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Ayumi Kumabe

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Death as Birth and the Mutuality of Life: Being Born into the World through the Female Body as a Door in *At the Back of the North Wind*

Ayumi Kumabe

Introduction

At the Back of the North Wind (1871), George MacDonald's most famous work at his mid-career, depicts the life and death of a boy whose name is Diamond and his mystical contact with a beautiful lady called "North Wind." This work can be divided into two parts: a fantasy, dreamlike part focusing on the interaction between Diamond and North Wind, and the realistic one describing people's daily lives. They are interrelated through the boy and treated equally by an anonymous narrator who becomes friends with him at the latter half of the story and retells his experience. In addition, many compositions are inserted into his narrative such as a fairy tale titled "Little Daylight," two dreams told by Diamond and Nanny, nursery rhymes, and some of the boy's poems.

When the north wind blows into a "window" (49), a knothole in Diamond's bed one night, the boy meets North Wind, a mysterious beautiful lady.¹ After some excursions with her, he visits and temporarily stays at the beautiful, peaceful country at North Wind's back by going through her body, and then returns to the real world. After that, Diamond leads a lively life: he becomes a bread-winner in place of his sick father by driving a cab, learns to read and write, makes many songs, and does many good things for people around him, while North Wind does not appear as a tangible being. Later, he moves to "the Mound," a residence of Mr. Raymond, the rich philanthropist, where the boy meets his beloved North Wind again. Finally, we see Diamond dead, "as white and almost as clear as alabaster" (298), lying on the bed. However, the narrator concludes: "They thought he was dead. I knew that he had gone to the back of the north wind" (298).

Previous studies tend to examine MacDonald's works focusing on the author's view of life and death, that is, the fuller life after death,² and, it is said that he most earnestly grapples with the theme of death in *ABNW*. Especially, *ABNW* is seen as the story for explaining the meaning of death, a phenomenon difficult to understand for children.³ In this way, the country at the back of North Wind has been commonly seen as life after death,⁴ and critics have paid much more attention to North Wind's role of taking Diamond to that country than to the character herself.

Previous studies are also apt to compare Diamond to Christ because he stays at the country of afterlife temporarily, and then returns to this life: the boy resurrects like Jesus Christ. Besides, after his return, he does various good things for people around him, and sometimes he is too good to be seen as an ordinary human boy, reminiscent of Christ. His father's name, Joseph can also lead us to regard Diamond as such. Consequently, such studies often insist that Christ-like Diamond revives in order to enlighten people. For example, Roderick McGillis states that after returning to this life, the boy "now becomes 'God's baby,' a Christ figure who spreads his message of love, obedience, and duty through his actions and his words" ("Language and the Secret Knowledge" 151). William Raeper asserts that "Diamond's trip to the back of the north wind 'saints' him with another order of life which he must bring back to bless and improve the everyday world" ("Diamond and Kilmeny" 135). Robert Lee Wolff regards Diamond as "a Christ-like child, then, God's baby ... a model of divine simplicity, who does not care what people say of him, who lives only for others, who is indeed too good for this real world, which he must leave" (156). Bonnie Gaarden contends that Diamond, "who wakes from unconsciousness has been reborn as God's baby" because "[i]n

MacDonald's fiction, a terminal or near-terminal illness is often a piece of adversity that leads to the rebirth of a transformed character" (99).⁵

As these studies emphasize death or life after death and Diamond's Christ-like saintliness,⁶ they have rather underestimated North Wind herself mainly in three ways. First, they see her as God feminized or a messenger of God whom Christ must obey, regarding the relationship between her and Diamond as that between God and man.⁷ Secondly, North Wind's maternal role for the boy is generally underlined, reducing their relationship to a mother-child one. Thirdly, she has been viewed as the mere symbol of death. As Raeper clearly points out that "it is not North Wind herself, but going to the back of her which is most important" ("Diamond and Kilmeny" 136), in most cases, she is considered only in relation to Diamond, and therefore, she herself has not been appreciated enough.⁸

As well as North Wind's aforesaid underestimation, there are other overlooked but noteworthy aspects of *ABNW*. Firstly, since male characters seem to play important roles,⁹ females have not been much paid attention to in the same way as North Wind herself has not been enough appreciated. Second, for the deeper understanding of this work, we should pay attention to the overlooked fact that MacDonald shows a deep interest in not only death and life after death but also birth: the antenatal and the moment of birth.¹⁰ Besides, as mentioned above, North Wind has been regarded symbolically and often seen as Diamond's mere dream,¹¹ but we should note that he interacts with her physically, and sometimes their bodies are very close together. In fact, North Wind appears as a beautiful lady only in the presence of Diamond: through him, she can become a corporeal being with abundant black hair, ample bosom, and strong but ladylike arm. Without the boy, she is only insubstantial wind that nobody can see or touch, and so her corporeality manifested through the boy must not be disregarded.

In order to examine some important factors overlooked by previous studies, we pay attention to what North Wind says to Diamond about the body and the door. She says to the boy that "[n]o creature can know another without the help of a body" (295). Body is the evidence of living this life. Therefore, paying attention to the importance of the body, we can reveal the view of life in this work. Also, contemplating North Wind's body will lead to the appreciation of female characters and their bodies. Moreover, we take notice of "the Door." North Wind tells Diamond, who wants to go to the country at her back, that "you must walk on *as if I were an open door* and go right thorough me" (121, emphasis added). Namely, her body becomes "the Door" to that country. Then, we name North Wind "the Door of Death," which connects the world after death and the present world: the spiritual world where souls live and the physical one where mortals live.¹² Also, we define a mother as "the Door of Life," through which life can have an existence as a corporeal being.¹³

Defining North Wind and mother as "Doors," in section I we will argue that these two "Doors" that are opposed at first sight are closely connected with each other reflecting the author's view of life and death. In this way, we can see the death that North Wind gives as birth. In section II, we will focus on the baby who just goes through "the Door of Life," and the birth motifs scattered in *ABNW*. Then, by pointing out the unborn's subjectivity in being born and the baby's important traits which we name "baby-ness," we can see that the giving and receiving of life is not described merely one way. Also, we will discuss the relation between the baby and Diamond as well as his own "baby-ness." Then, we will consider how the boy acquires language, mentioning its relation to the baby, and its characteristics like nonsense, musicality, and the power of giving life in section III. His peculiar narrative allows him to speak the unspeakable/unspoken country that he visits and North Wind's body, and make them manifest in the real world. The final section

consists of two parts. In the first part, we will look into the issue of woman, especially the female body, involved with language for examining North Wind's corporeality and actuality. Then, we will also focus on overlooked female characters and their relationship with North Wind through their bodies. In the second part, we will show how Diamond, who is given a new life by North Wind, "the Door of Death," attests her existence and makes her corporeal being by especially paying attention to their common points and her physical features. He becomes "the Door of Life" for her, giving her who has no-body body by his peculiar narrative and through his body. They are "Doors" to each other, which indicates their special bonds and the mutuality of life. Demonstrating the mutuality between North Wind and Diamond, we can see her as a beautiful, corporeal lady. If we can view North Wind not as the incorporeal being, the mere symbol of death but as a corporeal lady, it will lead to the appreciation of the image of woman, the female body, and the view of life in *ABNW*.

I. "The Door of Death" and "the Door of Life"

In this article, we define mother as "the Door of Life," through which life can have an existence as a corporeal being in this world. On the contrary, North Wind is regarded as "the Door of Death" that connects the spiritual world after death and this physical world. Although these "Doors" are opposed to each other at first sight, in this section we will conclude that they are closely related by demonstrating that the death that North Wind gives Diamond can be perceived as "birth" through a new life.

In the third chapter from the end, North Wind implies to the boy that she is the personification of death:

"People call me by dreadful names, and think they know all about me. But they don't. Sometimes they call me Bad Fortune, sometimes Evil Chance, sometimes Ruin; and *they have another name for me which they think the most dreadful of all.*"

"What is that?" asked Diamond, smiling up in her face.

"I won't tell you that name. *Do you remember having to go through me to get into the country at my back?*"

"Oh yes, I do. How cold you were, North Wind! and so white, all but your lovely eyes! My heart grew like a lump of ice, and then I forgot for a while."

"*You were very near knowing what they call me then.*" (289, emphases added)

We can easily imagine that her name which people dread most is death.¹⁴ Moreover, when Diamond goes through her body to reach that country, he suffers cruelly: "the cold stung him like fire" (121), and finally he faints, which might be seen as the death agony.

The more Diamond goes out and interacts with North Wind, the poorer his health becomes, suggesting that she is the personification of death.¹⁵ According to his mother, he is in such extremely bad condition during his stay at the country at North Wind's back that she thinks that he is dead. McGillis clearly points out that "[h]er arrival invariably announces Diamond's illness" ("Language and the Secret Knowledge" 150). Namely, North Wind seems to bring death or be a harbinger of it. We can see this more plainly when she has to do her work of sinking a ship and drowning people on it. She says to Diamond, who is very anxious for them, that "[t]he people they say I drown, I only carry away to—to—to—well, the back of the North Wind" (85). From the above, she can be seen as the personification of death, and the country where she takes people as the netherworld.

Diamond's mother Martha, "the Door of Life" is immune to North Wind, backing up the fact that she

is “death.” Although North Wind has the destructive power such as sinking a ship and breaking a big tree easily, and can do many mystical things, Martha seems to be unaffected by her power. When Diamond notices that there is a hole in the wall where his little bed stands, through which the strong, cold north wind is blowing, he attempts to close the hole repeatedly, but he fails each time and at last gives up. However, the next day his mother pastes a bit of brown paper over the hole, so that he can snuggle down and has no occasion to think of it. Then, one night North Wind requires the boy a little angrily to open “[her] window”(48), the hole in the wall. As he obeys this stranger’s demand, she can enter the room. At this first meeting, the boy is so frightened that he hides himself under the bed clothes and does not see her directly, but finally she blows off his covering. The boy soon becomes entranced by what he sees:

Leaning over him was *the large beautiful pale face of a woman*. Her dark eyes looked a little angry, for they had just begun to flash; but a quivering in *her sweet upper lip* made her look as if she were going to cry. What was the most strange was that away from her head streamed out *her black hair in every direction*, so that darkness in the hayloft looked as if it were made of her hair.; . . . *the boy was entranced with her mighty beauty—her hair* began to gather itself out of the darkness, and fell down all about her again, till *her face* looked out of the midst of it like a moon out of a cloud. From *her eyes* came all the light by which Diamond saw *her face and her hair*; and that was all he did see of her yet. The wind was over and gone. (51-52, emphases added)

Bewitched by North Wind, the boy emphasizes her mighty beauty and her physical characteristics, which show the importance of her corporeality.¹⁶ Strangely enough, despite her strong, mystical, and destructive power, North Wind cannot exceed the mother’s power: she cannot even blow off the paper that Martha pastes over the hole to enter Diamond’s room.

We can see Martha’s immunity to North Wind and her protective power most clearly when Diamond stays alone at his aunt’s house at Sandwich: the boy goes to the country at North Wind’s back in his mother’s absence. Since he is far from his mother’s power, North Wind can bring the boy out and grant his wish to go to that country. Moreover, it is Martha that gives a motive to return to this life to Diamond, who has been drawn to North Wind and quite satisfied there. At that country, there is a tree where people can know how things are going with their beloved ones in this life, and the boy also goes to the tree. Sitting on the tree, he begins to long very much to get home again, “for he s[ees] his mother crying” (125). Therefore, he entreats North Wind to take him home. If the boy had not seen his mother crying, he would have stayed there eternally. This shows that North Wind is in a directly opposite position to Martha.

We examined these two women—two “Doors”—that seem to oppose to each other, but they are also closely related in this work. North Wind tells the boy of his birth: “I know your mother very well, . . . She is a good woman. I have visited her often. I was with her when you were born. I saw her laugh and cry both at once. I love your mother, Diamond” (53).¹⁷ Indeed, North Wind, the personification of death, who is present at the moment of the boy’s birth, reminds us of the theme of *memento mori*: we mortals must remember that we have to die. However, she watches over Martha at the birth of Diamond as if she were a midwife, her mother, or fairy godmother. Moreover, we can also consider North Wind to be a goddess of fertility. Catherine Persyn, examining North Wind’s various lunar aspects, points out that “she is there in her capacity as *Artemis*, the virgin goddess of childbearing” (63). Through the strong connection between North Wind and Martha in this childbirth scene, MacDonald displays his view that death and birth are closely related: we are destined to die at the very moment of birth, but we need not/should not fear death because death that North Wind gives can be seen as *birth*.

Naming is one of parents' important duties, and in a sense, North Wind names the boy "Diamond" in the true meaning. One day she asks Diamond whether he remembers the day when a man has found fault with his name. The man (perhaps a clergyman) may argue that the name is against Christianity because diamond is the symbol of mammonish material prosperity. Or, he may just say that "Diamond" is ludicrous and not suitable name for a son of poor family. The boy answers that "[o]ur window opens like a door, ... and the wind—you, ma'am—c[omes] in, and bl[ows] the bible out of the man's hands, and the leaves [go] all flutter flutter on the floor" (53).¹⁸ Then, his mother picks the bible up, finding his name "diamond" in it: "the sixth stone in the high-priest's breast-plate" (53).¹⁹ This shows that North Wind names the boy in a true meaning. In "The New Name," MacDonald refers to "the true name" that "expresses the character, the nature, the being, *the meaning* of the person who bears it" (*Unspoken Sermons* 45), and contends that only God can give a person this name. Makman states that over the course of the novel, Diamond's value shifts: "his ability to produce literal wealth for his family transforms into a capacity to produce abstract 'wealth'—emotional and spiritual value—both for his family and for a broader community" (198). We can say that his true value/nature is the latter. Referring to the bible, North Wind shows that the true meaning of his name is not secular prosperity but sacred "wealth" making people happy. Namely, she gives him the true name that corresponds to his nature. Moreover, MacDonald says that "[s]uch a name cannot be given until the man *is* the name" (*Unspoken Sermons* "The New Name"45). In other words, we must be/become the name that God intends us to be while in life. North Wind is not God, but she makes us catch a glimpse of his name's true meaning. Through interactions with her, Diamond acquires emotional and spiritual value, the true meaning that his name "Diamond" bears. In short, North Wind helps the boy to become his true name: she makes him live as God has intended him to.

