

Imagining Solidarity on the Periphery: William Faulkner and Nakagami Kenji as Writers of Minor Literature

連帯への想像力：マイナー文学の書き手としての
ウィリアム・フォークナーと中上健次

TANAKA Yumi

田 中 有 美

【要旨】中上健次は、アメリカの作家ウィリアム・フォークナーとオイディプス的な関係を結びつつ、架空の場所「路地」の物語群をうみだした。フォークナーの『響きと怒り』や『アブサロム、アブサロム！』は、北部から周縁化された南部としての架空の町ジェファソンを、その内部においてもさらに疎外された人々を描きながら一つのまとまりをもった共同体の世界として示した。中上も秋幸三部作で、熊野の「歴史」から隔てられ、高度成長期の開発で消失していく「路地」に生きる疎外された人々を描く。本稿は、両作家によるこのような試みが、まさに作家自身が使用する「中心」の言語、つまり、標準的な英語／日本語によるエクリチュールを、口承の伝統や地域や人種による特徴的な話し言葉で多層化するものとなっていることを示す。ひとつの言語の多層性を前景化しながら、言葉をより豊かなものとし、周縁化された共同体の連帯を想像的に創造する（ローティ）「マイナー文学」（ドゥルーズ、ガタリ）となっているという点で、この二人の作家は同じ方向性を示していることを明らかにする。

I. Introduction

After a suggestion in 1968 by Karatani Kojin, a literary critic and close friend of Nakagami Kenji (1946-92), to read William Faulkner's (1897-1962) novels, Nakagami absorbed himself in Faulkner's works. His reading began with *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August*, and *Absalom, Absalom!* Then, in the early 1970s, he closely read a number of short stories, including "A Rose for Emily" and "Dry September." He famously declared, "I'll be Japan's Faulkner" (Karatani 231).¹⁾ In 1976, he won the Akutagawa Prize, an important award for literary newcomers in Japan. The book, *The Cape*, established his reputation as a novelist. Nakagami's work as a novelist from 1968 to the mid-1970s, was always implicitly in conversation with Faulkner's work.

In the years that followed, Nakagami frequently expressed his critical understanding of Faulkner's works in lectures and discussions. In the late 1970s, his interests focused on three elements of Faulkner and his works: the map of Yoknapatawpha in *Absalom, Absalom!* (Nakagami, *Kishu* 8), "Thomas Sutpen and Joe Christmas and their mysterious origin," and Faulkner as a writer from the South (Nakagami, "Fundamental Place" 92). Nakagami's interest in Faulkner connects to the latter's depiction of the South, a marginalized place which maintains alternative verbal traditions from a standardized language in the center.

As I will discuss, Faulkner and Nakagami's representations of the periphery are similarly based on the hybridity of marginalized language.

Faulkner and Nakagami demonstrate the temporal and fragile solidarity of their respective home communities focusing on the oral tradition. This demonstration inevitably draws the two authors' texts into the struggle between local dialects and "English" or "Japanese," and between spoken and written language. Ironically, because the two authors choose the oral tradition as an act of solidarity for marginalized people, their own acts of writing are alienated from the world they develop in their sagas. In other words, Yoknapatawpha, a literary invention based on Oxford, Mississippi, and the Alleyway, an imaginary representation of the discriminated area in Shingu, Wakayama, emerge from the slippage between two uses of language. The limitation of standardized written languages makes it possible to represent the two marginalized communities, which consequently prevents Faulkner and Nakagami's novels from being minority literature describing particular decentered communities.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner allows multiple cracks to fracture his writing by including a variety of dialects and by indicating the inadequacy of written language. These cracks contribute to suggest different and cross-racial solidarity between southern blacks and the decaying old families of the South in the marginalized space.²⁾ The novel never stabilizes itself as a novel about those marginalized people. Rather, it prompts us to consider yet more marginalized people excluded from the solidarities of these typical minor communities. Quentin, who is regarded as an imitator of black people in Boston, and Benjy, the sole white man at the Easter service of a black church, are not only the sons of the decaying old southern family, but also stand at the periphery of the South, a periphery which is within neither the white nor the black community.

