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TO GO BEYOND COMMUNAL NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTS:

The Case of William Faulkner and Nakagami Kenji

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William Faulkner (1897–1962), the great novelist of the American South in the twentieth century, influenced many writers globally. Nakagami Kenji (1946–92), a literary master of modern Japan after Oe Kenzaburo (the 1994 Nobel Prize winner for literature), was one of those who acknowledged Faulkner's influence on his literary imagination.[1] Nakagami's Kumano, which serves as the background of his many fictions, reminds us of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha. Nakagami wrote extensively about several families of this area in his novels, just as Faulkner wrote in his Yoknapatawpha saga.[2]

Admittedly, Faulkner was from the planter class of the old South, while Nakagami was from the *Burakumin* class, a Japa-

1. At the beginning of the collection of non-fiction essays *Kishu: Ki no Kuni, Ne no Kuni Monogatari* (*Kishu*: *A Tale of the Land of Trees, Land of Roots*), published in 1978, Nakagami refers to Faulkner's Jefferson in relation to the exploration of his homeland Kumano (482). Nakagami also sensed the importance of Faulkner's dynamic imagery of the South, which is the South of any place. See Nakagami, 'Hammo suru Minami,' in *Nakagami Kenji Zenshu* 15, 535–43; translated into English as 'Faulkner: The Luxuriating South,' in: *Faulkner: After the Nobel Prize*, 326–36.

2. For Example, Nakagami's *Akiyuki Trilogy* (*Misaki* [*The Cape*] 1976, *Karekinada* [*The Sea of Kareki*] 1977, *Chi no Hate, Shijo no Toki* [*The Ends of the Earth, the Supreme Time*] 1983) writes about the protagonist Akiyuki Takehara and his family at *Roji* (alleyway), his neighborhood in Kumano. In *Sennen no Yuraku* (*A Thousand Years of Pleasure*), published in 1982, an old midwife narrates about the lives of the young men of *Roji* (alleyway) she helped bring into the world.

nese social outcaste in the past. Nakagami regarded himself as a minority writer, and like some African-American or Latin-American writers inspired by Faulkner, he was quite conscious of Faulkner's critical but complicated gaze towards his society. Born illegitimate in the minority class in a country which traditionally emphasized the patriarchal authority, Nakagami sensed Faulkner's polar position and predicament as a legitimate heir to Southern culture and history. Faulkner was aware of the contradictions of binary thinking in the Southern black/white racial divide, but growing up in the deep South, he also knew the binding power of the traditional narrative constructs. The cause of the old South and the spell of blood and race repelled as well as enchanted him.

The power of traditional narrative constructs, and the sense of place and history which affect the legends, are also as significant to Nakagami's literature, as to Faulkner's. Nakagami suffered not only from the binary contrast of the sacred and the damned in traditional Japanese narratives, but also from the treacherous solution of the binary oppositions in these narratives. He was acutely aware of this in his old ex-*Burakumin* neighborhood in Kumano.

Nakagami's hometown belongs to the Kumano area, located on the large Kii Peninsula in the middle part of mainland Japan. The mountainous Kumano area is related by tradition to the origin of ancient Japan, and abounds in myths and legends of gods and emperors.[3] Since it is agreed theoretically that the old Japanese hierarchy, with the emperor at the top, consequently necessitated the outcaste at the bottom, Nakagami was critically aware of ancient Japanese myths and legends, which centered on heroic emperors and which founded the basic structure of the imagined community of patriarchal Japan.[4] Growing up

3. The Kumano area is mentioned as a village of gods in *Nihon Shogi*, written around the 8th Century.

4. Nakagami criticizes that the Japanese *monogatari* (narrative, or narrative making) praises such patriarchal structure of power. Still, he believes there is something maternal in the Japanese way of narration, which sets the reverential tone, forecloses people within the patriarchal narrative constructs and makes them absorb its ideology. See *Taidan: Mongatari no Shohshitsu to Ryuhbou* (*Dialogue: the Disappearance of the Narrative and the Nomadic*

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as a member of a minority in the Kumano area, the mysterious heart-land of the ancient Japan, Nakagami has a love-hate relationship with his homeland and its traditional narrative constructs. Though set apart in time, space, and class, Faulkner and Nakagami respectively criticize their patriarchal societies which are sustained by the use of elaborate narrative constructs, and which consist of binary codes, and cause fatal discrimination.

