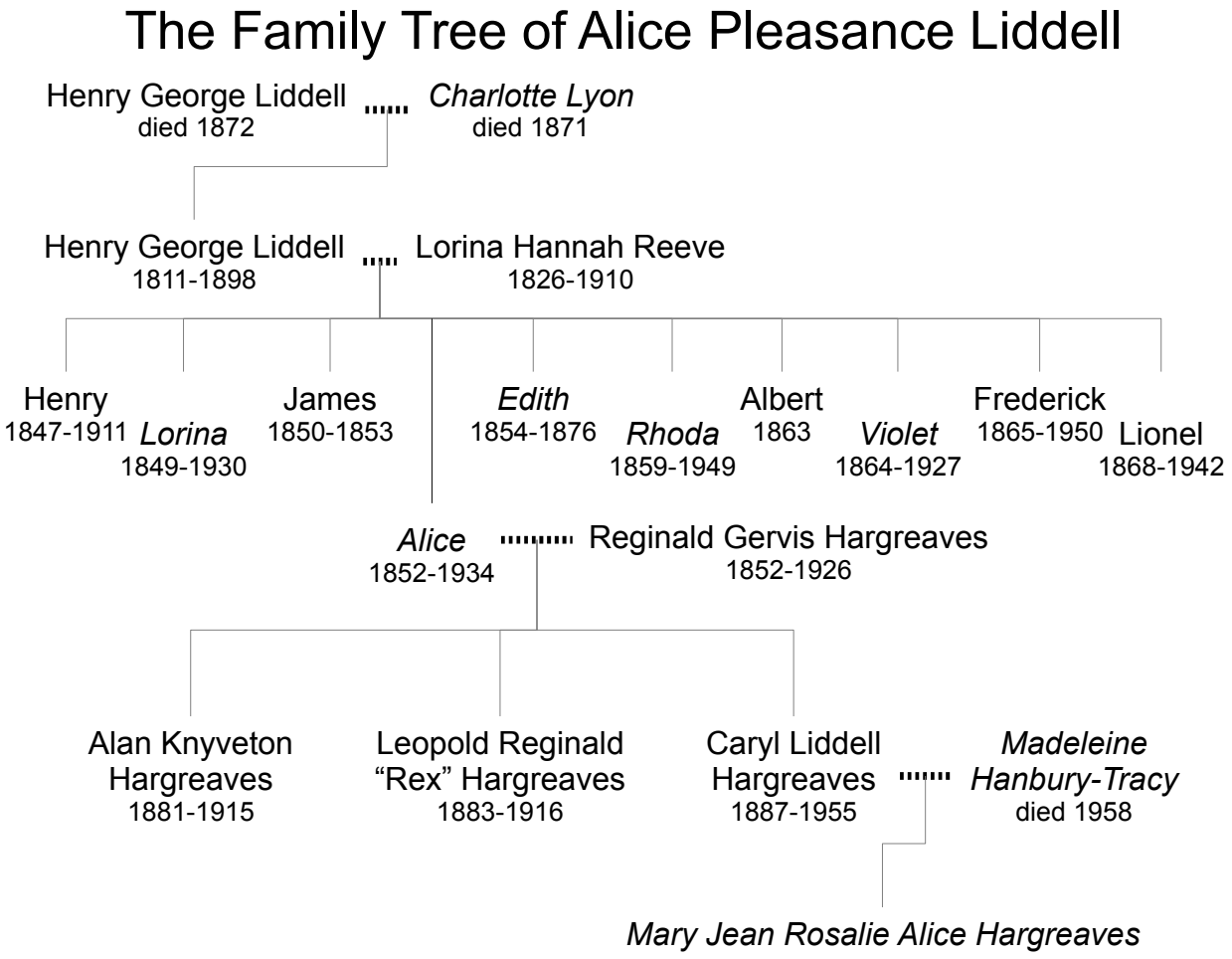
[843] Gardner, pp. 224-225 [281].

[844] Attwood gives the assessment criteria of Gillberg 1991 on p. 37; that of the DSM-IV on p. 41, and on pp. 49-50 discusses additions to the DSM-IV designed to assess adults. Volkmar & Wiesner,, p. 51, lists six different sets of diagnostic criteria, mostly for the very young, and lists a dozen additional tests on pp. 69 and 71.

"It's as large as life, and twice as natural": Alice Liddell

Charles Dodgson has been the subject of myriad biographies and research studies. The young girl who inspired his fancy has received far less attention. Yet Alice Pleasance Liddell, later Mrs. Reginald Hargreaves, was well worthy of attention in her own right — and probably would have been even more noteworthy had she not had the misfortune of being a woman in Victorian England.

Alice Liddell was the fourth of ten children of Henry George Liddell (1811-1898), later Bishop of Oxford,[845] and Lorina Hannah Reeve Liddell (1826-1910), the family consisting of Edward Henry ("Harry"), born 1847; Lorina Charlotte ("Ina"), born 1849; James Arthur Charles, born 1850 but died of scarlet fever 1853;[846] Alice Pleasance, born 1852; Edith Mary, born 1854; Rhoda Caroline Anne, born 1859; Albert Edward Arthur, born and died 1863; Violet Constance, born 1864; Frederic Francis ("Eric"), born 1865; and Lionel Charles, born 1868. All five girls (Ina, Alice, Edith, Rhoda, and Violet) appear in the *Alice* books, Ina and Edith repeatedly, but it was Harry, Ina, Alice, and Edith whom Dodgson knew best.



[845] from 1889; ClarkAlice, p. 206.

[846] Gordon, pp. 75-76. Most of the other information here comes from the frontmatter of Gordon.

Her father at the time of Alice's birth was the head of the Westminster School, a post that paid reasonably well but didn't bring any particular social rewards. But he was also chaplain to Queen Victoria's consort Prince Albert — he had succeeded to that post when Samuel Wilberforce was given a bishop's mitre in 1846.[847] That didn't pay anything, but it obviously brought connections galore. And the Greek Lexicon Liddell edited with Robert Scott brought him academic respect. So when Thomas Gaisford, Dean of Oxford's Christ Church College, died on June 2, 1855,[848] Liddell was an obvious successor. It took a while, but the Liddell family eventually settled in the Deanery (which they had partially rebuilt with their own money). It was on the grounds there, on April 25, 1856, that Dodgson first met Alice, who was not quite four years old.[849]

As girls in an upper middle class family in Victorian England, the opportunities for Alice and her sisters were limited. They obviously were not trained for a trade, nor for a "masculine" subject such as science. Like most respectable women of the time, the Liddell sisters had a governess, Miss Prickett, whom they called "Pricks." She does not seem to have been particularly learned,[850] but she did a good job of teaching the social rules of the time; it has been suggested that the Red Queen of *Through the Looking Glass* is based on her (Dodgson himself would later call the Red Queen "the concentrated essence of all governesses"),[851] although other sources think Miss Prickett was the model for the White Queen.[852] Alice also went to a day-school; there are at least three references to her French lessons in the Alice books. In *Wonderland,* the first is in the chapter "The Pool of Tears," where Alice says to the mouse, "Où est ma chatte?" from her French text.[853] The second is in "The Mock Turtle's Story":

> *"I've* been to a day-school, too," said Alice. "You needn't be so proud as all that."
> "With extras?" asked the Mock Turtle, a little anxiously.
> "Yes," said Alice, "we learned French and music."[854]

The last is in *Looking Glass,* in the chapter Queen Alice:

> "Do you know languages? What's the French for fiddle-de-dee?"
> "Fiddle-de-dee's not English," Alice replied gravely.[855]

These are the obvious references. It appears that the ties to Alice's French lessons run even deeper; Alice's French textbook *La Bagatelle* had lessons about "the Rabbit," "The Fall," and "The little girl who was always crying" — all themes which Dodgson took up and twisted humorously in the early chapters of *Wonderland*.[856]

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847 Gordon, p. 70.
848 Cohen, p. 53.
849 Cohen, p. 60.
850 ClarkAlice, p. 41.
851 Cohen, p. 94; Gardner, p. 161 n. 8 [206 n. 5].
852 ClarkAlice, p. 42.
853 Gardner, p. 26 [42]
854 Gardner, p. 97 [128]
855 Gardner, p. 255 [323]
856 Woolf, p. 217

This was only one of many indications that the pretty, dark-haired little girl was something special. She was a "remarkable eleven-year-old."[857] Although she had no formal academic training, Alice was well-educated. She loved reading from an early age,[858] eventually collecting a large library of books of poetry, literature, art, music, archaeology, philosophy, religion, language, and more.[859] She was fluent in French by age eleven.[860] Indeed, her French was good enough that, at that age, she wrote a letter to Dodgson in that language, inviting him to the celebrations of the Prince of Wales's wedding.[861] She studied art with the great John Ruskin — and observers agree that she (and her siblings) had a genuine "talent for art."[862] Ruskin's school in 1870 gave her a first prize for one of her drawings,[863] although Ruskin's feelings toward her may have played a role. Even the harshest of Dodgson's biographers admits that her "artistic and intellectual ability was well above average."[864] The Liddell sisters were also sufficiently talented musically that Hubert Parry dedicated three trios for female voices to them.[865] Alice's was based on Shelley's "A Lament,"[866] which begins

O World! O Life! O Time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more — Oh, never more!

Talent ran in the family. Her uncle Charles Liddell was a famous engineer.[867] Her father, Dean of Christ Church college (and hence Dodgson's boss) was a justly renowned classical scholar, best known for Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon. It is hard for us today, in the era of computer-based note-taking, to realize what a monumental accomplishment this work was. The author's copy of the fifth edition, a work being revised at the very time Dodgson was working on *Wonderland,* proudly proclaims itself *A Greek-English Lexicon,* Compiled by Henry George Liddell, D.D., Dean of Christ Church, and Robert Scott, D.D., Master of Balliol College, Fifth Edition, Revised and Augmented, Oxford, 1864. It has 1644+xiv large pages of rather small type. Some 500 ancient sources are cited. It is still in print a century and a half after publication — revised, to be sure, to take into account the many new documents found since its time, but the

[857] Cohen, p. 94.
[858] Underground, p. 9
[859] ClarkAlice, p. 187
[860] Underground, p. 12
[861] Underground, p. 12; Cohen, p. 209
[862] Gardner, p. 98 n. 18; ClarkCarroll, pp. 190-191. Her signed drawing of Christ Church Cathedral in 1878, shown facing p. 144 of ClarkCarroll, is indeed very good. Additional samples of her work are in Gordon, pp. 32, 128, 130, 139, 141-143, 145, 151, and elsewhere.
[863] Gordon, p. 105.
[864] Hudson, p. 201.
[865] Gordon, p. 113
[866] ClarkAlice, p. 118.
[867] see, e.g., ClarkAlice, p. 209.

current versions are still recognizably based on the work of Dean Liddell. For practical purposes, it is the only English-language lexicon of classical Greek still in use; the many publications since its time concentrate instead on the later *koine.* Dean Liddell also made real reforms at Christ Church. Wonderful as the "Alice" books are, it is unfair that Dean Liddell is know mostly as Alice Liddell's father.

It is fascinating to note that Liddell's co-author Robert Scott translated "Jabberwocky" into German in 1872 — in a mock-scholarly article.[868] Dodgson must have loved it. We note, too, that John Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River* "might be regarded as the first English fairy tale for children";[869] amazing that Alice Liddell was close to both Dodgson and Ruskin.

Still, Alice might have grown up to be just another daughter of an academic, moderately well-married and forgettable — except for the events of a July day in 1862. All evidence seems to indicate that it was on that day that Alice became Dodgson's particular — indeed, his life-long — favorite.[870]

Dodgson's relationship with the Liddell sisters grew slowly. He first recorded meeting them while trying to take a photograph of the Deanery in 1856 — a photograph which turned out badly.[871] But he watched the girls as he worked. Later, he took photographs of the children themselves, starting with Harry.[872] The photographs became a regular thing,[873] and Dodgson began to build a social relationship with the girls — a relationship which flowered over the next half decade. Dodgson became very closely attached to the girls — and vice versa. Given the stories about Dodgson and girls, it's perhaps worth adding that, in prior years, Harry Liddell had been part of these meetings; the reason that he was absent on the 1862 boating trip is that he had started to attend boarding school.[874] But absent he was.

Dodgson and the Reverend Robinson Duckworth took three of the Liddell sisters, Lorina, Alice, and Edith, rowing on the Thames, perhaps on July 4, 1862.[875] The details of this expedition are confused — there is no real proof that the day was July 4, e.g. Lorina Liddell, at least, seems to have remembered a different day for the event.[876] Dodgson himself, although he noted the July 4

868 Gardner, p. 151 n. 17 [p. 193 n. 11].
869 Zipes, p. 432.
870 ClarkAlice, p. 74.
871 Cohen, p. 60.
872 Cohen, p. 61.
873 At least, most biographers seem to think so. Winchester, however, notes that only eleven solo photos of Alice survive, and seven group photos with one or more siblings.
874 ClarkCarroll, p. 123.
875 Gardner, p. 7 [21] n. 1.
876 Woolf, p. 158.

expedition in his diary,[877] did not mention telling the "Alice" story at the time; he added that note in a months-later addendum, written when the manuscript had been finished.[878] All other testimony about the day comes from much later.[879] The witnesses disagree about where Dodgson told his tale; we cannot be sure that it was on the boat or on the shore. All the participants say the weather was fine, whereas weather records show July 4, 1862 as a gloomy, chilly day.[880] There is evidence that parts of the story may have been created earlier.[881] But there can be no doubt that, on a river trip, Dodgson told a tale to the Liddells that was the heart of the *Alice* story. The earliest evidence for this is Dodgson's diary entry. He gave later accounts as well (e.g. in 1887[882]), as did Duckworth[883] and Alice Hargreaves herself, first in Collingwood,[884] later in the *New York Times.*[885] Despite many minor discrepancies, the eyewitnesses agree on the key point: Dodgson told the tale to entertain the three Liddell sisters.

Dodgson had often told stories on these trips, but this one apparently was special. The girls enjoyed it so much that Dodgson was instructed to write it down. It seems that this was Alice's suggestion.[886] This manuscript text, *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* was also a hit with those who read it, and when the novelist George MacDonald saw it, he urged Dodgson to publish.[887]

Of course, Alice Liddell's life didn't end when Dodgson told his tale. But the relationship did not last. *Something* happened which caused a significant estrangement between Dodgson and the Liddell girls. What, we do not know; this is the key to all that follows.

Part of the problem may have been the Liddells' ambitions: Dodgson was simply not high-class enough. The Liddells believed their daughters should aspire to higher things. "More than one pair of jaundiced eyes saw Mrs Liddell as angling to catch a royal fish for one of her daughters."[888] Mrs. Liddell was known as "the Kingfisher" because of her desire to climb.[889] Dodgson himself seems to have used this characterization[890] — hard to believe he kept trying to

[877] The relevant text, as given by Gernsheim, pp. 47-48, is "Duckworth and I made an expedition *up* the river to Godstow with the 3 Liddells; we had tea on the bank there, and did not reach Ch[rist] Ch[urch] again until ¼ past 8, when we took them to my rooms to see my collection of micro-photographs, and restored them to the Deanery just past 9." On the facing page, this was later amplified with the remark, "On which occasion I told them the fairy tale of *'Alice's Adventures Under Ground',* which I undertook to write down for Alice."

[878] Underground, p. 10.

[879] The most important sources can be read on pp. 90-91 of Cohen.

[880] Gardner, p. 9 [23], n. 1.

[881] Hudson, p. 74

[882] Brooker, p. 8

[883] Brooker, pp. 8-9; Stoffel, p. 64; Underground, p. 10

[884] CollingwoodLife, p. 44 [chapter III]

[885] Brooker, p. 9

[886] Stoffel, p. 65, and Underground, pp. 4, 10, cite both Duckworth and Dodgson as saying this was Alice's idea.

[887] Stoffel, p. 67.

[888] Gordon, p. 72.

[889] Gordon, p. 171; Stoffel, p. 82.

[890] ClarkAlice, p. 152.

be friends with Alice after that! The pseudo-drama "Cakeless," which we will discuss further below, has the Alice character, Ecilia, declare to her parents Apollo and Diana, "You always wished that I should marry one Or Prince, or Peer, or else a Member's son."[891] The Liddell children were distantly related to the royal family — "it appears that Alice and the present Queen [i.e. Elizabeth II] are fifth cousins three times removed"[892] — but not considered part of the nobility. Dean Liddell was the nephew of a baron and the grand-nephew of an earl — indeed, he reportedly was descended in the twelfth generation from Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, the only daughter of George, Duke of Clarence, the younger brother of King Edward IV, whose claim to the throne of England was superior to that of King Henry VII — but Liddell himself held no titles.[893] Mrs. Liddell (whose social status was inferior to her husband's[894]) is thought to have been the one who really disliked Dodgson.[895] It seems quite clear that it was the children who wanted him around and the parents who did not.

On November 26, 1864, Dodgson finally gave Alice the manuscript of *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* even as the print edition was in preparation.[896] If the Liddells had made any noteworthy response, it has not been recorded.[897]

There is some evidence that her personality was strong enough, even as a girl, to dominate a room. Consider, for instance, that letter she wrote to Dodgson inviting him to the Prince of Wales's wedding. That was *her* idea, note. Another instance comes from John Ruskin's autobiography *Præterita.*[898] Ruskin — who, to be sure, was suffering from mental illness when he wrote his book[899] — refers to Alice as "Alice in Wonderland." This makes it clear that this was after Dodgson was close to Alice — but, if anything, that would have lessened Ruskin's liking for her; Ruskin, even more than Dodgson, was drawn to very young women. Ruskin deliberately came around the Deanery when Dean and Mrs. Liddell were out — and although he was supposed to meet Alice, Edith, and Rhoda, he was so entranced that he was certain only of having seen Alice. The Liddell parents soon returned home due to snowy roads; Ruskin called it

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891 ClarkAlice, p. 153; this is from Act I, Scene I, with the full context on p. 256 of ClarkAlice.

892 ClarkAlice, p. 23, and see the genealogy on p. 24. Alice's relationship is to Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, the wife of George VI and mother of Elizabeth II, so it does not involve royal blood in the Liddell family. Based on this genealogy, the relationship is in fact *third* cousins three times removed.

893 ClarkCarroll, p. 82.

894 Leach, p. 221.

895 so, e.g., Cohen, p. 513, although Leach, p. 227-228, as usual disagrees with the conventional opinion. Jones/Gladstone, p. 36, claim that Dodgson went on to place Dean and Mrs. Liddell in *Wonderland* as the relatively benign King of Hearts and the imperious Queen of Hearts. Jones/Gladstone would point out that the trial of the Knave of Hearts is a feature added in *Wonderland,* not found in the original version of the tale. But the Queen of Hearts appears in her guise of a fury in the croquet scene, which does occur in *Alice's Adventures under Ground.* It is more likely that the elder Liddells appear in *Sylvie and Bruno,* in an unflattering light.

896 ClarkAlice, p. 103.

897 ClarkAlice, p. 106.

898 Ruskin, pp. 410-411.

899 Ellis, p. 172.

an incredible disappointment.[900] But what is interesting about this incident is that, again, it appears Alice herself arranged it, against her parents' will. She is also credited with standing up to the future Prime Minister Gladstone.[901] It is fascinating that she was *not* able to convince her parents to allow Dodgson to resume his visits.

Alice grew up, became a woman, lived her life. But it does not seem to have been happy — several writers declare that there was always a sadness about her.[902] Much of this is due to family tragedies — the death of her sister, the death of her first real love, the deaths in World War I of two of her three sons. Could the separation from Dodgson have been the first of these sorrows?

Some time in the 1860s,[903] Alice fell from a pony and broke her leg. At the end of her life, she complained that Dodgson never visited her during her convalescence.[904] Perhaps he did not realize that she missed him (another sign of autism?), but he may not have had the choice.

