

24 May 2013

11:45am – 12:30pm

Room A302

Roundtable Title: Why people tell stories

Presenter: John Smith, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract

In this session I'd be interested in discussing where the creative instinct comes from and why people feel impelled to tell stories. I'd also like to consider why we turn to fiction as a source of comfort and escape, and how it helps us to understand the world.

The discussion can move on to consider where stories come from. How much of a story is autobiographical and does it matter? Does an autobiographical novel carry more weight than something that has been completely imagined? Where do writers find their ideas? Do they come from childhood (e.g. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee), family and friends (e.g. Jane Austen's oeuvre) jobs (e.g. *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis) or from chance meetings and overheard comments? We can also consider what details make a story convincing and why we need stories at all. Is it because, as someone once said, 'reality is not enough'?

Biodata

John Smith is a Language Instructor at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He has an MFA in Creative Writing and won the SCMP - RTHK Top Story Award in 2011. Visit RTHK website at http://programme.rthk.org.hk/channel/radio/index.php?c=radio3&m=album&album_id=85&ppage=3&photo_id=1308 for more information.