In this paper, I hope to present the similar and/or different strategies Faulkner and Nakagami adopt in their critique and deconstruction of the narrative construct of each society. Both Faulkner and Nakagami are fascinated with traditional narratives which are strongly connected with their native lands and histories, but they also want to go beyond the local or national bind of the patriarchal system through the creation of their own narratives. They both sense that they are, more or less, minority nomads in their own land. The focus of examination and comparison in this paper is on the nomadic protagonists and the 'dangerous women'[5] in Faulkner's *Light in August* and in Nakagami's 'Fushi' ('Immortal'), one of the short stories in *Kumano Shu* (*Kumano Collection*). There is little mention of Nakagami's *Kumano Shu* in the critical comparison of Nakagami with Faulkner,[6] but Nakagami was writing short stories for *Kumano Shu* about the same time as he was writing *Chi no Hate, Shijo no Toki* (*The Ends of the Earth, the Supreme Time*,

People), 28–29. Also see Nakagami, *Fukei no Muko e, Monogatari no Keifu* (Beyond Landscapes, A Genealogy of the Narrative), 120–22, 165–67, 204–07.

5. This phrase is quoted from the title of Nina Corniyetz's critical study, *Dangerous Women, Deadly Words: Phallic Fantasy and Modernity in Three Japanese Writers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). In this book, Cornyetz brilliantly examines gender and sexuality in the texts of Nakagami and other Japanese writers.

6. The critical comparison between Faulkner and Nakagami is mainly on Faulkner's novels with Quentin Compson as the main protagonist (*The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*) and Nakgami's *Akiyuki Trilogy*. See for instance, Michiko Yoshida, 'Kenji Nakagami as Faulkner's Rebellious Heir,' *Faulkner, His Contemporaries, and His Posterity*, ed. Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (Tubingen: Francke, 1993), 350–60; Anne McKnight, 'Crypticism, or Nakagami Kenji's Transplanted Faulkner: Plants, Saga and *Sabetsu*,' *The Faulkner Journal of Japan* (May 1999). 24 August 2006 <http:// www.isc.senshu-u.ac.jp/~thb0559/fjournal.htm >.

1983),[7] a novel which shows some strong allusion to Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

The protagonists of Faulkner's and Nakagami's texts mentioned above are nomads, who are hard to categorize into one identity, and they go beyond the boundary of each community. In *Light in August*, Joe Christmas is an orphan who does not fit into Southern society because he does not know whether he has black blood or not. He is a subversive wanderer, and in that sense is similar to some of Nakagami's heroes in *Kumano Shu*. Nakagami does not say whether his protagonists are from the ex-*Burakumin* class (the Burakumin class is a socially discriminated class,[8] and you cannot tell a Burakumin from the others on the surface, just as you cannot single out Joe Christmas as a black), but both Christmas and Nakagami's protagonists are alienated from society. And their encounter with the women on the border of the community is affected by complicated gender roles and traditional narrative constructs which fortify the hierarchal order.

In *Light in August* and *Kumano Shu*, there are some problematic women who assume various monster-like features of the ancient myth or legends. Neither Faulkner nor Nakagami, in spite of their critique of patriarchal society, shows direct sympathy with women: Faulkner is often criticized for his misogyny, and Nakagami is notorious for describing violence to and of women.[9] Still, these authors'

7. 'Fushi' was first published in the magazine *Gunzoh* in 1980, though the *Kumano Shu* as a collection of short stories was published in 1984. Nakagami was writing a part of *Chi no Hate, Shijo no Toki* (*The Ends of the Earth, the Supreme Time*) in 1981, and finished the manuscript in 1982 (*Nakagami Kenji Zenshu* 15, 759). Nakagami was familiar with Faulkner's *Light in August*, as he mentions Lena in *Hammo suru Minami* in 1985 and in other writings.

8. There is no confirming academic agreement on the origin of the discrimination against the *Burakumin*, which is traced back as far back as the middle ages. See George De Vos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, *Japan's Invisible Race: Caste in Culture and Personality*. Kurokawa Midori, however, concludes that the discrimination of the *Burakumin* people is practically racial, since people try to find whatever stigma or sign of the *Burakumin* on their bodies to separate them from the other Japanese and to justify discrimination. See Kurokawa, 20, 40–42, 70–75.