She could hardly have known what was to come when, in 1872, she and her sisters went on a tour around Europe which presumably opened their eyes to new vistas[905] — including Paris, Rome, Venice, and even Mount Vesuvius. While on this trip. their grandfather died,[906] bringing £300 to Alice as a legacy.[907]

The death of her sister Edith in 1876 was so shattering that the family reportedly never spoke of it again.[908]

As an eligible woman in male-dominated Oxford, Alice probably would have had many suitors even had she been relatively plain, but the fact that she was so beautiful caused even more men to be interested. One of her failed suitors was the twelfth Earl of Winchelsea, who eventually wrote her a farewell note as he seemingly lay on his deathbed.[909]

In 1872, Alice came close to catching an even bigger fish. Prince Leopold, Queen Victoria's youngest (and most academic) son, came to Oxford in that year. The Liddells liked him because he was royalty, and he liked them because he was probably the most intelligent and artistic of Victoria's children; he fit well with the Liddells. It can't be proved that Alice and Leopold fell in love; the only letter Gordon can find to her from him dates from the time of her wedding; it came with a signed picture and a gift and is very affectionate but does not say anything that

[900] summarized in Gardner, p. xviii-xix [12].
[901] Jones/Gladstone, p. 103.
[902] Cohen, p. 518, following ClarkAlice, pp. 196-197..
[903] The date is disputed; ClarkAlice, p. 112, says 1866; Gordon, p. 114, prefers 1862.
[904] Gordon, p. 114.
[905] Gordon, p. 135.
[906] Gordon, p. 143.
[907] ClarkAlice, p. 136.
[908] Gordon, p. 125.
[909] Gordon, p. 169.

indicates actual passion.[910] At least one source thinks Leopold instead pursued *Edith* Liddell.[911] But this may be because the Liddell family tried hard to keep everything quiet;[912] there is much secondary evidence that Leopold and Alice were close. It is likely that Leopold was her first adult love;[913] what separated them was not lack of affection but the difference in social class. And, supposedly, the Liddells no more approved than did the royal family.[914]

Leopold was at Christ Church from 1872 to 1876,[915] so they met when Alice was twenty and Leopold a year younger. They could not marry — but he named his oldest daughter Alice, and she named her second son Leopold, and the prince was the boy's godfather. He sent her a personal note at the time: "It is very good of you asking me to be godfather to your boy, and I shall have *great* pleasure in being so. Please let me know what his names are to be.... Our child will probably be christened on Easter Monday, we mean to call her Alice."[916]

When Alice married Reginald Hargreaves, Leopold sent her a ruby and diamond brooch[917] but did not attend the ceremony.[918] One wonders what Hargreaves thought — but, based on his letters, he was so thrilled to get Alice that he put up with it. Who could blame him? Perhaps it was as well she married Hargreaves; Leopold, a hemophiliac,[919] died young in 1884.

Alice's husband, Reginald Gervis Hargreaves, was one of three children of Jonathan Hargreaves (died 1863) and Anna Maria Harland Hargreaves (died 1872). Reginald himself was born in 1852. Jonathan Hargreaves inherited his money from the family's Lancashire clothing business — although he sold out the business after his brother Robert died in 1854.[920] In 1856, the family bought the estate of Cuffnells at Lyndhurst;[921] this was where Alice would spend her later years. It had a view of the Solent and the Isle of Wight, and included a dozen bedrooms.[922] There were ten servants.[923]

Hargreaves was all that Dodgson was not: "in the first rank as a shot, a fine cricketer who played for Hampshire, a good golfer, and very proud of his [estate's] trees."[924] In other words, the standard country squire. That applied to his politics, too; he was a typical English aristocrat, being

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910 Gordon, pp. 173-174.
911 Charlotte Zeepvat, as quoted by Karoline Leach on p. 188 of Bloom.
912 ClarkAlice, p. 157.
913 ClarkCarroll, pp. 190-191; Cohen, pp. 514-516.
914 ClarkAlice, p. 157.
915 LennyAlice, section "Love and marriage"; Gardner, p. 18 n. 12.
916 ClarkAlice, p. 193.
917 ClarkCarroll, p. 192.
918 ClarkAlice, p. 182.
919 Cohen, p. 514; Weintraub, p. 224.
920 ClarkAlice, pp. 176-177.
921 Gordon, p. 153.
922 Gordon, p. 154.
923 Gordon, p. 157.
924 Hudson, pp. 201-202

quite the jingoist; he wrote a verse for "God Save the King" that began "Lands far across the sea, Empire that are to be, All homage bring."[925]

Despite his wealth, Hargreaves seems a rather unlikely match for Alice. He had money, but he certainly didn't approach her in brains. Punctuation seems to have eluded him, and his first note from Eton boasted of cricket, not academics.[926] "He hated Latin and Greek and did not even care for French.... Inevitably he preferred the cricket pitch to the classroom, and it was there that he excelled."[927] (He would install a cricket pitch at his home at Cuffnells in 1874.[928]) A biographer frankly labels him Alice's "intellectual inferior."[929] Perhaps family trauma contributed; his father died in 1863 while Reginald was still at Eton.[930] The boy's school results were not exceptional, but at this time colleges did not base admission on merit so much as on cash, and Hargreaves had that. The universities had a special sort of degree they gave to aristocrats who showed up but didn't accomplish anything academically. So, with good sports credentials if little in the way of academic gifts, he headed to Christ Church.[931] It took him six years to finish his B.A.[932]

There is evidence that he pursued both Alice and Edith Liddell, but gradually gave more and more of his attention to Alice.[933] The courtship lasted four years;[934] after that long pursuit, the time from proposal to wedding, strangely enough, was only eight weeks.[935] Alice saw Cuffnells for the first time only a week before the wedding.[936]

(Oddly enough, Alice would be the last Liddell daughter to wed. Perhaps mother's machinations cost Rhoda and Violet. Rhoda seems to have been as beautiful as Alice and Edith, although the images of Violet make her rather less attractive, but neither girl ever wed, and their relations with men seem to have been quite unhappy.[937])

Alice and Reginald were married in Westminster Abbey, with the famous hymn writer Sir John Stainer playing the organ.[938]

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925 Gordon, p. 191.
926 Gordon, p. 152.
927 ClarkAlice, pp. 177-178.
928 ClarkAlice, p. 190.
929 Gordon, p. 202.
930 Gordon, p. 160.
931 Gordon, p. 168.
932 ClarkAlice, p. 178,
933 Gordon, pp. 174-175.
934 Gordon, p. 175.
935 Gordon, p. 179.
936 Gordon, pp. 177-178.
937 Gordon, pp. 180-181.
938 ClarkAlice, p. 180.

The journals of their honeymoon showed their differences; Alice with a lady's maid, Black, rather haughty, but a skilled writer giving vivid descriptions;[939] (she has been described as "by no means inarticulate... though... the level of prose was frankly uninspired"[940] — but at least she was setting out to give a real description). Reginald by contrast scribbled brief reports and showed little curiosity about people or places.[941] And yet, the marriage seems to have been a genuine success.

Nor did her domination fade as she grew older; she was very determined as an adult[942] — indeed, "imperious" might be a better word.[943] And it appears that she, not Reginald Hargreaves, chose the names for her sons (how else to explain that one was named Leopold and another Caryl?).

Alice doesn't seem to have been a particularly good person to work for.[944] Her granddaughter declared that she was a "formidable woman who dominated the family."[945] She said herself that "I am becoming something of a termagant" as she managed Cuffnells,[946] although at least one of the servant's sons said that she "was so very thoughtful for others, treated her servants well and was very popular in the village."[947]

There are hints that she was lonely during these years.[948] She seems to have turned to her family for both intellectual stimulation and company.[949]

Certainly she missed her old home. When her father retired from Christ Church and she paid her last visit to the Deanery in 1891, she wrote how she could "hardly bear to feel it is my last evening here as my own dear old home of many joys and sorrows; dearest, I think you know, if I talk of it it makes me cry."[950] But there is no specific explanation of what is is that she missed.

If you ignore the fact that Reginald clearly saw himself as boss and Alice as assistant, they seem to have been quite modern. They bought Rolls-Royce #59, and also scrounged together a car based on parts from Thorneycrofts that somehow was kept running until 1935.[951]

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939 Gordon, pp, 193-194.
940 ClarkAlice, p. 137.
941 Gordon, pp. 195-196.
942 Woolf, p. 174.
943 See the information in Cohen, pp. 522-523,
944 ClarkAlice, p. 237, gives an example of her harsh treatment of a new servant who had developed chilblains.
945 Woolf, p. 174.
946 Gordon, p. 198.
947 Ernest Odell, the son of one of the Cuffnells grooms, quoted on p. 211 of Gordon.
948 Gordon, p. 202.
949 Gordon, p. 204, although his deductions are based in part on the sheer volume of correspondence among the members of the family.
950 Gordon, p. 207.
951 Gordon, p. 215.

They had three children, all sons, Alan Knyveton Hargreaves, 1881-1915; Leopold Reginald Hargreaves, known as "Rex," 1883-1916; and Caryl Liddell Hargreaves, 1886-1955. All seem to have taken after their father more than their mother; brains do not seem to have been their strong suit. Alan "was a complete extrovert and possessed a flamboyant streak as well.... He was also the friendliest fellow imaginable, polished in his manner, and an absolute charmer."[952]

"Rex [i.e. Leopold] had an adventurous spirit, too... he rarely came out on top in... sporting activities.... although he was a sound scholar rather than a brilliant one, he outpaced Alan." Caryl "was a much more introverted character, intellectually gifted, an with a keen interest in most forms of cultural pursuits."[953] He was also an excellent pianist.[954]

"Rex" and Caryl both attended Christ Church.[955] Alan, the oldest son, did not; he joined the army around the beginning of the twentieth century, went to Sandhurst, and served in the Boer War.[956] It wasn't all hard service; he saw much of Africa and Asia — and did a lot of big game hunting, as well as playing polo and racing his automobile.[957]

When the First World War began, all three boys became officers. Alan and Leopold were killed in the War. Alan had suffered repeated wounds, including a bullet through the lung before taking the fatal injury.[958] He had already been awarded the DSO for his service in 1914.[959]

Leopold fell in the trenches of the Somme, probably from friendly artillery fire. He was posthumously awarded the Military Cross.[960]

Gordon thinks that Reginald never really recovered from the loss of the boys.[961]

Reginald Hargreaves had been well-to-do when he married Alice, but his wealth was all inherited, and neither he nor his cousins had any training in managing it.[962] There is no sign that "Regi" understood business or investment; he had to start selling off property in the 1890s[963] — and probably should have sold it earlier, when he would have gotten a better price.[964] Hargreaves died in 1926, leaving Alice to pay off an immense death duty.[965] Regi's estate

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952 ClarkAlice, p. 210.
953 ClarkAlice, p. 210.
954 ClarkAlice, p. 216.
955 ClarkAlice, p. 215.
956 Gordon, pp. 217-218.
957 ClarkAlice, pp. 215-216.
958 Gordon, pp. 218-220; ClarkAlice, p. 220.
959 ClarkAlice, p. 221.
960 ClarkAlice, p. 225.
961 Gordon, pp. 221-222.
962 ClarkAlice, p. 188.
963 Cohen, p. 518; Gordon, p. 227, notes that what was sold at this time was Accrington, the old family. The next major sale was in 1912.
964 ClarkAlice, p. 210.
965 Gordon, p. 228.

brought a relatively paltry £26,000 pounds to Caryl, compared to the £40,000 he had inherited from his father.[966] Alice herself received little except the use of his carriages and cars and such until his death. She would have been homeless had not Caryl allowed her to stay in Cuffnells while he spent his weekdays elsewhere.[967] "Thereafter, lack of money was for Alice an insistent fact of life that would not go away."[968] Alice would live eight more years, but Reginald's death forced her to sell off the manuscript of *Alice's Adventures under Ground* to keep the estate afloat.[969] It was, presumably, small consolation that it sold for more than £15,000, a record at the time.[970] It was gone — to America, as it turned out. At the auction, "Over near the rostrum an old woman, once little Alice, brushes a handkerchief across her eyes. Then she, too, vanishes."[971]

Caryl spent much of his time in London, which his mother perhaps did not like (they are reported to have had several rows[972]), and he proved a poor financial manager. Alice didn't approve of his wife, the war widow Madeleine Hanbury-Tracy, either.[973] Despite his mother's feelings, Caryl married Madeleine on June 6, 1929.[974] Madeleine had two sons, both almost grown, from her first marriage; she and Caryl had one child, Mary Jean Rosalie Alice Hargreaves, born June 10, 1931.[975]

The family kept Cuffnells for the time being, but it would be taken over by the military in 1941; it was demolished a few years later.[976]

There was a surge of interest in Alice in 1932, the hundredth anniversary of Carroll's birth, and her own eightieth year, and the seventieth anniversary of the boating trip. She was interviewed, she toured, she even earned a doctorate — a degree Dodgson never achieved; his best was a Master of Arts, awarded in 1857.[977] Hers was, to be sure, an honorary degree, awarded by Columbia University in 1932.[978] Given her intelligence, artistic skill, and education, however, it was probably deserved.

It was quite a fête; she was guarded from the public, many accommodations were made to her frailty, and the flowers "transformed Alice's hotel suite into an ornamental garden."[979]

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966 ClarkAlice, p. 230.
967 ClarkAlice, pp. 230-231.
968 Gordon, pp. 227-228.
969 Cohen, pp. 518-519.
970 Gordon, p. 233.
971 Gordon, p. 233.
972 ClarkAlice, p. 232.
973 Cohen, pp. 519-520; ClarkAlice, pp. 237-238.
974 ClarkAlice, p. 239.
975 ClarkAlice, p. 240.
976 Gordon, p. 224.
977 CollingwoodLife, p. 29 [chapter II]
978 LennyAlice, section "End of Life"; Cohen, p. 520
979 Gordon, p. 236.

One of the great collectors of Carroll memorabilia, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., met her at that time and reported that "she turned out to be a charming, gracious lady with her girlhood charm still evident."[980] But the press had trouble with her — she didn't give the sort of answers they liked, and many of her questions for them were surprisingly technical — how did they dredge the river, and how did they ventilate the Holland Tunnel?[981]

Being a worldwide celebrity was probably exciting, but it was also somewhat tiring: "oh, my dear, I am tired of being Alice in Wonderland. Does it sound ungrateful? It *is* — only I do get tired!"[982] She slipped into a coma in November 1934, and on November 15, she stopped breathing. She left no will, so all her estate (less than £1400) went to Caryl. Her body was cremated, and the ashes were placed in the Hargreaves monument; there was neither a memorial nor a grave in Oxford.[983] Alice died relatively lonely and rather poor, "a once bright creature made dull by dullness."[984] A sad ending for such a wonderful child.

[980] CohenMorgan, p. 26.
[981] Gordon, p. 237.
[982] Cohen, p. 521.
[983] ClarkAlice, p. 249.
[984] Cohen, p. 519.

"He stole those tarts, And took them right away": The Accusation

It is famous that Charles Dodgson's social life revolved around girls. "Carroll's principal hobby — the hobby that aroused his greatest joys — was entertaining little girls."[985]

The relationship between Dodgson and Alice, and Dodgson's many relationship with other young girls, has become the source of a great deal of emotional analysis, much of which can fairly be called destructive criticism, much of it psychosexual. This even though, as Harold Bloom freezingly declares, "Psychoanalytic interpretations of Carroll's works always fail, because they are necessarily easy and vulgar, and therefore disgusting."[986] Nonetheless, "Of late Carroll has been compared with Humbert Humbert, the narrator of Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Lolita."*[987] It was in fact Nabokov who translated Carroll into Russian![988]

Phyllis Greenacre's study *Swift and Carroll* offers similar sorts of comments.[989]

William Empson's "The Child as Swain" declares "To make this dream-story from which *Wonderland* was elaborated seem Freudian one has only to tell it."[990] I can only say that I *still* don't see it, even with Empson's references to help me along. Many of these analyses, it seems to me, confuse what Dodgson was himself thinking (as, e.g., he was clearly thinking about getting old when he wrote *Through the Looking Glass)* with what the books themselves are about.

A few accounts openly accuse Dodgson of being a pedophile,[991] far more at least imply that it must be true.[992] This even though the evidence is strong that he was perfectly comfortable with adult women — Karoline Leach blames the story that he liked only children on Langford Reed's 1932 biography, a book which she regards as largely fictional.[993] Dodgson owned at least one drawing of an adult nude; he simply did not make such pictures himself.[994]

It doesn't help that Dodgson is known to have taken many photographs of nude children. Nor that he is on record as kissing his child friends.[995] And Alice once wrote of him asking for a lock of hair from one of the Liddell girls, although she also said he was joking.[996] He did, however,

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985 Gardner, p. xvii [11].
986 Bloom, p. 5.
987 Gardner, p. xix [13]; Woolf, p. 154.
988 Brooker, p. 80; Gardner, p. xxvii.
989 Gardner, p. 9. *Swift and Carroll* was published by International Universities Press, 1955.
990 Norton, p. 349
991 Brooker, p. 55, gives examples.
992 Brooker, pp. 54-58.
993 Leach, pp. 70-73l. The other biographers don't seem to go as far in condemning Reed, but don't use him much, either — e.g. Cohen has only two citations of Reed.
994 Leach prints the image following page 196.
995 Woolf, pp. 71, 102.
996 Gordon, p. 120.

ask at least one other girl for a hair sample, although that too was a joke — he asked for a key to go with the lock![997]

It sounds like the portrait of a pedophile, certainly. Nude photos. Kisses. Interested only in young girls. Learned skills used to lure said girls.

But there is another side. Indeed, we might perhaps learn something from the nude images themselves. Six of these photos survive. Two, contrary to myth, were of young boys. The other four, which survive only in colorized versions, are surprisingly easy to find.[998] Of the four, only one (of Evelyn Hatch) can be regarded as revealing, and even it is hardly erotic. "Viewed objectively, they could be described as whimsical, coy, even trite, and the painted settings in particular have a garishly amateurish quality."[999] In any case, none of this has any relevance for the issue of the relationship between Dodgson and Alice Liddell, because Dodgson's first recorded instance of a nude photo was of Beatrice Latham in 1867,[1000] long after he was estranged from the Liddells.

We might add that Beatrice Hatch, the "victim" of one of his photography sessions, stood up for him; Evelyn Hatch, one of the three Hatch daughters,[1001] actually edited a book of his letters; Diana Bannister, daughter of Annie Henderson, recalled her mother was upset about claims that his acts were impure.[1002] There are indications that he took a nude of Gertrude Chataway,[1003] and she remained a life-long friend. Enid Stevens declared, "I know now that my friendship with him was probably the most valuable experience in a long life, and that it influenced my outlook more than anything that has happened since; and wholly for good."[1004] And some of the settings may have been chosen by others; Dodgson's skills as a photographer helped him to meet many noteworthy people for whom he took pictures.[1005]

It sounds as if Dodgson considered nude children innocent, nude adults less so — a sentiment typical of his time. To oversimplify, the Victorians thought of sex as corrupting, and of pre-pubescent children as innocent of this taint — "freshly arrived from the presence of God, uncontaminated and asexual";[1006] — in the art of the period they are often portrayed as angels. This certainly wasn't just an oddity of Dodgson's. The author, for instance, owns a reproduction of the 1846 illustrated edition of Thomas Moore, *Moore's Irish Melodies,* drawn by Daniel Maclise. This features at least 29 drawings of nude children, of both sexes, sometimes with angel wings but

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997 CohenMorgan, p. 47.

998 There are black-and-white versions on pp. 166-167 of Cohen, and color copies in Stoffel: p. 40 (of Beatrice Hatch), p. 46 (Evelyn Hatch), p. 47 (Evelyn Hatch), p. 114 (Annie and Frances Henderson)

999 Brooker, p. 36.

1000 Cohen, p. 165.

1001 Hatch, p. 186.

1002 Woolf, p. 145.

1003 Woolf, p. 256.

1004 CohenMorgan, p. 94.

1005 Cohen, pp. 161-162, lists some of the distinguished people of whom he captured images

1006 Stoffel, p. 46.

sometimes not, some in mixed-gender groups; one is of two of them kissing; another appears to show a young boy undressing a girl!