Besides being present at Martha's childbirth, North Wind is directly related to her at times. First of all, Diamond says that North Wind's voice sounds like his mother's twice: at their first meeting in the boy's room and during their excursion in a storm.²⁰ Moreover, MacDonald intentionally tries to make us confuse North Wind with Martha. Returning to his home, Diamond holds "up his arms to meet hers [North Wind's], and [i]s safe upon her bosom" (130) and falls asleep without his noticing. Then, when he wakes up, to his surprise, a face that is bending over him is "not North Wind's; it [i]s his mother's" (130). Besides, he "put[s] out his arms to her, and she clasp[s] him to her" (130) just like North Wind did. Fernando J. Soto and Makman also indicate that these two women are closely connected with each other from the beginning of this work.²¹ In addition, Susina underlines North Wind's mother-like aspect by referring to the illustration. He states that "[t]he facial features of North Wind and Diamond resemble one another so closely that they could be a mother and child. Diamond is surrounded in rippling waves of North Wind's hair, curled up like an infant snug in his mother's backpack" (375).²² In this work, Diamond is described as North Wind's baby/child many times and she actually considers the boy to be her child at times.²³ From these things, we can say that North Wind is closely connected with Martha as the boy's another "mother."

Furthermore, North Wind is seen as more powerful, influential "mother" than Diamond's biological mother because Martha neither takes action nor gives orders to her son. Consequently, as Holbrook states, "Diamond's real mother seems by comparison more like a foster mother" (178). Makman also points out that MacDonald emphasizes North Wind's maternal aspects, comparing her with Martha: "Whereas Diamond's mother is impotent and morose, the wind is all-powerful, playful, and often erotic" (113). Although the relationship between North Wind and Diamond should not be just simplified to the mother-child one because of their common traits and her erotic physical features as we will examine later, we cannot

deny her strongly maternal aspects. In short, these two women can be seen as the boy's mothers and North Wind has a greater influence on him.

The most significant common feature between the mother and North Wind as "Doors" is that they change the corporeality of a person who goes through them. One can become a corporeal being by being given birth to by his/her mother: by going through "the Door of Life." Diamond is born into this world from Martha's body, and similarly, the following scene at the doorstep can be seen as a return to the mother's body and the boy's re/birth through it.

"I want to go into the country at your back."

"Then you must go through me. . . . You must walk on as if I were an open door, and go right through me." . . .

Diamond walked towards her instantly. When he reached her knees, he put out his hands to lay it on her, but nothing was there save an intense cold. He walked on. . . . It was when he reached North Wind's heart that he fainted and fell. But as he fell, he rolled over the threshold, and it was thus that Diamond got to the back of the north wind. (121-22, emphasis added)

While approaching North Wind, Diamond describes her as "one of the great figures at *the door* of an Egyptian temple" (121, emphasis added). In fact, North Wind *is* the door: she, "the Door of Death," gives birth to the boy into the country at her back. Gaarden points out that she has some aspects of the Great Mother, one of the Jungian archetypes. The Great Mother is a personification of Nature and the "life-death-life" cycle, in which "death is portrayed as a return to the womb of the Mother in preparation for rebirth" (Gaarden 93-94). In *ABNW*, death is depicted as "birth" into a new life by going through the beautiful lady's body as "the Door" and being given birth to by her as a spiritual, no-body being.²⁴ Furthermore, it is remarkable that around the time when Diamond reaches the country at her back, Martha gives birth to her second child.²⁵ Namely, both ladies become "Doors" almost at the same point. Consequently, the scene where Diamond goes through North Wind as "an open door" can be regarded as a parallel to Martha's childbirth. Diamond and his younger brother are born through a woman's body as "the Door" almost simultaneously, indicating that *death* that North Wind gives Diamond is *birth*.

II. The Subjectivity of the Unborn, Birth Motifs, and Baby-ness

In section I, we learned that the death that North Wind gives Diamond can be seen as a *birth* through a new life by pointing out her close connection to the boy's mother and her maternal role. However, in birth, the mother-child relationship is not equal because the mother is the life-giver and her child is the receiver: the former has precedence over the latter. In order to discuss the mutuality between North Wind and Diamond—Diamond, who is given a new life by her, also becomes "the Door of Life" for her by making her a corporeal being—we must reveal that the giving and receiving of life is not merely depicted as one-way. For this purpose, we will pay attention to birth, the subjectivity of the unborn, and babies' importance and their notable traits which we name "baby-ness." By focusing on these things, we will conclude that the mother-child relationship is equal, which can back up the mutuality between North Wind and Diamond.

As is commonly thought, the baby is a powerless, passive being who cannot choose to be born and is only given life by his/her mother, but in *ABNW*, babies play important, active roles. First of all, we should note that according to East Wind, another female wind, "it is all managed by a baby" (85). This sublime, mysterious baby managing this world reminds us of the Old Man of the Fire in "The Golden Key" (1867). He is said to be the wisest and oldest of the three old wise men, but in fact, Tangle finds the Old Man "a

little naked child” (139), reminiscent of the Christ Child. These powerful baby figures demonstrate that MacDonald sees a baby as sacred and near to God.

Diamond himself views a baby as important and influential. One night, hearing the drunken cabman who lives in the house next door shout angrily, his wife cry and his baby scream, the boy decides to do what he can. Going through the half-open door, he firstly goes to the wailing baby and talks soothingly: “Babies always take care of their fathers and mothers—don’t they, baby? That’s what they come for—isn’t it, baby?” (169). Moreover, Diamond considers a baby to be his friend. He tells his father, who does not count a baby as his friend because they do not do anything useful for him, that “[b]aby can laugh in your face, and crow in your ears, and make you feel so happy. Call you that nothing, father?” (175). Diamond sees a baby not as a passive being who is only given life and looked after by his/her parents, but as their caregiver, making them happy. In addition, he says that babies *come* to take care of their parents, namely, babies *choose* to be born to them. In brief, babies are active in being born, influencing people around them.

“God’s baby,” Diamond’s nickname, can underline the importance of babies, his close connection with them, and the fact that he is born again by going through North Wind’s body. After his return from the country at her back, people come to call the boy “God’s baby” rather sardonically, meaning “silly” because of their misunderstanding about his saint-like behaviors. Nanny tells Mr. Raymond that “[t]he cabbies call him God’s baby, . . . He’s not right in the head, you know. A tile loose” (172). Later, she lets the boy know his nickname and what it truly means: “It meant that you were not right in the head” (243). However, Diamond, who interprets words literally, is really pleased with the name even after hearing her explanation. As some critics have pointed out, the name suggests God’s baby Christ, underlining the boy’s saintliness and otherworldliness. But we should also interpret it more literally like Diamond: the boy returns to a baby, who is active and influential, through North Wind’s body as the “Door.”

Diamond’s close connection to babies allows him to speak the mysterious country at North Wind’s back—it has not been spoken and we cannot speak it—, where we mortals cannot go during our life-times. There are three exceptions who go to and return from that country: Durante, a nobleman reminiscent of Dante Alighieri, a peasant girl named Kilmeny, and Diamond himself. A Scotch shepherd writes down the testimony of Kilmeny’s experience as verse: “Kilmeny had been she knew not where, / And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare; / . . . The land of vision it would seem, / And still an everlasting dream” (123).²⁶ Although the girl goes to that country, she cannot describe it in ordinary language. In addition, people do not need language to communicate there. Diamond tells the narrator that “[n]obody talks there. They only look at each other, and understand everything” (125). Therefore, that country can be seen as the world of pre-language, or more precisely, that of ultra-language. As the world after death or some preparatory place for heaven, the country at North Wind’s back surpasses the linguistic activity in this life—it is the unspeakable/unspoken—holding the unknowable secrets of life.

Babies, who just come from another unspeakable/unspoken place—we can neither remember nor know what it is like before birth—let Diamond speak the country in which he has stayed. We should pay attention to the singing river which tells him something precious like well-being, truth, and compassion.²⁷ Remarkably, babies can have him reproduce the river’s song. According to the song, we find sound, musicality, and feeling much more important than meaning in that country. It is impossible for Diamond to verbalize the song because the river sings tunes not “in people’s ears” but “in their heads” (124). Knoepfmacher refers to the indescribability of the river’s song: “In its preference of sound over sense, this formless type of poetry conveys the feelings of well-being and trust that Diamond finds so difficult to

articulate through causal and linear discourse” (251). However, the boy can partially succeed in reproducing that song when he sings to his baby brother and sister. After Diamond sings to his younger brother about baby, himself, swallow, and lamb, the narrator comments: “Some people wondered that such a child could rhyme as he did, but his rhymes were not very good, for he was only trying to remember what he had heard the river sing at the back of the north wind” (158).²⁸ What is more, when Mr. Raymond, who is a poet himself, asks Diamond to let him hear one of his songs, he answers that he cannot sing them because “I forget 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, emphases added). As we will examine in later sections, speaking the unspeakable/unspoken is Diamond’s noticeable characteristic, and therefore, we should note that babies help him to manage this contradictory thing.

The baby has some remarkable characteristics, which Diamond has in common and we define them as “baby-ness.” First, we focus on nonsense as the first “baby-ness.” Diamond talks about nonsense and baby to his mother:²⁹

“Nonsense is a very good thing, ain’t it, mother?—a little of it now and then; *more of it for baby*, and not so much for grown people like cabmen and their mothers? It’s like the pepper and salt that goes in the soup—that’s it—isn’t it, mother? There’s baby fast asleep! Oh, *what a nonsense baby it is*—to sleep so much! . . .” (202, emphases added)

Diamond thinks that nonsense enriches our life as salt and pepper add rich flavor to the dishes. Besides, he regards it as especially good for babies as well as seeing his brother fast asleep as nonsense. Both nonsense and baby are beyond comprehension but impact us favorably.

Later, Diamond comes to show this first “baby-ness”: nonsense. After he earns money for the first time by working as a cab driver in place of his sick father, he sings a song to his baby brother. This time, he does not try to make a song by reproducing the river’s song, but he sings “The True History of the Cat and the Fiddle,” an Edward Lear-like nonsense song out of Mr. Raymond’s book.³⁰ After singing, he says to his brother that “I’m so happy that I can only sing nonsense” (201).³¹ In this scene, Diamond begins to wonder “what the angels do—when they’re extra happy” (202). To think about angels’ nonsense leads him to dream angels who dig up or take care of stars. As we will examine later, these angels can be seen as the unborn, which shows that nonsense is related to babies.³² Then, Diamond increasingly comes to sing nonsense songs after his return from the country at North Wind’s back. As nonsense is identified with babies, his “baby-ness” could show that he is born again by going through her body.

The second “baby-ness” is happiness. Babies’ happiness is neither deprived of nor affected by others, and they both give people happiness and get all good/happiness from the world. When Diamond’s father must change his job owing to his master’s bankruptcy and his family gets worse off than before, his baby brother crows and laughs despite his family’s distress, because “the baby’s world [i]s his mother’s arms; and the drizzling rain, and the dreary mews, and even his father’s troubled face c[an] not touch him” (148). The drunken cabman’s baby also cares nothing about misery because “[m]isery can never get such a hold of a baby as of a grown person” (167). Moreover, once Diamond’s younger brother laughs innocently, his depressed family becomes happy and begins to laugh because his laughing is contagious: “His little heart was so full of merriment that it could not hold it all, and it ran over into theirs” (149). Furthermore, when Martha bears her third child, the narrator comments that “[o]f God’s gifts a baby is of the greatest; therefore it is no wonder that when this one c[omes], she [i]s as heartily welcomed by the little household as if she had

plenty with her” (254). Besides, the baby is described as one “who g[ets] all the good in the world out of it” (152). In short, the baby, immune to the misery, gets all the happiness and good in the world, giving these things to people around him/her.

Diamond also demonstrates that second “baby-ness” after coming back to the real world. When he sees his parents become miserable because of the decline of their life circumstance, he decides to be immune to the misery and shut it out. Later, he actually comes to make his parents happy and immune to their misery like his baby brother did. When they see the boy sing songs to his baby brother, who is lulled into sleep, they feel jolly despite their miserable situation: “What rose in his happy little heart ran out of his mouth, and did his father and mother good” (202). Even when the family’s situation gets worse, Diamond is not affected by the misery, and instead, “the sadder he s[ees] his father and mother looking, the more Diamond set[s] himself to sing to the two babies” (255). Then, he prioritizes others’ happiness over his own. When Nanny comes to live with his family temporarily, he gives up his room for her so that she is comfortable and can be at hand to help his mother right after childbirth. Furthermore, he gets all the good/happiness from the world like a baby: he can derive comfort from nature even when he is solitary. Since Nanny and Jim see the boy as “only an amiable, over-grown baby” (268-69) and “a mere toy” (276), they never care about him except when they think that he can “minister to the increase of their privileges or indulgence” (276). Even though Diamond sometimes feels lonely, he never makes any complaint about his exclusion, and instead, he is content that they play happily. Then, he finds consolation and happiness in nature. He says to the narrator that “[w]hen nobody minds me, I get into my nest, and look up. And then the sky does mind me, and thinks about me” (275).³³ Although these “too good” behaviors tend to be seen as the boy’s saintliness reminiscent of Jesus Christ, we want to emphasize that they demonstrate his second “baby-ness.”

We regard fearlessness as the third “baby-ness.” One day, when Diamond, his two younger siblings, Nanny, Jim, and the narrator are outside, it suddenly grows very dark and “there c[omes] a great flash of lightning, that blind[s] us for a moment” (280). In contrast to Nanny and Jim, who become pale with fear, the baby girl Dulcimer only crows with pleasure. Their contrasting response to the lightning underlines a baby’s fearlessness. As everything that happens in the world is new for babies, they would be glad about it instead of being frightened.³⁴

Like a baby, Diamond is fearless of and occasionally feels happy about something scary for ordinary people. At the beginning of the story, when the wind is raging so loud outside that the boy is sure that someone is talking, “he [i]s not frightened, for he ha[s] not yet learned how to be” (47). Diamond’s fearlessness comes to be emphasized more clearly as the story progresses after his short stay in the country at North Wind’s back.³⁵ It becomes more conspicuous after he moves to the Mound, the Raymonds’ new residence. First, Diamond does not fear at all some winged creature, maybe a large insect, which Jim and Nanny are greatly scared of. Instead, he regards the creature as “a kind of an angel—a very little one” (275). Secondly, the boy does not fear to live alone in the highest room at all. At the outset, Diamond lives with his family in “a little cottage” (272) near the Raymonds’ mansion, but he finally begins to live with them as their page. Mrs. Raymond assigns “a little room at the top of the house” (273) to the boy because he tells her that “I never was afraid of anything that I can recollect—not much, at least” (273). A young boy like him may feel fear to sleep alone in such a lonely place at the top of the house, but actually, Diamond is quite satisfied with this highest room, saying that “I shall be near the stars, and yet not far from the tops of the trees. That’s just what I like” (273). Thirdly, he is not scared at the blinding flash of lightning in the least. Among those out of the house, only he and his baby sister never fear the lightning and instead, they are

delighted with it: “Dulcimer crow[s] with pleasure; . . . Diamond’s face too [i]s paler than usual, but with delight” (280). From the above, fearlessness, the third “baby-ness” is also regarded as one of Diamond’s significant features.