9. The harsh criticism on Faulkner's misogyny has been reexamined and is fairly deconstructed through gender criticism. See, for instance, Deborah Clarke, Minrose C. Gwin, and John N. Duvall. As for Nakagami, Livia Monnet criticizes

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marginal women contribute to the unsettling of society in their struggle with the protagonists, and the reaction of the nomadic heroes to these women also tells us how patriarchal society functions and deals with the repressed and the alienated.

In *Light in August*, Joanna Burden, daughter of a Northern abolitionist in the South, remains an alien to the townspeople of Jefferson. The change of Joanna's behavior from her masculine fight against Joe Christmas's sexual assault to nymphomaniac frenzy afterwards and finally into religious stubbornness assumes some monstrous quality. As a matter of fact, not only Joanna but also women characters conforming to a 'nursing' or 'feeding' image of femininity generally assume an evil or menacing quality for Christmas. The dietitian at the orphanage, and Bobbie, a restaurant waitress and Christmas's first love, betray and blame Christmas when they are cornered. Christmas's trouble often starts when he feels trapped in a woman's room or house. Hidden in a curtained corner in the dietitian's room, small Christmas vomits when, eating toothpaste, he inadvertently sees the dietitian's sexual act with her lover. Alone with an African American girl in a shed, he panics and strikes her violently. When Christmas is locked up in a room for punishment by his stepfather, his stepmother secretly brings food for him, but he immediately dumps it. In dark, closed spaces, whether with their sexual appeal or with food, women are dangerous. They seduce him and make him succumb to the physical desires he wants to control and suppress.

Christmas, who struck down his stepfather presumably to death, runs away from women as well as from patriarchal society. He resists patriarchal authority which confines him to a hierarchal order, but he also distrusts women who remind him of his physicality. Christmas slips into Joanna Burden's house in Jefferson and comes to his confrontation both with Joanna and with the patriarchal South.

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the patronizing, authoritative attitude of some influential Japanese male critics who try to dismiss the critical views of Nakagami's violence on women in his texts. See Monnet, 14–15. Cornyetz, however, emphasizes the ambivalent androgyny of Nakagami's protagonists' positions in *Dangerous Women, Deadly Words: Phallic Fantasy and Modernity in Three Japanese Writers*.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Circe serves hungry men with meals but changes them into swine afterwards. Joanna supplies Christmas with food, though she did not mean to seduce him in the beginning (Still, the food is fixed '*for the nigger*' [Faulkner, 1987: 261] as Christmas recognizes: the food set for any needy African American defines her relationship to the eater as a charity-giver). Then she becomes a nymphomaniac femme fatale and calls him a 'Negro!' (Faulkner, 1987: 285) in their sexual acts. And at the end of their relationship, she turns to be extremely religious and wants him to become a black, a model African American who, through her guidance, will work for the improvement of the life of his race. If Joanna does not turn Christmas into a swine, she wants to turn him into an African American.

Joanna's grandfather and her half-brother were killed as Northern abolitionists by John Sartoris, the head of a respectable, aristocratic family in Jefferson. Joanna says to Christmas that Colonel Sartoris 'was a town hero' (Faulkner, 1987: 274) for the killing. She is an enemy of the townspeople, only tolerated for being not conspicuous or obtrusive. In a sense, Christmas also could be a hero who slaughters the dangerous monster for society. As a nymphomaniac, each strand of Joanna's hair 'would seem to come alive like octopus tentacles' (285), and at her final confrontation with Christmas, the shadow of her arm on the wall raising the old pistol is 'monstrous' and resembles 'the arched head of a snake' (310). In these respects, she reminds us of Medusa, whose hair is living serpents and whose fearful gaze turns men into stone. At the final moment, Christmas does not see Joanna directly but only looks at her shadow on the wall. Perseus in the Greek myth carefully watches Medusa reflected on his shining shield to avoid being turned into stone, and chops off her head. Joanna is found dead with her head almost thrashed apart.

