

European Literature of the 19th Century

German Literature

- The history of German literature, like that of the nation, is fragmented and discontinuous
 - Unlike the national literatures of France or England, which had an uninterrupted development since the Middle Ages
- Germany became a modern nation-state only in 1871
- Before this, the history of the various German states is marked by warfare, religious turmoil, and economic decline
- In the 19th century, the following movements / approaches flourished in German literature
 - Weimar Classicism (early 18th cent., or the “Age of Goethe”)
 - German Romanticism
 - Realism and Naturalism
 - All these movements had an interest in individual liberty and in nature as a source of poetic inspiration

German Idealist Philosophers

- German Idealist philosophers of the 18th century inspired German Romanticism
 - Johann Gottlieb Fichte
 - Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling
 - Friedrich von Schlegel
 - Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
- German Idealists questioned Kant's transcendental idealism
 - Transcendental Idealism is the belief that things exist independent of our perception
 - German Idealism held that there is no "thing in itself" independent of our mind, i.e., things are what we perceive of them

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900)

- Attempted to expose the motives that underlie traditional Western religion, morality, and philosophy
- Influenced generations of theologians, philosophers, psychologists, poets, novelists, and playwrights
- Made the influential statement “God is dead”
 - These words express a fear that the decline of religion, the rise of atheism, and the absence of a higher moral authority would plunge the world into chaos
- Developed the concept of Übermensch or Superman
 - This a goal humanity has to set for itself
- Developed the concept of “will to power”
 - This is what Nietzsche believed to be the main driving force in humans: achievement, ambition, the striving to reach the highest possible position in life; these are all manifestations of the will to power

Major Works

- *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)
- *The Human, All Too Human* (1878)
- *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885)
- *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886)
- *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887)

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Other Major Philosophers

- Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)
 - Famous for his book *The World as Will and Representation* (1818)
- Karl Marx (1818-83)
 - Founding figure of Marxism, Communism, Socialism, Materialism
 - Major works: *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), *Das Kapital* (1867-1894)

TES STUDY MATERIAL

French Literature

- A dynamic period in French history
- End of Monarchy and the Empire
- Golden age for both the novel and poetry
- Three major movements
 - Romanticism
 - Realism and Naturalism
 - Symbolism

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Romanticism in the 19th Century

- Major Figures
 - **Victor Hugo**
 - **Alexandre Dumas**
 - **Théophile Gautier**
- Romanticism in France developed later than in Germany or Britain
- Influenced by the philosophy of Rousseau
- Depicted the discovery of self-awareness and the torments of the inner life
- Expressed disgust with their century
- Influence of Byron and the cynical Romantic hero

Victor Hugo (1802-85)

- Romantic poet and novelist
- His poetry
 - Employed variations on the fashionable Romantic modes of mirth and terror
 - Also, Oriental local colour themes
- Famous novels
 - *Notre-Dame de Paris* (*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, 1831)
 - *Les Misérables* (1862)
 - Later, a famous musical and a famous film were made based on the novel
- Famous verse drama
 - *Cromwell* (1827)

TEST STUDY MATERIAL

Les Misérables (1862)

- Set just after the French Revolution, in the post-Napoleonic era
- The story of Jean Valjean, a convict, who has just been released from prison after serving 19 years for stealing a loaf of bread
- At the town of Digne, when no one gives him shelter, Jean is treated with kindness by the bishop Myriel
- Jean steals the bishop's silverware, but the bishop saves him when he is arrested
- Influenced by the bishop to begin a new life, Jean assumes a new name and moves to a new location where he becomes a respected citizen and makes a fortune in manufacturing
- The police inspector, Javert, is suspicious of him
- Jean's conscience prods him to reveal his true identity that he is forced to flee

TES STUDY MATERIAL

In Paris

- The rest of the novel is set in Paris
- In Paris, Jean changes residences frequently and assumes a number of identities in order to avoid arrest
- He rescues a young girl named Cosette, the illegitimate child of Fantine, from the evil Thénardier family and becomes her guardian
- Cosette grows into a beautiful young lady in a convent