In *The Ends of the Earth*, *Supreme Time*, Nakagami likewise inserts oral language into his text, using phonograms, and creates more layers in his writing. Akiyuki never reduces his life to written language, but at the same time does not give a privileged position to the oral language of the Alleyway. Nakagami's refusal to interpret his characters' life through another form of language delineates Akiyuki and Ryuzo as characters living on the nameless periphery of the Alleyway. In this way, these two novels lead us to gaze at the periphery of a marginalized space, which continues to be produced in the process of the very solidarity of the marginalized and decentered which literature can create. In fact, this function is the responsibility of literature, and Faulkner and Nakagami share not only a method for the creation of solidarity but also that responsibility.

II. A Solidarity for the Marginalized:

Faulkner and Nakagami as Writers of Minor Literature

Faulkner and Nakagami show marginalized communities as achieving forms of solidarity in their works, and a deeper understanding of this is aided by examining Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's definition of "minor literature." In *Kafka; Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari point out three characteristics of minor literature: "the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual

to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation” (Deleuze and Guattari 18). As Kafka, the novelist Deleuze and Guattari argue, wrote for the Jews of Prague in “Prague German, a deterritorialized language,” a minor literature is what “a minority constructs within a major language” (Deleuze and Guattari 16-17). This vision of language of minor literature explains Faulkner and Nakagami’s ambiguous relationship to standard and written English/Japanese which the two authors use to describe the South and the Alleyway. Many problems Faulkner and Nakagami’s characters have derive from the political (racial, historical, class, economical, and gender) issues, and the problems are connected to each other in complicated ways.

In addition, Deleuze and Guattari describe the role of literature in the actual world in this way: “because collective or national consciousness is ‘often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down,’ literature finds itself positively charged in the role of a collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation. It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism” (Deleuze and Guattari 17). For Deleuze and Guattari, literature produces “an active solidarity” despite the fact that collective and national consciousness is always doubted “in external life,” that is, in the actual world. Although, in this description, literature seems to disregard the multiplicity of the actual world, it is clear that they view the function of literature positively. If the “solidarity” is “active” and invites another different solidarity, literature plays a “revolutionary” role. In this passage, Deleuze and Guattari illustrate how the writer is related to the revolutionary aspect of literature: “if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility” (Deleuze and Guattari 17). The writer, who is on the margin of a solidarity produced by another literature, is in a position of producing another solidarity which breeds “another consciousness and another sensibility.” The writer on the periphery of “his or her fragile community” is in a place where he or she can recognize the temporality and fragility of the solidarity. In short, a writer on the margin is in the position of creating relativity in the collective consciousness shared by those who are at the center of the community.³⁾

“Solidarity” in Deleuze and Guattari’s definition of literature is close to Richard Rorty’s notion of the concept. Rorty does not mention Deleuze and Guattari in his argument of solidarity in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, but Rorty explains his concept of solidarity as something imagined.

[i]n my utopia, human solidarity would be seen not as a fact to be recognized by clearing away ‘prejudice’ or burrowing down to previous hidden depths but, rather, as a goal to be achieved. It is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created.... This process of coming to see other human beings as ‘one of us’ rather than as ‘them’ is a matter of detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like and of redescription of what we ourselves are like. This is a task not for theory but for genres such as ethnography, the journalist’s report, the comic book, the docudrama, and, especially, the novel” (Rorty xvi).

Deleuze, Guattari and Rorty similarly emphasize the imaginary aspect of solidarity. It is an imagined unity despite the difference between “us” and “them” and transforms “them” into “one of us.”⁴⁾ In addition, they

give the novel an important role in the process of creating solidarity. Deleuze and Guattari deal with Kafka, a novelist; Rorty mentions novelists such as Charles Dickens, Olive Schreiner, Richard Wright, Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov, and regards the novel as “the principal vehicles of moral change and progress” as well as “the movie and the TV program” (Rorty xvi). In Faulkner and Nakagami’s case, the two authors’ writings offer solidarity to their home communities and communicate it to the center, but their relationship to solidarity is more complicated. As I will discuss later, the two authors, who approach their communities through writing, differentiate themselves from their home communities, which are characterized by *oral* heritage. The two authors create the communality based on their distance from the communities in the real world.

“Minor literature” is, in this model, written by a writer who offers a Rortyan solidarity to his or her community. Any work of literature might be called minor literature if it includes the process of offering a new solidarity: Even canonical literature can be minor literature. It is necessary for the marginalized writer to elaborate the method of expressing a new consciousness. The question of expression prompts us to consider the relationship between language and minor literature. According to Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka, a Prague Jew who wrote in a Czech dialect of German, epitomizes this relationship between a minority and a major language. Deleuze and Guattari also claim that the situation of Kafka can be found in the US. What Kafka did for German through Prague German is compared to “what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language” (Deleuze and Guattari 17).