A classical hero usually starts as an alienated person or a nomad, but is welcomed back to society as a hero after he accomplishes the assigned task of conquering a monster. Christmas, however, can never be a hero of Jefferson. In *Light in August*, the protagonist and the monster woman reflect the law of society in a curious way. Christmas's ambiguous skin color and Joanna's coercion of African American identity on Christmas point to the core

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problem of Southern society, but they reverse the common gender roles of the treacherous female body and the patriarchal law. Joanna rigidly performs the duty decreed by her abolitionist father until her death turns her into a typical white woman victim of a black rapist in the Southern myth. Christmas asserts his ambiguous body before he plays, from the viewpoint of Jefferson, the righteous role of a patriarchal avenger of the Southern code on Joanna, the Northern abolitionist. But the hero is quickly turned into a black murderer. Christmas's identity which goes beyond the black/white divide cannot be tolerated because his ambiguous blood tantalizes and nullifies the foundation of Southern society. The ironical allusion to the classical monster-conquest myth reveals the contradiction of the Southern narrative of race and gender, and also questions who the monster really is. Christmas, who is killed and castrated by Percy Grimm, might be remembered as another slain monster. But the town, which changes Joanna into a Southern woman victim, and Christmas into a black rapist murderer, might be a more sinister monster.

Joanna calls Christmas a 'Negro!' during their sexual acts. She is haunted by her father's words which regard the black people as God's curse on white people. Her father says: 'But you can never lift it [the black man's shadow] to your level. I see that now, which I did not see until I came down here. But escape it you cannot' (Faulkner, 1987: 279). In spite of all the efforts they make to raise the African Americans' position in society, both Joanna and her father accept the innate inferiority of the black race. Consequently, she is not free from the sense of sin and religious obligation in contact with the African Americans. She tries to challenge her father's control as well as Southern racism, but even when Joanna is in the most private, physical contact with Christmas, she must deliberately play the part of a femme fatale and names the racial taboo to enhance sexual frenzy and to convince herself of her subversive and cross-over act against her Puritanical and filial duty. She needs not only her body but also the verbal articulation and the defiant gestures to be aware of her challenge to society. The patriarchal grip, as well as Southern code of the binary divide, however, is too strong

to flee from, and she finally makes use of Christmas as a black to fulfill her religious goal.

In Nakagami's 'Fushi' in *Kumano Shu*, a lonely woman in the village offers lodging to a pseudo-monk wanderer, and makes love to him. The story is a variant of a Buddhist priest vs. enchantress monster battle in Japanese legends.[10] Still, the village woman's strong sexual desire as well as her zeal for salvation also reminds us of Joanna Burden, though Nakagami's woman is not obsessed with any ancestral mission. The woman presumably suspects that the protagonist is not a genuine monk, but she calls him 'Holy Master' during the sexual act, just as Joanna calls Christmas a 'Negro' in spite of his ambiguous identity. She repeats 'Holy Master, save me!' (Nakagami, 1995: 206) while the protagonist himself also starts repeating 'Save me,' and strangles her.

In *Light in August*, Joanna as a white woman regards her sex with Christmas as defilement and damnation, which might conversely free her from the patriarchal and Puritanical society; Nakagami's woman, on the other hand, is acutely aware of herself as an outcast. Through her appellation of the man as 'Holy Master' during the sex act, she defies the religious authority of the Buddhist community and aims at forbidden sexual ecstasy, but at the same time she desperately hopes for religious salvation. In the typical Buddhist priest vs. enchantress tales in Japan, the Buddhist priest does not succumb to the enchantress's sexual charm. He confirms the victory of Buddhism over the local animistic gods and monsters. The village woman in 'Fushi,' on the other hand, assumes total dependence on the monk in her sexual surrender so that she may assimilate with the religious authority. The village woman guesses that the protagonist is not a genuine monk. But the potential crash between the profane and the sacred instigates the woman to take a chance and to try either to be saved or to subvert the religious and social order. Negation of the self against the other in sex or religion brings sacrificial ecstasy, but the fusion of the two people across dif-

10. Yomoda Inuhiko discusses Nakagami's 'Fushi' partly as one of the 'Makai Sannyu Tan' ('The Tale of Adventures into the Monster World'). See Yomoda, 92–93. Zimmerman also discusses the traditional legends in relation to 'Fushi.' See Zimmerman, 199–206.