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Jean Finds Peace

- Cosette falls in love with Marius, a young lawyer, who joins a band of revolutionists at a barricade, where Jean is also present
- When Marius is wounded, Jean, who has spared the life of his constant adversary Javert, risks his life to carry Marius to safety through the sewer system of Paris, returning him to his family and Cosette
- Against all odds, Jean struggles to follow the bishop's teachings and become a good man
- It is not until after the wedding of Cosette and Marius and he is on his deathbed that he is at last able to stop running from his past and reveal all
- Not until then does he finally find peace

The Hunchback of Notre-Dame (1831)

- Romantic Gothic novel
- Novel as Epic Theatre
 - Characters caught in the midst of history
 - All sections of the society, from the king to the sewer rats
- The action of the novel begins on January 6, 1482, and ends in July of the same year, with an epilogistic chapter disclosing the fate of Quasimodo, the hunchback, dated to mid-1484

The Hunchback of Notre-Dame (1831)

- Esmeralda, a sixteen-year-old gypsy woman, dancing in the company of her trained goat, catches the eye of Archdeacon Frollo, who orders his misshapen ward, Quasimodo, to kidnap her
- Gringoire, a poet, fails in his efforts to intervene, but Esmeralda is rescued by Captain Phoebus and falls in love with him

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Three Marriages

- She becomes the “bride” of Gringoire in a mock ceremony produced by a “court” of beggars
- She later becomes the “bride” of Captain Phoebus, who promises marital commitment in his seduction of her but is murdered by Frollo before he can consummate his desire
- Frollo frames her for the murder of Phoebus and offers to save her life if she will yield to his desire
- She refuses and is then temporarily saved from execution by Quasimodo, who engineers sanctuary for her in the cathedral of Notre-Dame
- Quasimodo pushes Frollo to death from the heights of the cathedral
- Quasimodo also loves her and ultimately, after her actual execution, embraces her in death as his “bride” and achieves burial with her

Themes

- Fate or necessity (“anank” in Greek)
- Transition or change
 - The cathedral of Notre-Dame itself is a symbol of this
- Esmeralda remains a virgin through three “marriages”
 - Here Hugo reconstructs the Christian Trinity through Our Lady: Mother, Daughter, and Holy Spirit
 - Her execution is an analogue to Crucifixion

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Alexandre Dumas (1802-70)

- Prolific in several genres, Dumas is credited with 646 books
- His plots were suggested by a ghost writer who collaborated with him
- Influence of Shakespeare
- Wrote his phenomenal best-sellers in three years
 - *The Three Musketeers*
 - Two Musketeer sequels
 - *The Count of Monte-Cristo*

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Three Musketeers (1844)

- A historical novel set in the 17th century; in five parts
- In the introduction, the reader meets the heroes
 - The king's musketeers Athos, Porthos, and Aramis
 - D'Artagnan who becomes one of the musketeers
 - They become the Inseparables
- In the second part, there is considerable intrigue going on in the court of Louis XIII
- In the third part, there is a religious war between the Catholics and Protestants of France
- In the fourth part, a beautiful femme fatale causes the assassination of the duke of Buckingham, tries without success to poison D'Artagnan, and successfully poisons another character
- In the last part, she gets her retribution. Her executioner is the brother of a priest whom she seduced and ruined. D'Artagnan is rewarded with a promotion

***The Count of Monte-Cristo* (1844)**

- Historical setting is important
 - Set during the Bourbon Restoration (1815-39)
 - Set in France, Italy and the Mediterranean islands
- Was originally serially published
- Unlike *The Three Musketeers*, it is not set in ancient history but contemporary
- Its values are not aristocratic but bourgeois

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Count of Monte-Cristo (1844)

- Dantès is a kind, innocent, honest, and loving man
- From merchant marine officer, he is promoted by merit to captain
- He is about to marry his sweetheart, Mercédès
- He is honest and naïve
- He does not realize that Danglers wants his captaincy or that Mondego wants his sweetheart
- The men falsely accuse him of being a Bonapartist spy
- The prosecutor Villefort convicts him and sends him to prison in order to cover up the wrongdoing of Villefort's father
- Dantès, for being too innocent, is demoted