Deleuze and Guattari’s remark on possible modes of language in minor literature leads us to consider how Faulkner and Nakagami’s languages are related to their methods of producing a Rortyan solidarity in their sagas. Both Faulkner and Nakagami produced a solidarity through emphasizing the oral tradition of Yoknapatawpha and the Alleyway. In “Introduction to *The Sound and the Fury*,” Faulkner states, “We [Southerners] need to talk, to tell, since oratory is our heritage” (Faulkner, “An Introduction” 229). Benjy, Quentin, and Jason’s monologues form most of *The Sound and the Fury*. Black southern dialect spoken by Dilsey, her family, and Reverend Shegog emphasizes the significant role of oral language. In the Easter service, a religious solidarity is strengthened through the unity of white and black oral Englishes commanded by Reverend Shegog and Dilsey’s unverbilized sounds. More radically than this novel, *Absalom, Absalom!* and *As I Lay Dying* are formed wholesale from an assemblage of oral narratives.

In Yoknapatawpha, the power of rumors is enormous, and it is undeniable that such rumors contribute to a demonstration of solidarity. Faulkner describes southern “oratory” by creating a huge assemblage of multiple speeches and rumors. The people of Jefferson are united by rumors—uncertain information about people such as Thomas Sutpen, Joe Christmas, Joanna Burden is spread by word of mouth. *Absalom, Absalom!* minutely describes the process of circulating information as rumors among people in Jefferson, who are united and represented as “the town.” In Section 3, when Henry vanished “[Ellen] heard just what the town heard,” and Ellen “fill[s] the town’s ear with” Judith’s engagement to Charles Bon (Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* 62). When people cannot access the information about hidden incidents in the Sutpens, “the town believes” what they assume. Moreover, “the town [knows]” of Henry and Judith’s intimate relationship (Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* 62), and what Miss Rosa knows is no more

than what “the town [knows]” (Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* 63). In her conversation with Quentin, Rosa anticipates how people will tell him about the reason that Rosa came back to her father’s home: “*They will have told you how I came back home. Oh yes, I know: ‘Rosie Coldfield, lose him, weep him; caught a man but couldn’t keep him’*” (italics original, Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* 136). When she utters the latter half of this sentence, which is enclosed with quotation mark, Rosa imagines and demonstrates how people *tell* Quentin. Rosa knows that all information circulates mouth to mouth in Jefferson. In Section 6, we finally realize that even General Compson, who seems to be in the privileged position of hearing Sutpen’s own narrative directly, does not have more knowledge about Sutpen’s family than “the town”: Mr. Compson says to Quentin, “[Your grandfather] knew only what the town, the county knew” (Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* 169).

Nakagami, influenced by Faulkner, focuses on the oral tradition of his hometown to establish his own sense of solidarity. In a speech he made in Frankfurt, Germany, he spoke about the world of his mother and siblings, which is completely separated from written language.

My mother, brother, and sisters do not read and write. They cannot. They are illiterate. In my family, it is only I who reads and writes. Only I read and create books. I am conscious that, from the day when, taken by my mother, I entered the grade school’s playground with cherry blossoms until today, and until I give up my breath, I have continued and will continue to lay myself on the rupture between my mother and siblings’ world, which is my loving sphere and isolated from letters, and this world of letters. I continue to tremble with unaccountable indignation.

(Nakagami, “Am I ‘Japanese’?” 340)

Traditionally, those who lived in the discriminated area did not have opportunities to receive education. Nakagami, who was born after World War II, went to school in a compulsory education system. He was aware of his special position in his family and isolated from his home because of his literacy. This exclusion makes it possible to suggest a new solidarity of his home as a space severed from written language.

Nakagami’s interest in the world devoid of letters is not limited to his familial sphere. In a discussion with Yasuoka Shōtarō and Noma Hiroshi, Nakagami talks about the fundamental difference between oral traditions and the world of letters.⁵⁾ Nakagami introduces a story that he heard from a woman in his hometown. She told Nakagami what her grandmother had heard and seen during the procession of the feudal lord of the Kishu Clan (the old name of Nakagami’s home prefecture), who had gone to Tokyo (Edo) for an alternate-year attendance (*Sankin-kōtai*, 参勤交代). Common people had to kneel down on the ground for the Kishu feudal lord’s procession. Forerunners ordered people to kneel down on the ground, saying ‘shita ni (kneel down on the ground, 下に).’ Nakagami shows an interest in the possibility that people living without written language have a totally different understanding of sounds compared to people living with written language.

