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“Little Daylight” in George MacDonald’s *At the Back of the North Wind*

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Among George MacDonald’s fantasy writings, *At the Back of the North Wind* (*BNW*) is remarkable both for its social realism and complex narrative structure.¹ A London coachman’s son named Diamond goes to the land at the back of the north wind. Diamond meets a female personification of the north wind, who brings him around in her bosom over the city of London, towards the ocean and to the dream-like country at her back. The thematically significant fusion of reality and fantasy — the juxtaposition of Victorian London and the mysterious country designating death — formally corresponds to its intricate narrative web with layers of different voices and utterances: the main narrator unexpectedly begins acting as a character in his own narrative towards the end of the book; Mr Raymond writes riddles, revises nursery rhymes and tells stories; and the main character Diamond sings poems of his own and out of books.

Of these interpolations into the main narrative, Mr Raymond’s story “Little Daylight” (Chapter 28) is sometimes considered an independent fairy tale. Rachel Johnson, however, has recognised this tale as “a turning point” in *BNW* “as the lives of Diamond’s family, Nanny and Mr Raymond ... become inextricably linked,” in other words, a point where fairy tale “leak[s] into the realistic aspects” of the novel (42-43). Johnson’s insight into the function of this fairy tale in its host story of *BNW* is worth pursuing further.

¹ *At the Back of the North Wind* was first serialized in *Good Words for the Young* from November 1868 to October 1870, and published as a one-volume edition in 1871. For the complex narrative structure of this novel, see Pennington, and McGillis “Outworn” 85-86.

In this paper, I would like to suggest that this fairy tale of “Little Daylight” marks Diamond’s influence on Mr Raymond’s creativity, and that his influence is represented as reaching beyond the world of *BNW*. First, I will show how “Little Daylight” is thematically interconnected with Diamond’s and Nanny’s dreams to communicate one of the major concerns of *BNW*. Secondly, I will argue that Mr Raymond reveals different creativity in “Little Daylight” from his previous works, and his newly gained creative force is influenced by Diamond. Finally, I will suggest that Mr Raymond’s creation of this fairy tale mirrors the main narrator’s fictional creation of *BNW* as a whole, and that this mirroring mediates the fictional world of *BNW* and the extra-text world of readers.

I Mr Raymond’s “Little Daylight,” and Diamond’s and Nanny’s Dreams

In Chapter 28, Mr Raymond tells his story “Little Daylight” to children at the hospital, including the street sweeper Nanny, and Diamond, who has come with him. The story is about a princess cursed by a wicked fairy to wake all night and “wax and wane with its mistress the moon” (222). A prince comes and kisses her without knowing her to break the curse.

Like “The Light Princess,” which originally appeared in *Adela Cathcart* (1864), Mr Raymond’s story “Little Daylight” is independent enough to be considered separable from *BNW*. Yet, in its host narrative, it has thematic connections and shares core significance with two other stories. It is carefully placed between Diamond’s dream (Chapter 25) and Nanny’s dream (Chapter 30).² In the last but one chapter of *BNW*, during his last encounter with North Wind in this world, Diamond expresses his belief that all these three stories — “Little Daylight” and the two dreams — are born under the influence of North Wind (289). Answering his questions, she admits that she gave Diamond “the dream ... about the little boys that dug for the stars,” and that

² In the serial version, the three chapters appeared successively in May, June and July 1870.

she was "the lady that sat at the window of the moon" in Nanny's dream (289). Besides, she has something to do with "Little Daylight" (289).

U. C. Knoepfelmacher, who has included these three stories in his edition of MacDonald's *Complete Fairytales* (2000), argues that these stories "are competing versions of the core fantasy that shapes the plot of" *BNW*, for each narrative "dramatizes the same yearning for incorporation with a female Other that so powerfully fuels MacDonald's imagination" ("Erasing" 99).³ While Knoepfelmacher suggestively discusses each story, especially concerning the female sexuality in Nanny's dream and Mr Raymond's "Little Daylight," there seem to be more pertinent motifs and themes which combine these incorporated narratives and which express the basic worldview of *BNW*: circularity and rebirth.