Next, we pay attention to the most notable thing for babies: their subjectivity in being born. We can see this issue to some extent in Princess Daylight’s birth in Chapter XXVIII, and most clearly in Diamond’s dream about angels in Chapter XXV. In “Little Daylight,” the narrator tells how the princess is born, saying that “little Daylight ma[kes] her appearance” (219), neither that “little Daylight is born” nor “the Queen gives birth to little Daylight.” The expression of making her appearance can imply the princess’ will at birth, namely, it demonstrates Princess Daylight’s subjectivity in being born.

We can see such subjectivity in Diamond’s dream. Angels in his dream can be considered to be humans before birth because they rejoice over the boy and greet him heartily “as if they had found a lost playmate” (206). These angels’ works are digging up and taking care of stars.³⁶ They let him look through the hole, which makes him greatly delighted. What he sees through the star-holes can be this world since he perceives “a great many things and places and people he kn[ows] quite well” (206). Some may say that the world seen through the holes is not ours because Diamond reports that it is somehow different: there is “something marvellous about them” (206-07). However, we should remember that “[o]f God’s gifts a baby is of the greatest” (254). Namely, the world seems more wonderful since it and its people are about to receive the new life, the greatest gift from God. In addition, Diamond cannot help but *cry* after looking into the star-hole, which is suggestive of the first cry. From the above, the world seen through the star-hole is our life and angels are the unborn.

These angels never jump into the star-holes at random, but they choose the hole carefully: they choose to be born by their own will. When they strike stars whose color they like, or more precisely, see as theirs, they jump into that hole. After an angel jumps into a hole, Diamond is fearful about the angel because their wings are “mere buds” and so little that they are “of no use for flying” (205). To make the boy feel easy, the captain of angels tells him that “[h]e’s lost them by this time. They all do that go that way. You haven’t got any, you see” (207). Namely, the captain implies that these angels are humans before birth and jumping into the star-hole is birth. In addition, significantly, he says that “[w]e never forget a star that’s been made a door of” (207), namely, star holes that they jump into are “the Door of Life.” Besides, the captain confides the star which he is looking for to Diamond: “I’ve never found the colour I care about myself. I suppose I shall some day” (207). The angels jump into the star-holes, which they care about, in other words, they choose their parents to be born with their own will.

In this section, examining babies’ power and “baby-ness”—their significant characteristics that Diamond has in common—we demonstrated the importance of the birth motifs for deeper understanding of *ABNW*. Besides, we showed that babies are not passive beings but active ones who choose to be born by their own will and have some reasons for that like taking care of their parents. That is to say, the receiving and giving of life is not depicted merely one-way in this work, suggesting the mutuality between baby and mother. This can back up Diamond’s mutual relationship with North Wind. However, it is insufficient yet. When Diamond is about to wake up from the dream, he tries to remember what girl angels sing, but he feels that “as if the effort to keep from forgetting that one verse of the vanishing song nearly kill[s] him” (209). Despite his efforts, his reproduction is only what they seem to sing: it is “so near sense that he th[inks] it could not be really what they did sing” (209). This demonstrates that the world before birth cannot be spoken and known by the living. Like the world before birth, the land at North Wind’s back is the

unspeakable/unspoken, where the living cannot normally reach during their lifetime. If Diamond can describe that land, he attests the actuality/corporeality of North Wind, whose body he must go through to get into it. In this way, he also becomes “the Door” for her, showing their mutuality.

III. Speaking the Unspeakable/Unspoken by Diamond’s Peculiar Language

Diamond comes to behave like a saint after his return/rebirth, reminiscent of the Christ Child, but, there is another notable change in him: he learns to read and write. Besides this, he speaks the unspeakable/unspoken by the peculiar language that he acquires, which is essential for North Wind’s actuality/corporeality. Through managing this contradiction, Diamond plays the role of a mediator between people around him and the unspeakable/unspoken. Critics have tended to examine the mediator in MacDonald’s works from the Christian viewpoint. For example, Persyn, who investigates the importance of the moon in *ABNW*, points out that “[b]y reflecting the light of the sun, the moon enables us dimly to apprehend that which would otherwise remain ‘the unspeakable unknown’” and “Christ is God made visible, just as the moon is a *sun* we can look at” (78). The moon/Christ mediates between people and “the unspeakable unknown”—the thing that we can neither see nor know directly—that is, the sun/God. Therefore, Diamond is also considered to be such mediator colligated with the moon/Christ.

Unlike previous studies, we view the unspeakable/unspoken not as God but as the worlds both before birth and after death, and the female body (sexuality). We will minutely examine how Diamond speaks to them and becomes mediator between them and people. As we mentioned before, the worlds before/after this life are unspeakable/unspoken, and the female body can also be seen as such. According to Helena Michie, the female body has been used as metaphor for the unknowable in contrast to the male body, the normative body of his discourse, which has “been used as a metaphor for apprehending and domesticating the unknown” (7).³⁷ Similarly, Peter Brooks points out that “[m]an as knowing subject postulates woman’s body as the object to be known, by way of an act of visual inspection which claims to reveal the truth—or else makes that object into *the ultimate enigma*” (97, emphasis added). Then, Michie continues that since women’s bodies “are themselves the unknowable, the unrepresentable mystery, they are not so much vehicles of epistemological consolation as they are sources of change, disruption, and complication” (7). Besides, woman is deprived of her corporeality by the frequent use of metaphors like dead metaphor,³⁸ synecdoche, and metatrophe, especially in the prudish Victorian period when people treated mentioning the female body as taboo.³⁹ If Diamond can speak the unspeakable/unspoken in this work—the country at North Wind’s back and her body—he can become “the Door of Life” for her. Therefore, we will examine how the boy manages to do this contradiction by language and through his body in section III and IV respectively. In this section, we will pay attention to the overlooked fact that Diamond learns to read and write. Firstly, we will focus on his immature linguistic activity, and then, we will inquire into the process through which he comes to be literate and what he does. Finally, his peculiar language will be examined, revealing how it allows him to speak the unspeakable/unspoken, which partly makes him “the Door of Life” for North Wind.

Before visiting the country at North Wind’s back, Diamond cannot read and write. One day, during their conversation in the park, North Wind suddenly directs his attention to a poet rowing a boat. Then, unable to spell very well, the boy mixes up “poet” and “boat” and has trouble communicating with her, demonstrating his immature linguistic ability. He needs to come to grasp the object correctly by learning to read and write. However, to become “the Door of Life” for North Wind, it is insufficient for him to acquire the ordinary language since he must manage the contradictory thing of speaking the unspeakable/unspoken.

What holds the key to resolving that contradiction is the book found at the sea in Sandwich. Right after returning from that country, one day Diamond happens to find a little book partly buried in the sand when he sits down at the seashore with his mother. Remarkably enough, the wind keeps blowing from the north.⁴⁰ This north wind that “comfort[s] the mother without letting her know what it [i]s that comfort[s] her (134) is undeniably North Wind. Therefore, we can say that this book is given to him by her, and later we know the fact that “North Wind ha[s] given him [it]” (188). Also, Diamond later comes to call it “North Wind’s book” (191).

A song which Diamond’s mother reads to the boy plays an essential role for speaking the unspeakable/unspoken. Martha is forced to read the song because “three times, with sudden puffs, the wind bl[ows] the leaves rustling back to the same verses” (138). This wind must be North Wind, and as her son wants to hear the verse, she decides to read it to him. The following citation is part of “what Diamond hear[s], or th[inks] afterwards that he ha[s] heard” (139).

I know a river
 whose waters run asleep
 run run ever
 singing in the shallows
 dumb in the hollows
 sleeping so deep
 and all the swallows
 that dip their feathers
 in the hollows
 or the shallows
 are the merriest swallows of all . . .
 by the singing river
 that sings for ever
 and the sheep and the lambs
 are merry for ever
 because the river
 sings and they drink it . . .
 and the happy swallows
 skimming the shallows
 and it’s all in the wind
 that blows from behind. (139-43)

This verse has no punctuation, and describes the singing river, swallows, and the sheep and the lamb on and on, which seems to cycle and last eternally. Martha stops reading this song abruptly, seeing it as nonsense and going on forever. However, the boy tells his mother: “That’s just what it [the river at North Wind’s back] did, . . . That’s almost the very tune it used to sing” (144).⁴¹ He continues to ask his mother:

“Who made that poem?” asked Diamond.

“I don’t know,” she answered. “Some silly woman for her children, I suppose—and then thought it good enough to print.”⁴²

“*She must have been at the back of the north wind some time or other, anyhow,*” said Diamond. “She couldn’t have got a hold of it anywhere else. That’s just how it went.” (144, emphasis added)

As Diamond premises, this poem is closely connected to the singing river there, and actually “North Wind ha[s] given him [the book]” (188), and so it plays an essential role for him, who tries to reproduce the song which he has heard. Then, after he learns to read and write, he tries to find that poem in “North Wind’s book” (191) but he cannot.⁴³ Therefore, we can say that North Wind, who is present at their conversation as the literal north wind, speaks directly to Martha’s heart, and makes her verbalize the song reminiscent of the singing river at that country.

After Diamond returns home from that country, his father Joseph begins to teach him reading and writing. Joseph chooses “North Wind’s book” found on the seashore as his son’s lesson-book, and so the boy “learn[s] very fast indeed. Within a month he [i]s able to spell out most of the verses for himself” (175). The process that Diamond learns to read and write—stimulated by Mr. Raymond and taught by his father—can correspond to a gendered view: male is assigned to the intellect and culture. However, we should also note that he learns from “North Wind’s book,” which contains endless, nonsense verses, suggestive of *écriture féminine*. This learning—containing both male and female traits, and being helped by North Wind herself—lets him acquire peculiar language.

Before going on to examine how peculiar Diamond’s language is, we should remark that he takes words literally and speaks only the truth. As mentioned in section II, he is very pleased with his nickname “God’s baby” that people actually use to mean “silly.” Moreover, as he always speaks what is true, he neither tells a lie nor imagines that people lie. One day, he visits Mr. Raymond’s house after learning to read and write. However, as a butler cannot believe that his master really invites such a poor little boy despite his assertion, he thinks that the boy tells a lie to enter the house. Since the honest Diamond believes that what people say should be taken literally, he gets deeply shocked by the butler’s disbelief. In addition, we should note that Diamond cannot solve a riddle. Mr. Raymond asks the boy to come to his home again after solving a riddle, but in spite of his earnest effort, he fails. After all, he asks a gentleman who gets in his cab to find out the riddle, which he easily solves. Seeing Diamond feel sorry that he cannot solve it unaided, the gentleman says that “you needn’t tell him [Mr. Raymond] any one told you” (197). Then, the boy gives him “a stare which c[omes] from the very back of the north wind, where that kind of thing is unknown” (197). Again, Diamond cannot even imagine telling a lie, and notably, his attitude is closely connected with that country. Besides, since the riddle can be seen as ingenious metaphors, we can say that he neither understands nor uses a metaphor.⁴⁴ In summary, the boy only speaks true things without any lies or metaphors as well as interpreting what people say literally.

Then, Diamond comes to make verses by himself mainly for babies. He states that his songs are “awfully silly, but they please baby, and that’s all they’re meant for” (189). He attaches greater importance to rhythm and musicality than contents and meaning in his songs because babies cannot understand the meaning of language yet. Furthermore, Diamond’s peculiarity becomes clearer when we compare Mr. Raymond’s works with the boy’s songs: while the former’s works are adaptations of familiar nursery rhyme and children’s stories, the latter’s are *not*. *ABNW* consists of many kinds of works, and three works—“The True History of the Cat and the Fiddle,” “Little Daylight,” and “The Little Lady and the Goblin Prince”—are clearly said to be written by Mr. Raymond.⁴⁵ The first one, a nonsense poem, is an obvious parody of the well-known nursery rhyme, “The Cat and the Fiddle,” or “Hey Diddle Diddle.” “Little Daylight,” whose protagonist, the princess Daylight, sleeps all day under the curse, is an adaptation of *Sleeping Beauty*. The narrator mentions that “I cannot myself help thinking that he [i]s somewhat indebted for this one to the old story of The Sleeping Beauty” (219). “The Little Lady and the Goblin Prince” is a clear reference to

MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872). As this work was serialized in *Good Words for the Young*, a periodical for children, from November 1870 to June 1871, readers of *ABNW*—it was serialized in the same periodical from November 1, 1868, to October 1, 1870, and published in 1871—could instantly perceive that this title refers to the author's own work.⁴⁶

Contrary to Mr. Raymond's works, what Diamond makes is his original creation or a reproduction of the singing river's song at North Wind's back, embracing its musicality, rhythm, and atmosphere rather than its contents.⁴⁷ Here it is notable that MacDonald explains his notion about imagination and literature, referring to music. For example, in "The Fantastic Imagination" (1893), he asserts that "[t]he true fairytale is, to my mind, very like the sonata" (173) and considers his works to be "broken music" (175). He continues:

I will go farther—The best thing you can do for your fellow, next to rousing his conscience, is—not to give him things to think about, but to wake things up that are in him; or say, to make him think things for himself. The best Nature does for us is to work in us such moods in which thoughts of high import arise. . . . *Nature is mood-engendering, thought-provoking: such ought the sonata, such ought the fairytale to be.* (174, emphasis added)

Besides, MacDonald remarks that "[i]f there be music in my reader, I would gladly wake it" (175). We can see that he puts a high value on musicality in a literary work. This notion can be seen through *ABNW*, especially in the river's song that Diamond strives to reproduce.

