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Diamond and “Better Love” than that of North Wind in *At the Back of the North Wind*

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Introduction

At the Back of the North Wind (1871) was firstly serialized in the periodical *Good Words for the Young*, to which George MacDonald contributed not only as a writer but also as its editor for three years.¹ After being serialized in the journal from November 1868 to October 1870, it was published as a book in 1871. According to Greville MacDonald, the periodical was “too good to succeed,” but “reawakened” his father’s “gift of faerie-allegory” in *At the Back of the North Wind* (361). Indeed, the periodical does not seem to have achieved the success it deserves (*The Bookbuyers Guide* IV, quoted in Lang 24); however, MacDonald’s story about an innocent boy seems to have been well received, as Greville MacDonald mentioned that it remained the “best seller” among MacDonald’s works (361).

This story is told by a narrator who insists that he has “been asked to tell you about the back of the north wind” and later appears in the story itself as a friend of

¹ The journal *Good Words for the Young* had been printed from 1868 to 1877, by an ambitious Scottish publisher, Alexander Strahan (c.1835-1918). After the success of *Good Words*, he expanded the target to children in *Good Words for the Young*. In 1869, MacDonald took over the role of editor from Norman MacLeod who had edited both *Good Words* and *Good Words for the Young* (Scott 40-41). For more detailed information about the publication and MacDonald’s contribution to the periodical, see Oakley, and Scott.

the protagonist, Diamond (145). One night, a poor coachman's son Diamond is visited by a dream-like beautiful lady North Wind. North Wind shows him how she works, taking him over the sky of London; she once frightens a drunken nurse in the shape of a wolf or she sinks Mr Coleman's ship to make him honest, which causes the Diamond's father unemployment. She takes Diamond to the picture of the back of herself, the place beyond death, seemingly full of the irrational and honest; people there are pleased but a little sad, which would represent the author's sorrow at separation by death even though he insists that death is "more life." Diamond's health gradually declines throughout the story, intervened by a temporal lull; when he is ill in his real life, he is depicted as going to a journey with North Wind. Especially while he visits the picture of the back of the north wind, he is seriously ill, and his mother bursts into tears after he wakes up. At the end of the story, he actually visits the country at the back of the north wind, which means that he dies in real life.

The narrative structure allows this work to be conspicuously realistic. One thing is that the two realms, the real and the fantastic, in which Diamond lives and visits, are intertwined as in many other works by MacDonald; however, it is peculiar to this work that one of the settings is Victorian London, the contemporary world for MacDonald.² The reality of Victorian London is curiously mingled with the fantastic narrative: the actual fall of the Coleman family is caused by the dream-like existence of North Wind, or the poor little girl Nanny, sweeping in the street at night, is helped by Diamond who came from the sky.³ Another peculiarity of this work is that the

² Colin Manlove suggests that this is "MacDonald's only fantasy set mainly in this world" (51).

³ There are many descriptions of working class people and their inferior conditions of life in this work. Although MacDonald's criticism for the society and sympathy for the poor can be apprehended in those descriptions, Okiko Miyake doubts how exactly MacDonald grasped the situation of the working class family. For example, Nanny's situation - an orphan, wearing shoes with many holes, and family breakdown by alcohol - was the stereotyped set of the

narrator plays more significant roles than in other works; the narrator in this work ostensibly tries to just convey mainly what he is told by Diamond, but he in fact strongly insists on his opinion about Diamond and the place behind the North Wind. His doubts or comments could control the story, and the repetition of certain phrases and his didacticism would make a strong impression on the readers. At last, the most significant message for Diamond to be matured for his death is actually told by the narrator, who at that point is one of the characters of the story. As Hiromi Hamamoto points out, the narrator's appearance "seems to blur the boundary between the fictional world and the reader's world"; the talkative narrator makes the world of this story more realistic, as does the setting of contemporary London (86). This fusion of reality and fantasy makes Diamond wonder whether he is dreaming or not; his doubt continues to the end of the story, especially about North Wind, who first comes when he is about to sleep, as if she appears in his dream, but he himself loves her deeply.⁴