In his dream in Chapter 25, Diamond goes down a stair into the earth in order to meet a group of merry naked boys with wings — angels — in the sky (204-05). They eagerly welcome him as their peer. The route Diamond takes suggests that underground leads to heaven, as if prefiguring the uplifting movement of a dead person after burial from underground to heaven, from death to life. These boy-angels dig up stone-like stars in the sky to find a door to be born into this world.⁴ When one of them finds a star-stone of the colour he likes, he jumps down to earth through the star-hole, losing his wings (206-07). The captain of the angels remarks, "Some people say ... that they [wings] come again. I don't know." (207) This intimates a possibility that humans, or ex-angels without wings, might become angels again. Diamond goes through the route from underground to heaven, and witnesses the pre-existence in the sky and the inverted route from heaven to earth. Heaven and earth are thus connected in a circular path, suggesting a possible rebirth.

Just as he dreams of the angels' world and wakes up out of it, so Diamond visits and returns from the land at the back of North Wind. The whole story of Diamond's

³ Robert Wolff calls these three stories "interpolated fairy-tales" without exploring connections between them (11-12).

⁴ This corresponds to the Romantic view of childhood that babies are nearer heaven than adults.

adventure, which blurs the boundary between reality and dream, makes a circle, going out of this world into another world, coming back to this world and going to another world again. His physical condition corresponds to this circular journey, from nearly dying through recovery to final death. Depicting the circular movement suggests that his final departure from this world is not actually the end of his life, and this is confirmed in Chapter 37 where North Wind takes Diamond on the journey into another world. The narrator declares in the very last sentence of this novel: “They thought he was dead. I knew that he had gone to the back of the north wind.” (298) Diamond’s dream thus epitomises one of the essential understandings of life presented in *BNW*.⁵

In Chapter 28, Mr Raymond tells the story of “Little Daylight,” in which the moon plays a major role. Princess Daylight enacts the cycle of the moon in her own physical condition, repeatedly aging close to death and regaining her youth, strength and life. The moon’s waxing and waning shows its cycle clearly to human eyes and indicates the flowing of time. Princess Daylight makes a circle in her dance, mirroring the moon’s condition from new to full moon, while expressing her destined unnatural condition living always in the night.

A human life essentially has a linear movement from birth to death, while the moon repeats the cycle, appearing to change its shape as it circles the earth. Tethered to it because of the wicked fairy’s curse, Princess Daylight is confined to the darker world, maidenhood, and the realm of sterility and death. The prince’s kissing her while she is in her old woman phase and most pitiable physical appearance not only at once recuperates her youth, by liberating her from this cursed tie to the moon, but also

⁵ Richard Reis observes that the “idea of trips to the other world sandwiched between returns to this is ... typical of MacDonald and of some symbolic significance.” He compares Diamond with the child-heroes of other fairy tales, including Charles Kingsley’s *The Water Babies*, one of the literary sources of this novel (17). It is suggestive that, according to Coleman Parsons, “Old Diamond’s progress through life — that of a good job followed by adversity nobly borne and a return to clover — constitutes MacDonald’s greatest originality in the chronicle of the horse. In literature, once a horse has started on the downward path, he goes from bad to worse” (2). Thus MacDonald gave a circular path also in Old Diamond’s life.

suggests her passage from girlhood to womanhood and their future life in the sun, the realm of life.⁶ Princess Daylight's story is thus deeply defined by circularity and rebirth. In this case, stepping out of this circle is her salvation into human life.

Nanny's dream, which she recounts to Diamond in Chapter 30, is also about the moon and its cycle. She is invited into the moon by the Man in the Moon and ordered to clean the windows on its surface. She finds the lady there and later, against her order, opens the box of bees. The lady of the moon in Nanny's dream turns out to be North Wind, as later she herself admits to Diamond (289). She is already associated with the moon in her first appearance: "her face looked out of the midst of it [her dark hair] like a moon out of a cloud" (52, see also 114).

Nanny is expelled after she opens the lady's box of bees and lets three bees out (251). The bees are said to gather "their honey" not from the flowers but "from the sun and the stars" (249). Once escaped, the lady has no choice but burn them, which causes a storm (251). Nanny's mischief is more serious than it first appears. The bees' task is presumably to gather the light-honey so as to change the moon's phase. Letting more bees out than ordained, as Nanny does, could disturb the moon's cycle and thus the order of time.