We should note the similarity between the singing river's song that North Wind makes Martha verbalize and two songs which Diamond makes for his baby brother. Some traits of the river's song can be seen in his first song: it is nonsense, seems to go on forever without punctuation, and has the same motifs like lambs and swallows.⁴⁸ The similarity becomes much clearer in the boy's second song.

baby baby babbling
 your father's gone a-cabbing
 to catch a shilling for its pence
 to make the baby babbling dance
 for old Diamond's a duck
 they say he can swim
 but the duck of diamonds
 is baby that's him
*and of all the swallows
 the merriest fellows
 that bake their cake
 with the water they shake
 out of the river
 flowing forever*

. . . and Diamond's his nurse (158, emphases added)

This song is also nonsense and seems endless with no punctuation. Moreover, though Diamond at first sings about his brother and himself, it unconsciously comes to be mixed up with what his mother has sung to him: he uses the same motifs, and some lines are almost the exact quotations from the river's song.⁴⁹ Namely, he reproduces or summarizes that song. Indeed, the song may be nonsense and irrational, but it plays an important role in giving birth to meaning. Knoepfmacher points out the similarity between the river's song

and “geno-text”—the creative means by which the physical text (“pheno-text”) comes into being—in the theory of Julia Kristeva, the French psychologist and semiotician.⁵⁰ Knoepfelmacher states that “the poem MacDonald has Martha ascribe to a ‘silly woman’ is the kind of antinarrative that Julia Kristeva would call a ‘genotext’: the attempted reconstruction of a process that is ‘ephemeral’ and ‘unstable’ as it ‘organizes a space’ and moves through zones that have only ‘relative and transitory borders’” (252).⁵¹ Briefly speaking, “geno-text” is “the text perceived as productivity or productive activities,” and “pheno-text” is “the structuralized language phenomenon ... the text perceived as a finished product” (my trans.; Nishikawa, *Kristeva* 58), the physical text which is expressed/contained in language or other signifiers. Therefore, it can be said that Diamond helps us to give birth to such a text, like he does for the narrator, by reproducing the river’s song: like the true fairytale in “The Fantastic Imagination,” the boy can be “mood-engendering, thought-provoking” (174). Moreover, the narrator describes Diamond’s way of singing as “more like the sound of a brook than anything else I can think of” (279). His voice itself, in cooperation with his circular song, becomes reminiscent of the river. The reproduction of the river’s song and his brook-like voice can let us know the unspeakable/unspoken country at North Wind’s back, engendering our mood and thought to give birth to something new.

Diamond’s language has some power of life-giving by collaborating on making songs with babies and singing about birth itself. The boy tells Mr. Raymond that he cannot “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 is helped to make songs by babies who just come from another unspeakable/unspoken place through “the Door of Life.” In addition, the song to his new-born sister is noteworthy for his life-giving language. When Diamond lulls Dulcimer, he sings about how her body parts are made in the dialogue form.

Where did you come from, baby dear?
 Out of the everywhere into here.
 Where did you get *your eyes* so blue?
 Out of the sky as I came through. ...
 What makes *your forehead* so smooth and high?
 A soft hand stroked it as I went by.
 What makes *your cheek* like a warm white rose?
 I saw something better than any one knows.
 Where did you get *this pearly ear*?
 God spoke, and it came out to hear.
 Where did you get *those arms and hands*?
 Love made itself into hooks and bands.
Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
 From the same box as the cherubs’ wings. ... (262-63, emphases added)⁵²

This song referring to body parts reminds us of Anodos’ song for the White Lady in *Phantastes*. Perceiving a sign of his ideal lady at the Fairy Palace, Anodos carols her body parts from her feet to head to lift up an invisible veil that conceals her. As he sings about these parts, they begin to appear in front of him as if he gave life to her by singing.⁵³ Although the atmosphere of their songs is different—Anodos’ song is erotic and the boy’s is not—,⁵⁴ the boy’s song can be also considered to be life-giving because his song reproduces Dulcimer’s birth. His life-giving language can let him give life to North Wind, making her corporeal.

Finally, Diamond comes to speak directly to people's hearts like North Wind did to his mother on the seaside at Sandwich. When he, embraced in North Wind's arms, flies over the town at night, he finds a lady staying awake owing to some physical or emotional pain. Asked by North Wind to "[s]ing a little song to her" (293), he sings a song about the circle of life, mentioning the changes in nature, day, and four seasons.⁵⁵ Although we never exactly know what she suffers from, considering the contents of his song and scattered birth motifs in this work, her problem can be involved with life: miscarriage or an early death of her child. Without knowing, the lady is consoled by the song about the circle of life by the boy who has life-giving power. Furthermore, most importantly, he can speak directly to her heart.⁵⁶ After singing, he fears that the lady could not hear his song, but North Wind assures him that she hears him not with her ears but her heart, thinking that the words come "out of the book she [i]s reading" (294). At last, Diamond acquires North Wind's way of speaking, which lets him speak about her, an unspeakable/unspoken being.

Peculiarities of Diamond's language—musicality, the close connection with baby, life-giving power, and direct contact with one's heart—can allow him to speak the unspeakable/unknown country at North Wind's back. By having a good command of this peculiar language, the boy can become "the Door of Life" for her, attesting the existence of that country and her body that he must go through to reach it. However, this is not enough yet for Diamond to become "the Door": we must consider another unspeakable thing, the female body. Therefore, we will examine the issue of the female body and language in the next section.

IV. North Wind as a Corporeal Being through Diamond, "the Door of Life": Speaking the Unspeakable/Unspoken and the Mutuality of Life

Overlooking North Wind's corporeality, previous studies have focused much more on her role of taking Diamond to the country at her back than herself. Indeed, Manlove points out the importance of the body: "MacDonald always felt that closeness with people and things was the only way to understand them aright, and for him that closeness came from the body rather than the mind" (157). However, from the Christian viewpoint, mentioning *Unspoken Sermons*,⁵⁷ Manlove never examines North Wind's body itself, only considering Diamond's physical closeness with her to be the author's belief in "loving relationship as the heart of life" (157) that can connect us truly with our fellow men, Nature, and God. However, the reason why MacDonald describes the wind as a beautiful, corporeal woman must be examined for three points. First, in general, wind gods are male such as Boreas, the god of the north wind in Greek myth, and therefore, this gender reversal must be noticed. Second, it should be noted that North Wind, the invisible, literal "north wind," appears as a beautiful lady only in the presence of Diamond: through him, she becomes a corporeal being. Thirdly, we must remark that in fact, some female characters attest her actuality/corporeality. Although these points have been treated lightly, they will lead us to the deeper understanding of this work's view of life and death, and the image of woman.

This section consists of two parts. In the first part, we will look into the importance of North Wind's body by remarking the underestimated female characters and their relationship with her. At first, we will concisely examine the difficulty and complexity of expressing the female body. Then, we will look at how female characters attest North Wind's existence through their bodies. In the second part, we will investigate how Diamond solves the problem involved with the female body, and becomes "the Door of Life" for North Wind by making/keeping her corporeal, focusing on the form of this work, his peculiar language, their common features, and the boy's mutuality with her. We will also emphasize that female characters help him to become her "Door of Life." Finally, we will conclude that North Wind and Diamond become "the Doors"

for each other, which shows the mutuality of life and the weight of their corporeality.

i) *North Wind's Corporeality/Actuality and the Relationship between Women*

We pay attention to two problems involved with the expression of the female body. First, woman has been described as a mere symbol, and in that case, her body is in fact vacant. Midori Wakakuwa, mentioning some strong female images in pictures, such as Virgin Mary, the personification of superior concepts like “truth,” “justice,” and “French Republic,” points out that “it is clear that such woman images do not directly represent the relationship between both sexes in the society” (my trans.; 10). Wakakuwa continues that the woman’s body is abstract, vacant sign: “‘unnamed’ female body, which has no position in society and is not polluted by any reality, has become a suitable sign for the symbol of the integration of mind paraded by men” (my trans.; 11). Therefore, these female images are exactly “the image of woman as the symbol, which has no relation to the actual condition” (my trans.; 13). According to Brooks, representing the body in modern narrative “seems always to involve viewing the body” (88), and the viewer, the epistemic principle has been largely throughout the Western history assumed to be male. Then, that “which is to be looked at, denuded, unveiled, has been repeatedly personified as female” (Brooks 96), and consequently, the female body has become the symbol of truth that men pursue. As truth is difficult to reach, males almost always fail, making the female body “the ultimate enigma” (Brooks 97). To sum up, when the female body becomes the mere symbol, woman is deprived of her corporeality: her body is only a vacant vessel for describing some meaning.

Second, as we mentioned at times, woman is deprived of her corporeality by the frequent use of metaphorical words like dead metaphor, synecdoche, and metatope, and such description is especially noticeable in the Victorian period.⁵⁸ Although in fact “literature and cultural statement in the Victorian period were filled with questions and images about sexuality” (my trans.; Tanaka 11),⁵⁹ this deep interest in sexuality went against the prudish mores of the Victorian era, when it seemed a taboo to refer to the female body and sexuality, making women lack corporeality. According to Michie, “the Victorian period embodies both the absence and the presence of female sexuality,” and although “many, even most, Victorian novels center on a physically beautiful heroine and trace the disposition of her body in either marriage or death, the body itself appears only as a series of tropes or rhetorical codes that distance it from the reader in the very act of its depiction” (5). This can deprive woman of her corporeality.

Considering these two problems, it is worth examining how the female body is described in *ABNW*, and then, we can “know” North Wind—if she had not acquired a body, we “wouldn’t know anything about [her]” (295)—through her bodily descriptions. These problems are found here and there in this work, and most clearly shown in North Wind. As we stated before, she has been merely considered to be the symbol of death. In that case, what really matters is not herself but her role of taking people to the country of the afterlife at her back. Besides, the fact that people neither see nor touch her body—she is invisible, the literal “north wind” for them—can demonstrate the difficulty and complication of describing the female body. We should also notice that pregnancy/childbirth, which can clearly emphasize female corporeality, is almost completely omitted in this work. Diamond’s mother gives birth to two other children in the story, but there is no description of her pregnant body and childbirth. As for her third pregnancy, the narrator only mentions that her state is “but poorly, for a new baby [i]s coming” (254). Besides, the narrator gives *ex post facto* reports on Martha’s childbirth like mere additional explanations, and her body is entirely left out from his reports.⁶⁰ Similarly, we can never see the queen’s pregnant body in “Little Daylight.” Daylight’s birth is

described without referring to the queen: the princess “might have come from the sun, only by and by she show[s] such lively ways that she might equally well have come out of the wind” (219-20). This scene makes us think that she is not born from the woman’s body but magically, from nature—sun and wind—depriving the queen of her corporeality.⁶¹

To describe the female body is attended with difficulties and contradictions, but we can detect one solution in the female relationship. Some female characters—their entrance to the story and their bodies—show North Wind’s actuality. In a sense, female characters themselves become “language” expressing her: they describe the invisible female body. Indeed, it seems that female characters do not directly involve with the progress of the story, leading to their undervaluation.⁶² Unlike Mr. Raymond and Joseph, they neither encourage the boy to make decisions nor teach him anything. Besides, contrary to the male narrator, the female characters know/believe in nothing about North Wind and the country at her back. However, in fact, they play essential roles of testifiers for her actuality and catalysts for the boy to become “the Door of Life.” In this part, we consider five female characters: Diamond’s mother Martha, her baby-girl Dulcimer, Miss Coleman, Mrs. Raymond, and Nanny.

First, we look at Martha for two points. Firstly, her physical contacts with Diamond can indicate North Wind’s body. After the boy returns home from the country at her back, significantly, Martha comes to have physical contacts with him more frequently and closely. Just like North Wind did for him, Martha clasps him into her bosom (130), helps him to walk, maybe hand in hand (138),⁶³ kisses him (154), takes hold of his hand tightly (155), and most importantly, “t[akes] him on her lap as if he ha[s] been a baby” (199).⁶⁴ Diamond has close bodily contacts with North Wind, which, as we will investigate later, maintain her corporeality. Therefore, even though North Wind does not appear at that time, by contacting with the boy in a similar way to her, Martha can back up her corporeality.

Martha’s deleted body also attests to North Wind’s corporeality. The narrator only describes Martha as “but poorly” (254) when she is expecting Dulcimer—he just tells us consequences of her childbirth—so that we may feel that her babies come to this world magically, not out of her body like Princess Daylight. Indeed, the deletion of her pregnant body and childbirth can deprive Martha of her corporeality, but contrariwise, this can emphasize North Wind’s corporeality. We should remember here that Martha gives birth to her second child almost at the same time when Diamond goes through North Wind’s body as “the Door.” As we will minutely investigate in the next part, in this scene her body is directly depicted through the boy’s physical senses. Therefore, these two women’s synchronized “Door” roles not just show that going through North Wind’s body can be seen as “birth” but demonstrate that Martha’s concrete but unwritten corporeality reinforces her abstract but written one.

Martha’s daughter also has the close relationship with North Wind.⁶⁵ First of all, we should note that the title of Chapter XXXI when Dulcimer is introduced is “The North Wind Doth Blow” even though North Wind never appears either as the literal north wind or as a corporeal, beautiful lady. This uncanny title implies that she watches over Martha and Dulcimer when the baby girl is born like she did during Diamond’s birth.⁶⁶ Moreover, North Wind reappears in the next chapter.⁶⁷ Although the boy can only hear her voice asking him to come, she surely enters the story after a long absence. Just after Dulcimer appears in this world, she also reappears, suggesting their close connection.

Diamond sings about how Dulcimer’s body parts are made—the process through which she becomes a corporeal being—, which can back up North Wind’s corporeality. In this song, Diamond sings: “Where did you get your eyes so blue? / Out of the sky as I came through” (262). This is reminiscent of the angels who

are born to this life through star-holes. We should remember here that his dream about these angels is given by North Wind. We should also compare the boy's song with Anodos' "startlingly erotic ballad" (Carpenter 79) to the White Lady in *Phantastes*.⁶⁸ While Anodos chants her body parts from her feet to head, her naked body appears as if he lifted a veil concealing her or striped her of her clothes. Then, despite his desire to possess her body, he is never allowed to touch it.⁶⁹ For Anodos, the White Lady's body is that to be revealed and pursued, and he fails, turning her body into "the ultimate enigma" (Brooks 97). On the contrary, Diamond sings about how his sister's body parts are made instead of making her naked: he chants her birth. Moreover, the boy holds Dulcimer in his arms while singing to her. Namely, he not just sings about his sister's body but actually touches it. As we will show in the next part, Diamond makes North Wind a beautiful, corporeal lady both by language and through his body, and therefore, his song for Dulcimer can prefigure her corporealization. In summary, Dulcimer is closely related to North Wind, and the baby girl shows the process to be corporeal.

Then, we should look into Miss Coleman, the daughter of Joseph's first master. In the first place, it is remarkable that Diamond mistakes her for North Wind in the Colemans' house. Though this lovely young lady is no match for her in beauty, and the former's hair is not so long as the latter's incredibly long, abundant one, the boy's sheer longing for North Wind makes him mistake the miss for her for a moment. Moreover, this lady, seeing the boy run toward her with stretching out his arms, "almost kne[els] on the floor to receive him" (59) although North Wind has not lifted him despite his same begging attitude. Miss Coleman acts like a substitute for her, compensating the boy's sorrow with both her appearance and affection.