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ferent classes can also be a blasphemy to the religious or social hierarchy.

Furthermore, the village woman's persistence in making the wretched protagonist a saint may also be affected by the stereotypical happy ending of some Japanese folk tales. Many Japanese legends promise their wandering protagonists a delivery from nomadic drift into religious or secular glory at the end. After many hardships, protagonists are often found by their aristocrat fathers and are recognized as their legitimate sons.[11] This promise, the kinship between the sacred and the damned, has charmed the people of the lowly class. Nakagami suspects the gratifying denouement in the traditional Japanese narratives may have robbed the *Burakumin* class of their will for insurrection against society.[12] Admittedly, the piety and devotion for the holy and the noble help lighten the misery of the despised. But Nakagami also suggests that the desire for merging with the elect could prompt the lower class to seize power, either mundane or holy. Nakagami's village woman secretly aims for the share of authoritative power through sexual surrender at the same time as she desperately hopes for the religious miracle by a holy saint. The lonely village woman and the wandering protagonist see the slightest possibility of salvation in their physical contact while the two outcasts mirror on each other their respective suicidal desire and destructive aggressiveness against society.

Both in *Light in August* and 'Fushi,' the men kill the women in the end. Joanna's appellation of Christmas as 'Negro' and the village woman's appellation of the pseudo-monk as 'Holy Master' are oppositional in the use of class, but these women make use of social or racial hierarchy paradoxically to assume surrender

11. For instance, the protagonist of an old legend 'Shuntokumaru' is poisoned, blinded, and expelled from his aristocrat father's mansion due to an intrigue, but he is finally purged of the poisoned body and returns to his original class. A Noh play *Yoroboshi* is based on this story. See, for example, Nakagami's essay 'Tanpen Shohsetsu toshiteno Noh' ('Noh plays as short fiction').
12. In 'Nichirin no Tsubasa' ('Wings of the Sun'), 1984, Nakagami describes the old women from *Roji* (alleyway) who eagerly visit the Ise Shrine, where Amaterasu Ohmikami, the ancestral goddess of the Imperial family is enshrined. They are devoted to the Emperor, and finally go to Tokyo to have a look at the present Emperor.

towards their men, and yet try to take a better command of their relationship. They desperately seek salvation, but they resort to social appellation even in the most physical contact with their lovers. What they confront is not their men but the social system and its narrative constructs. They use their men as instruments either for salvation from the patriarchal system or for insurrection. Nakagami's village woman would have the protagonist as a holy saint, and Joanna must have Christmas as black to secure her role either as an abolitionist or as a subversive rebel. Joanna, however, fails to cross over the color line after all, and returns back to her original role as an abolitionist's daughter. Joanna's resignation to her filial duty and her surrender to almighty God complete her monstrousness as an instrument of patriarchy, and it drives Christmas to kill her.

The heroes who fight against these women realize that they have much in common with these subversive monsters. The victim and the victimizer are somewhat interchangeable: Christmas kills Joanna partly because she embodies the Puritanical patriarchy which conditioned his thinking and whose authority he paradoxically acknowledges during his revolt against his stepfather McEachern. Also, Nakagami's pseudo-monk starts repeating 'Save me' after the village woman during the sexual acts. He understands how alienated the woman is from community, and sees himself in the woman's desperate desire for salvation. But he is not sure whether his savior will come from the holy or the mundane world. The woman on the border wants to be delivered from isolation through the patriarchal authority, which, however, despised her and repressed her in the first place. Her revolt against power is complicated with this hope for ambiguous delivery. The pseudo-monk is urged to eliminate such an illusion for salvation in himself when he strangles the woman. These pairs secretly know their true enemy is society, but they fight against each other, paradoxically reflecting the hierarchal order.