In such a realistic story, the protagonist Diamond is seen to be excessively pure and unrealistically innocent; therefore, some of the other characters regard him as silly, though at the end they become friends and have some respect for him. Many critics have concluded him to be a supernatural "good" boy, epitomized by the author's religious or Romantic view of children: for Glenn Edward Sadler, Diamond is "a source of lasting love" who is assigned "the cosmic role of the child" exemplifying "universal love and immortality" (5). William Raeper seems to disregard him as "a prig, a cardboard saint without an ounce of real blood in his veins" (325). U. C. Knoepfelmacher regards this work as conspicuous by its

poverty in Victorian literature. Diamond's family is also described as a working class family, but unnaturally his parents can read when a compulsory education system had not been started before 1870 (189-90).

⁴ Manlove suggests that Diamond must believe that she is real because "one could not ask for a truth from an illusion" (55).

difference from other works, which emphasize the maturation of a child-protagonist because Diamond “at the outset does not have to grow into manhood” (229). Colin Manlove also seems to consider Diamond to be already matured because he is “the perfect innocent from the outset,” so that he “does not develop, or become better, throughout the narrative” (66).

In truth, MacDonald regards a baby or a child as the wisest based on his religious belief and Romantic view of childhood; therefore, the innocent boy Diamond appears to be perfect as to the maturation of humankind.⁵ Throughout the story, he is certainly depicted as a “good” boy; especially after he visits the picture of the back of the north wind, he becomes too good to be true, as if he internalizes the goodness of the place. He helps his family both mentally and economically in his young age, and even encourages his mother when they do not have enough money for their food. After Diamond says to her, “I think there must be a big cupboard somewhere, out of which the little cupboards are filled, you know, mother,” she remembers what she heard at church that “she hadn’t to eat for tomorrow as well as for to-day,” which relieves her worry about food (218).⁶

⁵ In “the Golden Key” as well, the oldest man of all appears as a small child. As William Gray points out, the inverted relationship between Diamond and his parents would represent a Wordsworthian dictum, “The Child is father of the Man” (51).

⁶ It might be natural for Diamond to be good and the story is tinged with a didactic tone, because the former editor of *Good Words for the Young*, Norman MacLeod, as well as MacDonald, aimed to improve “people’s lives through the Church” by the journal (Scott 41); in the work, the protagonist is destined to be a model for readers to learn how to live. However, MacDonald did not accommodate his writing to the publisher or the readers (Scott 45); when the publisher of the journal, Alexander Strahan implied that what MacDonald had written was too unorthodox to satisfy the Evangelical readers, MacDonald felt offended and wrote to his wife Louisa, “If he thinks to turn me into a slave of *Good Words* and *Good Words* into a slave of such foolish people, I shall soon cut my moorings” (quoted. in *Victorian Mythmaker*, Hein

However, the simple valuation on him as "a saint-like boy" would make us overlook another aspect of Diamond. He is conspicuously described as a child-like boy with "real blood in his veins" when he is with North Wind; and more crucially, his maturation in this world seems to be completed when he overcomes his obsession with North Wind. Therefore, for his maturation, or his going to the real back of the North Wind, more attention should be devoted to his human-like aspects.

Diamond's deep love for North Wind could be seen in the way he eagerly asks for her love in return in the conversation on the characteristics of her works:

Diamond clung to her tighter than ever, crying:

"No, no, dear North Wind; I can't believe that. I don't believe it. I won't believe it. That would kill me. I love you, and you must love me, else how did I come to love you? How could you know how to put on such a beautiful face if you did not love me and the rest?" (183)

Although North Wind and the place behind her help him to be a Christ-like boy and then he influences the others around him by the innocence or goodness, he is unchangingly disturbed or unsettled when North Wind is involved. He fears to lose her in his life and obstinately begs her to deny that she is a dream. He fears that the existence of North Wind is rejected by admitting her to be a dream, as if an abandoned child is clinging to his mother desperately.