Miss Coleman also helps to assure North Wind's actuality through her body since the worsening of her condition originates in North Wind. On the same day when she sinks the ship of Mr. Coleman and Mr. Evans, she "ha[s] wound a few of her hairs round the lady's throat. She [i]s considerably worse the next morning" (132). North Wind in this scene can remind us of the Alder-maiden, who "will smother you with her web of hair" (9) in *Phantastes*. However, she is different from the Alder because of her good intentions. The narrator does not clearly explain how Miss Coleman's worsened health does her good, but we can see that she grows better in her reunion with Mr. Evans: she expresses her emotion freely and becomes very happy with her fiancé. As North Wind helps her to turn from a languid, reserved young lady who "ha[s] not anything particular to do" (132) to a cheerful, emotional one, Miss Coleman's change can attest to the actuality of the catalyst for it. Moreover, the lady's poor health leads to her reunion with Diamond and his father for the first time after her father's bankruptcy. Since she is still very poorly, "a cold wind [coming] down the street" (163) makes her mother decide to catch a cab, which they drive. This sudden "cold wind" must be North Wind. Even if she is the invisible, literal wind here, Miss Coleman's vulnerable body shows her existence.

Next, we consider how Mrs. Raymond is connected with North Wind. In the hospital, Nanny reports to Diamond that a beautiful lady dressed in blue and gold has come to her and lent the girl her ruby ring given by her husband-to-be for one night.⁷⁰ It is unimaginable that an ordinary lady lends her precious ring to an unfamiliar child. Besides, Nanny says that "I do think it [i]s the ring that set[s] me dreaming" (242) of the moon lady. These things convince readers that their meeting and the girl's dream consequent to it are caused by North Wind and can even make them confuse Mrs. Raymond with the moon lady, namely, North Wind.⁷¹ Furthermore, as North Wind gives Nanny that dream and the mystic moon lady in it is actually herself,⁷² it can prove her actuality. Besides, since "Mond" is the German word for the moon, "Ray-mond" is

interpreted as “a ray of the moon”: Mrs. Raymond can be regarded as “Mrs. Moonlight,” *another* moon lady. In brief, the lady is closely related to both Nanny’s dream and “Little Daylight” that originates in North Wind, and her confusing identity—she can be taken for the moon lady/North Wind—reinforces North Wind’s actuality.

Lastly, we examine how Nanny attests North Wind’s existence by focusing on the girl’s disease and her physical closeness with Diamond. First of all, her disease seems to be caused by North Wind. Although the girl’s wretched life condition—she lives in the slum areas with her drunken grandmother who neglects her—must be its direct cause, her ensuing good change after fever implies North Wind’s involvement like she did for Miss Coleman. Seeing the girl’s striking change in both her appearance and manner, Diamond says to himself that she “must have been to the back of the north wind!” (216). Indeed, as that country is seen as the afterlife, his words can suggest that she has been close to death.⁷³ However, Diamond firmly believes that “everything strange and beautiful must be done by North Wind” (245), so that we can take his words as expression for Nanny’s extraordinarily beautiful, good change. He thinks that North Wind “must have had to do with her! She ha[s] grown from a rough girl into a gentle maiden” (216). The girl can attest to North Wind’s actuality through her change in both her body and mind.

Secondly, we should note that Nanny and Diamond contact physically closely at their first meeting. Directly getting down from North Wind’s back, Diamond decides to help Nanny, but since the fierce wind, namely, North Wind, does not let her stop, he needs to “ca[tch] her in his arms” (74). After walking for a while, they, exhausted, take a rest in an empty barrel under the arch: they “put their arms round each other, and when he began to grow warm, Diamond’s courage began to come back” (78). As well as showing the importance of physical contact and corporeality, the accentuation of their closeness can attest that their first meeting—by extension, North Wind—is not Diamond’s dream but reality. What is more, Nanny, without intention, lets North Wind fulfill her promise to the boy: “it will be all right in the end. You will get home somehow” (74). Although the boy does not exactly know where his home is, while walking with Nanny, he happens to arrive at the hill near his house. Thanks to the girl, Diamond can come to the place, and “a gust of wind” (79), which must be North Wind, seizes and blows them to Mr. Coleman’s garden next to his house. Nanny attests North Wind’s existence through her body and by helping the lady to keep her word.

ii) *North Wind and Diamond Become “Doors” for Each Other: The Mutuality of Life and the Female Body*

In the first part of this section, we examined how female characters attest North Wind’s actuality especially through their bodies. In this part, we will consider the form of this work, some common features between North Wind and Diamond, and their mutual relationship. We will also look at how some female characters help the boy to become “the Door of Life” for North Wind. Showing that they become “Doors” for each other, we will conclude that North Wind is not an abstract, no-body being but a concrete, corporeal, beautiful lady, which can shed light on the issue of the female body as well as the author’s view of life.

First, we look at the combined form of this work. It combines two kinds of novel form which are sometimes seen as different “worlds”:⁷⁴ realistic Dickensian novel and dream-like fantasy.⁷⁵ While we can see people’s everyday lives in the realistic part, Diamond and North Wind’s mysterious excursions and contacts preside over the fantasy part. Stephen Pricket points out that for MacDonald: “(as for Dante), the world existed at the intersection of many perspectives and ‘languages,’ no one of which was complete or adequate in itself to describe the full richness of reality” (28). By creating another “reality” which makes the

impossible possible, and treating it and ordinary life equally and sometimes interrelating them, MacDonald tries to speak the unspeakable/unspoken about which we cannot acquire sufficient knowledge only in our ordinary world. Such a form in this work can give actuality to the mystic North Wind.

Two reports by Durante and Kilmeny, who go to and return from the country at North Wind's back, can back up her actuality. Durante is, as many critics point out, Dante Alighieri, the great Italian poet who wrote *La Divina Commedia* (1307-21). Kilmeny is a young peasant girl and "a Scotch shepherd who die[s] not forty years ago" (122) writes down her testimony. This Scotch shepherd is James Hogg,⁷⁶ a famous Scottish poet, who wrote a poem titled "Kilmeny." Regarding the form of *ABNW*, John Pennington says that "MacDonald is able to fuse the real world of London with the land at the back of the north wind by providing a series of subtexts which undercut narrative stability, . . . These series of subtexts combine to confound any narrative stability so that the reader views the fantasy world as 'legitimately' as the realistic portion of the text" (55). In other words, North Wind can exist as "legitimately" as Diamond. As we discussed before, his peculiar language lets him speak the unspeakable/unspoken: North Wind and the country at her back. Then, he does not write his stories by himself, but instead, he speaks about his experience to the narrator, who writes it along with Durante and Kilmeny's reports equally realistically. In this way, Diamond mediates between the unspeakable and the narrator, and the form of this work can heighten the reality of the boy's story.

After Diamond's return from that country, the story comes to focus on his change and what he does for people around him, leading to the undervaluation of North Wind. She never appears as a physical, beautiful lady until he reunites with her nearly at the end of the story. Consequently, Raeper insists that "it is not North Wind herself but going to the back of her which is most important, for she is hardly in evidence for over two hundred pages after Diamond's return" ("Diamond and Kilmeny" 136). However, we should not connect her long absence with her low value. Instead, we will regard it as the result of her mutuality with the boy: during her absence, Diamond lets people glimpse the country at her back through his figure and behavior. In other words, the boy plays a role of her substitute, attesting their special bonds.⁷⁷

After staying at that pacific country where everything goes right, Diamond struggles to fight the misery and make the current situation more like that country.⁷⁸ Consequently, the boy contrives to find happiness even in miserable situations—it is his "baby-ness"—rehabilitates the drunken cabman who uses violence on his wife and extends a caring hand to everyone including those who seem unkind to him. As well as reminding us of the Christ Child, the boy actualizes the country at North Wind's back in the real world through these behaviors. McGillis asserts that "[c]learly, MacDonald wishes us to see fantasy or the supernatural at work in the real London in the person of Diamond" ("Language and the Secret Knowledge" 154). Moreover, his role as North Wind's substitute becomes clearer if we look at his relationship to the narrator. Letting the boy reach the country where mortals cannot visit in their life-times, she imparts the secret of life to the boy.⁷⁹ After returning to this life, Diamond does a similar thing for the narrator. It seems to him "as if little Diamond possessed the secret of life" (276), and then, the boy tells the story about North Wind and the country at her back to him, partly granting the secret which the boy has been given by her to him. In brief, by making people around him glimpse that country by dint of his figure and behavior, Diamond becomes a substitute for North Wind in this life.

Before examining how Diamond also becomes "the Door" for North Wind, his "Door," to back up their mutuality, we note their two common features. First, we look at their emotional expressions: by being together, they can evince various feelings. North Wind is the literal wind, so that although the strong wind is

considered to be anger, she cannot express how she feels to the masses. Only in the presence of Diamond, she can show her various feelings as a beautiful corporeal lady: sadness, anger, sulk, worry, and most of all, happiness, laughing greatly. Besides, she also teaches the boy many emotions such as fear and courage by making him feel them for himself. Fear is especially worth noting because as discussed in section II, Diamond feels no fear about anything, which shows his “baby-ness.” However, he feels fear when being with North Wind, especially considering her actuality. After his return from that country, Diamond comes to show unordinary “saintliness,” but he can never endure the thought that North Wind could be his dream. Greatly scared of that thought, he says to her: “I can’t bear to find it a dream, because then I should lose you. You would be *nobody* then, and I could not bear that. . . . it’s not something better—it’s you, I want, North Wind” (286, emphasis added).⁸⁰ Then, North Wind assures him that “if I were only a dream, you would not have been able to love me so. . . . You might have loved me in a dream, dreamily, and forgotten me when you woke, I dare say, but not loved me like a real being as you love me” (288). Namely, his profound love for her attests to her actuality. Their various human emotions make them actual beings, neither saintly nor incorporeal, and the boy’s deep love for her proves her reality.

Next, we examine their androgynous common trait, blurring gender boundaries. Indeed, androgyny can be related to MacDonald’s religious view that God is both Father and Mother.⁸¹ In addition, as the boy comes to demonstrate androgynous features after his return from the country at North Wind’s back, they can be interpreted as his saintliness/superhumanity. However, we should connect androgyny more directly to the author’s view of gender, regarding it as North Wind and Diamond’s remarkable commonality.⁸² First, their neutral names show their androgynous feature. Raeper points out that “[w]hat emerges positively from the pool of MacDonald’s sexuality is a tendency towards saintly androgyny” and as significant examples, Raeper cites two otherworldly children: Diamond and Clare Skymmer in *A Rough Shaking* (1890), who “have names that are neither male nor female” (*George MacDonald* 208). Like them, “North Wind” is also a neutral name that just means the natural phenomenon. Moreover, before entering Diamond’s room for the first time, she is merely described as “the voice,” and “it” is used as her pronoun. Then, she declines the boy to call her honorific—prefix “Mr.” or “ma’am”—and instead, she orders that “[y]ou must call me just my own name—respectfully, you know—just North Wind” (53).

We should also pay attention to the neutralization of the conventional gendered image: “the wind” for North Wind, and “the angel” for Diamond. In general, the wind gods are male, and the most prominent example is Boreas, the god of the north wind in Greek myth. Besides him, there are three other Greek male wind gods: Notus, the god of the south wind, Zephyrus, that of the west wind, and the wind god Aiolos, the son of Poseidon.⁸³ We should also note that John Ruskin depicts the wind as male, South-West Wind, Esquire, who has destructive and vindictive power in *The King of the Golden River* (1851), an influential children’s book at that time. To wit, the wind gods are generally male, and their destructiveness and strength—masculine attributions—are almost always emphasized. Indeed, there are two female wind gods: Aura in Greek myth and Xiang-fei in Chinese myth. However, unlike North Wind, Aura is the goddess of breeze and is drawn as a woman only floating in the air.⁸⁴ Xiang-fei has an aspect of the windstorm god taking charge of windy-waves, but she is not independent: she is just the spouse subordinate to the male god of Xiang River.⁸⁵ In contrast to them, North Wind is neither helpless nor dependent, and she retains “male” attributions like destructiveness and swiftness. Besides, MacDonald does not merely reverse the convention by making her “masculine.” North Wind also shows “feminine” kindness and protectiveness to Diamond, and like his mother, she gives birth to the boy through her body into a new world. She is exactly the

androgynous personification of the wind.

MacDonald also neutralizes the image of angel, or more precisely, makes the image androgynous through Diamond. Auerbach points out that “[i]nitially angels were by definition masculine; . . . Not only are angels masculine, but they are typically martial, armored figures” (70), referring to angels in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667) and William Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793) as exemplars.⁸⁶ Then, Auerbach continues that these original “masculine and breathtakingly mobile” (71) angels were feminized in the Victorian era as “the Angel in the House,” the then ideal woman image: a benevolent, demure, submissive mother/wife. However, although this image prevailed at that time that Diamond’s mother can be likened to this Angel, she is neither called nor compared to it. Instead, people call the boy “angel.”⁸⁷ Auerbach points out that as heir of the tradition of masculine, mobile angels, “the Victorian angel in the house seems a bizarre object of worship, both in her virtuous femininity with its inherent limitations” (71–72). Since Diamond can freely move round as a cab driver and he even flies over the city with North Wind, he turns the image from the limited, confined female angel to the original, mobile one.⁸⁸ Besides, he does not completely return it to the masculine angel. As the boy with girlish traits,⁸⁹ Diamond makes the angel-image androgynous like North Wind does for the wind.

Now we will examine how Diamond becomes “the Door of Life” for North Wind, making her corporeal. It should be noted here that the boy cannot become her “Door” only by himself and that Mrs. Raymond and Nanny give support to him. They assist him in perceiving North Wind as a corporeal being and maintaining her corporeality. First, we examine Mrs. Raymond’s function to help the boy to become “the Door of life.” We should note that this lady reunites them at the end of the story. He cannot meet North Wind for a long while after his family moves to the miserable mews in London. Even after they move to Mr. Raymond’s residence in Kent, “[o]nly for two months or so, he neither s[ees] nor hear[s] anything of North Wind” (272). However, Diamond can meet her again thanks to Mrs. Raymond, who assigns “a little room at the top of the house” (273) to him. Dissimilar to the mews where there are “such a high wall” and “so many houses” (150) to prevent North Wind from entering, this room has no obstruction for her. Then, we can see the boy interact with her again. Their reunion after a long period is impressive for its physical intimacy: the wind comes in “through the door he had left open, and blew about him as he danced, . . . he found his uplifted hands lying in those of North Wind’s, who was dancing with him, . . . When he saw her, he gave one spring, and his arms were about her neck, and her arms holding him to her bosom” (285). Mrs. Raymond gives him the opportunity to meet her as a corporeal being again.