Such illustrations were actually included in one of Carroll's own books, *Three Sunsets and Other Poems,* published in 1898 with illustrations by Gertrude Thomson. This contains twelve illustrations, all largely irrelevant to the text, *every one of which portrays at least one naked child.* And Dodgson knew what he was getting with Thomson; he had contacted her decades earlier, when she was in her twenties,[1007] and identified her on first meeting her by declaring her a "young lady who liked fairies."[1008] Thomson had also drawn the cover for *The Nursery Alice* of 1889.[1009]

Those who maintain the view that Dodgson was a pedophile seem to completely ignore the Victorian attitudes toward children, sex, and nudity; while it is possible that Dodgson lusted after underage girls, the evidence is not enough to prove it. We observe that, after his death, Dodgson's family went out of their way to emphasize his relationships with children.[1010] He seems, if anything, to have been more *worried* about the thoughts raised by dealing with adults. In dealing with adult women, Dodgson was often so prim as to be somewhat intimidating to those around him — e.g. he would try to avert his eyes even while helping her over a stile.[1011]

What's more, we have plenty of records of Dodgson spending time with older women. His diaries show "a man who displayed absolutely no discernable inclination to drop his female friends when they reached adolescence, who, on the contrary, enjoyed many close friendships with teenage girls and adult women, some of whom had husbands."[1012] Dodgson's brother claimed that he had about fifty young women whom he adopted as unofficial "nieces" so that he could maintain contact with them as they grew up to become women.[1013] For instance, Alice Raikes, who helped inspire the looking glass theme of the second Alice book, stayed in touch with him for decades, even after she married.[1014] An even more dramatic case is that of Gertrude Chataway, which we will get to below.

Indeed, we have records of what would now surely be called dating, and with a grown woman. The woman involved was Gertrude Thomson, Dodgson's aforementioned illustrator, with whom he shared a friendship that started after she was an adult[1015] and lasted until he died — she left

[1007] CollingwoodLife, p. 87 [chapter V].
[1008] CollingwoodLife, p. 89 [chapter V].
[1009] ClarkCarroll, p. 231
[1010] Woolf, p. 140. She notes that Dodgson's family destroyed, or at least was incredibly careless with, many of his papers (including e.g. parts of his diary, his catalog of correspondence, and his catalog of photographs), but did nothing to suppress records of his contacts with children.
[1011] Woolf, p. 201.
[1012] Leach, p. 117.
[1013] Woolf, p. 104.
[1014] ClarkCarroll, p. 175.
[1015] Woolf, pp. 97-100; Stoffel, p. 112.

an account of his funeral.[1016] If he had been anyone other than Lewis Carroll, we would certainly have said that he dated Thomson — he once wrote to her, "Are you sufficiently unconventional (I *think* you are) to defy Mrs Grundy and come down to spend the day with me in Oxford?"[1017] She was at least once addressed as "Mrs. Dodgson."[1018] She also served as a chaperone for some of his nude photo sessions.[1019]

Dodgson's friendships with girls are typically treated as some sort of abnormality, perhaps a sign of pedophilia — but might be additional evidence of autism. Intelligent autistics often learn how to imitate normal people[1020] — something Attwood calls "wearing a mask." One of Dodgson's biographers feels that his letters "nearly all reflect a public face."[1021] But Attwood adds that such a mask can be exhausting. Working with children simplifies matters significantly. First, the mask can be tailored specifically to children, not to everyone. And, second, while children can be cruel, particularly to those not part of their "in group," they are less likely to condemn someone for being "odd." Willey, who spent some time as an elementary school teacher, observes that she did just fine with the children but eventually gave up the job because of the pressures of dealing with parents and adult co-workers.[1022] Dubin implies that Asperger's sufferers often feel more comfortable with members of generations other than their own.[1023]

It is curious to note that Karoline Leach, who goes to immense lengths to try to set aside one extreme psychological view of Dodgson, feels compelled to come up with another, in which the Liddells become his surrogate family, because his life was profoundly affected by his inability to make peace with his father[1024] and he becomes "A Prisoner in His Cell." This even though almost everything she obsesses about is typical of autism.

Leach gives a striking description of what she thinks Dodgson meant by his "child-friends" — the term that has caused so much psychological analysis: "For Dodgson, a 'child-friend' was a female of almost any age — at least under forty — with whom he enjoyed a special kind of closeness. Some, indeed, were little girls, some began as such but grew up and were still 'child-friends' at twenty or thirty; some were given the name even though their relationship with Dodgson began when they were young women."[1025]

[1016] ClarkCarroll, pp. 271-272.
[1017] ClarkCarroll, p. 206.
[1018] Leach, p. 294.
[1019] ClarkCarroll, p. 207.
[1020] Attwood, pp. 27-28.
[1021] Woolf, p. 5.
[1022] Willey, pp. 68-69. I can testify to this myself. It was the author's experience that learning to deal with children required practice, but was easier than learning to deal with adults, and once the required skills were in place, children were far more accepting than adults. I once had a Sunday School class wished upon me. I managed, with difficulty, to learn how to deal with the kids. I think they even came to like me. Whereupon the parents got upset....
[1023] Dubin, p. 210.
[1024] Leach, p. 274
[1025] Leach, p. 14.

Evelyn Hatch notes that, as he grew older, he often sought out older children.[1026]

Rather than lusting after them, it has been suggested that Dodgson liked little girls because he felt sexually safe with them.[1027] This is sometimes connected with his dislike of boys — but this dislike is probably exaggerated, being based on a joke Dodgson once made, and exaggerated into a mania by his nephew, who declared that he had for boys "an aversion almost amounting to a terror."[1028] Hudson has a large collection of wisecracks about boys, but most appear to be jokes rather than genuine opinions.[1029] "His few little comments on 'liking children — except boys' seem obviously to be jokes taken out of context by posterity."[1030] "Essentially, Carroll gor on with individual boys with whom he had something on common."[1031] Dodgson had a boy as a godson, and even helped care for the young man as he lay dying.[1032] Fernando Soro in suggested that his last great book, *The Hunting of the Snark,* was made up for this boy, Charlie Wilcox.[1033]

Recall that Dodgson met the Liddell children not through one of the daughters but through the oldest son, Harry, who is mentioned more in his extant diaries than is Alice,[1034] and who reportedly idolized Dodgson.[1035] (Curiously, although Dodgson's photos of Alice Liddell are all over the net, it is almost impossible to find his photos of Harry.) We might add that seven of Dodgson's ten siblings were girls,[1036] so he had more experience with them than with boys. (In light of Dodgson's general public success, all those siblings might be significant; Tammet comments that having siblings forced him to develop social skills.[1037])

My guess is that Dodgson did indeed feel safest with young girls — but it was *emotional* safety. They could not bully him, they would not question his motives, they would not reject him for being odd. "The better one gets to know Carroll, the clearer one sees that his association with young females, while indeed romantic, achieved a quality that, far from being base, was wholly uplifting."[1038] "Every scrap of evidence points to the idea that his little girls offered Carroll elements of the idealized romantic relationships he craved, *but without the actual sex*"[1039] — romantic relationships not in the modern sense of pursuing marriage but in the classic

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[1026] Hatch, p. 5.
[1027] Gardner, p. xix [13], xxvii
[1028] CollingwoodLife, p. 48 (chapter III).
[1029] Hudson, p. 260.
[1030] Leach, p. 14.
[1031] Woolf, p. 132.
[1032] Woolf, p. 79.
[1033] Woolf, p. 80; Cohen, p. 405; cf. Gardner-Snark, xxiv, although in the earlier edition, p. 3 n. 2, Gardner said only that it was composed as Wilcox was dying. Based on the chronology in ClarkCarroll, p. 198, I suspect that Wilcox inspired a few fits, but that most of the *Snark* was inspired by Gertrude Chataway.
[1034] Woolf, p. 154.
[1035] ClarkCarroll, p. 92; Winchester, p. 79.
[1036] Stoffel, p. 14
[1037] Tammet, p. 54.
[1038] CohenMorgan, p. 18.
[1039] Woolf, p. 123.

medieval sense of *seeking to do the right thing for the other party;* perhaps it wold be clearer, today, to call them "chivalrous" relationships. If the hypothesis is correct that autism affects that sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system,[1040] then being with children would spare him the hypervigilance he would experience with other people. Besides, many male autistics are more comfortable with women: they "may have a highly developed feminine side and so will often appear to get on better with women than men.... He may find women are more tolerant of his lack of confidence and conversational topics, and he would have learned quickly that he is more likely to be accepted by females than males."[1041]

And Dodgon's faith was very strict. In religion, he was so strict that he demanded that his illustrators not draw their works on Sundays.[1042] In his days, Christ Church undergraduates were made to sign a pledge of adherence to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church,[1043] and there is no hint that this troubled Dodgson. He did avoid being ordained to the ministry (something that required him to get a sort of a waiver to some Christ Church requirements from Dean Liddell[1044]), and was slow to be ordained a deacon[1045] — but it should be remembered that even the diaconate is a significant office in the Anglican church; he not only preached on occasion but was involved with communion, a baptism, and a funeral.[1046] The overwhelming evidence is that he held strictly to the rules of the church.

Ironically, Dodgson's father expressed beliefs that were viewed by some as heretical[1047]— but it is more a token of the diversity of ideas floating around at this time than a genuine sign of heresy.

It is true that Dodgson himself was "broad church,"[1048] that is, relatively liberal in theological matters; he did not, for instance, believe in eternal punishment,[1049] and he showed some receptiveness to Darwinism.[1050] But he was devoted to the truth of the Bible and the existence of a personal God, and when Christ Church was engulfed in arguments over Benjamin Jowett's role there, he insisted that Jowett re-subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles.[1051] He seems to have

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1040 see the discussion of the hyperactive sympathetic nervous systems on page 147.
1041 Aston, p. 64.
1042 Woollcott, p. 5.
1043 ClarkCarroll, p. 64; Cohen, p. 367
1044 Cohen, pp. 205, 365
1045 Stoffel, pp. 56-57.
1046 Cohen, pp. 276.
1047 Cohen, pp. 346-347; ClarkCarroll, p. 73.
1048 Cohen, p. 348.
1049 Cohen, p. 362.
1050 Cohen, pp. 350-352.
1051 Cohen, p. 356.

some tendency toward spiritualism.[1052] Politically, he was very much a conservative, as his sarcasm about Gladstone shows;[1053] his diary also contains many harsh references to Irish attempts to gain Home Rule.[1054] He probably opposed giving women places at the Universities, although the evidence here is uncertain.

"[T]here is no evidence whatsoever that he made any sexual advances toward [his child-friends]. Not only would such behavior be contrary to everything we know about Dodgson — and indeed profoundly shocking to him — but the many tributes his child-friends paid him later in life indicate perfect propriety in their relations."[1055] Similarly, "there is not the slightest shred of evidence that he did anything out of line with pre-pubescent girls, and no indication that he had sexual feelings toward them. Taken as a whole, the documents suggest that he found late-teenage girls and grown women attractive, but that he struggled to suppress a sexual interest in them by concentrating on what he considered to be 'pure,' that is, non-carnal aspects of femininity."[1056]

Clearly, whatever Dodgson thought in his heart, this conservative Anglican deacon clearly never acted on any impulses he might have had toward his young friends. He even contributed, privately, to a group which sought out child abusers,[1057] and very publicly demanded tighter controls on child prostitution.[1058] He also worked at supply them with moral educations,[1059] sometimes to the point of obnoxiousness. One of his biographers concluded that he set himself certain moral limits and, within them, did what he liked:[1060] many writers record his scornful remarks about "Mrs Grundy," the snoop and guardian of public morals;[1061] he claimed to have defied her more than anyone else at Christ Church.[1062]

[1052] This is based on the reconstruction of his library at LibraryThing. Among his books were Reynold's *The supernatural in nature, a verification by free use of Science;* Home's *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism;* many volumes of the *Psychical Research Journal;* Lee's *The Other World;* Sinnett's *The Occult World;* Bushnell's *Nature and the supernatural*, and quite a few others. Woolf, p. 203, observes that Collingwood said he was deeply interested in the occult. He seems to have had a mixed take on Darwinism; his library included Mivart's *On the genesis of species,* Bree's *An exposition of the fallacies in the hypothesis of Mr. Darwin,* Brunton's *The Bible and Science,* Temple's *The Relation between Religion and Science,* Matheson's *Can the Old Faith Live with the New?: or The Problem of Evolution and Revelation,* and Birks's *Modern physical fatalism and the doctrine of evolution.* He also had several books by the incredibly reactionary John William Burgon, and while he seems to have had a number of Greek Bibles, it appears he stuck with the old *Textus Receptus* that underlay the King James Bible rather than using a more modern edition.

[1053] Cohen, p. 251.

[1054] Cohen, pp. 484-485.

[1055] Stoffel, pp. 47-48

[1056] Woolf, p. 139.

[1057] Woolf, p. 140.

[1058] Cohen, pp. 431-432.

[1059] Example of one of his lessons is in CollingwoodPictures, pp. 340-344.

[1060] Woolf, p. 103

[1061] Woolf, p. 97; ClarkCarroll, pp. 206.

[1062] ClarkCarroll, p. 256.

A biographer suggests that the reason the myth arose that he attended only to little girls is that the girls, who stayed in contact with him as they grew up, wanted to make their relationships with him seem more innocent — at least by Victorian standards — and so portrayed themselves as younger than they were.[1063]

The charge of pedophilia is not the only recent accusation against Dodgson. The other tendency in recent times is to see Wonderland as some sort of dark horror vision. This view probably originated with Anthony M. E. Goldschmidt's "Alice in Wonderland Psycho-Analyzed."[1064] "In 1933 [Goldschmidt] was an undergraduate at Balliol.... It was in that year that he turned his attention to the Lewis Carroll of Collingwood, Reed, and legend. He studied the man presented there, with his endless succession of 'little girls'... and concluded that he was looking not at a saint or an ethereal being... but at a repressed paedophile.... Goldschmidt published his views in a four-page article in the *New Oxford Outlook*...."[1065] This is "now suspected to be fraud rather than Freudian"[1066] — and, indeed, we know of another hoax perpetrated by Goldschmidt.[1067] But it was taken seriously by Paul Schilder, who in 1938 convinced an editor to publish "Psychoanalytic remarks on 'Alice in Wonderland' and Lewis Carroll," — a paper which claimed to find "preponderant oral sadistic trends of cannibalistic character,"[1068] a claim which has now spawned a whole horror side show.

On the other hand, Gillian Avery argues that Dodgson "was completely unconscious of the nihilistic character of Wonderland. This can be seen from the way he reduced it in '*The Nursery Alice*' to a bland mush."[1069] To be sure, *The Nursery Alice* was published much later, when Dodgson's sentimentality was much worse.

That there are many death jokes in *Alice* books is certain — consider Alice's conversation with Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass:*

"I never ask advice about growing," Alice said indignantly.

"Too proud?" the other enquired.

Alice felt even more indignant at the suggestion. "I mean," she said, "that one can't help growing older.

"*One* can't, perhaps," said Humpty Dumpty, "but *two* can...."[1070]

Even the hagiographic Gardner admits that there are "whimsically violent visions" in the books;[1071] he observes that the first of many death jokes comes very early in the first chapter.[1072]

1063 Woolf, p. 106. See, for instance, the case of Isa Bowman described in note 736.

1064 So Woolf, p. 142, and Brooker, pp. 79-80.

1065 Leach, p. 79.

1066 Brooker, pp. 79-80

1067 Leach, p. 80.

1068 Woolf, p. 145.

1069 Zipes, p. 88.

1070 Gardner, p. 211 [266].

1071 Gardner, p. xx [14].

1072 Gardner, p. 13 [27 n. 3].

But he also points out that Victorian children "were delighted to have at last some books without a pious moral."

Frankly, my suspicion is that the death jokes do not arise because Dodgson is telling a horror story; they arise because Dodgson *is deeply depressed* — especially when writing *Looking Glass*. I cannot recall the source, but I seem to recall reading somewhere that half of high-functioning autistics experienced suicidal thoughts, often including suicidal ideation — that is, considering actual methods. *Of course* someone thinking about suicide is going to talk about death — and several of Dodgson's poems from the 1860s are thought to have suicidal elements.[1073] One wonders what Dodgson might have done had he not been such a staunch Anglican....

The distinction between the whimsical and religious Dodgsons is significant; one of the reasons he resigned his teaching position was to try to promote "the cause of religious thought."[1074] This idea was already affecting him when he published *The Hunting of the Snark,* as he insisted on including an irrelevant "Easter greeting" pamphlet in the first edition.[1075] But when Dodgson did finally produce a volume full of moral lessons, the result was *Sylvie and Bruno,* which is almost mind-numbingly tedious. It has been urged that *Looking Glass* is darker in tone than *Wonderland* because it was written when Dodgson was dealing with the death of his father.[1076] On the other hand, while most sources say that Dodgson was close to his father, there is strong evidence of disagreements between father and son,[1077] and some think the elder Dodgson repressed all his children.[1078] It *is* intriguing to note that Dodgson returned to the Alice theme at the time of his father's death. Apparently Dodgson had told stories to the Liddells about chess,[1079] but that was most of a decade earlier.

The strongest evidence *against* the idea that the Alice books are a horror story, however, is the simplest: The fact that children are so fond of the tales. Those who wish to offer a horror vision need to recall how the story originated: as a tale told on the Thames for three young girls, then reworked as *Alice's Adventures under Ground.* The work, as revised by Dodgson and illustrated by John Tenniel, became *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* The book and the manuscript certainly do not agree at all points, but the book is obviously an amplification of the original story. As a random statistic, the first paragraphs of *Wonderland* and *Under Ground* are identical except for one word: the manuscript reads *"where* is the use of a book"; the published version reads *"what* is the use of a book." The endings are almost the same too: "and how she [Alice] would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in their simple joys, remembering her own child life, and the happy summer days." The only difference here is that Dodgson hyphenated "summer-days" in the manuscript. We should perhaps note that Dodgson, in that final passage, did not make any

[1073] Woolf, p. 116.
[1074] CollingwoodLife, p. 105 [chapter V].
[1075] Gardner-Snark, p. xxx [pp. 4-5
[1076] Woolf, p. 294; cf. CollingwoodLife, p. 59 [chapter IV].
[1077] Cohen, pp. 329-342.
[1078] Leach, pp. 171-172. See, however, the hints of common genetic problems discussed in notes 796 through 808, which could also explain the children's problems.
[1079] Gardner, p. 141 n. 5 [p. 180 n. 4].

hint that Alice would be his wife — but *did* hint that she would carry on his work with children. Alice was not, on this evidence, his love-interest but his heir.

Dodgson clearly was not trying to write some sort of horror tale. Indeed, we note that, while Alice displays a wide variety of feelings in the stories, fear plays no particular part.

"That's what the name is called. The name really is....": Which Alice?

But who is the Alice who stars in the book? She is not exactly the girl whom Dodgson took boating — for starters, Alice Pleasance Liddell was ten years old in 1862, and Alice is probably seven in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and definitely seven and a half in *Through the Looking Glass:* In *Wonderland,* Alice declares in the chapter "A Mad Tea Party" that the date is the fourth of May[1080]— Alice's birthday. *Looking Glass,* in the chapter "Humpty Dumpty," reveals that she is seven years and six months.[1081] Thus the events in *Wonderland* probably took place on May 4, 1859, the day Alice Liddell turned seven, and *Looking Glass* took place exactly six months later.[1082] There is some minor supporting evidence for the idea that the year is 1859.[1083]

An even more noteworthy difference between the Alices is the fact that the girl Dodgson drew in *Alice's Adventures under Ground* does not resemble Alice Liddell. A difference in faces might be the result of Dodgson's limitations as an artist (the only drawing Dodgson is ever known to have made of the "real" Alice shows a girl with short dark hair, but one who looks very little like Alice's photographs — so little like her, in fact, that Dodgson pasted a photograph over the drawing; the drawing was not noticed until 1977[1084]), but we note that the Alice of the manuscript had long hair — Alice Liddell at this age, as seen in Dodgson's own photographs of her, had short hair and bangs. (It has been suggested that Alice's sister Edith was the model Dodgson used,[1085] but there is no evidence for this.)

Dodgson at one time denied that Alice Liddell was the model for "Alice,"[1086] and after asking, "What wert thou, dream-Alice, in thy foster-father's eyes?" (note the archaizing language) — he went on to describe a sickeningly saccharine character, "loving, loving and gentle: loving as a dog."[1087] But this creature clearly is not the Alice of the books, who was a "spontaneous little loudmouth";[1088] it is instead a description of Dodgson's nauseating later creation, Sylvie (who, to be sure, was evolving in his mind at the time he wrote the above quote).