His final revelation is brought to him by the narrator, at this point one of the Diamond's friends in the story; the narrator, who intervenes in the story at some significant points, exhorts Diamond to believe in a "better love" than that of North Wind, which would mean God's love. His acceptance of the Will, which North Wind obeys and sends North Wind to Diamond, brings the final maturation of the child; he is then allowed to go into the back of North Wind.

In this study, therefore, I will focus on how the protagonist Diamond overcomes his obsession for North Wind and completes his own maturation. Although he seems to have been perfectly good and completely matured, influencing other people by his goodness, he has not overcome the fear of losing North Wind. His final trial is to accept his separation from North Wind, and to believe in “a still better love” than that of North Wind – to accept the sorrow of separation from his beloved, and just to believe in the Love that sent North Wind to Diamond (361). Diamond, who is on the way to his death, is not originally perfectly good but he is also on the way to the goodness from a normal or life-sized boy. His maturation process does not go straightway; while he sleeps and awakes, or goes to a journey with North Wind and comes back to his reality, he develops himself as if he has died and is reborn spiritually.

I will firstly show Diamond’s human-like aspects that are exposed when he is with North Wind and discuss how he strengthens his love for North Wind, which makes it difficult to separate from her. Secondly, then, I will argue that Diamond dies because he has matured enough after he overcomes the fear of separation from his beloved in this world. Diamond experiences the dual effect of the love of this world through North Wind; her tutelage allows him to be a saint-like child and her overwhelming love and beauty so enchants him that he is obsessed with her. He has to overcome the obsession in order to be closer to God.

I Diamond as a realistic child

As stated before, many critics have regarded Diamond as excessively good, but few have focused on his humanlike aspects.⁷ Although he is originally so

⁷ In his reading of the work in the light of Greek mythology, Fernando Soto denies that Diamond is portrayed as simply as many scholars have argued; however, he emphasizes more on Diamond’s cleverness in his poetical or linguistic ability.

innocent that North Wind chooses to visit, his humanlike aspects could be noticeable especially when he is concerned with North Wind. As his love for North Wind grows deeper, his secular characteristics become more conspicuous.

Even before he meets North Wind, the story describes him as innocent, but also somehow ignorant. The loft where he lives is “always cold” according to the narrator (145); one night, before he goes to bed, he creeps into the trusses of hay, piled up around his bed. Although the inside of the hay is also cold, he lies there “thinking how cold it was outside in the wind, and how warm it was inside there in his bed” (146). Because “ever as he grew colder, his bed would grow warmer,” he at last scrambles out of the hay, shoots into his bed, and covers himself up, “thinking what a happy boy he” is (146). He thus certainly is innocent, is satisfied with what he currently has and tries to be the happiest in his situation. Yet as the narrator continues, “He had not the least idea that the wind got in at a chink in the wall, and blew about him all night,” he seems to be blindly pure, not understanding the real situation around him (146).

When he first meets North Wind, his innocence or ignorance could also sound rude or stubborn. Diamond regards his name as nice because it is the name of his father’s horse, not knowing the gem itself, and he objects to North Wind’s rejection of his opinion rudely; and he persists, “Diamond is a very pretty name” (149). North Wind also indicates that he is not polite as he talks to her, lying and covering his head under his bed-clothes without looking at her. She tells him that she wants him to come with her, yet he obstinately answers that he wants to go to sleep, for he does “not like to be scolded, even when he deserves it” (149).