I heard that the order ‘shita ni, shita ni’ sounded like the roar of ‘wha, wha’ for the grandmother, who hid herself in the bush, kneeling down on the ground. Those who can write probably heard the call like ‘shita ni, shita ni’, but the same sound was carried as ‘wha, wha’ to those who were devoid of letters and dropped from writing. [...] I feel that writing is so strong that it dissolves

the world of 'wha.'

(Nakagami, Yasuoka and Noma 84)

The word "dissolve" suggests his belief in the power of writing and his fear of the control that writing imposes on oral tradition. Nakagami seems to indicate that his grandmother's lack of literacy prevents her from associating "shita ni, shita ni" with a specific meaning. Nakagami instinctively understands that the world of 'wha' is the same kind of community he comes from since he posited himself at the rupture of the world of written language and oral tradition of his community.

Faulkner and Nakagami display the struggle between writing and orality in order to create a new collective consciousness that questions a monolithic concept of English and Japanese. Oral heritage offers a solidarity to Faulkner and Nakagami's imaginary community while writing itself is the "major language" in their works. Faulkner and Nakagami's works are "minor literature" in the sense that they represent orality as the foundational discourse of marginalized communities. Employing major language, that is, by writing, Faulkner and Nakagami attempt to demonstrate another possible solidarity, one based on an oral tradition. This does not mean that the two authors intended to admire oral heritage in the marginalized communities or insist on its regeneration or preservation. Kafka leads us to a new concept of German by using Prague German, and rather similarly Faulkner evokes a new concept of the English language, which has space for marginalized English dialects. Likewise Nakagami shows us new possibilities in the Japanese language, which makes an assemblage of written/standard Japanese language and other marginal Japanese dialects.⁶⁾

Faulkner and Nakagami enrich English and Japanese at two different levels within their writings. On the first level, regional and social dialects are articulated using standard English/Japanese language. This articulation contributes to the formation of an active solidarity of a specific marginal community, which is a fulfillment provided by minor literature, and not by minority literature, which is written by minor language about marginalized communities in Deleuze and Guattari's model (Deleuze and Guattari 16). On the second level, Faulkner and Nakagami's *written* narratives about a community formed by oral tradition inevitably reveal that their writings are fundamentally alienated from the community they describe. In particular, Nakagami's writing is conscious of the rupture between writing and oral tradition. This alienation from their writing, which stems from the difficulty of offering a solidarity based on oral heritage through writing, continues to question the authority and capability of standard English and Japanese language to represent American and Japanese marginalized communities.

III. *The Sound and the Fury*

The Sound and the Fury is filled with attempts to produce multiple languages within English.⁷⁾ In what follows, I focus on marginalized languages and analyze how Faulkner creates another language within the "English language." Quentin's spoken language deconstructs the supposed dichotomy of black and white people's language. When Quentin converses with three boys in Boston, a boy asks him "Are you a Canadian?" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 120). Another boy negates the possibility and says "He [Quentin] talks like they do in minstrel shows" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 120). These boys'

responses associate Quentin's speaking with the exaggerated manner of black people's speech, which white or black actors perform in minstrel shows. Quentin's language is not only different from northeastern English but also from the actual language used by black people. In other words, his language is regarded as different from white people's as well as black people's; the boys treat Quentin's language as fictional, only used in the world of performance. In addition, the South is not even an alternative to which the children attribute Quentin's accent. This exclusion of the South in the children's mind suggests that Quentin's language does not belong to the actual world for them. In Boston, Quentin's speech is as marginalized as that of Southern Blacks.