Dodgson's denial was issued decades after the event, in "Alice on the Stage" — by which time he was starting to dislike the Alice books as not being upright and moral enough and may have been trying to recast them. To be sure, it has been claimed that Sylvie is a "fictional incarnation" of Alice[1089] — but there really isn't any similarity in personality, even though there is a fascinating

[1080] Gardner, p. 71 [96]
[1081] Gardner, p. 210 [265].
[1082] Gardner, p. 73 n. 6 [p. 86 n. 4]
[1083] Gardner, p. 138 n. 1 [p. 178 n. 1.
[1084] Gardner, p. 127, displays the drawing. Nina Auerbach claims that Alice's hair color changes in *under Ground* (Norton, p. 337), but the drawings in that book are in black-and-white; I don't think we can draw any conclusions based on Dodgson's art.
[1085] ClarkAlice, p. 91.
[1086] Woolf, p. 175
[1087] Norton, pp. 281-282
[1088] Leach, p. 31.
[1089] Cohen, p. 453

quote in *Sylvie and Bruno* in which Arthur, who is thought to represent Dodgson himself, declares that a person should have only one love — and then refers to Lady Muriel, the alter ego of Sylvie, as his "first… and *only* love."[1090] If this is truly autobiographical, then it really does sound as if Sylvie is Alice. If so, though, Dodgson really had completely transformed her in his mind.

Some commentators have therefore tried to distinguish Alice-as-character from Alice-as-friend-or-muse-or-whatever. It is noteworthy that Dodgson's nephew Stuart Dodgson CollingwoodLife never mentions Alice Liddell in his discussion of *Through the Looking Glass.*

But the separation between Alices is a very difficult distinction to sustain. Apart from the various inside jokes about the Liddell family in the books, some of which are mentioned above, there are some quite explicit references to Alice Liddell inspiring the tales, both in the books and from those who knew them. In *Through the Looking Glass,* when she visits the wood where things have no names, Alice is sure that her name starts with "L"[1091] — as in "Liddell." Evelyn M. Hatch, who knew Dodgson, declared unequivocally that Alice was "the original of his 'dream-child.'"[1092] In a diary entry for 1885, when he was publishing the facsimile of *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* he refers to it as "a facsimile of the MS. book, lent me by 'Alice' (Mrs. Hargreaves)."[1093] When Dodgson published *Rhyme? And Reason?* (a book of poetry containing *The Hunting of the Snark* and other items) in 1883, he prefaced it with the *Snark's* dedicatory poem to Gertrude Chataway — but he sent a copy to Alice Hargreaves "recalling the long dreamy summer afternoons of ancient times."[1094] It was neither his first nor his last gift to the adult Alice — and very many of them were on "Wonderland" themes. Dodgson, in a letter to Alice composed in 1891, wrote (italics added) *"your* adventures have had a marvelous success."[1095] Even Alice herself admitted it a few times — in 1932, she autographed a copy of *Alice in Wonderland* to the future Elizabeth II with the words "From the Original Alice."[1096] Alice-the-character and Alice-the-person are fundamentally linked. The strongest proof of all is found in the final poem of *Through the Looking Glass,* which describes the fateful boating trip of 1862:

A boat, beneath a sunny sky,
Lingering onward dreamily,
In an evening of July —

[1090] Cohen, p. 454

[1091] LewisCarrollSociety, page education > resources > item Hidden Links to Alice Liddell in the Alice Books. The text itself is in Gardner, p. 177, although he suggests two alternate meanings: that "L" refers to Lily, the pawn Alice replaces, or that the name of the letter "L" *sounds like* "Alice."

[1092] Hatch, p. 2.

[1093] WilsonR, p. 141.

[1094] CollingwoodLife, pp. 107-108 [chapter VI]

[1095] Cohen, p. 491

[1096] ClarkAlice, p. 242.

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear....

The key verse is the fourth:

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies,
Never seen by waking eyes.[1097]

Clearly "Alice," the character in the book, mattered deeply to Dodgson. But that poem is an acrostic. And the name it spells out is — Alice Pleasance Liddell.

In addition, the poem which opens *Through the Looking Glass,* "Child of the Pure Unclouded Brow," ends with the line "The pleasance of our fairy-tale."[1098] So *both* poems in *Looking Glass* contain allusions to Alice Pleasance Liddell — and the reference to Alice (or at least to "Pleasance") in "Child" was added at the last moment, as Dodgson was correcting the galleys.[1099]

There are other, more subtle, references to Alice Liddel in "Child...." The third and fourth lines read "Though time be fleet, and I and thou Are half a life asunder." In 1871, when *Looking Glass* was published, Alice was nineteen, Dodgson was thirty-nine — in other words, she was almost exactly half his age. More: The breakup had come eight years before — not far from half of 19. Dodgson then says, "I have not seen thy sunny face, Nor heard thy silver laughter: no thought of me shall find a place In thy young life's hereafter." No estrangement, huh?

The Alice-specific poems in *Looking Glass* contrast to the opening poem in *Wonderland,* "All in the Golden Afternoon."[1100] This refers to the "cruel Three," i.e. Lorina, Alice, and Edith — and yet, even here, "Secunda" (Alice) uses "gentler tones" than her sisters, and she is the only one of the three mentioned by name — with a wish that she will take the tale "In Memory's mystic band."

The Lory (Lorina) and the Eaglet (Edith) appear along with the Dodo (Dodgson) and the Duck (Duckworth) in the Pool of Tears and the Caucus-Race chapters of *Wonderland,*[1101] as well as in the Dormouse's tale (as Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie).[1102] The two younger sisters, Rhoda and Violet, eventually appear as the Rose and Violet in *Looking Glass*[1103] — but only in bit parts, and there is

[1097] For the full poem, see e.g., Gardner, p. 273 [345]. It is interesting to note that Gardner sees no need to annotate the poem, except to offer the general remarks that it recalls the boating trip of 1862 and is an acrostic. He concludes "It is the song of the White Knight, remembering Alice as she was before she turned away, with tearless and eager eyes...." The White Knight is accepted to be Dodgson himself (Gardner, pp. 235-236 n. 2); the piece, although melancholy (Woolf, p. 175, calls it "slightly chilling"), is certainly the best of the poems bracketing the *Alice* books.
[1098] Gardner, p. 136 [174].
[1099] Gardner, p. 136 n. 8 [174]
[1100] Gardner, pp. 7-8 [21-23].
[1101] Gardner, pp. 27-29 [44-45].
[1102] Gardner, p. 75 n. 11 [100 n. 9]
[1103] Gardner, p. 159 n. 4 [203 n. 2]

little sign of Lorina or Edith. It is as if, in *Looking Glass,* Dodgson is concentrating entirely on Alice herself.

It is curious that Harry Liddell seems to make no appearance in the *Alice* books, but the cat Dinah of *Through the Looking Glass* did indeed belong to the Liddells; their two cats were Villikens and Dinah[1104] — names derived from the popular mock-tragic song "Vilikens and His Dinah," which is of uncertain authorship but was certainly in existence by 1853 (and which derives from an earlier "straight" tragic ballad "William and Dinah"); in the song, Dinah is promised to someone other than her beloved Vilikens, and takes poison; when Vilikens finds her, he too commits suicide. The tune was extraordinarily popular, but still, it was an interesting source for cat names....

Dodgson produced other early poems for the Liddell sisters collectively, or for the whole family — e.g. he wrote an acrostic for Christmas 1861 which begins "Little maidens, when you look." The first letter are an acrostic for LorinaAliceEdith, the three sisters who would be on the boat in 1862. This first appears as an inscription in a book he gave the three.[1105]

This makes it fascinating that most of the direct poetic references to Alice are in *Through the Looking Glass,* even though that book was published in 1871, by which time Alice Liddell was a young woman, about to turn nineteen, and largely out of Dodgson's life. The evidence is strong that he, at least, still wanted some sort of connection between them.

[1104] Norton, p. 273, based on one of Alice's own recollections from 1932
[1105] Cohen, p. 80

"He had softly and suddenly vanished away": So What Happened?

It is in the period between the voyage on the Thames and the writing of *Looking Glass* that the mystery begins. What exactly happened to Dodgson and the Liddells? This has been the subject of so much speculation that it is called the "Liddell Riddle."[1106]

It is often stated that we have only two clear facts. One is the undeniable although partial estrangement, beginning in 1863, between Dodgson and the Liddell family. "Something occurred during those three days [June 27–29, 1863] that caused a break in the relationship, something that exiled Charles and cut him off from the children. No more visits follow, no outings, no photography, no croquet games, no more walks together. And for more than five months afterward, not a single mention of a Liddell appears in Charles's diary."[1107]

The separation was so complete that, after Dean Liddell died and his family arranged for a biography to be written,[1108] it did not even mention Dodgson.[1109] This was apparently at the instigation of Mrs. Liddell.[1110] To be sure, the book contains few references even to Liddell's own children — the index does not mention Alice either under Liddell[1111] or Hargreaves,[1112] and I do not recall seeing her name in reading the book; references to the other children are also few — e.g. Edith is mentioned only when she died young,[1113] and Lorina only after she married;[1114] the book is mostly about Dean Liddell's scholarly and educational achievements.

Even more interesting, although not known until many years later, is the fact that the page of Dodgson's diary which would seem most likely to explain the estrangement is missing.

There are a few other odd reports which might bear on the matter. There was a rumor that Dodgson had proposed to Alice; no less a man than Lord Salisbury, the future Prime Minister, knew this rumor,[1115] and said that it was reported that being rejected had left Dodgson half-deranged. And Salisbury — who for a time was Chancellor of the University of Oxford[1116] — knew Dodgson personally; they even hoped to spent a weekend together in 1870,[1117] and "the Earl" of *Sylvie and Bruno* may have been modelled on Salisbury. And, after telling his story, Salisbury declared, "It looks like it." That is, it seemed as if Dodgson had become deranged. Nor

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1106 LennyAlice, section "The Liddell-Riddle."
1107 Cohen, p. 100.
1108 Thompson's; see the Bibliography.
1109 Woolf, p. 178.
1110 Cohen, p. 513.
1111 Thompson, p. 284.
1112 Thompson, p. 283.
1113 Thompson, pp. 257-258.
1114 Thompson, p. 259, 263; both places refer to her as "Mrs. Skene."
1115 Cohen, p. 101; WilsonAN, p. 324.
1116 Cohen, p. 274.
1117 ClarkCarroll, p. 166

was Salisbury fond of gossip. But the context needs to be understood. The note is from 1878[1118] — *fifteen years after the estrangement.* When exactly did Alice turn Dodgson down? 1863? 1878? And when did he become deranged? If 1863, then surely he would be over it by 1878! Salisbury was writing his note as an apology to Lady John Manners, whom Dodgson had somehow brushed off (could he have fled the scene, as he did elsewhere?[1119]). The note reads as if Salisbury was trying to justify Dodgson's behavior. It is a strange excuse — but it seems to prove that the rumor was common. Which doesn't mean that it was accurate.

Some have noted the fact that Alice did not marry until she was twenty-eight[1120] — a spinster by Victorian standards. Few of the Liddell girls married early, however; Lorina was in her twenty-fourth year when she married William Baillie Skene[1121] — an event which Dodgson mentioned only briefly in his diary.[1122] Rhoda and Violet never married at all. Edith became engaged at twenty-two to Aubrey Harcourt, but died before they were married — a sad event which even induced Dodgson and Mrs. Liddell to talk to each other and exchange photos of the dead girl.[1123] There is a window at Christ Church dedicated to her; it reads "Ave dulcissima, delictissima Ave" ("Hail, our sweetest, our dearest, hail").[1124]

The estrangement between Dodgson and the Liddells was complicated and not really complete — after all, Dean Liddell would remain his boss for many more years, and supposedly Dodgson considered it "a blow" when he retired.[1125] Dodgson wrote a letter to Mrs. Liddell saying that the Dean's retirement was a "*great* loss" to Christ Church.[1126] Yet Dodgson did not sign Liddell's farewell book.[1127] Dodgson, the conservative, was often the opponent of the reforming Liddell on issues of campus politics and governance;[1128] most of the more recent biographers think Dodgson was glad to see him go.[1129] It seems reasonable to assume that Dodgson was trying to avoid being in the company of either Dean Liddell or his wife, even while recalling happier times in the past. But it is by no means clear *why* he was trying to avoid their company.

The real problem in solving the "riddle" is the lack of evidence. What we know is that, in late June 1863, Dodgson and the Liddell family went on an expedition, and Dodgson and several Liddell daughters took the train home. Then comes a gap in the relationship — Dodgson's surviving diary pages do not mention the girls again until December, when he encountered them

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[1118] Leach, pp. 134-135, who quotes it in its entirety.

[1119] see the note above about deserting a party on page 19.

[1120] LennyAlice, section "Love and marriage"; Underground, p. 25.

[1121] ClarkCarroll, p. 188.

[1122] Cohen, p. 219.

[1123] ClarkCarroll, pp. 189-190.

[1124] Gordon, p. 125; ClarkAlice, pp. 164-165.

[1125] CollingwoodLife, p. 142 [Chapter VII].

[1126] Quoted in full on Leach, p. 267.

[1127] ClarkAlice, p. 209.

[1128] Jones/Gladstone, pp. 32-33

[1129] So, e,g, Hudson; Leach, p. 268, goes so far as to charge Dodgson with hypocrisy in writing his letter; she is responsible for the suggestion that Dodgson was trying to avoid the Liddells' company.

by accident and reported that he "held aloof from them as I have done all this term."[1130] "There is no mistaking Dodgson's note of anguish" in the December diary entry.[1131]

The next year, Dodgson apparently made an attempt to resume the old excursions; it was rebuffed.[1132] They met occasionally, and Dodgson took his last photograph of Alice when she was eighteen, but not even the publication of the book she inspired could restart the friendship.

Dodgson seems to have done what he could. The first run of *Through the Looking Glass* amounted to fifteen thousand copies[1133] (this compares to the thousand of the first edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland).* Of these, a hundred were author's copies — three bound in morocco leather, the rest cloth-bound. The first three authors' copies went to "the Deanery," i.e. Alice, Lorina, and Edith Liddell[1134] — with Alice and only Alice getting a leather copy. Indeed, Dodgson tried to arrange a special copy for Alice with a mirror in the cover — which would have made it the only one of its kind — but this proved impractical.[1135] The other morocco copies went to Tennyson and to Ellen Terry's family. Dodgson's diary does not record any reaction by the Liddells to the receipt of their copies.[1136]

Even Dodgson's last photograph of Alice has inspired controversy. She is looking straight at the camera, but she is not smiling. Nor is she in one of Dodgson's costumes; the photo shows a very pretty woman with elaborate hair wearing a typical Victorian dress and a slightly bored, or pensive, look. Or perhaps she is sad.[1137] Some have argued that she looks unhappy with Dodgson. Even if true, those who argue this do not seem to have looked at other photos of Alice taken two years later. The photo "Alethea" ("truth"), taken by Julia Margaret Cameron in 1872,[1138] show a young woman with long hair and looser clothing than in Dodgson's photo — but she looks like she has just eaten four lemons in a row; her expression is far more sour than with Dodgson. To make a woman as stunning as Alice Liddell look ugly took effort, but Cameron — despite being famed for her fantasy photos — managed it; although creative, it is generally agreed that Cameron was not a good photographic technician.[1139]

Perhaps Alice simply was tired of the tedious process of being photographed by then — to take a photograph, at this time, meant holding the lens open for most of a minute, and it took many minutes to create the wet plate required for the picture. It is thought that Mrs. Liddell had the children photographed to help their social status,[1140] so they may have been pushed into the

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1130 Stoffel, p. 81.
1131 ClarkCarroll, p. 143.
1132 Stoffel, p. 83.
1133 ClarkCarroll, p. 168.
1134 Norton, p. 292.
1135 Hudson, pp. 202-203.
1136 ClarkCarroll, p. 169.
1137 Winchester, p. 76
1138 WilsonAN, pp. 323-324
1139 Ellis, p. 261.
1140 Stoffel, p. 38. Cohen, p. 62.

photo sessions when young and been reluctant be bothered when older. On the other hand, Alice would later say that Dodgson, with his games and puzzles, made the sessions enjoyable.[1141] Perhaps it was just that, by the time she turned eighteen, the long sorrow of Alice's life[1142] was starting to affect her.

It seems clear that the 1863 separation was not the children's idea; the next time Dodgson was allowed to meet them after the June event, it was apparently at the urgent request of Alice and Edith Liddell; Mrs. Liddell consented to the reunion but did not deign to meet him, and Lorina was said to be ill.[1143]

Dodgson and Alice occasionally corresponded into the 1880s and beyond, but the letters were so formal that Dodgson referred to her as "Mrs Hargreaves." A letter from the early 1890s seems typical; Dodgson admits to remembering her as seven years old but still sounds pretty desperate to have her over for tea, with her husband or anyone else.[1144] This even though he wrote to her years after her marriage to call her his "ideal child-friend" and say, "I have had scores of child friends since your time, but they have been quite a different thing."[1145] (Dodgson was asking to be allowed to publish a facsimile of the original manuscript of *Alice's Adventures under Ground*. There is disagreement about just how Alice responded; while some say that she gave permission "gladly,"[1146] others note that she consulted with her father before giving consent.[1147]) We might also mention that CollingwoodLife, in his acknowledgements[1148] thanks "Mrs Hargreaves" — but without noting who she is or even observing that her first name is Alice!

The Liddells apparently destroyed Dodgson's early letters to their daughter.[1149] Alice admitted, much later, that she did not recall their contents,[1150] although Caryl Hargreaves thought there were hundreds of them.[1151] Few or many, it is noteworthy that Dodgson was writing extensively to a pre-teen. Reportedly he gave her a present as early as her fifth birthday.[1152] Alice herself said that she was his "little bright-eyed favourite."[1153] One wonders what other items about Alice might have been destroyed; Dodgson's diary for March 13, 1863, reports that "I began a poem

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1141 Norton, p. 275.
1142 For this sorrow see p. 109.
1143 ClarkCarroll, p. 125; Cohen, p. 92.
1144 Jones/Gladstone, pp. 73-74.
1145 CollingwoodLife, pp. 111-112 [Chapter VI]; cf. Gardner, p. xviii [12]; the full letter is in ClarkCarroll, pp. 227-228.
1146 ClarkCarroll, p. 228.
1147 Woolf, p. 177.
1148 CollingwoodLife, p. 3.
1149 Woolf, p. 178.
1150 Norton, p. 277, has Alice's comments on this.
1151 Cohen, p. 513. It should be remembered that Dodgson wrote more than a hundred thousand letters in his life (CohenLetters, pp. viii-ix), so this is not completely absurd — but it is a very high number even by Dodgson's standards.
1152 Hudson, p. 99.
1153 Norton, p. 277.

the other day in which I mean to embody something about Alice (if I can at all please myself by any description of her) and which I mean to call "Life's Pleasance."[1154]

Ordinarily we would turn to Dodgson's diary to learn what happened. But, as mentioned, the relevant page at the end of June 1863 is missing — cut out of the book. There is dispute about how this came about, but the evidence is strong that this was done not by Dodgson but by his one of his nieces (probably Menella Dodgson) after his death[1155]— Brooker catalogs recent discussions of the excised pages. Of eight books checked, six agree that Dodgson's relatives did it; one (by Bakewell) thinks Dodgson perhaps did it himself; one ignores the matter. Brooker says that the cutting was done with nail scissors, leaving a jagged edge. In addition, an attempt was made to alter the text before the excision.[1156] Karoline Leach — in response to Brooker? — says that some of the pages were cut with a razor, just two with nail scissors. This implies to her that different people did the cutting — but it might be that one person did the cutting at different times and with whatever came to hand.[1157]

The removal of the pages is noteworthy. Dodgson's diary, on the whole, is not deeply personal. "It was not Charles Dodgson's custom to commit his deepest feelings to paper in times of acute personal sorrow."[1158] (Karoline Leach suggests that he thought the diary would be spied on[1159] — a strange suggestion given that he was no one in particular when he started the diary — but it occurs to me that this just might be another hint of autism — possibly Dodgson simply didn't know *how* to write down his inner feelings.**)** There is little sign of anything shameful in the large quantity of surviving material, and his niece felt the need to cut only about half a dozen pages. Leach says that seven pages of text have been cut, plus some blank pages.[1160] (And why would anyone cut those? Leach believes Dodgson cut the empty pages himself, but does not say why.[1161]) Leach thinks more than one hand was involved in the cutting.[1162] Cohen instead counts *six* missing pages, and his list does not agree with Leach's.[1163] Little attention has been paid to any of the excisions except this one in 1863.[1164] Since Dodgson probably did not cut out

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[1154] Jones/Gladstone, p. 7; ClarkCarroll, p. 126, thinks this was "Child of the pure unclouded brow" of *Through the Looking Glass* — but the reference to "pleasance" in that poem was not added until the galley proofing stage; see note 1099.