Diamond is thus not a saint at the beginning of the story but just as ignorant or rude as a normal child could be; however, he then starts to obey North Wind after she appears as a lady in front of Diamond and strengthens his attachment to her. His attitude toward North Wind unnaturally quickly changes – when he is asked to come with her again, this time he soon decides to go. He is so keen on going with her that he repeats “I will go with you” three times; because he is deeply enchanted by her

beauty, which could anticipate his difficulty later in accepting North Wind's seemingly evil acts despite the beauty. He also becomes like a helpless infant at this point – as he decides to go with her, he stretches out his both arms as if he is ready to be held by a mother. He then keeps his childishness after North Wind leaves him in the yard: he follows North Wind in the yard but begins to cry because he cannot find North Wind there; then he is found by Miss Colman's nurse and taken to their house. As he enters the house, taking Miss Coleman as North Wind, he runs toward her, stretching out his arms, which could be seen as a lost child finding his mother.

In fact, the relationship between North Wind and Diamond becomes like the mother-child dyad.⁸ When North Wind takes Diamond into the sky to show him her sinking a ship, he is almost like a fetus in his mother's womb. They are depicted as communicating nonverbally with each other, as if they are united as one in her body: his words vanish but North Wind can hear him, and Diamond also hears her even though "her ear and her mouth must seem to him so dreadfully far away" (180). He finally realizes that her voice is "more like his mother's voice than anything else in the world" (180). He is then sometimes described as a baby: when North Wind leaves Diamond in the Cathedral as she goes to sink a ship alone, Diamond feels himself as "a child whose mother has forsaken it," and he "cried a little first, and then crawled up the steps on his hands and knees" (189). Later, on his way to the picture of the back of the north wind as well, Diamond is like a baby yearning for his mother: he is left alone again in a cave on the iceberg after North Wind is gone, but he thinks her eyes shining in the ice or looking up from below the ocean, which shows that Diamond feels as if North Wind is watching over him anytime. He does not want to eat all the way to his destination, but he enjoys "suck[ing]" the bits of iceberg, which could imply that he seems to be a baby sucking mother's milk (202).

⁸ Ayumi Kumabe points out that there can be found some descriptions of North Wind as Diamond's mother, which reinforces the connection between North Wind and Diamond's mother (31).

As for his own mother, Diamond reverses the norm of mother-child relationship by comforting or taking care of his own mother, but for North Wind, he depends on her and behaves like a realistic child. Diamond's strong attachment to North Wind, which is as strong as the one between a mother and child, would make it difficult for him to separate from North Wind.

He then wears the characteristics of North Wind, as if he becomes like a small incarnation of North Wind in his process to be as a saint. For instance, as North Wind used to try to reform a drunken nurse or the Coleman family, when Diamond hears the drunken cabman's wife crying and the baby screaming, he starts to be aware of his role to help them: "Thereupon Diamond thought it time that somebody did something, and as himself was the only somebody at hand, he must go and see whether he could not do something" (240). The influence by the place behind the North Wind on his change is also emphasized as the narrator explains rather defensively that "if my reader find it hard to believe that Diamond should be so good, he must remember that he had been to the back of the north wind" (225-26). Indeed, one morning, when seemingly he comes back from the place behind North Wind, he suddenly decides to "try and be of use now" so that he can help his mother to whom he has given a lot of trouble, and later he works as the chief support of the family (227). He is, on the other occasion, described as an incarnation of goodness; for example, any bad word finds itself ashamed to come out of the man's mouth when Diamond is near (234); and this could be similar to the people at the back of the north wind, who "never wish but what is good" (209). He is surely guided by North Wind; and also learns to be like an incarnation of goodness at the back of the north wind, to which he is taken by North Wind.

Diamond thus changes into a numinous child from a normal one by the influence of North Wind and the place behind her. Yet at the same time, he has been strengthening his love for North Wind. As Knoepflmacher mentions "MacDonald's dream-child is primarily defined by his obsessive desire for the overpowering female figure," Diamond is almost obsessed with North Wind and begins to be

afraid to be parted from her (230). He is captivated by her beauty and yearns for her like her baby; as will be shown in the next section, Diamond is obsessed by fear of losing North Wind, which would represent his human-like aspects. Even after he becomes like a saint, he behaves like a human child when North Wind is involved; he gets upset and tries to cling to her in this world.