It is noteworthy that Mrs. Raymond is the first witness of Diamond’s death. If we see his parents wail over his death, the blissful time that he has had so far with North Wind can be destroyed because they do not truly understand their son—they are sometimes puzzled by him after his return from that country—and never know his experience with her.⁹⁰ His death should not be only grieved, but welcomed as a festive one: as we know, the boy lives in the beautiful land after death through North Wind’s body. However, at the same time, although critics have focused more on the boy’s unordinary saintliness than his humanity,⁹¹ we had better avoid just considering his death to be delightful as the saint’s or the supernatural’s one. Furthermore, for instance, Raeper asserts that readers need not grieve over the boy’s death because of his superhuman nature: “What saves Diamond, however, from a descent into complete and utter sickliness is that he becomes a fairy child—a Scottish brownie, in fact—going about the streets of London doing good. The reader does not have to accept Diamond as fact, but can enjoy him as fantasy” (“Diamond and Kilmeny” 133). Truly, the boy sometimes shows extraordinary, “superhuman” nature, but he is the “human” boy who lives this life

earnestly, and as we mentioned before, his human aspects come to the fore being with North Wind.⁹² Therefore, Mrs. Raymond, who wails over his death, keeps the boy human, as well as alleviating its sorrow, maintaining his *jouissance* with North Wind. Moreover, the lady helps to certify North Wind by finding Diamond dead because he has to enter “the Door of Death” in order to reach the afterlife country. Namely, Mrs. Raymond witnesses the boy having gone through North Wind’s body, and the boy’s dead figure itself shows her existence through the lady’s eyes. It is also noticeable that Mrs. Raymond finds him dead, “lying on the floor of the big-attic room, just outside his own door” (297).⁹³ This actual door can plainly show that he goes through North Wind’s body as “the Door” in the real world. Thanks to Mrs. Raymond as a witness, the boy can attest the existence of North Wind, “the Door of Death,” through his *dead* body near the *door*.

Next, we scrutinize Nanny’s role for helping Diamond to become “the Door of Life” for North Wind. Except the narrator, Nanny is the only one to whom Diamond confides about his precious North Wind. When he goes together with the girl on a stormy night, he tells her about North Wind.⁹⁴ Then, we should remark the beginning of this work: the narrator states rather enigmatically that “I have been asked to tell you about the back of the North Wind” (45). Who asks him to do so remains a mystery to the end, and no critics could present an evident explanation. However, if we notice the capital “North Wind” in the narrator’s words, Nanny can be the conceivable person because that person must have been told about North Wind. We can presume that the girl, who has never believed his story about North Wind, comes to desire to know about his precious lady and that country at her back where he has gone after his death. If so, Nanny causes the narrator to write *ABNW*, whose form makes her existence credible.

Nanny has Diamond remember North Wind and attest to the credibility of his excursion with the lady, allowing him to make her real, corporeal being. Despite his deep affection for North Wind, the boy nearly forgets her and considers their communion to be his dream at times, as with the lapse of time in her absence. However, he remembers her clearly when he talks with or thinks about Nanny.⁹⁵ Namely, the girl prevents Diamond from forgetting North Wind during her absence. Moreover, Nanny remembers her first meeting with Diamond at a stormy night. As North Wind “set[s] him down in the street” (74) so that he can help her, their first meeting and North Wind are a chain of events. Besides, as mentioned in the first part of this section, these children’s physical closeness reinforces its reality. The girl, as a guardian of her existence, helps him to keep North Wind a corporeal, real being.

Now let us examine how Diamond becomes “the Door of Life” by making North Wind corporeal through his body. Although previous studies have overlooked the significance of North Wind’s body, we should pay attention to it because she says to Diamond: “If I hadn’t [a body], you wouldn’t know anything about me. No creature can *know* another without the help of a body” (295, emphasis added).⁹⁶ Their bodies are essential factors for their close relationship, and through Diamond’s body, he (and we) can *know* North Wind. She says that those who call her by dreadful names like Bad Fortune and Death, “think they *know* all about me. But they don’t” (289, emphasis added). For these people, she is only a symbol or metaphor, not a bodily being. As we mentioned, the symbolization and the frequent use of metaphors deprive woman of her corporeality. However, Diamond directly expresses North Wind’s body through his body sensations, keeping her corporeality. We will especially investigate her coldness, body parts, and mutual relation with him.

First, we should notice that Diamond mentions the coldness of North Wind’s body at times because it underlines their physical contacts. For example, when he takes her hand, he states that “it [i]s cold, but so pleasant and full of life, it [i]s better than warm” (66). Besides, they touch upon each other’s body temperature: while Diamond puts “his little mouth to the beautiful cold hand that ha[s] a hold of his,” she

says that “[w]hat a dear little warm mouth you’ve had!” (100). When the boy touches her body at the doorstep after his stay at that country, she is surprised by his vitality and warmth, and then, they come so close together: she “slowly lifted her arms, and slowly folded them about him, until she clasped him close. . . . The cold of her bosom, which had pierced Diamond’s bones, vanished” (127). Without our bodies, we can feel neither coldness nor warmth, and therefore, even though North Wind’s corporeality seems unreliable at times, through these descriptions, we can see that she is a bodily being.

Secondly, we examine her body parts: hair and arm. Michie, especially referring to the hair, hand, and arm, points out that the fragmented descriptions of the body deprive the heroine of her corporeality and keep readers away from her. However, in *ABNW*, through her physical contacts with Diamond, North Wind’s corporeality is maintained. Although Michie indicates that “[h]air is a particularly involuted figure because, like metaphor itself, it both covers and reveals, dresses and undresses the body” (100), North Wind’s hair does not cover her body but instead, her abundant hair streams in the wind. Elisabeth G. Gitter points out that “the more abundant the hair, the more potent the sexual invitation implied by its display, for folk, literary, and psychoanalytic traditions agree that the luxuriance of the hair is an index of vigorous sexuality, even of wantonness” (938). North Wind’s abundant black hair demonstrates not only the strength of the wind but her sexuality/vitality, suggesting her corporeality.⁹⁷ Besides, the boy snuggles in her hair, “the woven nest” (70) reminiscent of the womb, and finds it comfortable with feeling her other body parts such as her hand and back. In this way, her hair never becomes synecdoche of her body: it is just one part of her body. Then, Michie remarks that “Victorian novels are frequently about women’s hands” (98), and “[t]he hand or arm that comes to stand for the unnameable body parts at once introduces the larger body by implication and *focuses the reader’s attention on disembodied fragments*” (86-87, emphasis added). North Wind’s hand/arm is also impressively depicted:

[Diamond saw] a gigantic, powerful, but most lovely arm . . . stretched down through a big hole in the roof. Without a moment’s hesitation he reached out his tiny one, and laid it in the grand palm before him. . . . The hand felt its way up his arm, and, grasping it gently and strongly above the elbow, lifted Diamond from the bed” (90).⁹⁸

Indeed, her hand/arm is described separately, but Diamond actually touches it. In addition, held by it, the boy talks with North Wind while gazing at her face, and she soon holds him into her bosom. These descriptions save North Wind from fragmentation, in other words, her corporeality can be preserved through the boy’s body.

Third, we examine the mutual relationship between Diamond and North Wind for her corporeality. Their mutuality is most clearly expressed at the doorstep where she becomes “the Door of Death” for the boy. We already mentioned that going through her body as “the Door” can be seen as Diamond’s re/birth, and it also should be noted that the boy, desiring to return to this life, comes back to North Wind at her doorstep. When he first finds her, she seems dead and her figure is depicted metaphorically: “Her pale face was white as the snow, and her motionless eyes were as blue as the caverns in the ice” (127). However, the instant Diamond touches her, she is revitalized: “her face began to change like that of one waking from sleep. Light began to glimmer from the blue of her eyes” (127). Furthermore, touching her body, the boy lets her restore her corporeality.

A moment more, and she laid her hand on Diamond’s head, and began playing with his hair. Diamond took hold of her hand, and laid his face to it. . . . [he] laid himself against her bosom. She gave a great sigh, slowly lifted her arms, and slowly folded them about him, until she clasped him close. (127)

There are no more figurative expressions, and instead, North Wind's body parts are directly described through their physical contacts. This clearly shows that Diamond plays a role of "the Door of Life."⁹⁹ Through his body, Diamond, who has received a new life from her, gives her life as the mother does for her baby, and turns her into a beautiful, corporeal lady from translucent, almost incorporeal being compared to nature—snow and ice—reminiscent of death.

North Wind's corporeality and her mutual relationship with Diamond can demonstrate that this work lays weight on this life, and in fact, the boy never merely longs for death: he rather attaches importance to living this life fully.¹⁰⁰ He prefers this tough but meaningful life to calm, peaceful life after death. Diamond happens to see a clergyman, Mrs. Coleman's brother, the next morning after North Wind breaks the great elm tree. Seeing the broken tree, the clergyman says that "I wish we lived at the back of it [the north wind]" (107) because "if this tree ha[s] been there now, it would not have been blown down, for there is no wind there" (108). However, Diamond answers that if the tree has been there, "we should not have had to be sorry for it. . . . Then we shouldn't have had to be glad for it, either" (108). It can demonstrate the boy's view of life: he thinks that this life full of ups and downs—pleasures and sorrows—is preferable to pleasant but monotonous life after death.

We can also see Diamond's view of life when he flies with North Wind, held in her arms. On one stormy night, the boy insists that he wants to stay in her arms despite the exposure to the strong wind. Although North Wind says to him "[b]ut hadn't you better get into my hair? Then you would not feel the wind" (92), Diamond, clinging to her grand bosom, explains to her how nice staying in her arms is: "It is a thousand times better to have them [her arms] and the wind together, than to have only your hair and the back of your neck and no wind at all" (92). Since the boy is exactly at North Wind's back in this scene, the safe place where he cannot feel her body except her hair and neck corresponds to the calm posthumous country at her back. We must also remember that North Wind herself cannot reach that country and no wind blows there. On the other hand, the place sometimes accompanied with danger, where he can feel her arms and grand bosom, and become in bliss with her—the place in front of her—corresponds to this life full of ups and downs. Moreover, although North Wind can be considered to be the personification of death, she never brings death at will: she only takes people to the country at her back when one lives out his/her allotted life span. Besides, she says to the boy that "I almost wish old Herodotus had held his tongue about it [that country]" because "then that clergyman would never have heard it and set you wanting to go" (113). That is, North Wind asserts that one should not long for death before his/her allotted time.

Indeed, Diamond wants to go to that posthumous country at North Wind's back and asks her to take him there, which is sometimes seen as a suicidal tendency,¹⁰¹ but he never longs only for death. Even though he may face danger at the place in front of North Wind held in her arms—in this life—the boy says to her that "I *begin to think* there are better things than being comfortable" (92, emphasis added). This can show that he comes to notice the preciousness of this life though he must go through some pain and hardship. We should note that he "begins to think" this, namely, he comes to think in this way after he interacts with North Wind. Thanks to her, the boy can live this life better and fully.

Diamond's ardent desire that she is his "own real beautiful North Wind" (287) and never his dream can also be seen as his attitude towards this life. This desire not just originates in his love for her—as we mentioned, his profound love attests that she is "a real being" (288)—but shows the importance of her body: he longs for her to be a real corporeal being. We must remember that in order to become "the Door of Death" for taking the boy to the country at her back, North Wind becomes a translucent, ultra-cold, and

unlively being: she must “consent to be *nobody*” (115, emphasis added). Therefore, that desire and his physical contact with her demonstrate that he lives this life earnestly as well as making her corporeal. At last, when the time has come—he has lived out his allotted life span—the boy is given a new life by going through North Wind’s body as “the Door.” Then, his report about her in his peculiar language, his physical contacts with her, and his body itself assert her existence. In this way, Diamond becomes “the Door of Life,” making her real, beautiful, corporeal lady. They are “Doors” for each other, showing the mutuality of life, and their bodies allow them to do so.

Conclusion

In section I, we focused on what North Wind says to Diamond: “You must walk on as if I were an open door, and go right through me” (121), we named her “the Door of Death” which connects this life and the afterlife, namely, the physical world and the spiritual world. Then, we defined a mother as “the Door of Life,” through which life can have an existence as a corporeal being in this life. These “Doors” conflict with each other at first sight, but at the same time they are closely related. Therefore, the death which North Wind gives to Diamond can be perceived as “birth” into a new life. However, the boy is not the mere receiver of life from her. In section II, we revealed that the giving and receiving of life is not depicted as merely one-way by pointing out the baby’s importance and the unborn’s subjectivity in being born. Then, we discussed the boy’s peculiar language that can allow him to speak the unspeakable/unspoken—the afterlife and North Wind’s body—in section III. Finally, in section IV, we demonstrated how Diamond becomes “the Door of Life” for North Wind, making her corporeal, by his peculiar narrative, their mutual relation, and through his body. They become “Doors” mutually, which proves the mutuality of life in *ABNW*. Moreover, by perceiving North Wind as a corporeal beautiful lady, we can shed light on this life and the weight of female characters, especially their bodies.

MacDonald’s belief in the new and fuller life after death has been so exclusively focused on that we may think that he cherishes a hope only after death. But, he does not. As North Wind says to Diamond, “[n]o creature can know another without the help of a body” (295). Going through her body, the boy can be born again in the other world, while he makes her corporeal in this life through his body. Their bodies—the testimony of life—their physical intimacies, and their mutual relationship can attest that MacDonald puts a high value on this life, not just on the fuller life after death. In conclusion, *ABNW* affirms not only death but also this life: this work appreciates both worlds beyond “the Door of Death” and “the Door of Life.”

Endnotes

1. This article uses Broadview’s *At the Back of the North Wind* edited by Roderick McGillis and John Pennington. From now on, we will use the shortened title *ABNW* for this work.
2. Previous studies often cite one memorable scene in “The Golden Key” (1867) as that describing clearly and precisely MacDonald’s view of life and death. After a distressing and long journey, the child-hero Mossy, now exhausted, turning into an old man, comes to the Old Man of the Sea. After Mossy takes a bath there, he becomes young and lively again. The Old Man says to him that he tastes death and “it is only more life,” correcting the boy’s remark: “It is better than life” (142). This view of death as a more, fuller life appears in MacDonald’s many works including *ABNW*, and the view has been one of primary objects examined by previous studies.
3. Richard Reis remarks that “[p]erhaps the most remarkable thing about *At the Back of the North Wind* is

that MacDonald is trying, in fact, to justify death, that most inscrutable of the ways of God, to children” (15).