Apart from the monster-like women, there are women who somehow represent maternity or merciful saviors in the texts of Faulkner and Nakagami. These women can be also dangerous for the protagonists exactly because they suggest enticing delivery from the struggle with patriarchal society. Unlike Joe

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Christmas, who is wary of maternity, the pseudo-monk in 'Fushi' especially tends to seek maternity or at least female sexuality, as his way for salvation.[13] This becomes clear when the pseudo-monk meets a mysterious woman in the Kumano mountain after he murders the village woman. He tries to rape the mountain woman, but she submits to his desire rather obediently. Even when he wants to draw back, sensing that their sexual intercourse is watched by strangers, she holds him fast and tries to make him continue. Watching the woman with a pair of diminutive hands like that of an infant, the pseudo-monk wonders if she is an embodiment of *Kwannon Bosatsu* (Avalokitesvara or Kuan Yin, the Buddhist goddess of Mercy) (Nakagami, 1995: 198). He finally concludes that she may not be a holy saint, but begs her to live with him, and even hopes that he would settle down with her in the mountains.

The mountain woman's infantile hands and sensual body in 'Fushi' suggest both her innocence and female maturity. These contradictory characteristics are also those of Lena Grove in *Light in August*. Lena, the expecting mother, is sometimes compared to the earth mother as well as Virgin Mary for her fecundity and serenity.[14] Lena is hardly disturbed by the curious or severe look of the townspeople toward an unmarried pregnant girl. The narrator refers to Lena's 'inert hands' (Faulkner, 1987: 19), but her hands sometimes move quietly, whose action is 'some musing reflex of the hand alone' (22). They seem to assert their own existence, just as the tiny hands of the mountain woman in 'Fushi' surprise the protagonist with their unexpected strength. Both the hands of Lena Grove and of the mountain woman represent their self-composed physical existence regardless of their social status, while both Joanna Burden and the village

13. Nina Cornyetz mentions that Nakagami's narratives often reproduce the illusion of 'the female body as conduit to the realm of the spirits' (Cornyetz, 1999: 184). Zimmerman interprets the mountain woman as an angel, or 'a mandala of the universe' (Zimmerman, 2007: 203).

14. Millgate explains Lena as the symbol of the earth-mother Diana as well as the Virgin Mary (Millgate, 1966: 133–34). Irving Howe mentions the Greek Helen in association with Lena (Howe, 1952: 49). In *Faulkner in the University*, Faulkner also says that there is 'something of that pagan quality' in Lena (Gwinn and Blotner, 1997: 199).

woman struggle on the border of community for their own existence and for power.

Admittedly, there is no external evidence that Nakagami was conscious of Lena Grove in presenting the mountain woman in 'Fushi.' Nakagami surely associates his mountain woman with the traditional Japanese enchantress in the mountain. The mountain woman's tiny hands suggest her strangeness as well as holiness, and she is a member of an old clan that lives secluded with vengeance against the rival clan which beat them in the old days. In *Light in August*, Joe Christmas never comes across Lena although they are both in Jefferson at the same time. Faulkner presumably wants to keep Lena away from Christmas so that she can remain an idealistic representation of maternity and serenity, which partly purges the atrocious violence in the end. Nakagami's mountain woman, on the other hand, comes into close contact with the protagonist. She takes him to the noble lady's mansion where the strange clan members with boar or monkey heads grieve over the loss of the battle in the past. But she mysteriously disappears soon after the pseudo-monk feels the impulse of strangling her, and her benign disappearance exempts him from committing another murder. Both Lena and the mountain woman assume some kind of maternal serenity which alleviates violence in the racial / gender / class struggles.

The real role of these women in both texts, however, is not to give any easy solution or delivery from suffering, but to confirm the protagonists' self-outlawed wandering. Neither Lena Grove nor the mountain woman reconciles the conflict between the nomadic hero and patriarchal society. Lena still plans to marry Lucas Burch, who is after the reward money for catching Christmas. With all her images as Virgin Mary and as Keats' unravished bride 'moving forever and without progress across an urn' (Faulkner, 1987: 7), Lena hopes to marry the irresponsible, greedy man who plays all the disadvantages of Christmas, his former business partner. Of course she might choose better in the end and marry Byron Bunch, an honest and kind man who follows her. Either way, while she maintains the primordial power of fecundity as earth mother, she also shows the incentive for a family, which might settle down in Southern society as one of its basic

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units. 'I reckon a family ought to all be together when a chap [baby] comes. Specially the first one. I reckon the Lord will see to that' (Faulkner, 1987: 23), she says. Lena is wise enough to be silent when a furniture dealer wants to talk about the lynching of Joe Christmas. But her silence contradictorily suggests that even Lena must share a part of the town's memory of lynching in her journey away from Jefferson.