II Diamond's death as his maturation

The text suggests that Diamond's death should not be lamentable by addressing that he has gone to the back of the north wind; but the saint-like child's death is still controversial and has interested many critics. Jean Webb takes this ending rather pessimistically by finding a social critique in it that "such wealth and concentration of innocence in itself, symbolized by Diamond, has no place in the real world" (31). Marilyn Pemberton, on the other hand, regards his death as the result of his perfection in this world; and indicates that Diamond's early death is not just his privilege because "everyone does not have to be at this same level of perfection in order to be accepted into the world beyond death" (47). I would like to pursue Pemberton's notion of the individual perfection focusing on Diamond, though not as the surreal innocent boy but as the one who is obsessed with love in this world. For others, being saint-like could be the completion of maturation, but for Diamond, he cannot be completed until he accepts a separation from North Wind, to whom he deepens his love. After he consents that there is a greater love that sends North Wind to him whether North Wind is a dream or not, he is allowed to enter the place beyond death, which means his maturation has been completed.

Diamond's longing or yearning for North Wind does not change even while she is away; but it might be because North Wind also approaches Diamond indirectly. After Diamond comes back from the picture of the back of the north wind, North Wind does not appear as a beautiful lady in front of Diamond for a while, but she is implied to be near Diamond, and he can also sometimes feel she is near. In Chapter 17, when Diamond and his father are driving a cab, they

coincidentally take Mrs and Miss Coleman, who are Diamond's father's former employers, and drive them to the house. Mrs Coleman's remark could suggest that North Wind brings them to Diamond's cab: "for as hot as the sun was, a *cold wind* came down the street, and I saw that Miss Coleman must not face it" (emphasis mine, 237). North Wind also approaches Diamond in his dream. In Chapter 25, Diamond dreams a dream about naked little boys digging for stars and in Chapter 30, Nanny also dreams about a beautiful lady in a moon; it is later revealed that both of their dreams are sent by North Wind.

Diamond, thus, has been missing North Wind, who has been approaching and working upon him though he cannot see her. Even when North Wind appears only as a voice, Diamond's joy mingled with surprise is vividly portrayed. In Chapter 32, when Diamond hears the voice of North Wind, he is so glad that "his heart beat very fast" and "jumped out of bed," even though she does not appear as a lady, because he had almost given up seeing North Wind again until he heard the voice. In Chapter 36 as well, he looks at the moon on the top of the tree, maybe hoping he can find North Wind there, because in Nanny's dream, North Wind appears as a lady in the moon. Yet he then stops thinking of her "as she [North Wind] came of herself, and never when he was looking for her, and indeed almost never when he was thinking of her, he shut the east window, and went to bed" (350-51).

While he thus deepens his longing for North Wind, the angelic child is sublimed to be more saint-like. Diamond is impressively portrayed as not being frightened on many occasions and especially in Chapter 35, just before he meets North Wind again. When the narrator sees Diamond singing a song for his little sister and brother outside, and Nanny and Jim are also outside playing by themselves, a lightning comes. Nanny and Jim come to the narrator's with fear, but Diamond is described as not being frightened. Nanny says with a condescending air, "He ain't got sense to be frightened," but the narrator answers, "Perhaps there's more sense in not being frightened, Nanny" (347). This comment of the narrator's, who receives "a gush of reverence" from Diamond and regards him as "an angel of

God” (344), could refer to the similar phrase in the Bible⁹:

I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
(Joshua:1-9, New Revised Standard Version)

In the other part of the Bible, there can be found many descriptions of advising not being frightened or afraid. These expressions indicate that the pious ones would not have to be frightened because they can depend on God.¹⁰ Diamond’s not being frightened, therefore, could insinuate that he has faith in God or at least has something he can rely on. The song Diamond is singing at the end of the Chapter also describes the reason why he is not frightened by the lightning in:

The lightning and thunder,
They go and they come;
But the stars and the stillness
Are always at home. (348, emphasis mine)