Although the theme of rebirth is not self-evident in Nanny's dream, she herself is now recovering from being seriously ill. Diamond asks Mr Raymond to take care of her, and he brings her to the children's hospital. Nanny's illness and recovery, while reflecting the detrimental conditions of poor children's lives in contemporary London, echoes Diamond's pattern of circular movement. He falls into serious illness and recovers from it in this world, as he visits and returns from the northern land, mingling reality and dream. After listening to her dream, Diamond wonders to himself: "Perhaps if she [Nanny] hadn't done that [opening the box of bees], the moon might

⁶ Knoepflmacher argues that the true protagonist of this story is "the prince who must overcome his aversion to menstrual women" ("Erasing" 101). Although it might be significant to perceive an allusion to menstrual cycle in the princess's condition, in the story the prince does not seem to express his aversion to the princess in the appearance of an old woman.

have carried her to the back of the north wind — who knows?” (252) He thus intimates a possibility that Nanny could also have been brought to another world in her illness just like him.

This similar pattern of falling into illness and recovering from it seems to underline the difference between the two children. Their dreams share a common concern about two worlds, here and there. In their dreams both of them visit another world and come back. Unlike Nanny, harshly expelled because of her mischief, Diamond is warmly welcomed by the angels. It is hinted that Diamond is an angel himself when the captain of the angels assumes that he also has had wings before, and when he falls asleep and fails to see the girl-angels, who are said to only come after the boy-angels fall asleep. Diamond will die and go back to another world, while Nanny is going to live on in this world at the end of *BNW*.

This contrast between the two children marks Diamond’s peculiarity and his chosen role to mediate between what is there and what is here.⁷ Diamond is called “God’s baby” by the other cabbies and Nanny, who regards him as “not right in the head” (172). Mr Raymond, the narrator and some critics recognise more significance in this title. Mr Raymond says to himself: “I suspect the child’s a genius” (189); and the narrator confesses: “It seemed to me, somehow, as if little Diamond possessed the secret of life, and was himself ... an angel of God with something special to say or do” (276). Roderic McGillis casts the mantle of Christ over Diamond: Diamond “becomes ‘God’s baby’, a Christ figure who spreads his message of love, obedience, and duty through his actions and his words.” (“Language” 194)⁸ After returning from the land

⁷ Stephen Prickett suggests that “In himself he [Diamond] connects the two worlds of matter and spirit” (“Introduction” 27). MacDonald was influenced by the Swedish mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg, who believed in the correspondence between the two worlds, spiritual and natural (see e.g. Kessler).

⁸ Naomi Wood discusses Mr Raymond’s and the narrator’s fascination with Diamond as “the origin of language, and indeed of life” (72-73). For a Christian reading, see also Manlove and Smith; MacNiece 94-101 is equally instructive, though he does not discuss *BNW*. On the other hand, Fernando Soto emphasises the importance of Greek mythological dimensions in this novel.

at North Wind's back, Diamond begins to exercise his influence over the people around him, as in the episode concerning a drunken cabman who reforms under Diamond's influence (171). He thus becomes a mediator between the two worlds.

Concerning the moon, Nanny's dream offers a different version of the man in the moon from Mr Raymond's version found in his poem "The True History of Cat and Fiddle" (200-01). In Diamond's evaluation, Nanny's version has more truth than Mr Raymond's. The ostentatious claim of truth in the title is perhaps recalled when Mr Raymond introduces his story "Little Daylight." He asks the children: "What sort of the story shall it be?" (218) He calls this story "a fairy tale," different from "a true story" (218). Despite the author calling it a fairy tale, this story, together with the two dreams, conveys a deep truth and insight into the world. They share the motifs both of circular movements of the moon or between two worlds, and of death and rebirth corresponding to the circularity.

These three stories are thus closely interlaced in their thematic significance. As Diamond perceives and North Wind herself admits, they are all connected to North Wind (289). She executes the will of the higher order, sometimes bringing death. She "obeyed orders" when she sank a ship and is called "Bad Fortune, sometimes Evil Chance, sometimes Ruin" or with "another name," presumably death (113, 289). The three stories under the influence of this most powerful figure in the novel express its deepest concerns of the cycle of death and rebirth in fantastic terms.⁹ In the next section, I will draw attention to Diamond's differing in appreciation of Mr Raymond's earlier works and "Little Daylight."

II "Little Daylight" as Mr Raymond's work

⁹ Prickett observes that "MacDonald actually finds the roots of his inspiration in the fact of death itself" (*Victorian* 169). According to David Robb, this novel "is perhaps MacDonald's most drastic attempt to transform our vision of death, and to offer it as something to be wholeheartedly accepted" (29).