Black Southern vernacular, which is used by the servants of the Compsons and later by Reverend Shegog, also has the function of enriching language. In the last section, one witnesses in Reverend Shegog's sermon an assemblage of major and minor languages and something beyond them. Shegog's speech begins in standardized language, which "sound[s] like a white man. His voice [is] level and cold" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 293). Just after "two tears" slide on Dilsey's cheeks and she says "Yes, Jesus!" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 295), Shegog's locution drastically changes. In the earlier part of the speech, he says that "I got the recollection and the blood of the Lamb!" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 294). Then he utters "I got de ricklickshun en de blood of de Lamb!," which is explained that "[H]is intonation, his pronunciation, [becomes] Negroid" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 295). The congregation responds to his powerful sermon, raising the sound of "Mmmmmmmmmmmmm!" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 296). This sound refuses to have a particular meaning, but it has a potency of eliciting multiple feelings hidden in each congregation member's mind. At this moment, the three black languages connect to each other and form a solidarity based on the multiplicity of black languages.

The solidarity of the black people in the church points to another marginalized sphere: Benjy, a developmentally disabled white man. Frony says to Dilsey, "I wish you wouldn't keep on bringin him [Benjy] to church, mammy.... Folks talkin" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 290). Dilsey answers "Trash white folks. Dat's who it is. Thinks he aint good enough fer white church, but nigger church aint good enough fer him" (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 290). Dilsey's words describe Benjy's position, which is marginalized from both white and black communities. In particular, Benjy's isolation is intensified because he participates in the religious unity of the black people. Faulkner's foregrounding of black southern dialects leads us to create a new solidarity of the South and "English language," but this process is accompanied by the disclosure of a more marginalized space in the South. In addition to Benjy, the children's response to Quentin's southern accent, as we have seen, also suggests that Quentin is more estranged from the North than are black people. Thadious M. Davis observes "the significance of the Gibsons as a family group adding another dimension to the contrapuntal design by framing the disintegration of a white southern family with the survival of a black family" (Davis 396). A collective solidarity established for the marginalized black people counterpoints the marginality of several white characters.

In considering other novels by Faulkner, we discover several characters whose marginality is

articulated throughout the relationship to the solidarity of black characters. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, Sutpen's marginalization in a sense derives from his conflict against the collective existence of black slaves, one of whom required him not to use the front gate of the planter's house. That is, the enslaved person has power over Sutpen. In *Light in August*, Joe Christmas purposefully marginalizes himself from both white and black people. Regarding Sutpen and Christmas, their literal silence, in contrast to "oratory" and the devices that generate it, indicates the periphery of the South. Thus, neither these two novels nor *The Sound and the Fury* can be reduced to a minority literature of a particular community. Through the multiplicity of languages (including silence and meaningless sounds), the texts continue to indicate marginalized places in the South and lead us to a continuous attempt to discover a Southern solidarity. In this sense, *The Sound and the Fury* is truly "minor literature."

IV. *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time*

In *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time*, Nakagami also disassembles "Japanese language" through the Kishu dialect, the differences between the phonogram and the ideogram, and spoken and written language. As I have already suggested, Nakagami focuses on the oral tradition of his home community in order to offer a solidarity to those in the Alleyway. Nakagami's use of the phonogram, instead of the ideogram, foregrounds the Alleyway as the world of the spoken vernacular. "The Lord of Flies (Ha'e no oh, 蠅の王)" and "The Shit of Flies (Ha'e no kuso, 蠅の糞)" are nicknames for Hamamura Ryuzo there. In Akiyuki's conversation with some vagrants in the Alleyway, "The Shit of Flies" is transcribed in phonogram as "Ha'i no kuso (ハイノクソ)," which reflects the local accent. When "The Shit of Flies" appears as "Ha'i no kuso" in the phonogram, those who employ the standardized and written Japanese language have some difficulty in understanding the precise meaning of the phonogramic transcription. The phonogram prevents the phrase from being reduced to a particular meaning since the distinction of the three words, "shit," "of," and "flies," becomes unclear. Moreover, the vagrants pronounce "flies" "ha'i," a corrupt pronunciation of "ha'e," the standard pronunciation of "flies." This difference between the vagrants' and standard pronunciation causes a confusion between what is pronounced and its signification. The dialect and accent of the Alleyway destabilize the written and standardized Japanese language that connects itself with a meaning through ideography.