This song seems to be brought to him by North Wind and could represent the calmness Diamond possesses inside. The stars and the stillness which are not affected by the lightening could indicate Diamond himself, who has “calm shining eyes” (347-48); or it might be God’s Love or Will which he could always rely on. In fact, this is one of the ominous scenes which could foretell the end of his life

⁹ When Diamond describes himself as silly, the narrator also indicates that he “could not help thinking of the old meaning of the word silly” (342); according to *Oxford English Dictionary*, “seely,” the old form of “silly,” means “Spiritually blessed, enjoying the blessing of God.” (seely, a. Obs). This could mean that the narrator finds Faith in Diamond.

¹⁰ See Psalm 56:11, Isaiah 41:10, 43:1-2, Matthew 10:31.

because he could have died there: the thunder hits the tree in which Diamond's nest is and he could be about to die if he was there, as Nanny warns him. Yet he does not care about it, which would epitomize his firm faith in God, on whom he depends for whatever would happen to him.

However, his firm faith appears to be weakened when he finds North Wind again. Their reunion is held in a vivacious dancing scene. In Chapter 36, even before he sees North Wind again, he becomes more emotional than usual and seems to be conscious of his being in a dream: "So strong did his feeling become, that at last he began to doubt whether he was not in one of those precious dreams he has so often had [. . .]"(351). In such a dream-like situation, Diamond dances for joy along with the wind that keeps blowing toward him, and at last, "to his unspeakable delight," he finds that he is dancing with North Wind, hand in hand, round and round the long narrow room beyond the door in his own room. He now becomes stubborn again and challenges what North Wind tries to do for him: he emotionally rejects falling asleep on her lap, saying, "Please, dear North Wind, [. . .], I am so happy that I'm afraid it's a dream. How am I to know that it's not a dream?"(352). He is afraid that if he is asleep, it is proved to be a dream. Just a few pages before, Diamond tries to persuade Nanny that her dream is true because Nanny feels sorry for doing what a moon lady prohibited: he says to Nanny, "If there isn't [a house in the moon with a beautiful lady in it], there's something better," which is a similar remark to that which the narrator made to him later (350). North Wind reminds him of this notion, but he insists that he does not want to make it a dream here:

It's not for the dream itself – I mean, it's not for the pleasure of it, [. . .]
for I have that, whether it be a dream, because then I should lose you.
You would be nobody then, and I could not bear that. You ain't a dream,
are you, dear North Wind? Do say No, else I shall cry, and come awake,
and you'll be gone for ever. I daren't dream about you once again if you
ain't anybody. (352)

Here, Diamond's violence of emotion could reveal his obsession for North Wind that, though not so egoistic or evil, would be similar to the ones for the ladies which Anodos or Cosmo possesses in *Phantastes*. The increase of his love only for North Wind can be seen in his aversion for the song about Bo-Peep, which he used to sing for his little sister, Dulcimer. In the song, a girl called Little Bo Peep loses her sheep but at last gets more lambs instead, and Diamond does not like it because "it seems to say one's as good as another, or two new ones are better than one that's lost"(352). He continues, "Somehow, when once you've looked into anybody's eyes, right deep down into them, I mean, nobody will do for that one any more. [. . .]. Do tell me that you are my own, real, beautiful North Wind" (352-53).

He is, furthermore, actually frightened when he meets North Wind as a tall lady again in Chapter 36. He insists, "So you see, North Wind, I can't help *being frightened* to think that perhaps I am only dreaming, and you are nowhere at all" (emphasis mine 353); and North Wind does not answer this but covers his face with her long hair, which "*frightened* him still more" (emphasis mine 353). He almost loses his stillness seemingly because he loves North Wind so much; MacDonald seems to indicate, via the narrator, that love could grow to be an obsession which surpasses the absolute faith in God, and Diamond is urged to recover the faith he has temporally lost.