Introducing “Little Daylight,” the narrator underlines Mr Raymond’s literary source: “I cannot myself help thinking that he was somewhat indebted for this one to the old story of *The Sleeping Beauty*” (219). While admitting that Mr Raymond wrote down the story as we have it, he seems to partly undermine his authorship to the story “Little Daylight.” This story indeed shares some familiar elements with traditional fairy tales such as *Sleeping Beauty*: an uninvited wicked fairy curses a princess and a good fairy offers a remedy, in which a prince comes to kiss and save the princess. It recalls also a story like *Beauty and Beast* with its discrepancy between appearance and true identity.

Referring to the narrator’s comments, Knoepfmacher contends that the “insertion of ‘Little Daylight’ into *At the Back of the North Wind* ... only underscores the freshness of Diamond’s nonliterary imagination” (“Erasing” 104). Certainly, the wordplay in the name of Princess Daylight, for example, who wakes all the night in spite of her name, confirms the author’s conscious literariness.

As we have seen, however, Diamond himself appreciates “Little Daylight,” perceiving in it some influence of North Wind, along with his own and Nanny’s dreams. This suggests that the nature of “Little Daylight” is not completely opposite to what Knoepfmacher calls “Diamond’s nonliterary imagination,” but is partly given inspiration from the same source as Diamond’s imagination.

In contrast to his appreciation of “Little Daylight,” Diamond does not figure out a meaning or find much sense in earlier poems written by Mr Raymond. These are found in the second part of *BNW*, which has a tripartite structure: Diamond’s first encounter with North Wind and visit to the land at her back (Chapters 1-13); his cab driver life in London (Chapters 14-33); and his life in Mr Raymond’s residence named the Mound, where he dies (Chapters 34-38).

In Chapter 22, we first read Mr Raymond’s riddle of a tree, beginning “I have only one foot, but thousands of toes; My one foot stands, but never goes” (190).¹⁰ He is said to like “the old-fashioned riddle best” (190). He challenges Diamond to solve

¹⁰ MacDonald published this riddle in *Poetical Works* Vol 2 (1893).

this rhymed riddle, which he cannot. The narrator comments on this, remarking "Genius finds out truths, not tricks" (190). He thus insinuates his disapproval of Mr Raymond's riddle for riddle's sake and defends Diamond.

In Chapter 24, furthermore, we witness Mr Raymond's undeniable derivativeness in the poem "The True History of the Cat and the Fiddle," an ostentatious parody of the traditional nursery rhyme, also alluding to the Man in the Moon (200-01). His works before "Little Daylight" thus show his inclination to artificiality and literariness. This rewrite of the traditional nursery rhymes is included in the same book as the riddle of a tree, a book Mr Raymond gives Diamond. Despite the title insisting on revealing the truth, Diamond chooses to sing the parody when he is too happy to "sing sense" (200).¹¹

These earlier works of Mr Raymond make a clear contrast with Diamond's creativity, which is inexorably intertwined with the dream-like land at North Wind's back. This land is represented as "the origin of stories ... the source of creative powers" according to Makman (117) and "the source of poetry" in McGillis's phrase ("Language" 196).

When it comes to telling us about this land of poetry, the narrator draws on two reports about the land — by the Italian poet Dante Alighieri and the Scottish writer James Hogg — since his personal source Diamond "has forgotten a great deal, and what he did remember was very hard to tell" (122). It is hard to tell for Diamond partly because the people there "do not speak at all" (122). Paradoxically, the non-verbal aspect is thus attributed to the land of creativity, poetry and stories.

We have a glimpse of the nature of the land's creative power in a poem imitating a river flowing there.¹² In Chapter 13, after his coming back to this world, Diamond

¹¹ In his dream, Diamond hears "the angels' nonsense." The version which we have in the text, however, is "so near sense that he thought it could not be really what they did sing" (209). Thus, Mr Raymond's nonsense is compared and contrasted with the angels' one. By contrast, Diamond thinks the poem "Little Boy Blue" in the book he found on the beach "means something" (182).