[1155] Stoffel, p. 82; cf. Underground, p. 13; Brooker, p. 5. I cannot help but note the irony that the very second sentence of the preface of CollingwoodLife reads "I am well aware that the path of the biographer is beset with pitfalls, and that, for him, *suppressio veri* is almost necessarily *suggestio falsi*...." — "to suppress the truth is to suggest the untrue."

[1156] Brooker, p. 18

[1157] Leach, pp. 194-195.

[1158] ClarkCarroll, p. 66; cf. Woolf, p. 5.

[1159] Leach, p. 187.

[1160] Leach, p. 120.

[1161] Leach, p. 193.

[1162] see note 1156.

[1163] Leach, p. 125. Cohen feels like the better scholar, but this may be because Leach writes like a gossip columnist.

[1164] but see note 800.

the material himself, it is unlikely that *he* was ashamed of what the page said. It was his niece who was upset by it.

A common hypothesis is that Dodgson made some sort of offer of marriage to Alice — perhaps a direct proposal, perhaps a request to her family to be allowed to court her when she was older. According to Leach, it was Florence Becker Lennon who made this idea popular,[1165] and Leach does not think it unreasonable based on the information Lennon had available. But Lennon had no access to Dodgson's diaries, and Leach dismisses the speculation. Like much in Leach, I would consider this to be taking revisionism too far; we have no idea what Dodgson did, but it really looks as if *something* happened.

The evidence regarding a possible proposal is very vague but comes from several directions:

1. There was the Oxford gossip to this effect, reported by Lord Salisbury.[1166]
2. The 1874 student's allegory, "Cakeless,"[1167] implied that Dodgson would object to Alice getting married: in the scene describing the marriage, when there is a call for objections, the Dodgson character, "Kraftsohn," declares "By circles, segments, and by radii, Than yield to these I'd liefer far to die."[1168] There are signs of errors in this story, though — e.g. it has Prince Leopold, instead of courting Alice, courting the youngest Liddell daughter.[1169] And the ending seems completely unhistoric — in the last scene, Kraftsohn is captured by Romanus and his attendants, and tossed into the sea. His last words are "Farewell to pamphlets and to angles round! I seek a shore where Euclid is not found." (Note the rather incompetent poetry.) Romanus concludes the play with a quote, "Full fathoms five e'en now he lies, Of his bones are segments made... Goldfish hourly ring his knees. Ding-dong. Hark! now I hear them, ding, dong, bell."[1170]
3. There is a curious reference to the "anxious" subject of "A.L." in Dodgson's diary when he was discussing his brother Wilfred's potential marriage to Alice Donkin. It has been suggested that A.L. is Alice: "This close association of his anxieties about Wilfred's romantic affairs and his own relationship with Alice Liddell is one of the strongest arguments for concluding that he was romantically attached to the Dean's daughter and wished to marry her".[1171] The alternative suggestion is that "A.L" is an error for

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[1165] Leach, p. 87.

[1166] See the note on Lord Salisbury on page 130; also Cohen, pp. 100-101; Brooker, p. 22; ClarkCarroll, pp. 143-144; Woolf, p. 161, implies he was interested in one of the girls but does not specify which Liddell Dodgson was after.

[1167] Written hy John Howe Jenkins, who was expelled for writing it; ClarkAlice, p. 154.

[1168] Quoted by ClarkCarroll, p. 189, Cohen, pp. 515-516, and Hudson, p. 205. The full text of "Cakeless" is in ClarkAlice, pp. 256-262, with the relevant quote on p. 259.

[1169] ClarkAlice, p. 157.

[1170] ClarkAlice, p. 262. The parody is of *The Tempest,* Act I, Scene II, line 397 in the Riverside edition. Dodgson himself had parodied this verse in his 1872 fulminations over the Christ Church belfry; WilsonR, p. 131.

[1171] ClarkCarroll, p. 143, later followed by Cohen.

"A.D."[1172] — an explanation which seems rather artificial; in any case, it is quite a revealing slip!

4. Dodgon's nephew CollingwoodLife, whose inside information here might be significant, said, "it was *Alice,* who was undoubtedly his pet, and it was his intense love for her (though she was only a child) which pulled the trigger and released his genius. Indeed it is quite likely that Alice's marriage to Hargreaves may have seemed to him the greatest tragedy of his life."[1173] But it should be noted that Collingwood said, in the same place, that the family's opinion that, although Dodgson had suffered in love, the girl involved was not Alice but his actress friend Ellen Terry — who, note, was like Alice a recipient of one of the three finest copies of the first edition of *Through the Looking Glass.*[1174] There is some curious evidence of Dodgson trying to fit Ellen Terry into roles in his life once filled by the Liddell sisters.[1175]

5. Alice's son Caryl thought Dodgson loved his mother.[1176] But love — which can occur between friends! — is not a proposal of marriage. And Caryl Hargreaves also said, "I do not think that Dodgson was ever 'in love' with my mother in the sense in which that phrase is generally used. I don't think Dodgson was ever in love with anyone, that is do say, contemplated marriage...." [1177]

6. Decades later, Lorina Liddell (the sister, not the mother) was asked about the estrangement and hinted that Dodgson was sniffing after Alice[1178]— but Lorina then had to write *to Alice,* explaining what she said, implying that it would be news to Alice. This is usually seen as an attempt by Lorina to get the interviewer off her back by giving her the scandal she was fishing for. The fact that Lorina seems to have been trying to get rid of Florence Becker (later Florence Becker Lennon) does not prove that her statements were false. It does imply Lorina was hiding something, but we have no clue what. Jenny Woolf's suggestion is that Lorina and Dodgson had somehow been involved[1179] — which would explain why Lorina tried to cover it up; she didn't want to admit that she had had the hots for Dodgson. But her husband had been dead for decades by then; she had no great reason to hide.

It is obviously a very mixed bag. Collectively, the evidence for a proposal seems significant, but individually the items are all problematic.

[1172] Leach, pp. 249-250,

[1173] quoted by Hudson, p. 191; Cohen, pp. 341-342; also Leach, p. 251, who thinks Collingwood was lying (and accuses him several times of destroying Dodgson's diaries); interestingly, Leach and Cohen cite different backgrounds and sources for Collingwood's remark although both attribute it to him.

[1174] See note 1136.

[1175] Hudson, p. 194

[1176] Gardner, p. xxvi.

[1177] Hudson, p. 200

[1178] Brooker, p. 19; Woolf, p. 162

[1179] Woolf, p. 165-167.

Even if Dodgson *did* propose, this is another of those things that should be viewed in the context of the time: The church allowed twelve-year-olds to marry until quite recently, and in an era before antisepsis, many women died in childbirth; for a man to marry a much younger bride was not unusual. There is nothing impossible about Dodgson seeking to marry a girl Alice's age (twenty years younger than he); Dean and Mrs. Liddell themselves differed in age by fifteen years — he was born in 1811, she in 1826; they married when she was twenty. Dean Liddell in fact admitted to being balding and "going grey" at the time.[1180] The age gap by itself is not a significant objection to the match. The stock response is that the Liddells rejected Dodgson because their social status was higher than his. But since we don't know if he proposed, we certainly don't know why he was rejected!

Not everyone is convinced that Dodgson's problem with the Liddells centered around Alice. Karoline Leach, based on a slip of paper in the Dodgson collections that appears to summarize the missing page from the diary, allowed a possibility that Dodgson was actually going after Mrs. Liddell.[1181] Leach, however, makes more of the text of the notes than I think justified; the text[1182] summarizes Dodgson's diary by saying that he was "supposed" to be courting the governess and/or "Ina." But the rumors about Miss Prickett were not new, and even the rumor about "Ina" is merely a supposition, and unsubstantiated by any other source. It doesn't add up to much.

Since both Mrs. Liddell and her oldest daughter were named Lorina ("Ina"), it is perhaps more likely that Lorina Liddell the younger, who was fourteen in 1863, may have become interested in *Dodgson*[1183] — especially since he was only thirty-one and still rather handsome. Or, alternately, the gossip about them may simply have gotten too strong. If the Liddells felt that keeping company with Dodgson, even as friends, would damage Lorina's marriage prospects — as it very well might have done — they naturally would have tried to rectify the situation.

But none of these hypotheses explain the poems in *Through the Looking Glass,* nor the many years in which Dodgson tried to re-establish the relationship. If the break-up had been a love affair which failed, it might explain Dodgson's immediate reactions — but not the yearning for Alice which permeates the poems in that much-later book.

In fact we have two other pieces of data which are, potentially at least, highly relevant. One comes from the surviving pages of Dodgson's diary, which show him entering a period of emotional pain. The other is the character of Alice Liddell herself.

In the period after the separation, Dodgson's diary shows many more instances of internal anguish than before — he refers to himself as vile on many occasions, and prays for some sort of

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[1180] Cohen, p. 102.

[1181] The relevant discussion is in Leach's Appendix III; pp. 327-332; cf. Brooker, p 24; Woolf, pp. 6, 162. In addition, LennyAlice, in the section "Analysis," under "Interpretive essays," has an article Leach wrote for a 1996 *Times Literary Supplement* which contains the essential material.

[1182] Printed in Leach, p. 328.

[1183] This is the explanation favored by Woolf, pp. 162, 167-168.

help or relief.[1184] Many of those who have written about these passages seem to think he was praying for relief from lust.[1185] And perhaps that is one of the things that bothered him. But one of the faults he mentions is selfishness: "[O]f myself I am utterly weak, and vile, and selfish."[1186] This is not any sort of Biblical allusion; the King James Bible never uses the word "selfish."[1187] Elsewhere Dodgson prays for help with his "failing faith" and asks that his repentance be made "real." Granted, lust is one of the seven deadly sins.[1188] But, of all the deadly sins, it is among those *least* associated with selfishness. In the litany of the *Book of Common Prayer,* ninth paragraph, we read, "From all blindness of heart; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, *Good Lord, deliver us."* Lust is covered (obliquely) in the next paragraph. Dodgson was an Anglican deacon; he *knew* this. Note also that Dante made lust the least severe of the sins found in Hell. For Dodgson to call himself vile might be an indication of lust or masturbation — but vileness includes almost every sin and tells us very little. Whereas to call himself selfish is a strong indication that he did *not* consider his fault to be lust. He also referred to his "cold heart"[1189] — not a usual description of lust.[1190] He refers to himself as "beat[ing] the air"[1191] — which sounds very much as if he is taking action but having no success. Even more noteworthy is the prayer of December 31, 1863: "take me, vile and worthless as I am."[1192] "Worthless" is a singularly autistic word — and one which implies a failure to fulfill one's task. Admittedly he also mentions "weak flesh" and "corrupt affections."[1193] But the overall sense is clearly one of an absence of charity in some form, not an excess of sexual desire.

It is intriguing that there seems to be a correlation between Dodgson's cries of anguish and chance meetings with the Liddells.[1194] This is not certain, since Dodgson may not have recorded every meeting with his former friends, but it's highly revealing if true. The graph below shows the (estimated) number of prayers per year:[1195]

1184 Brooker, pp. 26-30, etc.

1185 e.g. Cohen, especially pp. 228-230.

1186 Woolf, p. 111; Jones/Gladstone, p. 7.

1187 There is a New Testament word, ἐριθ(ε)ία, sometimes rendered by something like "selfish ambition." It occurs in Romans 2:8, 2 Cor. 12:20, Gal. 5:20, Philip. 1:16, 2:3, James 3:14, 16. But the King James Bible always renders it *strife* or *contention* or *contentious,* and Liddell & Scott give its classical meaning as *labor for wages* or *canvassing for office, intriguing.* There would be no reason for Dodgson to connect this word with selfishness.

1188 The seven are pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth (Douglas/Elwell/Toon, p. 346).

1189 Leach, p. 41.

1190 compare Woolf, p. 117: "the possibility exists that Carroll was tormented by the idea of a more serious sin than fornication."

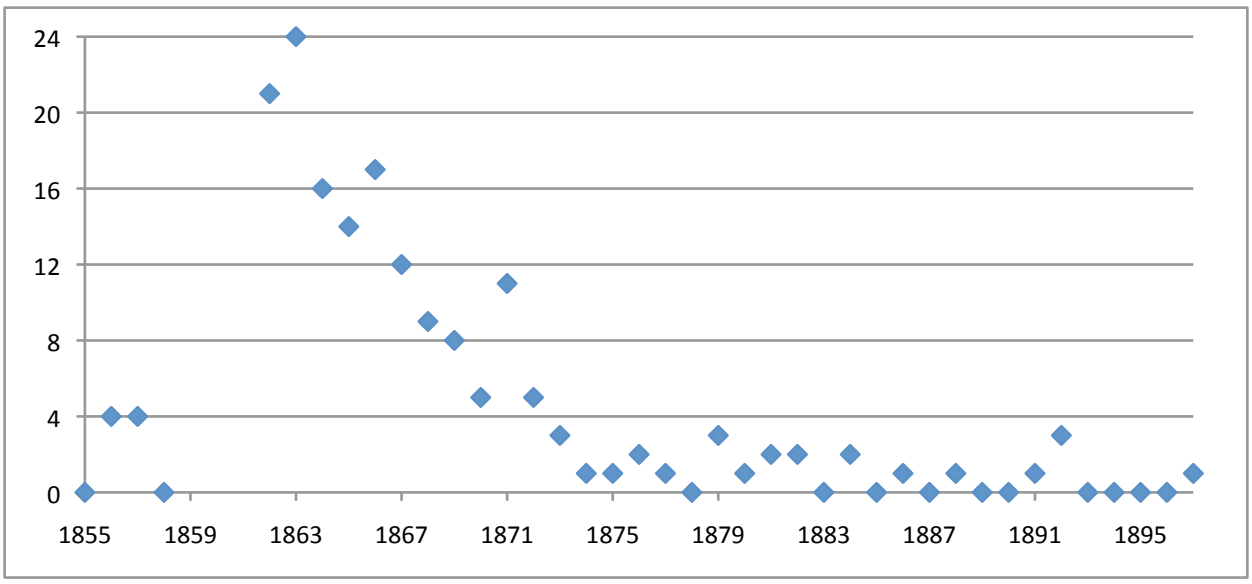
1191 Leach, p. 199.

1192 Cohen, p. 200.

1193 Leach, p. 41.

1194 Brooker, p. 32.

1195 Cohen, pp. 204-205, supplies the source data. For incomplete years, I have estimated the numbers for a full year based on the number of surviving months..



Sadly, we have no data for 1859-1861, due to the loss of the diaries, and only limited information for 1858 and 1862. But the appeals in the 1850s are few, and refer only to laziness and to problems with teaching,[1196] which are relatively minor faults. For eight months in 1862, we find fourteen more urgent prayers. This was when he saw the Liddells a lot — but Mrs. Liddell was often "on his case." In 1863, the year of the estrangement, he spikes to an all-time high twenty-four prayers, often very severe. In the next four years, we find sixteen, fourteen, seventeen, and twelve. Then the number declines, but is still higher than the 1850s level. In 1871, the year of *Through the Looking Glass,* the number again rises to eleven. And, remember, these are instances where he was in such anguish that he actually wrote it down; chances are that he suffered far more at times when he *wasn't* working on the diary. In 1872, with *Looking Glass* done, the number falls back to five. Thereafter, the number never exceeds three in a year; there are only twenty-five from 1873 until Dodgson died. What's more, the prayers all seem to be associated with his time in Oxford; they vanish when he leaves Christ Church.[1197] In May of 1864, we see a meeting with the Liddells followed immediately by self-flagellation.[1198] In 1866, fully four of seventeen outbursts come in a period of less than a month after a visit to the Deanery.[1199] Thus there is good reason to see a correlation between his earnest prayers and his proximity to the Liddells.

And *he was still commemorating Alice's birthday privately eight years after the estrangement:* May 4, 1871, he wrote in his diary, "Alice's birthday, I sit down to record the events of the day, partly as a specimen of my life now."[1200]

[1196] Cohen, p. 201

[1197] Cohen, p. 202 — a point accepted even by Leach, p. 207.

[1198] Cohen, p. 211

[1199] Cohen, pp. 212-213

[1200] Norton, p. 291; Underground, p. 22; Cohen, p. 214. Some have suggested that this is the birthday of the fictional Alice (Norton has the name "Alice" in quotes) — but "Alice" was born in July 1862. May 4 is the birthday of Alice Liddell, not Alice in Wonderland.

What is more, when asked in the 1870s about a dedication for some sheet music inspired by *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* rather than accepting a dedication to himself or a relative, he suggested that it be dedicated to Alice Liddell.[1201] This even though their contacts remained few and ambiguous.

How ambiguous? How about this: Alice named her third son "Caryl" — a name obviously similar to "Carroll." Alice maintained that the name "Caryl" came from a novel — but did not identify the novel.[1202]

Dodgson did not attend Alice's wedding although he and his friend Thomas Vere Bayne did send a gift.[1203] Curiously, the present involved (a watercolor painting of Christ Church's Great Quadrangle painted by R. P. Speiro[1204]) is not included in the official list of wedding gifts — Mrs. Liddell's hand at work?[1205] And yet, it was said that the painting hung above Alice's drawing-room fireplace![1206] Dodgson wasn't even in Oxford for the wedding; he spent the time at Eastbourne[1207] and did not mention the event in his diary.[1208]

There is apparently only one mention of Dodgson in all of Alice's known correspondence.[1209]

There is a claim that Alice asked Dodgson to be godfather to one of her sons, and that he refused.[1210]

The last time Alice and Dodgson are known to have seen each other was in 1891,[1211] seven years before his death — and she didn't stay for tea; she and her sister Rhoda made a brief visit. Interestingly, Dodgson seems to have had a nice visit with Rhoda and the fifth sister, Violet, shortly before, and also saw Lorina Liddell Skene about this time; only Alice was left out.[1212]

Dodgson continued to send her occasional gifts: he gave her an "Alice biscuit tin" in 1892[1213] and one of his Wonderland stamp cases.[1214] That occasion was the last time she is named in

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[1201] Hudson, p. 202; Cohen, p. 379.

[1202] Gardner, p. 18 n. 12; Leach, p. 271. Oddly enough, it is Leach who makes the most of this name, regarding it as evidence of the odd quasi-paternal role she claims Dodgson played in the Liddell family — even while maintaining that there was a love/hate relationship between Dodgson and Alice, as well as between Dodgson and Lorina

[1203] LennyAlice, section "Love and marriage."

[1204] ClarkAlice, p. 182.

[1205] This is the suggestion of Cohen, p. 517.

[1206] Winchester, p. 93.

[1207] Cohen, p. 506.

[1208] Cohen, p. 219.

[1209] Gordon, p. 90.

[1210] Leach, p. 255, but she cites this from a secondary source. ClarkAlice, p. 204, believes that the child involved was Caryl, but she has no source.

[1211] ClarkCarroll, p. 260.

[1212] Cohen, pp. 509-510.

[1213] Cohen, pp. 493-494.

[1214] Jones/Gladstone, p. 110

Dodgson's diary.[1215] They apparently made no difference; presumably she did not feel Wonderland was "hers." The fact that he gave her such gifts is perhaps more evidence of autism: he wanted to give her something, but didn't understand her likes and dislikes.

Alice did not attend Dodgson's funeral.[1216] To be fair, Dean Liddell himself died just four days after Dodgson, so she had other things on her mind; she reportedly did send a wreathe.[1217] Dodgson's will, which had been written as early as 1871,[1218] left everything to his siblings; it is only fifteen lines long, and Alice is not mentioned.[1219] His brothers Wilfred and Edwin were his executors.

And yet, after Dodgson's death, Alice supposedly wrote to Macmillan to try to acquire the originals of Tenniel's illustrations (and was rebuffed).[1220] Ernest Odell reported that the Liddell Sisters, during a family reunion at Cuffnells some years later, became heavily involved in some sort of nostalgia about "Ducky" and "Dodo" and boats and the Mad Hatter.[1221] Did Alice finally forgive Dodgson? Or was this the idea of the other sisters?

When she sold the manuscript of *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* Alice was reportedly in tears.[1222] But that was not the only memento sold at the auction, merely the most valuable by far, so we do not know why she cried.