Akiyuki's epithet in phonogram also indicates a playfulness between the language of the Alleyway and written Japanese. In the aforementioned conversation between Akiyuki and the vagrants, Akiyuki discovers that he is called "The King of the Shit of Flies (Ha'i no kuso noh, ハイノクソノー, 蠅の糞の王)" by residents of the Alleyway (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 418). The phonogramic transcription, which reflects not only the local accent but also the reduction of pronunciation, again blurs the distinctions between each word. According to a vagrant, people call Akiyuki this because he is the son of Ryuzo called "the King of Flies" or "The Shit of Flies." Akiyuki's epithet is a product of the reversed logic that the son is the king of the father. Akiyuki is first confused with the logic, but he realizes that the logic is "not wrong" (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 418). Akiyuki offers an interpretation of the

logic, which locates the son in the position of the king and the father the servant: “The King of the Shit of Flies usually dissipates the wealth which the Shit of Flies builds since he does not know the hardship to obtain the wealth” (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 418). The son, “The King of the Shit of Flies,” has an innate privilege of using the father’s wealth without any effort. In this sense, the son deserves to be called the king of the father. In the language of the Alleyway, “king,” the word for a ruler including the father, can be assigned to the son, who is controlled by the father because of his posteriority in the framework of the Oedipal. In the Oedipal model, the son is inferior to the father since the son is a latecomer. The posterity produces the hierarchy between the father and the son. In the Alleyway, the word “king” is more appropriate to the son than the father since the son is able to enjoy what the father establishes. Akiyuki’s nickname indicates that the language of the Alleyway assumes a different relationship between the father and the son. Ryuzo and Akiyuki’s nicknames in the phonogram suggest that the standard Japanese language used in the Alleyway includes another Japanese language operated by a different hierarchical system. This different Japanese language produces a solidarity for the Alleyway.

Akiyuki’s epithet in the phonogram suggests the presence of “Alleyway” language, which destabilizes the monolithic image of the standardized and written Japanese language. The sound of that nickname, which Nakagami emphasizes with the phonogram, refuses an attempt to articulate its meaning. In the Alleyway “The King of the Shit of Flies” is pronounced “ha’i no kuso noh.” It is difficult to divide the components of the phonogramic transcription into each unit of a meaning. In particular, the last word “noh,” which is a liaison of “of (*no*)” and “king (*oh*),” cannot be divided into “of” and “king.” Even the mark of liaison is erased in the phonogramic writing. In short, the distinction between a word and other words is obscured in the spoken language of the Alleyway. The phonogramic transcription indicates that the Japanese language includes other Japanese languages that are isolated from the written form and have different systems of meanings.

With the sharp consciousness of the rupture between the Alleyway and written language, Nakagami does not use his own language, writing, in order to describe Akiyuki’s understanding of two significant matters—the incest with Satoko, his half-sister, and the fratricide, the killing of Hideo, his half-brother.⁸⁾ In other words, Nakagami does not allow Akiyuki to interpret what he did through Nakagami’s written language. Instead of written language, Nakagami leads Akiyuki to reflect upon the incest and the fratricide via a folk song. First, Akiyuki likens his incest to the folk song, which only two old women can sing in the Alleyway now. It was so popular there that many people used to dance to it at a summer festival every year. The song is about a brother who loves his sister. The brother becomes sick because of his serious feelings for the sister and confesses that he loves her. He also says he will be recovered if she once sleeps with him. The sister is surprised at this confession and refuses her brother’s request. Considering her brother’s sickness, she proposes that she will sleep with him if he kills a mendicant priest, whom she is betrothed to marry. The brother finds the priest in a different city and kills him. The priest screams in a feminine voice when he dies. Hearing the voice, the brother suspects that he did not kill the right person. The brother removes the headpiece from the priest. He learns that the priest is his beloved sister. Lamenting his mistake, the brother kills himself. According to the story of this song, the brother and sister

do not commit incest. Yet Akiyuki connects this song with his incest: "I committed incest like the folk song about the double suicides of the brother and sister. Many people used to sing and dance to this song in 'the Alleyway'" (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 343). For Akiyuki, his incest is associated with the tradition which old women bequeath to the younger generation orally. In addition, incest seems to have a different meaning in the community in which people do not criticize the relationship between the brother and sister from a moralistic perspective. Rather they commemorate such a relationship by communicating a folk song through generations. Akiyuki tries to make a relationship to the oral tradition rather than the myth of incest, which is tabooed but also developed in the literature of written language.