¹² For understanding of the significance of the river song, I am indebted to Knoepflmacher "Erasing" 97-99, Makman 118 and McGillis "Language" 191.

and his mother find a book on the beach at Sandwich. Out of this book, she reads aloud to him a river song, beginning “I know a river/ whose waters run asleep/ run run over/ singing in the shallow/ dumb in the hollows ...” (139). It continues over four pages in print. She stops, saying “It’s such nonsense!” and “I believe it would go on for ever” (144). Diamond recognises it as the river song at the back of the north wind — “That’s almost the very tune it used to sing” — and believes that the author must have been there (144).

This song is a verbal imitation of the river flowing in the dream-like land Diamond visits. It represents the moment of verbal art’s generation. Verbal arts from rhymes to stories seem to find their source in something inarticulate, before language dissects, develops, trims and organises to give it a temporal, linear form.¹³ As McGillis observes, this river song “communicates the life cycle” and “establishes constant movement” (“Language” 191). The river song continues, circulates and never ends. A lingering tension between language and its inarticulate origin is perceived in the song’s overall preference for sound and rhythm over sense. The book is found “partly buried in the sand” (138), as if symbolising its in-between, dynamic nature of flowing out and forming into language.

Later, when he uses this book as a textbook for reading, Diamond cannot find or recognise this song in the book (175), which reinforces the song’s natural spontaneity and elusiveness, defying fixation and reproduction. We read the river song before Mr Raymond’s riddle of a tree and rewriting of traditional nurseries. In his riddle of a tree, the rhymes suggest artificial fastidiousness and cleverness with recurrent “but” and carefully calculated oxymoron, contradictions and paradoxes, while the rhymes in the river song convey lively natural spontaneity.

¹³ Wood suggestively employs Jacques Lacan’s contrasting orders of “Imaginary” and “Symbolic” to characterise the first part of the story with North Wind as the main figure and its latter part of realism, respectively. Wood is more concerned with mother and father contrast found between the two Orders than a division between the Imaginary as pre-language stage and the Symbolic existing with language, which seems to me at least equally pertinent in *BNW*. Knoepflmacher calls this poem of the river “the kind of antinarrative that Julia Kristeva would call a “genotext”” (“Erasing” 98). See Kristeva 83-86.

The narrator carefully introduces the river song into the text: "I do not exactly know what the mother read, but this is what Diamond heard, or thought afterwards that he had heard. He was, however, ... very sleepy." (139) The river song is a momentary verbal representation of the river, to be listened to only once, and just as you cannot step into the same river again so you cannot listen to the same river song more than once.¹⁴

Diamond's creativity, rooted in another world, shares the same features of natural spontaneity and resistance against fixation or reproduction.¹⁵ Diamond sings to a baby rhymed songs (152-53, 157-58).¹⁶ When in Chapter 22 Mr Raymond asks Diamond to tell him some poems he has made, he declines: "No, sir, I couldn't. I forgot them as soon as I've done with them. Besides, I couldn't make a line without baby on my knee. We make them together, you know. They're just as much baby's as mine. It's he that pulls them out of me." (189) Diamond needs collaboration from his active listener. Besides, he is "only trying to remember what he had heard the river sing at the back of the north wind" (158), without claiming any authorship to his songs.

Mr Raymond's "Little Daylight" is also said to be not necessarily the same version as the children at the hospital listened to, but for a different reason: "a good story-teller tries to make his stories better every time he tells them" (219). In contrast to Diamond, who forgets songs he has sung, Mr Raymond tells the same story again and again, and afterwards writes it down. At their first encounter in Chapter 19, this

¹⁴ Similarly, Diamond finds "verse after verse of the angels' nonsense vanished from" his memory (209).

¹⁵ Makman 118.

¹⁶ MacDonald places a special importance on rhymes in *The Princess and the Goblin*, where Curdie is good at making his own rhymed songs, which frighten and repel the evil creatures goblins (71-72). MacDonald alludes to two literary texts written in verse as reports on the land at the back of the north wind, quoting lines 38-51 of Hogg's poem "Kilmenny" written in rhyming couplets (123 and n. 1) and drawing upon Dante's *Paradiso* (1308-21). McGillis underlines the importance of poetry as a means of North Wind's communication to Diamond, and observes that MacDonald "equates poetry and parable, the poet and Christ" ("Language" 193).

gentleman asks Diamond if he can read, which leads his father to teach him how to read (172, 175). Mr Raymond thus introduces letters and literariness into Diamond's life, and, as an author himself, he represents it in this fictional world.