As a matter of fact, Lena succeeds Christmas as a potential nomad, who negotiates with society better than Christmas. Lena, her baby, and Byron as a pseudo-family keep on moving, without deciding whether she is going to marry or not, or whether she is really going to settle down. With Byron Bunch as a possible husband-father surrogate, they try a new sort of family barely in touch with patriarchal society or authority.

As for the mountain woman in 'Fushi,' her introduction of the protagonist to the bloody creek near the noble lady's mansion and to the men with animal heads or hands suggests the dead end of those outcast people. The story of the beaten and persecuted clan resembles that of the Japanese old Heike family in the twelfth Century, but Nakagami carefully makes the identification rather vague. The similarity and the warp from the history and the legends of the Heike clan make them ahistorical, and yet enthralled in the illusory past of the narrative. The mountain woman makes him realize that he must go wandering without being caught in the traditional narrative construct, or without hope for maternal, divine grace beyond patriarchal society. While Lena assumes Christmas's ambiguity in the form of her pseudo-family and shares some of the social responsibility for his death in her travels, the pseudo-monk in 'Fushi' maintains his vague identity, and constantly interrogates the meaning of his quest and of the murder he committed in his wandering.

In *Light in August*, Faulkner alludes to ancient myth or the traditional monster-conquest tales to reveal that the Southern white narrative depends on the black/white divide for self-justification and violence. The difference and the monstrousness of the aliens from society are emphasized to defend the use of violence and to secure the male and white authority. The gender struggle between Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden is also affected with the racial

problem. Faulkner, however, in crossing the divide both of race and gender, and in pursuit of the signification of mixed blood, not only criticizes the racial discrimination of Southern society: he comes to question the logical foundation of the binary code itself. The binary thinking of the elect and the damned, the good and the evil in the Puritan tradition is seen both in McEachern whose hometown is not mentioned but presumably in the South, and in Joanna, whose family is originally from the North. The binary code constitutes the fundamental ground of the US way of thinking, its idea of justice, and the trenchant boundary between the 'we' and 'the others.' Christmas is the victim of the black/white divide in Southern society, but Christmas's monstrous ambiguity challenges the binary opposition of American narrative constructs in general as well.

Kenji Nakagami, on the other hand, is aware of the treacherous structure of Moebius Strip in the old Japanese narrative constructs. The traditional Japanese narratives of religious miracles paradoxically connect the sacred or the noble with the damned in hierarchal society. They suggest the delivery of the damned and the wayward wanderers through their encounter with holy saints or noblemen who recognize their hidden kinship. The persecuted son's defilement and sin are purged through the merciful recognition of legitimacy and authenticity given from his aristocrat father. Nakagami turns the table in the face of such a seductive illusion, and makes the village woman dare for the authoritative power through the gesture of total surrender in sex against 'Holy Master.' The protagonist is deeply involved in this defiant attempt and recognizes himself in her desperate act. As the pseudo-monk in 'Fushi' realizes, however, there is the danger of absorption into the authority, and he cannot wholly accept the apparently woman-like position of treacherous surrender. Nakagami presumably alludes that the women who surrender in sex in front of strong men in his texts represent *Monogatari* (the traditional Japanese narrative construct), which is responsible for creating the illusory Moebius Strip of the damned turning into the sacred.

At the end of the story, the pseudo-monk is left alone in the mountain to go on wandering. Christmas at the end is suspended in the image of blood skyrocketing above the town

of Jefferson. Faulkner stays this monstrous image of neither white nor black to haunt the community based on binary codes. But Lena's continuing journey and the loose image of her pseudo-family suggest that Christmas's challenge against the binary code of patriarchal society can continue in the more peaceful form of Lena's journey. Nakagami's pseudo-monk is aware of his ambiguous identity in society just like Christmas is, and senses that his alienated position is similar to that of the woman outcast. But Nakagami, unlike Faulkner, does not let a woman take over the male protagonist's quest of salvation or challenge against patriarchal authority. He assigns the pseudo-monk to go on wandering, without Lena's serenity, to go beyond the illusion of salvation in the Moebius Strip of the Japanese narrative constructs.

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