[1215] Cohen, p. 510.
[1216] Underground, p. 26; ClarkAlice, p. 213; Cohen, p. 526, notes that none of the Liddells was there.
[1217] Hudson, p. 5.
[1218] Hudson, p. 4.
[1219] Cohen, pp. 527-528.
[1220] Gordon, p. 231.
[1221] Gordon, p. 212.
[1222] Gordon, p. 233.

"Crocodiles, when fasting, Are not all they seem": Why the Problem?

It seems clear that the estrangement between Dodgson and the Liddells was real, and almost as clear that it came about because Dodgson was too close to the girls, or perhaps specifically to Alice. And yet, simply assuming Dodgson was sniffing after Alice doesn't seem to add up. Anne Clark, the first person to write biographies of both Dodgson and Alice, confesses, "the enigma of their own special relationship and the nature of Carroll's genius remains elusive."[1223]

Let's summarize what we have so far, with our degree of confidence in the conclusions:

1. That Dodgson and the Liddells became much less close in 1863 (certain, although the exact nature and degree of the "distancing" is less clear).
2. That Dodgson still felt significant affection toward Alice Liddell, if perhaps not toward the rest of the family (clearly true).
3. That Dodgson felt some sort of depression after the quarrel (extremely likely, although the nature of the depression, and the severity, are unclear; we cannot prove correlation).
4. That Dodgson was autistic (uncertain and unprovable, but likely).
5. That Dodgson enjoyed the company of young girls (he eventually started cataloging the girls he met, but then, he catalogued *everything*), but was not unhappy in the company of adult women. Nor did he object to the company of boys and men. It has been suggested that what he truly disliked was ill-mannered children (and adults);[1224] Evelyn Hatch observed that "Spoilt or greedy children were anathema: he would have nothing to do with them."[1225] Since young girls are usually less rambunctious than boys, and Victorian girls in particular were trained to be "lady-like," and children more tolerant of strangeness than adults in any case, part of his attraction to young girls may simply be that it was more easy for *them* to like *him*.

And yet, if Dodgson planned to propose to Alice in 1863, or do something else that momentous, would there really have been only *one* page about it in the diary? Wouldn't there have been signs as he worked himself up to it? There is no hint of this whatsoever.

Also, in 1857, Dodgson had said he would never marry.[1226] To be sure, people change their minds — Morton Cohen would declare his firm opinion that Dodgson "was a marrying man."[1227] And Dodgson had little money in the 1850s, and his position at Christ Church depended on him being single, so he may not have wished to marry because of fears about his job.[1228] The obvious counter-suggestion is that a good mathematician — and Dodgson *was* a

[1223] ClarkAlice, p. 13.
[1224] Woolf, p. 136.
[1225] Hatch, p. 5.
[1226] Leach, p. 137, although she clouds this with a grammatical nitpick.
[1227] quoted by Gardner, p. xxvii
[1228] Woolf, p. 164

good mathematician — could have found another job had he really wanted to marry. The fact that he seems to have made no attempts to find another job at this time implies that he either truly did not intend to marry — or that, like many autism sufferers, he didn't want to face the trying task of seeking another position. In any case, he does not seem to have changed his mind; in the 1880s he would write, "I am still a lonely old bachelor! And I mean to keep it so...."[1229]

This sort of contradiction again is reminiscent of autistics. They cannot get partners in part because they are written off as "immature."[1230] It is infamous that the two most common questions asked by autistics are how to get a job and how to get a date.[1231] It is not unusual for an autistic to effectively give up while maintaining something like "I could get a date if I wanted one."[1232] Dodgson seems to have been wiser than most: Although he was a "lonely old bachelor," he had realized that his situation would be hard to change — and so he accepted it.

Another point follows from the observation that there is no romantic hero in the Alice books.[1233] Alice comes through *on her own,* with no companion. In fact, she has a meeting with a sort of avatar of Dodgson in *Through the Looking Glass:* he is the White Knight.[1234] But does the White Knight marry Alice? He doesn't even accompany her to the end of her journey. Although he is one of the few characters who seems friendly, he is quite ineffective. He goes with her to the boundary of the eighth square — and then turns back as she becomes a queen.[1235] If ever there should have been a hint as to what happened between them, it would be here — and there is nothing except sad evidence of how much Dodgson still missed her.

At this point we seem to have reached an impasse. A number of observers would have us believe that Dodgson was in love, and lust, with Alice — but he clearly was attracted to adult women also,[1236] and there is no sign he experienced sexual desire for Alice. This severely weakens the claim that Dodgson wanted to marry Alice. Karoline Leach would have us believe that Alice was nothing to him — but the evidence of the diary, and the later letters, and of the poems in *Through the Looking Glass,* surely disprove that. But if Dodgson felt something more than friendship for Alice Liddell, but was less than romantically in love with her, what does that leave?

[1229] CollingwoodLife, p. 108 [Chapter VI]. I must admit that this, too, sounds familiar. Would I like to have a wife? Sure. Would I be a good husband? Probably not. Do I want children? I'm too old, and too abnormal. And the women I would be willing to marry are few — and can do better than I. So I, too, "mean to keep it so."

[1230] Carley, p. 103.

[1231] Carley, p. 107.

[1232] Dubin, p. 115, is an example, admitting that, at the time he is writing, he is not in a relationship, but being "certain if I were to actively seek a partner, I would find one." Uh-huh.

[1233] The point is made by Cohen, p. 139.

[1234] see note 1097.

[1235] Gardner, pp. 247-248 [313-315]; also note 21 on p. 248.

[1236] Stoffel, p. 46, thinks he may have had sexual hangups, but emphasizes that he was friends with many adult women. Leach, p. 31, etc., gives constant hints that his sexual urges were normal and were not entirely unsatisfied. This was the era before birth control, and there is no hint of a pregnant girlfriend, so it seems unlikely that he was sexually experienced. But the evidence strongly favors the supposition that Dodgson was attracted to adult women.

What it leaves is… an autistic friendship.

"For I'm sure it is nothing but love," or "'Unless you leave this house,' he said, 'I'll send for the Police'": The Emotion in Question

Until now, we've been dealing mostly with historical facts, or at least with reasonable inferences from those facts. At this point, we need to turn to emotions. Specifically, the emotions of victims of autism — and, most specifically, their friendships.

It should be stated at the outset that the emotional world of autistics is poorly understood. It is known that autistics and "neurotypicals" have different emotional responses. But the nature of the difference is hard to pin down.[1237] Probably, in no small part, because not all autistics feel the same way.

Personal Viewpoint: I remember how I felt when I finally realized that ordinary people used the word "friendship" for something very different from what I meant by it. Superficially the meanings are similar — they both involve people we like to be around, people we help, people we approve of. But ordinary people have *casual* friendships — indeed, most of their friendships are casual. Mine are not. For at least some autistics, myself among them, friendship instinctively means something very, very much stronger.

Even in the autism literature, this seems to be a poorly documented phenomenon; if there is a clinical term, it is not widely used. There are references to it by Attwood, but not even Attwood gives a name to the phenomenon. Dr. Barbara Luskin, a local specialist in autism, also seemed to find the concept familiar. It is clear that many autistics have such friends. In a video interview,[1238] Attwood describes how autistics can become deeply attached to a person of high intelligence who shares common interests — such as a professor.

Personal Viewpoint: My own experience seems to match what Attwood says. In the absence of clinical data, I can only try to describe it from my own perspective. The feeling is one of extreme attachment. Most people feel very alien to me. These people do not. They are *my kind* — I am tempted to say *my species* — in a special, very hard-to-quantify way. They are the people I want to be with, the people I want to help, the people I want to serve, the people to whom I am bound. Does this sound like being in love? Perhaps, but there are differences. One is simply in degree: Being in love is a stronger emotion still. And this sort of friendship is not jealous. Nor is it exclusive; having one such friend does not mean that I do not want other friends of the same type.

Although most emotional traits of autism seem to be variations on those found in neurotypicals as well, this particular phenomenon seems to be peculiar to those with autism spectrum disorder, and is perhaps particularly subject to misunderstanding. (At least, this has been the author's

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[1237] ***Personal Viewpoint:*** I recently saw a video by Dr. Marsha Linehan, discussing emotional reactions. Each emotion, in her view, produces a standard reaction — e.g. fear causes the sufferer of the fear to avoid whatever causes it. Linehan discussed four emotions, and four reactions. In two of the four cases, my reaction to the emotion was not the normal one.

[1238] Autism Hangout, video titled "Sensory Issues, Special vs Intimate Friends and 'Intellectual Orgasms.'"

experience on several occasions, and Attwood says much the same.) These relationships feel utterly unlike relationships with other people; although some may be stronger than others, there is — for the author at least — an absolute, qualitative distinction; some people are "it" and some are not.

But it only happens with certain people. Attwood is right — it involves high intelligence and common interests. In my case, *extremely* high intelligence, and the person must have a strong interest in music; and a second interest in mathematics, science, or language; and have autistic traits; also, it helps very much to be female.

Yes, you're right, they're hard to find. Which is a big part of the problem for me — and, I think, for Charles Dodgson.

It appears, from comments in Attwood's book, that other characteristics of autistic friendships are an extreme devotion (which can appear to outsiders to be obsessive) and a desire to help the friend, even beyond the common desire autistics have to be helpful and use their special skills. And these relationships last long — in the author's personal case, the memory of these friendships has endured much longer than a mere case of unrequited love. In the case of the unrequited love, just about all feelings were gone after three years. But I have friends I would still like to see after twenty years without contact. One autism sufferer declares, "Once somebody becomes part of my life, I will let them out only for the most urgent of reasons" — adding that not even death is sufficient reason to let go; he declares, "I don't see that I have any choice in the matter."[1239] This is after spending *thirty years* missing someone.

Little wonder, then, that people confuse this emotion with being in love — and treat the autistic person as if he were in love, and, frankly, punish him for not being very good at it.

I do not know at what age these relationships start to develop. I was twenty when I had my first. But a textbook description of eight-year-old "Michelle" and the "pretty and rather snobbish little girl next door" sounds rather like a precursor to it — Michelle was willing to put up with almost anything, including being the neighbor's servant, for the sake of being friends with the neighbor.[1240]

And the friendships may not be what most people consider "age-appropriate." Attwood says that the friendships may involve significant age differences. Dubin implies that autism sufferers often feel more comfortable with members of generations other than their own.[1241] Other sources talk about autistics seeking out older companions.[1242] Perhaps in deference to our own era's sensitivity to pedophilia, perhaps because most of the research has been on young people, these sources refer only to friendships with older persons. This may be exaggerated. ***Personal Viewpoint:*** The author has experience with eight such friendships. The average age gap was 14 years — but this breaks down into three cases of people roughly the same age and five where the age gap

[1239] Page, p. 120.
[1240] Myles/Simpson, pp. 160-161.
[1241] Dubin, p. 210.
[1242] Digby Tantam, "Assessment and Treatment of Comorbid Emotional and Behavioral Problems," Prior, p. 165.

exceeded 15 years — ranging from an extreme of 19 years older to 31 years younger. In only one case have I had a friendship with an age range greater than the twenty years' gap between Dodgson and Alice, but it's clear enough that it could happen if I find a sufficiently talented candidate.

When Dodgson met Edith Blakemore at Eastbourne in 1877, he described her as "quite the brightest child, and nearly the prettiest, I have yet seen here."[1243] Note that intelligence is mentioned before beauty. The intellectual element is probably essential. Having that smart person who understands one's interests is vital, because it both affirms the interest and shows that it is not so peculiar — plus it gives the autism victim someone who can keep up and understand. That ability to have a cross-check is of great value — and is a large part of why age becomes minor; such people have to be taken wherever one can find them!

If these relationships were just friendships on steroids, it might be best to simply suppress them. As, indeed, has been suggested to me quite forcefully. But they are not mere hyper-friendships. The indications are that they can be tremendously beneficial for the autistic person. Liane Holliday Willey comments, "Without friendships, my version of friendships that is, I had very little support."[1244] This was even more true in the past. The autism sufferer faces many challenges in dealing with society and life. Today, we have many tools to help them, from cognitive behavioral therapy to antidepressants. None of these were available in the 1860s. But it is my experience than an autistic friend is an effective substitute, calming the fears and making it possible to deal much more effectively with the challenges. A friend makes the autism sufferer substantially more capable and normal. In the case of someone like Dodgson — brilliant but much-burdened by his personal quirks — such a person could represent the difference between genius and crank-hood.

Personal Viewpoint: These friendships have another effect, at least in my case: They enable social and emotional learning. From my first friend, I learned most of my social skills, as well as studying and doing homework. Another taught me how to keep my body in some sort of condition. My last friend showed me — at age fifty! — how to look people in the eye.

Personal Speculation: To the best of my knowledge, no one has attempted to determine the basis for the autistic friendship. One may speculate. It has been suggested that autism sufferers often have hyperactive sympathetic nervous systems[1245] — that is, that their "fight or flight" instincts are more than usually active. This may be because the parasympathetic nervous system, which usually shuts down the fight or flight response, is not sufficiently active. This leads to the suggestion that the presence of an autistic friend can activate the parasympathetic nervous system. This makes sense in light of the trust the autism sufferer has for the Friend. This does not explain why this trust arises, however. A thread at Autism Hangout seems to refer to the friendship phenomenon and implies that it is a variant of the autistic phenomenon of the Special

[1243] Cohen, p. 467.
[1244] Willey, p. 60.
[1245] Dubin, p. 17

Interest.[1246] Subjectively, this does not seem quite right to me; there is more to it. I can only speculate. But I think my speculation well-grounded.

It *has* been demonstrated that many autistics suffer a deficiency of the hormone oxytocin.[1247] This is the chemical known as the "trust hormone," or even the "love hormone" or the "social hormone." A love hormone it is not — you can't make people randomly fall in love by giving them oxytocin. But the hormone does promote bonding between parents and infants, and it causes people to be more trusting in social situations such as negotiating.[1248] It even turns certain non-monogamous species of voles into monogamous creatures.

Many brain functions depend on a specific hormone, but few hormones serve only one function. While oxytocin is vital to social development, it also contributes to overall intellectual capability. A shortage of oxytocin can result in depression, anxiety — indeed, most of the emotional problems of autistics.

So what happens when someone with autism finds a real friend? The oxytocin level of the brain increases, and suddenly the person with autism is less depressed, less lonely, less anxious, more capable. That the autistic friends provide this benefit is pretty clear, so the link to oxytocin makes sense.

But, of course, you suddenly have a person with a sufficiency of oxytocin *directed toward and derived from one person.* Naturally he wants to maintain that level of oxytocin — and, naturally, he will feel all the effects of oxytocin toward her. Greater trust. A desire to be closer. A wish, in other words, to be close friends. Hence that appearance — although it is only an appearance — of being in love.

Unfortunately, improved mood, and even improved trust, cannot make up for the ignorance derived from autism. An autistic with a friend can still make all the social mistakes of an autistic without a friend — indeed, may be *more* likely to make them, because he is trying harder! So it has been for me. Could it have been so for Dodgson?

Which brings us to what we know about Alice. Most descriptions of Alice start with her appearance: She was a beautiful child — Tennyson, upon seeing Dodgson's 1858 photo of her which was called "The Beggar Maid" (the photo of Alice you almost always see first — "one of the most memorable photographic likenesses ever taken, freighted not just with uneasy resonances, but having later powerful literary consequences and associations that remain with us to this day"[1249]) declared it the most beautiful photograph he had ever seen.[1250] Nina Auerbach calls her a "baby belle dame."[1251] Sir William Blake Richmond, who painted a famous painting of the three oldest Liddell sisters, declared that "no reproduction can do justice" to her "pretty

[1246] Autism Hangout, forum topic #436
[1247] GreenEtAl, NIHOxytocin.
[1248] PsychologyTodayOxytocin
[1249] Winchester, p. 6.
[1250] CollingwoodLife, p. 37.
[1251] Norton, p. 337.

face and lovely colouring."[1252] As she reached school age, she developed a "wistful piquancy which later distinguished her from all Dodgson's other child friends."[1253] And she grew up to be a beautiful woman; Sir Henry Taylor wrote that "I have hardly seen any photographs... which... seem to represent more beauty in the person photographed than three or four of [Julia Margaret Cameron's] photographs of Miss Alice Liddell."[1254] It is easy for those who want to create a sexual tale to work from this. But Dodgson knew many pretty little girls. They weren't "Alice." And — here is the important part — Alice Liddell was more than just a pretty face; she was exceptionally intelligent young lady.[1255]

And, in the opinion of both Dodgson and Dean Liddell, Alice was the brightest of all the Liddell girls.[1256] The importance of this fact, I think, cannot be overestimated. Dodgson was very smart — and Alice was as smart as he was.

Dodgson gave many sly hints that he found her fascinating. This is based on some of Dodgson's photos of Alice. They show her posed with a fern — which, in the version of "flower symbolism" used in Victorian times, stood for sincerity and fascination.[1257] There is more: Dodgson pasted a copy of one of Alice's photos into the manuscript of *Alice's Adventures under Ground* — and it is one of those with a fern, the longest leaf of which is just barely visible by Alice's right shoulder.

Hence the speculation which is the reason for this paper: That, instead of being "in love with" Alice Liddell, Dodgson had an "autistic friendship" with her. It is easy to believe that Dodgson might have spoken his mind too freely on that particular day — a common trait of autistics. "Most individuals with autism want to please the people around them, their parents, teachers, friends, partners and supervisors. This inner desire can manifest in many different socially appropriate and inappropriate ways...."[1258] "Another characteristic associated with Asperger's syndrome is that the person does not know when he or she would be expected to tell a 'white lie,' making a comment to someone that is true but likely to cause offense."[1259]

Maybe he did propose marriage.[1260] Maybe he just said, "I love you" — after all, he later declared when he published a facsimile of *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* declared, "to please a child I loved (I don't remember any other motive), I printed in manuscript, and illustrated with my own crude designs" the original text of the story.[1261] What "Dodgson" meant by "love" is open to

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[1252] ClarkAlice, p. 100.
[1253] ClarkAlice, p. 53.
[1254] Gordon, p. 122.
[1255] See the section above on the "remarkable eleven-year-old," p. 105.
[1256] Jones/Gladstone, p. 24.
[1257] Woolf, p. 247.
[1258] Grandin & Barron, pp. 243-244.
[1259] Attwood, p. 117.
[1260] But see the note on p. 142 where Dodgson declared that he would never marry.
[1261] Norton, p. 280. To be sure, Leach, p. 277, declares that Dodgson was lying in the "child I loved" comment. But she would say that, because it's required to prop up her hypotheses.

question — and indeed, someone who had never truly been in love might confuse an autistic friendship, which would probably be the strongest emotion he had ever felt, with romantic love.

Personal Speculation: So my own guess — and it's only a guess, and the hypothesis of an autistic friendship does not depend on it — is that Dodgson didn't do anything that would be perceived as romantic. Rather, I suspect that the Liddell parents asked Dodgson to back off a bit.[1262] Maybe they didn't think their daughters were doing well enough academically, or wanted them to spend their time with higher-class people, or just didn't like the rumors circulating.

Dodgson's autism is important here: Not being good at reading others, he misunderstood the request. And, in a way typical of autistics he escalated the conflict. That is, he blew a simple request way out of proportion. "It is common for [those who interact with autism sufferers]... to become entrapped in power struggles, frivolous arguments, and other nonproductive confrontations."[1263] Autistics will often back out of a situation — engage in a "pre-emptive strike" if they feel they are "Not being trusted. Being scrutinized. Being misunderstood, criticized, and doubted."[1264] ***Personal Viewpoint:*** The author has known another version of this, in which the autistic not understanding what is happening, pushes hard at a situation in an attempt to figure out what the other person is feeling — or, alternately, offers increasingly extreme forms of self-punishment in an attempt to atone for a mistake already made. Still another possibility arises out of the extreme insecurity most autistics feel — they will beg the other person to prove that (s)he is truly a friend. I've lost more than one friendship that way. Any of these situations can start a positive feedback loop which causes the relationship to spin completely out of control.

In all likelihood, Dodgson overestimated the Liddell's anger and rejection (autistics commonly do this, and they also feel anger and rejection particularly strongly), and he reacted in panic.

By the time this was over, Dodgson had escalated it so far that either he or the Liddells demanded a "separation." The major problem with this hypothesis is that it makes it hard to understand why the diary would be censored, but it fits well with autistic behavior.