Unlike Knoepfelmacher, who contrasts Mr Raymond literariness and Diamond's non-literary imagination ("Erasing" 104), McGillis understands Mr Raymond as "a male counterpart" of North Wind in this actual world depicted in the second part of the story, and thus includes Mr Raymond's riddle into the magical sphere of poetry, influenced by North Wind, or "the visiting Muse ... bringing intimations of eternity" ("Language" 196).¹⁷ This totally contrasting evaluation of Mr Raymond seems to stem from their failing to perceive the difference in Diamond's appreciation between Mr Raymond's earlier works and "Little Daylight."

Compared to his earlier works betraying his narrow scope and limitation as a creator of verbal art, the fairy tale of "Little Daylight" marks a new aspect in the source and nature of Mr Raymond's verbal creation. A conscious and artificial adult writer as he is, Mr Raymond does not have an immediate access to deep truth, for which Diamond becomes a mediator in the actual world through his adventure with North Wind. I suggest that Diamond exerts an influence on Mr Raymond, and as a writer he comes to express it in his creation "Little Daylight." "Little Daylight" can be seen as a work evincing this new dimension in his creative force. Through Diamond, Mr Raymond has come to receive inspiration from the land before language, of endless movement and circularity, and the ultimate source of life and poetry.

Later, in his final travel with North Wind towards the land at her back, Diamond sings a song of the sun, the moon and the seasonal cycle to assuage a lady's pain, without being noticed (293-94). This poem expresses a truth concerning the life cycle, in which apparent death always leads to new birth. The sun and the moon take their turns; the flower sleeping as if being dead "will lifts its head" with sunrise; and even in winter, the flower will not die but only hide, waiting for the certain return of

¹⁷ McGillis suggests that perhaps "Mr Raymond [is] his [MacDonald's] poetic genius" (196-97).

summer and the sun. It shares the same motifs and patterns and communicates the same concerns as the river song, the two children's dreams and "Little Daylight."

This poem turns out to be in Mr Raymond's book. Diamonds remarks, "If she sees them in Mr. Raymond's book, it will puzzle her, won't it?" and suggestively adds "Until she gets to the back of the north wind" (294). This song thus further attests to Mr Raymond's new creativity, connected to North Wind through Diamond.

III Mr Raymond's "Little Daylight" as MacDonald's work

Mr Raymond, as well as the narrator, is considered a duplication of MacDonald, especially because of a reference to "the Little Lady and the Goblin," which was to be included in *Good Words for the Young* between November 1870 and June 1871 just after *BNW* finished in the same magazine in October 1870, and obviously refers to MacDonald's beloved fairy tale *The Princess and the Goblin*.¹⁸ When the narrator first meets Diamond in Chapter 35, Diamond is reading this fairy tale. To the narrator who asks "Who is it by?" Diamond replies "Mr. Raymond made it." (274)

Certainly, as a writer, Mr Raymond is partly a shadow self of MacDonald. More significantly, Mr Raymond is represented as if having written a work to be read outside the world of *BNW*, which places readers in the same position as Diamond. Besides, Diamond's reading of this fairy tale and not mentioning his evaluation of it invites readers to find out by themselves whether, like "Little Daylight," Mr Raymond's (and MacDonald's) next story has also something to do with North Wind.

Readers of *BNW* would delightedly discover in the figure of Irene's great-great-grandmother in *The Princess and the Goblin* unmistakable similarities with the lady of the moon, or North Wind. Her room has a shining moon-globe and her hair is moonlit silver. She also changes her appearances from old to young like

¹⁸ See McGillis "Outworn" 86. Arthur Hughes offered illustrations both for *BNW* and *The Princess and the Goblin*. *BNW* was published as a one-volume book in 1871 while the other story appeared in the magazine.

Princess Daylight. Moreover, despite its fairy-tale setting, Irene's encounter and uncertainty about her great-great-grandmother's ontological status — whether she is just a dream or not — is reminiscent of Diamond's experience with North Wind.¹⁹

MacDonald seems to try to mediate between his fictional world of *BNW* and the reader's world by inviting readers to read the same story as Diamond. Diamond's prefiguration of reading is not only MacDonald's advertisement of his next story but also his invitation to readers to engage in Diamond's peculiar connoisseurship. Informed readers could reconfirm that Mr Raymond has renewed an access to the source of creativity and that North Wind's and Diamond's influence is still working in their own world beyond the fictional realm of *BNW*.