Dantês is in Prison

- He learns in prison of a great treasure hidden on the island of Monte-Cristo (Italian for “Christ mount”)
- He escapes from the island prison of Château D’If by water, gets the fortune, changes his identity, and becomes the Count of Monte-Cristo
- He is also healthy and handsome, despite his years in prison
- Now extremely wealthy, he seeks vengeance on those who have wronged him
- He takes law into his own hands because he realizes the limitations of society’s criminal justice system

Theophile Gautier (1811-1872)

- Poet, dramatist, novelist, journalist, and literary critic
- Was a strong influence on French culture during the transition from the early Romantic period to the aestheticism and naturalism of the end of the 19th century
- In his early career, Gautier was a Romantic
- Later he turned away from Romanticism towards art for art's sake
- *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835, novel)
 - Expresses his views on art for art's sake
 - Caused a considerable stir in literary circles by their disregard of conventional morality and insistence on the sovereignty of the beautiful

Later Views on Art

- Travelling, especially in Greece, led to his admiration of classical forms
- He felt that
 - Art should be impersonal, free from the obligation of teaching moral lessons, and that
 - The aim of the artist is to concentrate on achieving perfection of form
- He developed a technique in poetry that he called transposition, recording his exact impressions when experiencing a painting or other work of art
- Charles Baudelaire paid tribute to Gautier in the dedication of his verse collection *Les Fleurs du mal*

Literary Realism

- Major Figures
 - **Stendhal**
 - **Honoré de Balzac**
 - **George Sand**
 - **Gustav Flaubert**
- Mid 19th century to mid 20th century French literature
- Depictions of contemporary life and society as it was
- Everyday life and banal activities and experiences rather than romanticising them
- Balzac, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Flaubert, Hardy, George Eliot etc

Stendhal (1783-1842)

- One of the many pseudonyms of Marie-Henri Beyle
- One of the most original and complex of the 19th century French novelists
- Became an ardent supporter of Napoleon and had to flee to Italy after Napoleon's fall
- First used the pseudonym Stendhal in his travel book, *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*
- His *Racine et Shakespeare* (1823-25) is one of the first Romantic manifestos in French
 - Here he developed the central idea that each historical period has been “romantic” in its own time, that Romanticism is a vital aspect of every cultural period
- Supported the July 1830 Revolution, which established a constitutional monarchy and a return to the values of 1789
- Major Novels
 - *The Red and the Black*; 1830
 - *The Charterhouse of Parma*; 1839

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Red and the Black (1830)

- Written during the July Revolution of 1830
- Subtitled “A Chronicle of 1830”
- The novel portrays French society during the final days of the Restoration
 - Restoration means the restoration of monarchy, or the Bourbon dynasty, after the Napoleonic era ended
- Exposes the climactic political tension leading to the 1830 Revolution
- The novel depicts the adventures of Julien Sorel, who, like Stendhal himself, is a well-educated bourgeois liberal and admirer of Napoleon

Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850)

- Helped to establish the traditional form of the realist novel
- Supreme observer and chronicler of contemporary French society
- Typical themes
 - Vital, diverse, and interesting characters
 - Interest in and examination of virtually all spheres of life
 - Contrast between provincial and metropolitan manners and customs
 - Commercial spheres of banking, publishing, and industry
 - The worlds of art, literature, and high culture
 - Romantic love in all its aspects
 - Intricate social relations and scandals among the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie
 - The ambitious young provincial fighting for advancement in the competitive world of Paris

The Human Comedy

- In French, called *Com'edie Humaine*
- A series of 90 novels and novellas
- Balzac's plan was to produce a unified series of books that would comprehend the whole of contemporary society
- The series is an examination of every aspect of the French society from the French Revolution to the eve of the Revolution of 1848
- These novels have numerous characters in common
- *Le Père Goriot* (1835) is a famous novel of the series

Le Père Goriot (1835)

