

Department of English, Taipei Tech
Academic Seminar (107.1)

Dostoevsky, Consciousness and Romantic Irony

Abstract:

This article reconsiders Dostoevsky in relation to Schlegel's idea of irony, which is based on the premise that the human subject is self-dividing. The romantic imagines to achieve a stable and united self, but that wish is continually shown futile in an infinite process of self-reflection. Romantic irony therefore is a mode of existence marked by a desire for an organic whole and the realization that such desire is impossible. The Dostoevsky's hero is thrown to such ironic situation, where human subjectivity is continually confirmed and disconfirmed. The article first discusses references to Russian romanticism in Dostoevsky's writings. It then moves on to a rereading of *Notes from Underground* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Schlegel's critical fragments are used throughout to illuminate the ironic quality of Dostoevsky's writings. The article ends with a comparison between Dostoevsky and Schlegel's views on irony.

Speaker: Dr Paul Fung, Associate Professor and Acting Head of Department,
Department of English, Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

Chair: Dr Louis Lo, Associate Professor, Department of English, Taipei Tech.

Venue: Room 714, General Studies Building, Taipei Tech

Date: 26 October 2018 (Monday)

Time: 12:00 noon – 1:30pm

Speaker's Bio:

Dr Fung obtained his PhD from the University of Manchester. His research focuses on the intersections of literature, philosophy and film, which can be reflected in his book-length study of the nineteenth-century Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky. Dr Fung is currently working on irony as a mode of existence in the work of Schlegel, Kierkegaard and de Man. At Hang Seng University, apart from modules on the long nineteenth-century, he teaches a course on the relationship of money and literature. He is the Residential Master of Wellness College at HSU.