Diamond's obsession does not appear to be overcome until the narrator insinuates that there could be a more stable existence than North Wind: in answering Diamond's question about whether it could be all dreaming, the narrator somewhat abruptly draws his attention to the God or faith in him:

I daren't say, Diamond. [. . .] But at least there is one thing you may be sure of, that there is a still better love than that of the wonderful being you call North Wind. Even if she be a dream, the dream of such a beautiful creature could not come to you by chance. (361)

Although Diamond replies to him "I know," he seems to be "more thoughtful than satisfied," which would suggest that he has not accepted the idea yet but tries to understand or remember the meaning of it (361). The sudden revelation by the narrator encourages Diamond to remember the greater Love than North Wind, which he seems to have been forgotten as he is obsessed with her and her existence.

North Wind has thus exerted the dual effects upon Diamond: he changes into a saint-like boy, as if an incarnation of herself, and he also deepens his love for her, which has also grown into an obsession that makes him stick to her, not believing in God who sends her to him. In Chapter 36, the last Chapter in which Diamond and North Wind actually had a real conversation with each other, she has completed the educational effect by giving him the last lesson as a "treat" (356); she takes him to a lady who cannot sleep for pain and lets him sing a song which she hears with her heart. North Wind here confirms that Diamond understands that the lady will someday go to the back of the north wind. Diamond is also taken to his old house, which he finds is no longer his favorite place without his beloved family. North Wind gives him the final tutelage: "Everything, dreaming and all, has got a soul in it, or else it's worth nothing, and we don't care a bit about it," which would represent the idea that the appearance does not always show the soul in it, or correct Diamond's stick to whether North Wind is a dream or not (360). The other effect of North Wind on Diamond, the obsession with North Wind, is revealed to have been overcome, by the narrator's approach to Diamond: in the final Chapter, Diamond "solemnly" tells the narrator that he has seen North Wind sometimes (362). According to Diamond, North Wind does not speak to him or even move, so the narrator asks him, "Weren't you afraid?"; then he answers, "No. Why should I have been?" (361). When he used to go to the picture of the back of north wind in Chapter 9, North Wind sat at the doorstep motionless and never lifted her head, so Diamond was almost crying because she seems to not care for himself anymore. In Chapter 36, Diamond appears to see North Wind at the same doorstep as in Chapter 9, but this time, he is not afraid. This would show that his death is coming closer and his

maturation has almost completed.

Conclusion

In this study, I have focused on Diamond's human-like aspects, which had not previously been discussed minutely. Diamond is rude or stubborn like a normal boy when he is with North Wind and he deepens his love for her as if she is his mother. North Wind has influenced him as he changes into a saint-like boy or the incarnation of herself; and at the same time, his love for her has become an obsession which he has to overcome. I have also shown that Diamond's death represents his maturation after he has gotten over his fear of separation from the beloved, North Wind. Diamond is not perfect from the onset to the end, but he improves himself by depending on God, thereby getting over his obsession.

Strangely enough, his parents do not appear at the last scene of his death, which might suggest that Diamond now becomes a real God's child, apart from the mother on earth for whom he comes back from the picture of the back of the north wind. However, the author also describes Mrs Raymond as having been crying at his death, and even "broke out crying afresh," explaining the situation of his death to the narrator (362). Therefore, in this story, MacDonald would never want to describe a "cardboard saint" who goes to heaven just because he "has no place in the real world"; his little protagonist improves himself by the influence of his beloved friend and struggles to overcome the fear of losing her, for whom his love is so deep that it could surpass his faith in God.

As Diamond is hardly able to accept that North Wind is going to be nobody, his family or friends could have great difficulty in getting over the sorrow at their little one's death. Later, the author himself laments the death of "God's child." Twenty years after the publication of *At the Back of the North Wind*, MacDonald calls his beloved daughter Lilia, "God's child" in his letter to her (G. MacDonald 517). She dies in her thirties, and Greville expresses his father's grief at her burial: "Her father could hardly leave the grave: he came back twice after all others had

left, and it was with difficulty he was at last led away” (526).

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