4. Previous studies repeatedly point out that the country at North Wind’s back is afterlife. For instance, the country is considered to be “limbo,” the supposed abode of the souls of unbaptized infants and of the just who died before Christ’s coming (Knoepflmacher 241, Wolff 152). Lisa Hermine Makman says that the country is “the realm of the dead” (111), connecting it with dream and fiction. In addition, Fernando Soto sees the country as “the Greek land of death” (142), and Reis regards it as “Other World after death” (17). McGillis and Pennington, editors of *Behind the Back of the North Wind*, assert that the country is “the land of death” (vi).
5. There are more studies that relate Diamond to the Christ Child. In *George MacDonald*, Raeper again sees him as “saintly and Christ-like” (320) and as “a stained-glass Victorian emblem of perfection” (321). Similarly, Wood states that after his journey to the country at North Wind’s back, “Diamond seems no more human than the child Jesus, and he has a similarly ratified perspective” (68).
6. In the Victorian period, there were many stories in which an innocent, virtuous, extraordinarily good child dies like Helen Burns in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Little Nell in Charles Dickens’ *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41), and sometimes MacDonald’s *ABNW* is put in the same category with these stories. For example, Stephen Pricket states in the preface of *ABNW* that this work “has always been the most roundly abused of all George MacDonald’s major children’s books. The commonest charge against it—of deep sentimentality—places it in the tradition of ‘the-saintly-child-who-dies-young’ stories, beloved alike by Victorian readers and writers, and perhaps reaching its apogee with the death of little Nell in Charles Dickens’s *Old Curiosity Shop*” (9). McGillis and Pennington, annotators, also state that “[t]he illustration by Hughes of Diamond’s death-bed and MacDonald’s description of Diamond’s death reflect the Victorian fascination with children and death” (298). It is true that there was the tradition of “the saintly-child-who-dies-young-stories” in the Victorian era and Diamond can be compared to such a child, but this article will focus more on the boy’s human aspects than saintly ones, and life than death.
7. Especially, Colin Manlove and Rolland Hein examine MacDonald’s works from a Christian perspective. See Manlove and Hein, *The Harmony Within*.
8. Like this article, Catherine Persyn focuses on North Wind and points out her lunar characteristics, emphasizing the importance of the moon in *ABNW*. However, as the subtitle of her paper shows, Persyn tries to explain “Who is North Wind” and connects the lunar North Wind to the moon goddesses such as Diana, a symbol of God’s providence, and Christ. Indeed, Persyn’s examination is minute and useful, but it is insufficient because she reduces North Wind to the mere symbol. We will look into “Who North Wind is,” not “Who is North Wind,” especially paying attention to her overlooked corporeality.
9. *ABNW* is the story governed by males: the protagonist is a boy named Diamond; an anonymous male narrator who becomes friends with the boy retells his story. Besides, male characters advance the story: Mr. Raymond, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Evans, Mr. Stonecrop, and Joseph, Diamond’s father. They cause turning points (the up and down of Diamond’s family and their house moving), and make the boy do or decide something (start to work as a cab driver, learn to read and write, and become a page). On the contrary, female characters seem to have much less influence on the story. However, we will reveal that in fact women play essential roles like maintaining North Wind’s actuality and the boy’s special bonds with her.

10. We can see MacDonald's deep interest in birth here and there. For example, at the beginning of "A Sketch of Individual Development" (1880), an essay about the human growth, he expresses not only the unknowability of the antenatal and the moment of birth but also the desire to know them; in Chapter XII of *Phantastes* (1858), people living in the far-off, strange planet can be seen as antenatal beings; in the first draft of "The History of Photogen and Nycteris" (1879), the witch Watho forcibly tries to see the growing embryo by slitting open the pregnant woman's body. Moreover, Nycteris' first experience in the outside night world can be seen as her birth: the narrator describes it as "a resurrection—nay, a birth itself, to Nycteris" (313). These examples demonstrate that MacDonald investigates the theme of birth with acute interest.
11. Many critics have considered Diamond's contact with North Wind to be his dream partly because they meet at night after the boy sleeps. These critics divide day/reality from night/fantasy, regarding the boy's mysterious experience as the latter. Indeed, North Wind once says to him that "[o]nly you must go to bed first. I can't take you till you're in bed. That's the law about the children" (85). However, Diamond meets her in the daytime twice: one hot evening, the boy meets North Wind, who takes care of a bumble bee in the lawn of the Colemans (83-84), and one afternoon at the toyshop of an old woman, he hears North Wind's voice and knows that she is there by seeing the windmill go round (111-12). Therefore, we should not see Diamond's contacts with her merely as his dream.
12. Although Frank Riga also discusses the doorway, he sees not North Wind but dreams as the door. Riga insists that dreams are what God gives people and "they are the doorway between time and eternity, and through them, people receive spiritual education" (91). In this way, he sees the entire interaction between Diamond and North Wind just as his dream. Moreover, he never pays attention to the important "door" role that North Wind plays. Unlike Riga, Lisa Hermine Makman refers to North Wind as "a threshold" (112) that Diamond must cross to reach the country at her back. Furthermore, like this article, Makman compares her with his mother: "Just as Diamond's biological mother brought him into the world, this surrogate brings out of it. Diamond's passage through North Wind is a reversal of birth, a sort of death" (112). We will advance Makman's explanation and show these two women's close connection despite their seeming opposition by regarding them as "Doors."
13. We first introduced the concept of "the Door of Death" and "the Door of Life" in "'The Door of Death' and 'The Door of Life' in George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*" and discussed the view of life and death briefly.
14. Jan Susina, who examines the relationship between MacDonald and his illustrator, Arthur Hughes, also declares that North Wind is death. Mentioning the illustration of Diamond surrounded in rippling waves of her hair in Chapter IV, Susina states that her wavy hair "resembles currents of water" and it reminds "the reader of the North Wind's identity as Death" (375) because this image is similar to that of the drowning prince in "The Light Princess" (1864). See the illustrations in MacDonald, *ABNW* 71 and *The Gifts of Child Christ* 153.
15. Although we never learn what Diamond suffers from, his disease can be tuberculosis. In the Victorian era, there were so many people who suffered from it. MacDonald himself and his relatives were afflicted by this disease, and some of them died of it, so that he sarcastically called this fatal disease "family attendant." In *ABNW*, Diamond sometimes gets a fit of coughing (149), and the paleness of his face is emphasized (170). A racking cough is an obvious symptom of tubercular patients, and the paleness is also one characteristic of them. According to Carolyn A. Day, who examines the issue of beauty, fashion,

and disease, “[t]he transparency of the skin and whiteness of the complexion, both significant aspects of the consumptive symptomology, became ever more important as an explicit aspect of beauty” (95). Therefore, the boy’s disease is, as annotators point out, “what MacDonald called the ‘family attendant’—i.e., consumption or tuberculosis” (156).

16. We will look into North Wind’s corporeality minutely in section IV.
17. David Holbrook also focuses on the image of woman in MacDonald’s works, but unlike this article, he pays attention to the author’s biographical facts excessively. Consequently, Holbrook regards female figures as MacDonald’s dead mother—he thinks that the author expresses his yearning for her in them—and then, Holbrook connects woman with death in almost all cases. As for the quoted scene, he regards her frequent visits to the mother as “a clue to the North Wind’s identity and the symbolism of the book” because “[t]he mother is in the world of Death and it is there that the North Wind has visited her” (165). Moreover, he considers North Wind to be “a transmogrification of the dead mother herself” (165). Indeed, Holbrook is right to underline their close connection, but his interpretation is limited by exclusively focusing on MacDonald’s dead mother. In this scene, the role of North Wind can be seen as that of a midwife rather than death. We should note here that she is closely related to the mother at the birth of her baby, namely, life.
18. We should note that Diamond describes the window as an open door, which indicates the connection between North Wind and the door.
19. Exodus 28:18 and 39:11.
20. MacDonald, *ABNW* 50, 90.
21. See Soto 138-39, Makman 112-13.
22. See the illustration in MacDonald, *ABNW* 71.
23. North Wind calls Diamond “my child” so many times. Especially, when she puts him into the yacht for taking him to the doorstep of the country at her back, she says to him that “the yacht shall be my cradle, and you shall be my baby” (117).
24. Like this article, Makman considers North Wind on her doorstep to be a “threshold,” but Makman only sees the scene where Diamond goes through North Wind’s body to reach the country at her back as “a reversal of birth, a sort of death” (112). However, we should regard the death that North Wind gives the boy not as “a reversal of birth” but as “birth.”
25. As MacDonald does not clearly write the reason why Diamond has to stay at his aunt’s home for a while—Martha only mentions her sister’s letter in which she “wants the boy to go down and see her” (109)—some critics suppose that the boy’s short stay is for his convalescence because of some descriptions of his poor health. For example, Raeper points out that “[t]he longer Diamond spends with North Wind the more unearthly he becomes, until his mother begins to worry about his health and a trip is arranged to stay with an aunt at Sandwich” (*George MacDonald* 324). However, we want to propose another explanation: the preparation for his mother’s childbirth. Martha may be in her last month of pregnancy at that time because the narrator later tells us that she gives birth to her second child while the boy is away. We will examine it more in detail later in connection with North Wind.
26. As we will mention later this verse is a quotation from James Hogg’s 330-lines poem “Kilmeny” (1813).
27. Both Durante and Kilmeny also mention the river, and the narrator comments that “all [who go to that country] agree that there is a river there” (124). In some of MacDonald’s works, water, the river in particular, is one of the vital motifs. The significant examples are seen in his two adult fantasies. In

Phantastes, rivers act as guides for the protagonist Anodos, giving him consolation. In *Lilith*, the river also plays important roles such as giving vitality to Vane and breaking Lilith's spell. The river fills a key role in *ABNW* too. In the country at North Wind's back, there is a mysterious singing river. Going through her body, Diamond can hear its song, and besides, North Wind makes his mother verbalize it (138-44). Therefore, the river's song can attest to North Wind's existence. We will examine how Diamond reproduces the song, which partly enables him to become "the Door of Life" for her in section III and IV.

28. Diamond himself answers someone who asks him what he is singing: "One of the tunes the river at the back of the north wind sung" (124). Besides, the narrator mentions the boy's songs: "Sometimes, he would say, 'I made that one'; but generally he would say, ... 'I got it at the back of the north wind'" (279).
29. As annotators of this work point out, "[n]onsense is a recurring feature of Victorian literature" (144). The most prominent author of this genre is Edward Lear. He is an English artist and author, and his most famous work is *Nonsense Books* (1846) with his own illustrations. MacDonald's close friend, Lewis Carroll is also an important author in nonsense literature. In his classics, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), Carroll sometimes makes fun of "ordinary" language. Moreover, he wrote the long nonsense poem, *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876). MacDonald could be influenced by this style of literature because *ABNW* includes many nonsense poems.
30. MacDonald, *ABNW* 200-01.
31. We should note that Diamond relates nonsense to happiness, the second "baby-ness" that we will examine in the next two paragraphs.
32. North Wind grants Diamond's wish to know angels' nonsense by allowing him to dream about them: she clearly answers that "[y]es. I g[i]ve you that dream" (289). That North Wind, who oversees death, lets the boy know the unborn also demonstrates that "the Door of Death" and "the Door of Life" are closely connected.
33. Diamond frequents his "nest" at the top of the beech tree, where he finds happiness and consolation. The beech reminds us of the maternal, protective Beech Lady, who consoles Anodos in *Phantastes*. Diamond says to the narrator that "[t]he wind is like kisses from a big lady. When I get up here I feel as if I were in North Wind's arms" (276). We should remember here that North Wind's hair is described as "the woven nest" (70). Even when the boy cannot meet her, he is able to feel her body—her kiss, arms, and abundant hair—in his nest.
34. MacDonald was deeply interested in the moment at birth and the joy that babies may feel to see the world for the first time. We may see his interest in Chapter III in *ABNW* where Diamond goes out for the first time in a while. He describes the world brilliantly: "All the world was new to him. A great fire of sunset burned on the top of the gate that led from the stables to the house; above the fire in the sky lay a large lake of green light, above that a golden cloud, and over that the blue of the wintry heavens" (63). Through his eyes, we can see the world as more vivid, beautiful, and mysterious, with feeling some pleasure. MacDonald describes this theme most clearly in "The History of Photogen and Nycteris" (1879) through the eyes of Nycteris, who has been raised up confined in the tomb. Her experience of "going out" can be seen as her true birth: the narrator says that it is "a resurrection—nay, a birth itself, to Nycteris" (313).
35. However, Diamond, who comes to be more fearless as the story progresses, sometimes feels fear only

when being with North Wind, especially about her actuality. That shows his human aspect and how precious she is for him, which will be examined in the second part of section IV.

36. Some may say that MacDonald also had a traditional view of gender because he clearly assigns different roles in conformity with babies' sex: boys dig up stars, and girls take care of them which boys may hurt, and make these stars shine. Indeed, this can be seen as conventional gendered view: male is active and female is passive; women should look after something/body and support men. However, girls' work can demonstrate the underestimated female connection. If digging up stars and then jumping into the star-holes can be seen as birth, girl-angels who take care of stars and keep them shining help the childbirth. This indicates the special bonds between mother and daughter. MacDonald seems to see this relationship as complicated but special, which is most vividly depicted in *Lilith*. About the complicated but special relationship between mother and daughter, see Kumabe "'Lilith Shall Be Saved by Her Childbearing': Gynocentric Consideration on the Female Body and the Relationship between Mother and Daughter in George MacDonald's *Lilith*."
37. As for this issue, see also Barkan.
38. Michie calls cliché "dead metaphor" because cliché can be seen as the corpse of a metaphor, "killing metaphor through overuse" (88). See also Davidson 36.
39. See Michie 82. Besides, Brooks, mentioning Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857), points out that the heroine's body becomes "a fetishized object, or rather, an object that is never seen whole"—her corporeality is deprived of—through descriptions of "metonymical, accumulating details of her body and especially of her dress and accessories" (91).
40. In this scene, Diamond and his mother look eastward, when "a sweet little wind bl[ows] on their left side" (134), namely, the north wind blows toward them.
41. As Diamond comes to keep his mouth shut about North Wind and the country at her back after his return from it, we should note that he says to his mother clearly about that country in this scene. This indicates her close connection with North Wind as well as the boy's great trust in his mother. The relationship between North Wind and some female characters will be considered in the next section.
42. Reading this scene, some may think that MacDonald also had the conventional gendered view: women are not suitable for publishing literary work. However, we should note that he has Diamond say that "[s]he must have been at the back of the north wind some time or other, anyhow" (144). As the boy connects North Wind and that country with mystery and beauty, and the country has the secret of life and can be seen as "the source of poetry" (McGillis, "Language and the Secret Knowledge" 154), here MacDonald demonstrates a more generous, advanced view about women: their work may not be understood by everyone, but it has the mysterious beauty, which should be appreciated. Interestingly, almost at the same time as *ABNW*'s publication, his wife Louisa published *Chamber Dramas for Children* (1870), in which she tells and retells some traditional fairytales such as "Cinderella" and "Snow White."
43. Diamond has "never come upon the poem he th[inks] he ha[s] heard his mother read from it that day" (175).
44. Michie states that the frequent use of metaphorical words deprives woman of her corporeality. Therefore, Diamond's language can maintain North Wind's corporeality by using no lie and metaphor, which will be examined in section IV.
45. Indeed, Diamond implies that the song about the changes of day and seasons which he sings to the

suffering lady is from Mr. Raymond's book: he asks North Wind "[i]f she sees them in Mr. Raymond's book, it will puzzle her, won't it?" (294). However, it is not clear whether Mr. Raymond writes the song by himself, or he only edits the book. Besides, as we will mention later in this section, this song is noteworthy because Diamond sings it directly to the lady's heart just like North Wind does to his mother. Therefore, we compare only three works described clearly as Mr. Raymond's with the boy's songs.