What's more, Dodgson had already had one escalated conflict with the Liddells, in 1856, when he was told not to take any more photographs for a time.[1265] And we know that at about this time he engaged in another such conflict, with none other than Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Dodgson had photographed the Tennyson children and came to know their father, but a disagreement about some of Tennyson's unpublished works turned so chilly that the two broke off their

[1262] This is also the suggestion of Stoffel, p. 82.

[1263] Myles/Simpson, p. 121, with several examples on the following pages.

[1264] Simone, pp. 122-123, in the chapter "'Bye Bye,' Said the Black Sheep: Avoiding the Asperger's Pre-Emptive Strike."

[1265] Hudson, p. 99.

relations;[1266] the conflict was "quite unnecessary and most undignified."[1267] A quarrel with the parents of seventeen-year-old Atty Owen also sounds like such a situation.[1268]

It really doesn't matter what happened. When whatever he said was ill-received, and the friendship failed, Dodgson went into a "reactive depression."[1269] This would explain the anguished prayers for help which followed the breakup; Dodgson may, like many autism sufferers, have had difficulty with forgiveness.[1270] His "struggles to earn forgiveness" were one of Dodgson's chief burdens.[1271] One biographer declares that he had "a sense of personal unworthiness so strong that it can only be described as obsessive."[1272] This self-loathing would certainly explain the references to being selfish: *he wanted to have been more selfless and to have been a better friend.* ***Personal Viewpoint:*** It was reading this particular passage that made the author sit up and take note — I've been there.

And autistic friendship does seem to fit what little other information we have about Dodgson's relationship with Alice Liddell. She was, very likely, the smartest of all those little girls he knew — and that is probably the single most important factor in the friendships. And she was clearly fond of him and respected him — something that probably allowed him to let his guard down. His response to her liking for his story on that day in July 1862 strikes me as typical: Knowing that she liked the tale and wanted it written down, he apparently set to work that very night, or in any case early the next day (Duckworth was the source of the claim that he started that night),[1273] and it is claimed that he worked long hours on the project.[1274]

Personal Viewpoint: Arthur Girdlestone reported that Dodgson once told him that being with children was recuperative for Dodgson.[1275] The parallel is inexact, but it is the author's own experience that being with the autistic friends eases the mind in a way that nothing else can — the defects of isolation and imperfect decision-making are very greatly reduced. If Alice was indeed an autistic friend, it would explain how she helped to inspire Dodgson's greatest work.

It is interesting to note that Dodgson reportedly lost his stammer in the presence of children,[1276] although the sources are somewhat vague on this point. This would seem a further indication that being around them allowed him to truly relax.

[1266] ClarkCarroll, pp. 112-113.

[1267] Hudson, pp. 107-110.

[1268] Leach, pp. 282-283, although I am always cautious of a Leachean interpretation.

[1269] Term discussed in Attwood, pp. 23-24.

[1270] For the problems with forgiveness, see Attwood, p. 320. Compare Myles/Simpson, p. 7: "self-esteem problems, self-faultfinding, and self-deprecation are common among individuals with Asperger Syndrome."

[1271] Cohen, p. xxi.

[1272] ClarkCarroll, p. 116; it is her explanation for why Dodgson never sought ordination as a minister.

[1273] Stoffel, p. 65; Hudson, p. 130; Underground, p. 10; WilsonR, p. 109.

[1274] Brooker, p. 6, although this point is disputed.

[1275] Bowman, p. 17; cf. Woolf, p. 128. Leach, p. 52, however thinks Bowman amplified the story.

[1276] CohenMorgan, p. 17,

Dodgson's poem "Stolen Waters"[1277] is also interesting in this regard. It is not usually regarded as a great poem, being written in very irregular stanzas. But the content is indicative: The poet is lured astray by a beautiful woman, who steals his heart away, physically, leaving him cold and weary — a sort of revised "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." But there is a second part, in which "A rosy child… A sweet pale child… an angel-child" rescues him. Morton Cohen, referring to the first part of the poem, declares that it shows that Dodgson "is in trouble."[1278] Clearly something was eating at him in 1862.[1279] But *a child rescued him.* This really sounds like an autistic friend, a child — and, since this is when Dodgson was closest to the Liddells, it is very likely Alice.

It may be that Alice wasn't Dodgson's only autistic friend. His letters to Agnes Hull sound as if he was seeing a very strong friendship break up:

MY DARLING AGGIE,

Oh yes, I know quite well what you're saying — "Why ca'n't the man take a *hint?* He might have *seen* that the beginning of my last letter was meant to show that my affection was cooling down. Why, of course I saw it! But is that any reason why *mine* should cool down, to match?"[1280]

"It is clear that, half in play and half in earnest, these friendships could grow rather intense, and as the girls neared an age of maturity they may have been slightly disturbing to both parties."[1281] This remark about the intensity of the friendship sounds frighteningly familiar to me — and sounds very much like an autistic friendship. (Although we should note that, in the case of Agnes Hull, Dodgson was still writing to her two years later, so the crisis apparently ended.[1282])

Still, it is quite likely that Alice was Dodgson's *first* special friend. Or perhaps Lorina Liddell was the first, with Alice taking over as she grew up and her gifts became more evident. This would explain why so many references in *Wonderland* are to the three sisters, but *Looking Glass* is almost entirely about Alice.

[1277] Published in *Three Sunsets and Other Poems,* and reprinted on p. 962 of Woollcott. It is dated May 9, 1862.

[1278] Cohen, p. 225.

[1279] For another example, see "Solitude": "I'd give all the wealth that toil hath piled… To be once more a little child For one short sunny day" (Stoffel, p. 33).

[1280] CohenLetters, pp. 107-108.

[1281] Hudson, p. 263.

[1282] The letter cited above was written April 21, 1881; CohenLetters, pp. 125-126, has a letter to Hull dated April 6, 1883.

"Sentence first — verdict afterwards": Conclusion

Martin Gardner tells us that "Carroll made friends with hundred of little girls, but there were several of whom he was particularly fond and who received more than his usual attention. The first and most intense of these special friendships was, of course, with Alice Liddell, the original of his fictional Alice. Gertrude [Chataway, later Atkinson] was the second. He first met her in 1875 on the beach at Sandown, a small bathing resort. She was with her parents and three sisters. She was then almost eight."[1283] They would remain friends for the rest of his life, and her recollections of him are found in CollingwoodLife. We might add that Dodgson's diary recorded a meeting with her when she was twenty-six as a "most delightful visit."[1284] More evidence, surely, that Dodgson could care about adults as well as children!

It is not clear why Gardner considers Alice and Gertrude Dodgson's most important friends, unless it is because his best books (the Alice books and the *Snark)* were dedicated to them. Dodgson decided to publish *The Hunting of the Snark* on the day he wrote the dedicatory acrostic to Chataway.[1285] There is an interesting note in one of his later letters to Chataway, which begins, "MY DEAR OLD FRIEND, (The friendship is old, though the child is young.)"[1286] Chataway was by then an adult (the letter was written in 1892); still, it reads like a letter to a very close, serious friend. It is reasonable to assume that Chataway again let him feel the creative freedom that produced his best writing. But by external evidence, Isa Bowman was more important to Dodgson than Chataway; not only does *Sylvie and Bruno* begin with an acrostic on Isa's name, but he gave her substantial financial and career support.[1287] *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* has a subtle dedication to Enid Stevens (later Shawyer); instead of the *first* letter of each line of the poem containing her name, in this case it is the *third* letter. Similarly, *A Tangled Tale* is dedicated to Edith ("Addie") Rix using the *second* letter. (Interestingly, Rix went on to earn a mathematics degree, although at Cambridge rather than Oxford.)[1288]

Dodgson's amazing exertions on behalf of Thomas Jamieson Dymes suggest another relationship of extreme, although inexplicable, importance to Dodgson.[1289] If there were others, they didn't inspire him to great projects.

It is peculiar that Dodgson, although he had adult friends, does not seem to have *formed* special friendships with adults. Alice Liddell, Gertrude Chataway, Isa Bowman — he met them when

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[1283] Gardner-Snark, p. 5 n. 1 [pp. 15-16 n. 1]

[1284] Gardner-Snark, p. 6 n. 1 [p. 16 n. 1].

[1285] Gernsheim, p. 74, based on Dodgson's diary for October 24, 1875. The dedication to Chataway is one of his better ones in a technical sense, since the sixteen lines of the poem spell out Gertrude Chataway, and the four four-line verses begin with the syllables of her name: "Girt, Rude, Chat, Away."

[1286] Hatch, p. 105, beginning of Letter LXXI.

[1287] Leach, p. 56.

[1288] WilsonR, p. 151.

[1289] The financial aspects of this are covered on pp. 278-279 of Woolf. The only explanation Woolf can think of is that the Dymes clan gave Dodgson a chance to feel part of a family, as he had with the Liddells. It occurs to me that Leach, if she had ever mentioned Dymes, would probably suggest that Dodgson got Mrs. Dymes pregnant.

still very young. This is unlike my own case, e.g. — while the average age of my autistic friends is much younger than I, three of the eight have been about my own age, and one substantially older, and most of them were adults when I met them. Was there something that caused Dodgson to avoid even trying for friendships with people his own age? It seems likely, but it is not evident what the reason would be. Perhaps he eventually started to repress something, so that he had no expectations of making friendships with adults. It's hard to believe that he *always* felt that way.

Personal Speculation: I'm going to throw out a truly wild speculation here, and one for which I have absolutely no secondary evidence.[1290] This is just *me.* But I seem to have a strange special sense about my sort of people. I know, very quickly and based on utterly inadequate evidence, when someone has "it." When I met my sixth special friend, I was introduced to her as a fine young fiddler. By the end of the evening, I knew she was unusual. Not until a year later did I learn that she was of exceptional intelligence and someone whose best academic subject was mathematics. Later still, I learned that she spoke multiple languages. I knew she was someone special long before that.

Similarly with special friend number seven. I met her working at a low-wage, menial job. Within a few days, I knew she was… different. And she turned out to be a natural polyglot, musical, of high intelligence — someone who, like me, was extremely skilled, but who had never had her skills properly used or activated. A very autistic trait, that.

What is interesting is that, when I was told that #6 was an expert mathematician, I instantly thought two things: "I *knew* it" and "Not again." Until then, I hadn't really started to assemble the traits found in my autistic friends.

Such special friends are very hard to find because they are so rare. But, for me at least, they are easy to detect when they are encountered. These days, I just *know.*

It is fascinating to learn that Dodgson too seems to have had an "I just know" response. He had corresponded with Gertrude Thomson, and in 1879 they agreed to meet — but she didn't tell him what she looked like. He found her anyway, supposedly by asking a little girl who was with him to point out a woman who "knew fairies." "But, I knew you, before she spoke."[1291]

Dodgson perhaps had that sense with Alice Liddell — but, like me, he didn't know what it was that he was sensing, at least initially. (And I won't claim to know what the particular traits of his friends were — except, probably, for intelligence.) It appears that what Dodgson latched on to was not Alice's brains but her youth — and so he started seeking more friends among the very young. I rather suspect that it cost him — he cut himself off from a lot of special friends. But I don't know.

Personal Viewpoint: The true tragedy of autistic friendships, it seems to me, is that society finds them so hard to accept. On its face, an autistic friendship would seem very noble — they exemplify Chaucer's *trouthe,* the pledge of integrity, fidelity, honesty, and trust that is the true

[1290] Special thanks to "Sarah Jane" for the conversation which led me to this particular point.

[1291] Gernsheim, p. 78; Woolf, p. 99, although she explains this away by noting that Ms. Thomson was carrying a portfolio.

romantic ideal.[1292] And yet, is it socially acceptable to feel such a thing toward a much younger person, or toward many people at once? Perhaps not. On the other hand, for the autistic person, they are very beneficial — they provide relief from depression and anxiety and fear, and they give a support system. And yet, three different times, I have been denied that relief because people assumed I felt something different. In Dodgson's case, he paid that price at least once, with the Liddells. And what would have happened when he met Gertrude Chataway had he *not* been the famous author of *Alice in Wonderland?* I suspect another such disaster might have destroyed him.

And what great creations did we miss because Dodgson, for most of his thirties (which should have been his most creative years) was mired in the reactive depression of the loss of Alice?

For myself, and for the memory of Charles Dodgson, I can only hope that society can learn to recognize this situation and accept the way autistics see their friendships.

All of this is speculative, and — barring a miraculous discovery such as the missing diary page — will always be speculative. And the hypothesis that Charles Dodgson was autistic is well-supported but not proved — and is not materially strengthened by the evidence presented here. Maybe Dodgson really was the smiling pedophile the pop psychologists portray, and his depression really was the result of his desires being frustrated. Or maybe he really did want to marry Alice Liddell — this hypothesis is possible but hardly necessary if we accept that Dodgson was not a pedophile. I certainly might have thought my autistic friendships were being in love if it were not that they came after my one unhappy love affair, where the feelings were even stronger. If Dodgson had not had such a history, might he not have thought he was truly in love with Alice? No hypothesis strikes me as entirely satisfactory. But everything we know fits the profile of an autistic friendship, and consequent disappointment. It's not proof, and there will never be proof — but it's simpler than the alternatives. If it was an autistic friendship, it cost Dodgson a great deal of agony. But it gave us one of the greatest works of English literature. A high price — but also a high reward.

Perhaps the last word should be Morton N. Cohen's. Even though he never mentions autism, his description of Dodgson fits it well:

All his life he struggled against the limits of his nature; all his life he sought to correct, to improve upon, what he was and what he did, to free himself of his guilt, his sins, his lonely isolation. He achieved a degree of success through his feverish activity on behalf of others, for his conscience did not prick him toward the end as it had done in his prime. But with child friends, although they came and went, he never truly succeeded.[1293]

[1292] This description is based on Stevens, pp. 63-65, especially p. 64, describing the problem of Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* and how *trouthe* allows it to be overcome. When I read the description in Stevens, I knew I had finally found the word for what I felt toward my friends. As line 1479 of the *Franklin's Tale* tells us, "Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may kepe."

[1293] Cohen, pp. 532-533.

Appendix: Chronology of the Lives of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and Alice Liddell

	1800	Birth of the future Archdeacon Charles Dodgson, father of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, in Hamilton, Lanarkshire
Feb 6	1811	Birth of Henry George Liddell, later Dean of Christ Church. He was the son of Henry George Liddell Sr., whose elder brother Thomas became Baron Ravensworth in 1820, and of Charlotte Lyon, whose uncle was the eighth Earl of Strathmore
Mar 3	1826	Birth of Lorina Hannah Reeve, later Liddell, sixth and last child of James Reeve and Lorina Farr Reeve
	1830	Charles Dodgson Sr. marries his first cousin Frances Jane "Fanny" Lutwidge
Jan 27	1832	Birth of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, son of Archdeacon Charles Dodgson and Frances Lutwidge Dodgson, in Daresbury, Cheshire
	1834	Birth of Robinson Duckworth
	1843	Dodgson family moves to Croft Rectory in Yorkshire. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott publish the first edition of their *Greek-English Lexicon*
	1844	Dodgson begins to attend Richmond School
	1846	Dodgson begins to attend Rugby School. Henry George Liddell marries Lorina Reeves and becomes Domestic Chaplain to Albert the Prince Consort.
	1848	Birth of Ellen Terry
Sep 6	1847	Birth of Edward Harry Liddell, son of Henry George Liddell and Lorina Reeve Liddell
May 11	1849	Birth of Lorina Charlotte Liddell, later Skene
May 23	1850	Dodgson matriculates at Christ Church, Oxford
Jan 24	1851	Charles Dodgson takes up residence at Christ Church
Jan 26	1851	Death of Frances Lutwidge Dodgson, mother of Charles
May 4	1852	Birth of Alice Pleasance Liddell, later Hargreaves. Her father christened her on June 17
Oct 13	1852	Birth of Reginald Gervis Hargreaves
Apr 7	1853	Birth of Leopold George Duncan Albert, youngest son of Queen Victoria
	1854	Birth of Edith Mary Liddell
Dec 18	1854	Dodgson receives his Bachelor's Degree from Christ Church with First Class Honors in Mathematics, Second Class Honors in Classics
Jun 2	1855	Death of Thomas Gaisford, Dean of Christ Church.
Jun 7	1855	Henry George Liddell is appointed Dean of Christ Church.
	1855	Dodgson becomes Mathematical Lecturer at Christ Church. On October 15, he becomes "Master of the House," guaranteeing him a lifelong place in the college
	1856	Liddell family moves to Christ Church
Apr	1856	Dodgson meets Alice Liddell for the first time

May	1856	Appearance of "The Path of Roses," in which Dodgson first uses the name "Lewis Carroll." Dodgson had suggested four pseudonyms; he learned that editor Edmund Yates preferred "Carroll" on March 1, 1856.
Jun 16	1856	Dodgson sees Ellen Terry play Mamillius in "A Winter's Tale."
	1857	Dodgson receives his Master of Arts
	1858	Dodgson becomes a Senior Student (i.e. Senior Fellow) at Christ Church, granting him privileges which potentially include life long residence
	1859	Birth of Rhoda Caroline Anne Liddell
	1860	Dodgson's first published monograph, *Notes on the First Two Books of Euclid*
Dec 22	1861	Dodgson ordained Deacon in the Church of England
Jul 4	1862	Boat trip on the Thames with Dodgson, Robinson Duckworth, Lorina, Alice, Edith Liddell, at which Alice's Adventures were first told
c. Jun 28	1863	Estrangement of Dodgson from the Liddells
Mar 10	1864	Birth of Violet Constance Liddell
July	1865	*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* published. The first presentation copy went to Alice Liddell on July 4.
	1866	Birth of Gertrude Chataway.
Jun 21	1868	Death of Archdeacon Charles Dodgson
Nov	1868	Charles Dodgson takes the rooms in "Tom Quad" which he will occupy for the rest of his life.
	1871	*Through the Looking Glass* published (the first edition is dated 1872)
May 23	1872	Reginald Hargreaves matriculates at Christ Church.
Feb 7	1874	Lorena Charlotte Liddell marries William Baillie Skene
	1874	Birth of Isa Bowman
	1874	Production of the play "Cakeless," implying Dodgson would object to Alice Liddell's marriage.
	1875	Dodgson meets Gertrude Chataway
Mar 29	1876	*The Hunting of the Snark* published
Jun 13	1876	Marriage of Harry Liddell, who showed little of the academic ability of the rest of his family, to the heiress Minnie Cory
Jun 26	1876	Death (from peritonitis) of Edith Mary Liddell shortly before her marriage
Sep 15	1880	Alice Pleasance Liddell marries Reginald Hargreaves in Westminster Abbey. Dodgson is not present (and gives up photography in this year)
	1881	Dodgson resigns the Mathematical Lectureship (but stays on at Christ Church)
Oct 25	1881	Birth of Alan Knyveton Hargreaves
Jan 8	1883	Birth of Leopold Reginald "Rex" Hargreaves. Prince Leopold agrees to be his godfather.
	1886	Facsimile edition of *Alice's Adventures under Ground* published
Nov 19	1887	Birth of Caryl Liddell Hargreaves
Dec	1891	Dodgson and Alice Hargreaves meet for, apparently, the last time.
Jan 14	1898	Death of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. He is buried at Guilford, the family home since his father's death

Jan 18	1898	Death of Henry George Liddell
	1910	Death of Lorina Reeve Liddell
	1911	Death of Robinson Duckworth
	1911	Death of Edward Harry Liddell
May 9	1915	Death, in combat, of Captain Alan Knyveton Hargreaves, DSO, 2nd Battalion, Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own). He was probably killed by "friendly fire" from artillery.
Sep 25	1916	Death, in combat, of Captain Leopold Reginald "Rex" Hargreaves, MC, Irish Guards
Feb 14?	1926	Death of Reginald Hargreaves
Dec 9	1927	Death of Violet Constance Liddell
	1928	Alice Hargreaves sells the manuscript of *Alice's Adventures under Ground* for £15,400. Death of Ellen Terry.
	1929	Marriage of Caryl Liddell Hargreaves to a war widow. They will have one daughter
Oct 29	1930	Death of Lorina Charlotte Liddell Skene. (Her husband had died in 1911.)
	1933	Evelyn M. Hatch publishes *A Selection from the Letters of Lewis Carroll… to His Child-Friends.* (It contains no letters to or from Alice.)
Nov 16	1934	Death of Alice Pleasance Liddell Hargreaves
May 19	1949	Death of Rhoda Caroline Anne Liddell
	1950	Death of Frederick Francis "Eric" Liddell, the last of Alice's siblings.
	1951	Death of Gertrude Chataway Atkinson
Nov 26	1955	Death of Caryl Liddell Hargreaves. His wife died Aug. 5, 1958.
	1958	Death of Isa Bowman Barclay

Bibliography

This is a semi-annotated bibliography, with comments on the sources for the life of Charles Dodgson and Alice Liddell although not on the other works or authors cited. To speed reference, the primary sources for the life and writings of Dodgson and Alice are shown in RED; those of most importance regarding autism in TEAL.