Furthermore, Diamond is reading Mr Raymond's new story in Chapter 35 entitled "I Make Diamond's Acquaintance," in which the narrator appears as if coming into the story from the extra-text world.²⁰ This seems to blur the boundary between the fictional world and the reader's world and thus encourages us to see an inverted path also available, from the in-text world to the extra-text world.

The narrator unexpectedly appears as a character in his own story and claims personal contact with and confidences from Diamond. The narrator tells his story out of what he has heard from Diamond, thus under the boy's direct influence. This fictional creation of *BNW* is analogous to Mr Raymond's creation of "Little Daylight" under North Wind's influence through Diamond. Not only *The Princess and the Goblin* but also *BNW* itself can be thus said as attesting to North Wind's and Diamond's influence on creation beyond the confines of the novel's fictional world.

The narrator of *BNW* seems to assume, or try to assume, similar features with Diamond's creativity. He begins his story as if telling it orally to his audience: "I have

¹⁹ Motifs of interaction between two worlds are not uncommon in MacDonald's other works from *Phantastes* to *Lilith*. See Prickett "Two Worlds."

²⁰ McGillis "Outworn" 86.

been asked to tell you about the back of the North Wind" (45).²¹ Introducing the boy Diamond, he corrects or redirects what he says, as if suggesting the spontaneity and unfixed nature of his utterance: "He [Diamond] lives in a low room Indeed, I am not sure whether I ought to call it a room at all And when little Diamond — but stop: I must tell you that his father ... had named him after a favourite horse" (45).²² He seems to avoid the impression that he has consciously revised his story for publication, like Mr Raymond as we have seen concerning "Little Daylight" (219).²³

On the other hand, we notice the narrator's literariness in his reference to Herodotus in the second sentence of the novel (45), or his drawing on Dante and Hogg to explain the land at the back of the north wind (122). The narrator thus shares with Mr Raymond both literariness and Diamond's influence over verbal creation.

The narrator not only conveys Diamond's story but also comments on it and freely expresses his doubts: "Diamond insisted that there [at the back of the north wind] they do not speak at all. I do not think he was right, but it may well have appeared so to Diamond." (122) This subtle distance from his story seems to invite readers to approach Diamond's story by themselves probing their reaction and relationship to it. When he closes his story, the narrator accepts the ultimate explanation concerning Diamond's death: "I knew that he had gone to the back of the north wind." (298) The fine balance between the narrator's belief and a little critical detachment encourages readers to think by themselves, while suggesting a way of belief in the narrator's own experience.

MacDonald's insertion of Mr Raymond's "Little Daylight" into *BNW* thus contributes to mediate between his fictional world and the extra-text world.

²¹ This is comparable to the narrative frame presented in the conversation between Mr Editor and the child reader, placed not only at the beginning and the ending but also in the middle of the story of *The Princess and the Goblin* (47, 51-52, 191).

²² Manlove connects this unfixed manner of the narrative to "the scrambling of sequence in the book, and the continual uncertainty" permeating the novel (157-58).

²³ It is fascinating to have a glimpse of MacDonald's creative process in heavily revised manuscripts of *The Princess and the Goblin* (371-75).

Diamond's appreciation of this new dimension in Mr Raymond's creativity in "Little Daylight" leads readers to seek for North Wind's influence in *The Princess and the Goblin*, which appeared immediately after *BNW*, following Diamond's path as a reader. Besides, its creation mirrors the narrator's fictional creation of *BNW*, claiming Diamond's influence over the narrator who is represented as if having created this novel in the extra-text world.

In this paper, I have examined Mr Raymond's story "Little Daylight" at three different levels. First, together with Diamond's and Nanny's dreams, the story explores one of the major themes in *BNW*, death and rebirth conceived in a circular movement. Secondly, as Mr Raymond's work, it suggests Diamond's influence on his creation. Finally, as MacDonald's insertion into *BNW*, Diamond's appreciation of "Little Daylight" invites readers to find North Wind's influence in *The Princess and the Goblin* outside this fiction; and its creation mirrors the narrator's telling the whole novel of *BNW*, and the two writers, presented as if existing both in and outside of the narrative, mediate between the fictional world of the novel and the reader's world. "Little Daylight" therefore plays a role of multi-layered significance in its host story of MacDonald's *BNW*.

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