46. See Raeper, *George MacDonald* 269 and "A Note on the Text and Illustrations" in *ABNW* 35-38.
47. Diamond's songs are not always his original creation because he tries "to remember what he ha[s] heard the river sing at the back of the north wind" (158).
48. MacDonald, *ABNW* 153.
49. Especially, see lines 7, 12-14, 21 on p. 139 and lines 3-4 on p. 143.
50. As for geno-text and pheno-text, see Kristeva, *Séméiotikè—Recherches pour une sémanalyse* 163-81, 267-79. See also Nishikawa, *Kristeva* 57-61. Diamond's experience with North Wind and at that country can also be seen as geno-text. It leads to pheno-text, namely, *ABNW* written by the narrator/MacDonald.
51. See also Kristeva, "Revolution in Poetic Language" 120-23.
52. This song, titled "Baby," was later published in *Poetical Works, Vol. 2* (1893).
53. MacDonald, *Phantastes*, 182-84. We will contemplate Diamond and Anodos' songs again, focusing on the issue of expressing the female body in the next section.
54. Anodos' song is erotic not just because he sings minutely about every part of the White Lady's body but also because after the song, as annotators point out, "like Pygmalion's creation, the woman stands before Anodos naked and alluring" (123).
55. MacDonald, *ABNW* 293-94.
56. Even though Diamond does not make the lady verbalize his song, we should note that both he and North Wind can speak directly to people's hearts, not to their ears. Their way of communication reminds us of the singing river: "it did not sing tunes in people's ears, it sung tunes in their heads" (124).
57. Manlove cites "[i]t is by the body that we come into contact with Nature, with our fellow-men, with all their revelations of God to us" (*Unspoken Sermons* "The God of the Living" 91). However, Manlove rather overstates the spiritual benefits that the body allows us to have. We should also note that in this sermon, MacDonald regards the body as "no less of God's making than the spirit that is clothed therein" (91). We need to appreciate the body itself more, which is the focus of this section.
58. See Michie 88-97 (dead metaphor), 97-102 (synecdoche), and 102-23 (metatrophe).
59. The notion that "the Victorians were the enemy of sexuality" is "common knowledge after Sigmund Freud: sexuality is the very thing that the middle-class Victorians, who were slaves to 'respectability,' struggled to hide, avoid, repress, and deny" (my trans.; Tanaka 10). However, the reality was not as such. See Honda, Ichikawa, and Tanaka.
60. As for Martha's second childbirth, the narrator reports that "I [am] so full of Diamond that I forg[e]t to tell you a baby arrive[s] in the meantime" (147), and regarding her third baby, he just states that "[o]f God's gifts a baby is of the greatest; therefore it is no wonder that when this one c[omes], she [i]s as heartily welcomed by the little household" (254).
61. In this scene, nature seems to give birth to or at least helps the queen to bear Princess Daylight. In other works, nature also plays the role of a surrogate mother. In Chapter XII of *Phantastes*, maidens find their children in nature instead of giving birth to them. Similarly, in *Lilith*, the Little Ones find babies in the forest and Lona rears them as her own children. Though in fact the white leopardess hides these babies in

the forest to save their lives from Lilith, Lona believes that discovering them in the forest is the way of their childbirth. Indeed, MacDonald may emphasize the nature's power to give life and its relation to our birth, but these magical childbirths can deprive woman of her corporeality and sexuality.

62. For example, Naomi J. Wood, focusing on patriarchy, fatherhood, and Father-God, only examines powerful father figures like Mr. Raymond and the narrator.
63. North Wind helps Diamond to walk down the stairs hand in hand in the cathedral. MacDonald, *ABNW* 98.
64. North Wind sometimes sees Diamond as her baby, and repeatedly takes him on her lap, drawing him close to her ample bosom.
65. Soto also refers to the relationship between North Wind and Dulcimer: "Diamond calls his sister Dulcimer (or sweet air) and this implies that she is also a daughter of North Wind" (146). Soto may misunderstand the origin of the baby's name because, as annotators state, "dulcimer" means "'Sweet song' (Latin *dulcis*, and Greek *melos*); also, a stringed instrument, a favorite symbol for the Romantic poets" (261). However, we agree with Soto's opinion that remarks their overlooked connection, and we extend his examination.
66. At their first meeting, North Wind tells Diamond that she has watched over Martha at her childbirth of the boy. MacDonald, *ABNW* 53.
67. After Diamond returns home from the country at North Wind's back, she never appears in the story even as the literal north wind from Chapter XIV "Old Diamond" to Chapter XXXI "The North Wind Doth Blow."
68. MacDonald, *Phantastes* 119-23.
69. In the room full of statues, there is a prohibition written in golden letters: "TOUCH NOT!" (MacDonald, *Phantastes* 113). In defiance of this prohibition, Anodos tries to clasp the White Lady to his chest, but she flees from him with the reproachful cry: "You should not have touched me!" (125).
70. It is noticeable that Mrs. Raymond is dressed in blue and gold because Princess Daylight wears these significant colors—blue on the previous night of the full moon and gold at the full of the moon—when her vitality and beauty are also full. See *ABNW* 229-30. As Mr. Raymond hits upon "Little Daylight" inspired by North Wind, this coincidence shows the relation between North Wind and Mrs. Raymond.
71. For example, Knoepfmacher, despite his meticulous interpretations of this work, mistakes the moon lady for Mrs. Raymond. See Knoepfmacher 262.
72. Later, North Wind tells Diamond that "I [am] the lady that s[its] at the window of the moon" (289).
73. Actually, when Nanny is sent to the hospital lying in a litter, "[s]he [i]s too ill to know anything" (188), and in the hospital she "ha[s] talk much about him [Diamond] when delirious" (217).
74. Wood offers a Lacanian explanation on this work's two "worlds." She considers the fantastic world with sexual mother figure to be "remarkably analogous to the pre-oedipal, 'Imaginary' phase described by Jacques Lacan, in which the infant, enjoying perfect unity with the mother" (64) and sees the realistic one as "the Symbolic Order . . . dramatizing issues of paternity, power, and punishment" (65). As Wood's focus is placed on paternity, she does not examine the former focusing on physical intimacy. Of course, we should not simply see North Wind as the mother and Diamond as her child who is undifferentiated from her in the Imaginary, but we focus on the importance of physical contacts and the female (*mother's*) body in their relation.
75. As in the mid-nineteenth century people tended to undervalue fairytale and fantasy, George Murray

Smith, the publisher, advised MacDonald that “if you would but write novels, you would find all the publishers saving up to buy them of you! Nothing but fiction pays” (Greville MacDonald 318).

Therefore, MacDonald could not help writing realistic novels to earn money to support his growing family despite his preference for poetry and his genius for fantasy/fairytales. In *ABNW* and *Adela Cathcart* (1864), he includes novels, fantasy, and poetry. Through their hybrid forms, he arranges a compromise between the contemporary demand and his desire.

76. We can say that this “Scotch shepherd” is James Hogg for three reasons. First, Hogg was known as the “Ettrick Shepherd” because of his profession: he was a shepherd in Ettrick, Scotland. Secondly, the year of the shepherd’s death corresponds to Hogg’s: Hogg died in 1835, “not forty years” before the publication of *ABNW* (the chapter that tells the stories about Durante and Kilmeny appeared in *Good Words for the Young* on December 1, 1869, and was published as a book in 1871). Thirdly, MacDonald quotes lines 38-51 of Hogg’s poem “Kilmeny” in this work on p. 123.
77. Instead of merely undervaluing North Wind, some critics also point out possible substitutes for North Wind to explain her long absence. For instance, Soto sees old Diamond, the horse, as her substitute because of their similarities. See Soto 130. North Wind’s other possible substitute is Mr. Raymond. See Gaarden 93, McGillis, “Language and the Secret Knowledge” 155, and Persyn 71. Indeed, there is some truth in all of these critics, but they are insufficient for understanding this work’s essence, namely, the relationship between North Wind and Diamond. Therefore, we regard the boy himself as her replacement in her absence, which attests to their special bonds.
78. MacDonald, *ABNW* 148.
79. Wood attributes the boy’s access to the secret of life to “a result of his removal from the bonds of educated language and thought” (73) and emphasizes North Wind’s role of taking him to the country at her back, undervaluing herself. In this article, however, we ascribe his possession of life’s secret to his visit to that country through her body and his intercourse with her. Also, as we mentioned, it should be noted that the boy learns to read and write.
80. This “nobody” can also mean “no-body.” Diamond does want her to be his “own real beautiful North Wind” (287), a corporeal lady.
81. In *Adela Cathcart*, MacDonald sees God as One “who is Father and Mother both in one” and as “father and mother and home” (176). Raeper points out that many of his stories are quests for “a father, but *the God revealed throughout the book is the motherly God* . . . Fatherhood was an important concept for MacDonald, but the Prodigal Son’s father with his arms outstretched, and the great-great-grandmother, are twin faces of the same loving God MacDonald wants his readers to believe in” (*George MacDonald* 262, emphasis added). As for his “motherly God,” see Gaarden.
82. Soto also points out that androgyny is North Wind and Diamond’s common trait, but he refers to it only for asserting the importance of Greek mythology: “These examples of gender ambiguity would be strange, were it not for all of the gender confusion present in much of the ancient Greek mythology MacDonald uses in his book” (142). However, concerning androgyny, we must consider the author’s view of gender in the first place. Therefore, we see their gender ambiguity as the clue for understanding the view: how MacDonald blurs the gender boundary and neutralizes the gendered image through his depictions of North Wind and Diamond.
83. We can see a lot of male wind gods in various myths, for instance, Enlil, the god of wind and storm in Sumerian myth and Fu-jin, a naked man shouldering a big sack filled with the wind in Japanese myth.

Similarly, the wind god of Buddhism is also male, called Fu-Ten. He is borrowed from Vayu, the male wind god in Indian myth, and Fu-ten is usually described as the old man who has white hair and red body clad in armor. All of them show power and destructiveness, which are generally seen as “male” characteristics.

84. Aura bears a close resemblance to helpless, submissive women floating weightlessly in the air in the Victorian art. See Dijkstra 87-89.
85. *The Encyclopedia of the Goddess* 80-81.
86. Auerbach 71.
87. For example, the drunken cabman states that Diamond is “a [sic] angel come down on his own business” (198), and the narrator regards the boy as “an angel of God with something special to say or do” (276).
88. According to Auerbach, “traditional angels take possessions of infinite space with an enviable freedom” (71).
89. Diamond has some girlish/feminine traits. For example, a cab driver, impressed by the boy’s courage in driving an old horse, says that “you’re a plucky one, for all your girl’s looks!” (195): he regards the boy’s appearance itself as girlish. Besides, when Diamond has his younger siblings in the grass with him, he feels “just like a cat with her first kittens” (271). Moreover, Martha admires her son’s assistance, saying that “you’re as good to your mother as if you were a girl—nursing the baby, and toasting the bread, and sweeping up the hearth!” (151). By giving “feminine” traits to the boy, MacDonald heightens their value and tries to blur the boundary between genders.
90. Diamond mentions the country at North Wind’s back to his mother twice (131, 144) and his father once (263), but the boy remains tight-lipped upon North Wind herself.
91. For example, Lesley Smith says that “MacDonald shows us the love behind the sternness mainly through the agency of the hero” (161), whose role is angelic, priestly, and prophetic. Then, Smith considers Diamond to be both prophet and sacrificial victim, referring to the prophet Daniel and Old Testament prophecy.
92. McGillis also remarks that Diamond remains a real, human child: “He does not die because he is too good for the world; rather he dies because of his frailty, his susceptibility to illness” (“Language and the Secret Knowledge” 153).
93. Mrs. Raymond should find Diamond dead with her husband because she says to the narrator that “we” find the boy lying on the floor. However, Mr. Raymond never appears at this last scene, demonstrating the importance of her role as the first witness.
94. MacDonald, *ABNW* 76, 78-79.
95. For example, see MacDonald, *ABNW* 164.
96. McGillis also takes notice of North Wind’s words and mentions the importance of the body: “The words ‘know’ and ‘body’ remind us of the pleasures of the flesh necessary for reproduction” (“Outworn Liberal Humanism” 88).
97. Ranko Honda states that “hair is a mysterious thing that escapes decay after death, though it is part of our body. It is an ambivalent thing on the boundary between life and death. Hair is suitable for the place of crossover between life and death, or physical corporeality and metaphysical spirituality. . . . Come to think of it, sexuality, an ambivalent thing, is hopelessly spiritual as well as originally physical. Such ambiguous condition is the key that connects hair and sexuality” (my trans.; 187-88). North Wind has been seen as incorporeal north wind, but her hair can cast light on her corporeal aspect that has been

overlooked by previous studies. To wit, we can say that her abundant hair is a representative, suitable trait for North Wind, who is both corporeal and incorporeal being.

98. Auerbach also refers to the scene where North Wind's arm enters the boy's room as an example of dissociation of a woman's body. Auerbach points out that the mystic movement of hands "reminds us of the totemistic aura parts of a woman's body acquire in disjunction from the woman herself" and quoting this scene, she states that "[t]he independent power of a woman's binding hands is more than a compositional motif: through it, realistic representations acquire the resonance of icons" (48). However, as Diamond's body sensation retains the wholeness of North Wind's body, her body parts are neither detached from her nor turned into icons.
99. Holbrook regards this scene as the expression of the author's desire to restore his dead mother to life. See Holbrook 174. However, here we should pay more attention to life and the mutuality between North Wind and Diamond.
100. We can also see Diamond's positive attitude toward this life in his strenuous efforts to find happiness even in the miserable situation mentioned in section II as his "baby-ness."
101. For example, Holbrook points out that "[i]t may be a memory of the experience of being born: but it belongs much more to the symbolism of schizoid suicide—that yearning for the ultimate regression from which one is to begin to be; by being born again" (182).

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Ayumi Kumabe is an assistant professor at Seinan Gakuin University in Fukuoka, Japan. She has published several articles and given presentations at conferences mainly connecting the image of woman and the view of life and death in George MacDonald's works. She got a doctorate in literature at Kyushu University two years ago. Thanks to the support of her precious people, Ayumi can keep studying so hard, and enjoying it. She is also zealous in paving the way to women and girls.