Gardner, p. 306, lists 22 biographies of Dodgson/Carroll, of which seven are cited here; I have also cited two published since then and one Gardner does not mention. Many are now unavailable. Two of the three biographies of Alice Liddell are also apparently out of print (books by Christina Bjork, *The Other Alice,* and C. M. Rubin with Gabriella Rubin, *The Real Alice in Wonderland,* are primarily picture books, not biographies); the third, Cohen's *Lewis Carroll and Alice,* can be ordered from the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, http://www.lewiscarroll.org/, but is not in fact a biography. I hope I have consulted enough biographies to establish the basic facts, and have tried to avoid the books which argue for the most untenable positions (that Dodgson was a drug addict, that he was Jack the Ripper, that he was a child rapist, that he was really Queen Victoria, etc.). The one true revisionist work consulted is Leach, which is a useful corrective but clearly goes too far. The list below includes comments on the books about Dodgson so that you may know which were most useful.

It should perhaps be added that most information about autism remains formally anecdotal. For example, one of the papers in Prior is "Cognitive and Academic Problems" by Jo-Ann Reitzel and Peter Szatmari, which is cited on p. 239 of Attwood. And yet, pp. 42-43 of Prior lists the studies on which it is based, and the size of the population studied. The average number of test subjects in the studies was twenty-two; the median was twenty-one. It is generally agreed that a sample, to be statistically valid, must contain *at least* thirty test subjects. Only one study exceeded this threshold, and it only marginally. Freely granting the problem of finding a large sample of autistic children, these statistical studies simply aren't very meaningful.

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Bloom: *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Lewis Carroll's* Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom, Chelsea House, 2006. *A collection of essays about Dodgson's work, of varying value but often significant historical interest.*

Bowman: Isa Bowman, *The Story of Lewis Carroll, Told by the Real Alice in Wonderland,* Dent, 1899. References are to the eBook version released by Project Gutenberg. *Bowman was one of Dodgson's most beloved young friends — he dedicated* Sylvie and Bruno *to her as well as supporting her acting career — so she has genuine inside information. But she seems to have partially fictionalized their relationship because of the social attitudes of the time. She called herself "the Real Alice" because she played Alice in the stage version, succeeding Phoebe Carlo in that role.*

Boyer: Carl B. Boyer, *A History of Mathematics,* 1968; second edition revised by Uta C. Merzbach and with an introduction by Isaac Asimov, John Wiley, 1989, 1991

Brooker: Will Brooker, *Alice's Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Culture,* Continuum, 2004. *This is not about Dodgson but about society's response to Dodgson. It has some biographical detail, but its main use is to demonstrates how many crazy hypotheses about Dodgson there are.*

Brumwell & Speck: Stephen Brumwell and W. A. Speck, *Cassell's Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Cassell & Co., 2001

Carley: Michael John Carley, *Asperger's from the Inside Out,* with a foreword by Peter F. Gerhardt, Ed.D., Perigee Books, 2008.

Carpenter: Humphrey Tolkien, *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Biography,* 1977; references are to the 2000 Houghton Mifflin paperback

[Carroll, Lewis = C. L Dodgson: see Gardner, Gardner-Snark, Norton, and Underground]

ClarkAlice: Anne Clark, *The Real Alice: Lewis Carroll's Dream Child,* 1981; references are to the 1982 Stein and Day edition. *This was the first real biography of Alice Liddell, so it has its rough edges, and some of its most important statements about Alice seem to be undocumented (e.g. Clark claims on p. 95 that Alice somehow kept track of the progress of her book), but its main defect is that it seems to assume an affection between Dodgson and the adult Alice for which there is no clear evidence.*

ClarkCarroll: Anne Clark, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography,* Schoken Books, 1979. *A straightforward biography, but one which tends to maintain the Dodgson-as-saint viewpoint. Written before the existence of high-functioning autism was widely known, it of course does not mention the condition — but does give much relevant psychological detail.*

Cohen: Morton N. Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography,* 1995; page references are to the 1996 Vintage edition. *Probably the most important work of the most thorough of all Carroll biographers, but of course it is only one person's viewpoint, and it came out just before Leach made her discovery of the note allegedly summarizing the missing diary page.*

CohenLetters: Morton N. Cohen, editor, with the assistance of Roger Lancelyn Green, *The Selected Letters of Lewis Carroll,* Pantheon, 1982, based in *The Letters of C. L. Dodgson,* 1978.

CohenMorgan: Morton N. Cohen, *Lewis Carroll and Alice, 1832-1982,* The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1982. *This isn't really a biography; it's a description of the items displayed at the Morgan Library on the sesquicentennial of Dodgson's birth. Still, one can learn a certain amount from the catalog of artifacts.*

CollingwoodLife: Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll,* 1898; page references are to the (scanned-and-OCRed) Echo Library edition, which may contain some errors of transcription. Because the pagination varies between editions, I have cited chapter numbers as well as pages. *This was written by Dodgson's nephew, and is extremely and excessively complimentary. Nonetheless it cannot be ignored, because it is the* only *source to have had access to all Dodgson's papers before they were lost, dispersed, or cut out by other relatives.*

CollingwoodPictures: Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, editor, *Diversions & Disgressions of Lewis Carroll,* Dover, 1961, being a version, with additional photographs, of Collingwood's *The Lewis Carroll Picture Book,* T. Fisher Unwin, 1899. *A collection of Dodgson's lesser writings, plus artwork; there are a few odd facts to be derived from Collingwood's annotations, but overall, the value is slight.*

Collins: Bud Collins and Zander Hollander, editors, *Bud Collins' Tennis Encyclopedia,* 1997 edition, Visible Ink Press.

Crease: Robert P. Crease, *The Great Equations,* 2008; references are to the 2010 Norton paperback

[Dodgson, Charles L = Lewis Carroll: see Gardner, Gardner-Snark, Norton, and Underground]

Douglas/Elwell/Toon: J. D. Douglas, Walter A. Elwell, Peter Tune, *The Concise Dictionary of the Christian Tradition,* Regency Reference Library, 1989.

Dubin: Nick Dubin, *Asperger Syndrome and Anxiety: A Guide to Successful Stress Management,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2009.

Ellis: Roger Ellis, *Who's Who in British History: Victorian Britain 1851-1901,* 1907; references are to the 2001 Stackpole Books edition.

Emerson: Ken Emerson: *Doo-Dah! Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture,* 1997; references are to the 1998 Da Capo paperback edition.

Frith: Uta Frith, *Autism: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford University Press, 2008.

Fuld: James J. Fuld, *The Book of World-Famous Music*, 1966, 1971, 1983; fourth edition, Dover, 1995

Gardner: Martin Gardner, *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition,* Norton, 2000. This comprehensive edition includes material from *The Annotated Alice,* Clarkson Potter, 1960, and *More Annotated Alice,* 1990. Page references are to the *Definitive Edition,* but since most of the more important notes date back to the 1960 edition, where I have been able to identify the page number in the original *Annotated Alice,* this is shown in [brackets]. Gardner's is also the edition used for quotations from the published Alice books. As a shorthand, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* will be cited as *Wonderland; Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* as *Looking Glass. Gardner's work is not a biography, but it contains many biographical details in the notes and introduction. Gardner is however very reluctant to criticize Dodgson.*

Gardner-Snark: Martin Gardner et al, *The Annotated Hunting of the Snark: The Definitive Edition,* Norton, 2006, with introduction by Adam Gopnik. As with *The Annotated Alice,* this is an expanded edition, and I have shown, with [brackets], references to an earlier edition, *Lewis Carroll's The Hunting of the Snark: Centennial Edition,* consisting of Gardner's *The Annotated Snark* and other materials plus a foreword by James Tanis, William Kaufmann, Inc., 1981.

Gernsheim: Helmut Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll: Photographer,* 1949; references are to the 1969 Dover edition with a new preface by the author. *Since this is primarily a collection of photos, it has little information about Dodgson himself, but it does show the originality of his photographic work.*

Gessen: Masha Gessen, *Perfect Rigor: A Genius and the Mathematical Breakthrough of the Century,* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.

GilliverEtAl: Peter Gilliver, Jeremy Marshall, Edmund Weiner, *The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the* Oxford English Dictionary, 2006; references are to the 2009 Oxford University Press paperback

Gordon: Colin Gordon, *Beyond the Looking Glass: Reflections of Alice and her Family,* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982. *Very richly illustrated, although the documentation leaves something to be desired. The illustrations give a genuine idea, e.g., of Alice's skill as an artist; much of the material is based on searching through the family collection of artifacts and mementos. It isn't quite a biography, but it is very useful to the biographer.*

Grandin & Barron: Temple Grandin & Sean Barron, edited by Veronica Zysk, *Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships: Decoding Social Mysteries Through the Unique Perspective of Autism,* Future Horizons, 2005.

Gribbin: John Gribbin, *Science: A History 1543-2001,* BCA, 2002.

Grotta-Kurska: Daniel Grotta-Kurska, *J. R. R. Tolkien: Architect of Middle-Earth,* edited by Frank Wilson, Running Press, 1976 (note: several substantial sections of this book have been omitted "for legal reasons." It is by no means clear what the significance of this is. Also, there are very many obvious typographical errors — which implies a high likelihood of less obvious errors as well).

Hatch: *A Selection from the Letters of Lewis Carroll (The Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) to His Child-Friends,* edited with an Introduction and Notes by Evelyn M. Hatch, Macmillan and Co., 1933. *Dozens of letters, with most of the selections introduced by Hatch in a way that gives some insight into Dodgson's relationship with his correspondents.*

Howard: John Trasker Howard, "Stephen Foster," article from *The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians;* reprinted in Elie Siegmeister, editor, *The Music Lover's Handbook,* William Morrow and Company, 1943.

Hudson: Derek Hudson, *Lewis Carroll,* Macmillan, 1954. *The first biography of Dodgson after the initial publication of his diaries by Roger Lancelyn Green (who did not see the actual diaries). It also includes other new material. Because Hudson did not have the full diaries, it lacks some important data, and is perhaps too kind to Dodgson as a result.*

Isaacs & Zimbardo, Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo, *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J. R. R. Tolkien's* The Lord of the Rings, University of Notre Dame Press, 1968

Jackson: Luke Jackson, *Freaks, Geeks & Asperger Syndrome,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002

Jones/Gladstone: Jo Elwyn Jones & J. Francis Gladstone, *The Red King's Dream or Lewis Carroll in Wonderland,* 1995; page references are to the 1996 Pimlico paperback. *This is not a biography of Dodgson but an attempt to "decipher" the* Alice *books. It is marked by historical errors and, frankly, ignorance about the work of other Dodgson scholars. It must be used with caution, but because it is not a biography, it sometimes brings out points not found elsewhere.*

Leach: Karoline Leach, *In the Shadow of the Dreamchild: The Myth and Reality of Lewis Carroll,* originally published in 1999 as *In the Shadow of the Dreamchild: A New Understanding of Lewis Carroll;* revised paperback edition published by Peter Owen, 2009. *A sort of double-revisionist work, intended to rewrite a legend. It is not really a biography; it is an attack on the legend which, in the absence of actual data to support Leach's position, often proceeds by declaring all other data — no matter how significant and relevant — valueless. It is perhaps fitting that the last word in the main text is "pornography."*

Levy: Joel Levy, *Newton's Notebook: The Life, Times, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton*, Running Press, 2009

Moses: Belle Moses, *Lewis Carroll: In Wonderland and at Home,* D. Appleton & Co, 1910. References are to the eBook version released by Project Gutenberg. *This is written in a very cutesy style, and can have had little information other than that found in CollingwoodLife and Bowman (both of which are also available from Project Gutenberg) and the other early reminiscences; and she seems to have filled in what she could not know with ideas out of her own head (Leach, p. 68, refers to her "fatally fey" style and says it contains "no new material"; none of the other biographies reference it at all); I have used it only minimally.*

Myles/Simpson: Brenda Smith Myles & Richard L. Simpson, *Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Educators,* second edition, pro-ed press, 2003.

Norton: (Lewis Carroll), *Alice in Wonderland,* a Norton Critical Edition, edited by Donald J. Gray, second edition, Norton, 1992. Despite the title, it contains not just *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* but also *Through the Looking Glass* and *The Hunting of the Snark,* plus critical and historical material. The latter includes but is not limited to material from ClarkCarroll and CollingwoodLife.

OxfordCompanion: John Cannon, editor, *The Oxford Companion to British History* second edition, Oxford, 2002

Page: Tim Page, *Parallel Play,* 2009; references are to the 2010 Anchor Books edition with a brief new preface.

Pearce: Joseph Pearce, *Tolkien: Man and Myth,* Ignatius Press, 1998

Porter: Roy Porter, Consulting Editor, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scientists* second edition (the first edition was in six volumes for different types of scientists, published 1983-1985), Oxford University Press, 1994

Poundstone: William Poundstone, *Gaming the Vote: Why Elections Aren't Fair (and What We Can Do About It),* Hill and Wang, 2008.

Prior: Margot Prior, editor, *Learning and Behavior Problems in Asperger Syndrome,* Guilford Press, 2003.

Ridley: Matt Ridley, *The Agile Gene: How Nature Turns on Nurture*, Perennial, 2004; originally published 2003 as *Nature via Nurture: genes, experience, and what makes us human.*

Robison: John Elder Robison, *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperget's,* 2007; paperback edition with new afterword, Three Rivers Press, 2008.

Ruskin: John Ruskin, *Præterita,* in being volume 26 of *The Complete Works of John Ruskin, LL.D.,* Bryan, Taylor & Company, 1894. Available on Google Books, books.google.com/books?id=M8MdAAAAMAAJ. Checked June 30. 2013.

Saunders & Root: Steven Saunders and Deane L. Root, *The Music of Stephen C. Foster, Volume 2, 1856-1869,* Smithsonian Institute Press, 1990.

ShippeyAuthor: Tom Shippey, *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century,* 2000; references are to the 2002 Houghton-Mifflin paperback

ShippeyRoad: Tom Shippey, *The Road to Middle-Earth: How J. R. R. Tolkien Created a New Mythology,* revised edition, Houghton-Mifflin, 2003

Spaeth: Sigmund Spaeth, *A History of Popular Music in America,* Random House, 1948.

Stoffel: Stephanie Lovett Stoffel, *Lewis Carroll in Wonderland: The Life and Times of Alice and Her Creator,* Discoveries Books, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996? *Short, and heavily illustrated, so the amount of text is small. But, within its limits, it seems to be one of the better biographies.*

Simone: Rudy Simone, *Asperger's on the Job,* Future Horizons, 2010.

Stevens: John Stevens, *Medieval Romance: Themes and Approaches,* Norton Library, 1973.

Szpiro: George G. Szpiro, *Numbers Rule: The Vexing Mathematics of Democracy, from Plato to the Present,* Princeton University Press, 2010.

Tammet: Daniel Tammet, *Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant: A Memoir,* 2006; references are to the 2007 Free Press edition.

Thompson: Henry Lewis Thompson, *Henry George Liddell, D.D., Dean of Christ Church, Oxford,* Henry Holt, 1899. References are to the eBook version released by Google Books. *This never mentions Dodgson, never mentions Alice, and is a thoroughly dull panegyric. But it helps put Dodgson in context.*

TolkienFamily: John & Priscilla Tolkien, *The Tolkien Family Album,* Houghton Mifflin, 1992

TolkienFellowship: J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring,* being the first part of *The Lord of the Rings,* second edition; page references are to the Houghton Mifflin thirteenth printing

TolkienLetters: *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien,* selected and edited by Humphrey Carpenter with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien, Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

TolkienSilmarillion: J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion,* edited by Christopher Tolkien, first edition, Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Underground: *Alice's Adventures under Ground,* a facsimile of Charles Dodgson's original manuscript with an introduction by Sally Brown, The British Library/Folio Society, 2008.

Volkmar & Wiesner, Fred R. Volkmar and Lisa A. Wiesner, *A Practical Guide to Autism: What Every Parent, Family Member, and Teacher Needs to Know,*, John Wiley & Sons, 2009.

Weintraub: Stanley Weintraub, *Victoria,* 1987; references are to the 1988 Dutton paperback

White: Michael White, *Tolkien: A Biography,* Little, Brown, 2001; references are to the 2010 Abacus paperback

Willey: Liane Holliday Willey, *Pretending to be Normal: Living with Asperger's Syndrome,* 1999; references are to the 2000 Jessica Kingsley Publishers paperback edition

WilsonAN: A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians,* 2002; page references are to the 2003 Arrow Books paperback

WilsonR: Robin Wilson, *Lewis Carroll in Numberland: His Fantastical Mathematical Logical Life,* Norton, 2008. *This is devoted to Dodgson's career as a mathematician, not as the author of* Alice. *So while it is about Dodgson, it is not often cited in this work.*

Winchester: Simon Winchester, *The Alice Behind Wonderland,* Oxford University Press, 2011. *This is primarily about Dodgson as a photographer, and particularly about the photo "The Beggar Maid"; it has little of biography, although the information about the photographs is sometimes useful.*

Woolf: Jenny Woolf, *The Mystery of Lewis Carroll,* St. Martin's Press, 2010. *The newest account of Dodgson's life as of this writing, this is less a biography than a series of chapters on various topics, but as such it gives useful insights into how Dodgson felt about various things.*

Woollcott: Lewis Carroll, *Complete Works,* with an introduction by Alexander Woollcott, Vintage, 1976 (originally published 1936 as *The complete works of Lewis Carroll).* Most references are to the introduction by Woollcott rather than the text of the work.

Zipes: Jack Zipes, editor, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales: The Western fairy tale tradition from medieval to modern,* Oxford University Press, 2000.

Web Sites

Autism Hangout: http://www.autismhangout.com/. Created by Craig Evans. Pages checked between October 26 and November 16, 2011.

GreenEtAl: LeeAnne Green, Deborah Fein, Charlotte Modahl, Carl Feinstein, Lynn Waterhouse, and Mariana Morris, "Oxytocin and Autistic Disorder: Alterations in Peptide Forms," https://www.google.com/url?url=http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url%3Fhl%3Den%26q%3Dhttp://www.researchgate.net/publication/11662767_Oxytocin_and_autistic_disorder_alterations_in_peptide_forms/file/50463517ae481609c9.pdf%26sa%3DX%26scisig%3DAAGBfm1o4vjEJStDPgRkOHGJMUvfuP3vNg%26oi%3Dscholarr&rct=j&sa=X&ei=soLRUfLLKKK6yQGGu4HgCQ&ved=0CC0QgAMoATAA&q=oxytocin+low+levels+autism&usg=AFQjCNHde3rRCxkzUf1BTY1HcooCIJZH1A. Page checked July 1, 2013.

LennyAlice: "Lenny's Alice in Wonderland site," http://www.alice-in-wonderland.net/. Unless otherwise specified, references are to the page "Alice Liddell" under "Background Info." (www.alice-in-wonderland.net/alice1e.html). Pages checked November 14-15, December 5, 2011.

LewisCarrollSociety: "The Lewis Carroll Society of North America" site, http://www.lewiscarroll.org/. Pages checked June 28-July 1, 2013.

LibraryThing: The Legacy Library of Lewis Carroll, a reconstruction (based on bookseller's lists and other sources) of Charles Dodgson's library. http://www.librarything.com/catalog/Lewis_Carroll. Pages checked June 30, 2013.

LoC Sheet Music: Library of Congress Sheet Music Collection, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mussmhtml/mussmhome.html

NIHOxytocin: "Plasma oxytocin levels in autistic children." http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9513736. Page checked July 1, 2013.

PsychologyTodayOxytocin: Psychology Today's blog, article "The Trust Hormone: How Oxytocin Can Help Treat Autism." http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/spectrum-theory/201306/the-trust-hormone-how-oxytocin-can-help-treat-autism. Page checked July 1, 2013.

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