Secondly, Akiyuki shows a fundamental rejection of language to explain his murder of Hideo. Akiyuki recognizes that words are not capable of explaining the fratricide: "In prison, repeatedly recalling the irretrievable act that he did, Akiyuki decided to inscribe in his mind what he did to Hideo, his brother, as it was without explanation of words. Hideo was essentially innocent and knew nothing. Akiyuki decided to keep the inscription on his mind as long as he lived" (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 443). At this moment, Akiyuki manifests more fundamental suspicion about language. This suspicion is closely related to Akiyuki's desire to escape from typical forms of narrative written in language. Following the aforementioned manifestation, Akiyuki continues that he killed Hideo "not due to Hamamura Ryuzo. Much less, not due to Ikuo, his uterine-brother, who committed suicide by hanging himself on the persimmon tree at the house in 'the Alleyway' at the age of twenty four" (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 443). Ikuo hated Akiyuki since their mother remarried, bringing only little Akiyuki to the house of the newly-wed couple. Ikuo resented his mother's special treatment of Akiyuki; therefore, Ikuo often came to the house where his mother, Akiyuki, her new husband and his son lived, and intimidated her and Akiyuki, saying that "I'll kill you two" (Nakagami, *The Cape* 46). If Akiyuki explains his murder of Hideo in relation to Ryuzo, his act is reduced to a story of the Oedipal, a narrative of a son resisting his father. On the other hand, if he finds the same relationship between Ikuo and Akiyuki as between Akiyuki and Hideo, Akiyuki's murderer becomes a typical story of fratricide. In either case, his act is reduced to the two narrative forms that are circulating in the literature of written language.⁹⁾ When Akiyuki's murder is described as "Akiyuki killed Hideo with a stone. That's it" (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 443), Akiyuki chooses to face the fact without the mediation of words and typical narrative forms which written language has formed. Nakagami indicates the inadequacy of written language by indicating the limit of his own act of "writing" stories concerning the Alleyway.

When Akiyuki refuses to verbalize his interpretation of his own murder, even the oral tradition like the folk song is not adequate for his own truth. This treatment of oral culture suggests that Nakagami proceeds to search for another solidarity. Nakagami offers a solidarity to the Alleyway, but he doesn't stop there. He proceeds to disclose what the Alleyway marginalizes. The Alleyway also internalizes the system of exclusion and marginalization:

those who can read and write are nothing but geeks who are useful for the illiterate Alleyway people merely when they want to send letters to relatives, who originally came from the Alleyway but now live in other places. Hamamura Ryuzo lived with a widow in the Alleyway

and worked his way up. He was insulted as if, unlike those who live in the Alleyway, he had had his mouth at the place of anus and his anus at the place of mouth. They call him the Shit of the Flies or the Lord of the Flies. (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 66).

The Alleyway is marginalized from “the city,” but at the same time it “excludes and purges outsiders who have wisdom and energy, and spread persistent rumors about them” (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 415). To be accepted by those who live in the Alleyway, he or she must be more “incapable” than them (Nakagami, *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time* 416). Ryuzo, who has absolute power over them now, is exactly the outsider for the Alleyway, and Akiyuki is the man’s son. Akiyuki is on the periphery of the Alleyway as well. Indeed, Akiyuki sets the Alleyway on fire in order to erase it. *The Ends of the Earth, Supreme Time*, which creates a solidarity for the Alleyway, ends by breaking the solidarity and prompts us to proceed to what Deleuze and Guattari’s term “another consciousness and another sensibility” (17). Like Faulkner, Nakagami is not plain advocate of people in a particular marginalized space. He keeps locating his novels in the field of minor literature, but avoids being a writer of a minority literature.

V. Conclusion

If Faulkner and Nakagami went no further in the creation of a new collective consciousness than this, their works could properly be called merely a minority literature written from a marginalized community. Yet their works also indicate what is marginalized *within* the peripheral space. Their texts suggest another solidarity for doubly or invisibly marginalized places. The two authors indicate this doubly marginalized sphere through producing multiple ruptures in their language. Faulkner and Nakagami’s choice of the oral tradition as a medium of forming a solidarity inevitably involves their texts in the struggles between northern and southern English, white and black English, standard Japanese and *Kishu* dialect, and spoken and written words. These struggles can be developed in terms of the dynamic tension between a major and a minor language. Outsiders in the sense that they attempt to “write” a community deeply dependent on oral tradition, Faulkner and Nakagami share a method of demonstrating solidarity through the hybridity of language, indicating that this solidarity depends on a more marginalized and excluded space from the community. Their novels assume the responsibility of establishing a solidarity through literary writing and try to be open to continuous renewals of solidarity.

