

週三性別座談會 Wednesday Gender Seminars

The System VS The Individual – Postmodern Sex and Love in Murakami Haruki's *Norwegian Wood*

(in English)

Murakami Haruki, whose novels are often acclaimed for their depiction of a postmodern world's connection with the themes of alienation, loss and detachment from society, revealed in his acceptance speech at the Jerusalem Prize 2009 that his novels aim to “bring the dignity of the individual soul to the surface and shine a light upon it”. The individual, according to Murakami, is the antithesis of “the System”, which is supposed to protect human beings but sometimes “takes on a life of its own” and “begins to kill us”.

If the individual soul is what Murakami's novels glorify, and the System is what they revolt against, then we must ask: What exactly is the System? In what ways is it related to our lives, our society, our culture? And who is this individual? Does the individual carry the same sense for men and women alike?

By examining the notion of “the individual” and “the System”, this seminar evaluates Murakami's treatment of the individual soul in light of gender representations in his novel *Norwegian Wood* (1987). Focusing on the entangled webs of love and sex for protagonist Watanabe Toru and his love interests Naoko and Midori, the speaker will discuss the production of gender relations as a point of enquiry into Murakami's notion of the postmodern world.



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DATE: 9 MARCH 2011

TIME: 12:30 – 2:00 P.M.

VENUE:

ROOM UG02,

WONG FOO YUEN BUILDING,

CHUNG CHI COLLEGE, CUHK

Speaker:

Tsang Yat Him

M. Phil Year-2 student, Gender Studies Programme, CUHK

Chair:

Michael O'Sullivan

Assistant Professor, Department of English, CUHK