Notes

- 1) In this essay, family names of Japanese persons appear first according to Japanese custom. All Japanese writings are translated into English by the author.
- 2) My argument focuses on Faulkner as a writer of the South, but his texts are also argued in the context of the Global South. For example, see Hosam Aboul-Ela's *Other South*. Nakagami's lectures on Faulkner, "The Luxuriating South" and "The Faulkner Impact" indicate that he fully understands Faulkner's significant impact on the writers of the Global South. Anne McKnight suggests that Nakagami expands Faulkner's affinity with the Global South into his concept of the South as politically and culturally marginalized world areas: "Nakagami develops his concept of the South by transposing Faulkner's post-Civil War U.S. South to a specific region within Japan. Nakagami used the idea of a "South" to refer to local peripheries as well as Southern locations outside of Japan, making connections between local and regional imaginaries. This "South" links two scales of regional subnational peripheries and national political areas by asserting a common awareness that resources flow from a "periphery" of poor and underdeveloped developed states to a "core" of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former" (McKnight, Chapter 3). About the relationship between Nakagami and Faulkner in the argument of the Global South from the perspective of World Literature, see also Section 3, Chapter 4 of Imai Ryoichi's *The Alleyway and the World*.
- 3) In a discussion with Nakagami, Suga Hidemi refers to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature. Responding to Suga, Nakagami states, "the half part of me cannot find my identity in relation to Japanese" (Nakagami, "Toward the US" 445). In "The Double Logic of Minor Spaces," Seiji M. Lippit points out "the double function" of Nakagami's world as a minor space. Lippit focuses on the double function of "minor literature," "deterritorializing a major literature or language and also providing its necessary boundary of limit" (Lippit 283). He finds the function, for example, in the end of *A Thousand Years of Pleasure* in which an Ainu youth comes to the Alleyway and becomes a substitution for Tatsuo, a man from the Alleyway. Lippit calls this displacement "a cryptic, hidden movement along the borders of the nation-state" and "a type of 'mimicry' that takes place along the margin—between minority groups" (Lippit 295).
- 4) According to Elliott Colla, Rorty's concept of solidarity is further developed by Michael A. Principe. Principe foregrounds the difference between "us" and "them," which is not assimilated into "us," and emphasizes political possibility more radically than Rorty. "It seems important that we be able to act in solidarity with those that are at least in some important senses not 'one of us'" (Principe 144). For a more detailed summary of the history of arguments on solidarity, see p. 354 of Colla's "Sentimentality and Redemption: The Rhetoric of Egyptian Pop Culture Intifada Solidarity."
- 5) In this discussion, Nakagami distinguishes himself from the category of "minority writer." Nakagami criticizes a novel written by a young writer from a discriminated area (we cannot identify the novel he means): "I feel very uncomfortable when I read novels written by a young writer from [*hisabetsu*]-*buraku* (discriminated area). The reason is that they are very shallow. I felt how shallow they were. For example, a character is told 'you stink,' and he physically attacks the person who said this to him. The problems concerning the *buraku* are not such shallow things. If we write and publish such experience in this way, it can only be sensational. But I think it is different. I feel the problems regarding the *hisabetsu-buraku* are deeper and tougher" (Nakagami, Ysuka and Noma 43).
- 6) Tanaka Keiko observes that Faulkner uses "letters and rumors" to "regenerate voices and actions" of "people who died in the recent past" while Nakagami "is always cautious about the possibility that his words are captured in the narratives developed under the emperor system of Japan" (Tanaka 289). Nakagami's use of oral and colloquial language and his critical attitude toward his own writing are "his questioning of the emperor-centered language culture" in Japan (Tanaka 289).
- 7) In *Rhizosphere*, Mary F. Zamberlin asserts that Faulkner "destabilizes an order that associates varying uses of language with exterior rather than interior states" based on Deleuzian concept of minor language (Zamberlin 139).
- 8) Imai Ryoichi explains the relationship between "narrated words" and "written words," using Emily Apter's argument of translation in *The Translation Zone*: Nakagami "creates his 'creole language' by mixing vernacular 'narrated words' syntactically with the standardized system of 'written words'" (Imai, *The Alleyway and the*

World 160).

- 9) Yoshida points out the parallel between the rebellion against father and conventional narrative structure in the Akiyuki trilogy: “[To Nakagami], ‘to disclose a father’ also means ‘to expose the code and the system of the conventional narrative’ and liberate the novel from its control” (Yoshida 351).

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