- Originally serialized in *Revue de Paris* in 1834 and published in book form in 1835
- In English, “Old Goriot” or “Father Goriot”
- Belongs to the novel-series called *Comédie Humaine*
- Focuses on the rise of bourgeoisie and the power of money
- The setting is a decrepit, dirty boardinghouse in Paris in 1819, during the Bourbon Restoration
- Mme. Vauquer, a stingy old widow owns the place, and rules over her tenants
- The intertwined lives of three characters:
 - The elderly vermicelli-maker Goriot
 - A mysterious criminal-in-hiding named Vautrin
 - A naive law student named Eugène de Rastignac

Old Goriot's Secret

- All the characters in the novel are obsessed with money and they struggle to get ahead in the moral wilderness of post-Napoleonic Paris
- Jean-Joachim Goriot, once a wealthy man, is now a lodger and is on the verge of poverty
- Rastignac is attracted to the upper class and is tutored by his cousin, Madame de Beauséant, in the ways of high society
- He learns from Mme. Beauséant the secret of Goriot's life
 - He has bankrupted himself to support his two well-married daughters and he suffers from their ingratitude

Vautrin's Bargain

- One of Goriot's daughters, Delphine, becomes the mistress of Rastignac, who extracts money from his own already-poor family for this purpose
- Vautrin, who has sensed ambition in Rastignac, cynically offers him a bargain
 - The young student should win the love of the fair Victorine, whose father is extremely rich but who has disowned her
 - The only obstacle to Victorine's inheriting the fortune is her brother Frederic
 - For the sum of 200,000 francs Vautrin would manage to get rid of Frederick
 - Rastignac is indignant, but seems secretly tempted by the proposal

Vautrin is Arrested

- Rastignac fails in high society, but, aided by his cousin, tries to conquer the “middle world”
- He becomes the lover of Mme. de Nucingen, with the help of Goriot
- In the meantime, Vautrin has got Victorine’s brother murdered
- Vautrin is discovered to be an escaped convict and is arrested

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Old Goriot Dies Penniless

- Goriot's daughters come to him for help
- Their husbands have discovered their affairs and are trying to ruin them
- The two daughters show their monstrous egoism and pride
- Poor Goriot is afflicted by a stroke, and becomes delirious
- Despite his extreme love for them, the daughters have left him
 - Delphine to go to a ball, and Anastasie to sell her father's silver and protect her fortune
- When old Goriot dies, he is buried in a pauper's grave
- His daughters do not attend the burial
- It shows how money and social status corrupt human relations

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Gustav Flaubert (1821-80)

- Greatest among the French writers
- December 12, 1821 – May 8, 1880
- Revolutionized French fiction in the last half of the century with his sensational *Madame Bovary* (1856)
- Hugely influential on younger writers
- He remarked “Madame Bovary, c’est moi” (Madame Bovary is me)

TEST STUDY MATERIAL

Madame Bovary (1857)

- Flaubert's first published novel, in two volumes
- Employs psychological realism
- The story of a doctor's wife, having adulterous passions and living beyond her means
- Created much controversy during the time of its publication
- Social satire on
 - Middle class morality
 - France in the mid-19th century
 - Collapse of aristocracy
 - The middle class rose in power with merchants and capitalists
- Flaubert criticizes the moral conservatism, rough manners and unsophisticated taste of the middle class

The Plot

- Charles Bovary
 - A kindhearted young doctor, without much ability or ambition
 - He marries Héloïse, a widow much older than himself, who makes his life miserable with nagging and baseless suspicions
- Charles Meets Emma
 - A year later, Charles calls on Monsieur Rouault, a farmer with a broken leg
 - There he meets the farmer's beautiful daughter, Emma
 - Her education in a French convent has given her a restless urge for broader experience
- Charles marries Emma
 - Héloïse dies suddenly, and Emma agrees to marry Charles
 - They set up house at Tostes, where Charles has a doctor's practice

The Ball

- Charles and Emma
 - Charles is a simple, quiet man deeply devoted to Emma
 - But Emma desires the perfumed, passionate lovers of the romantic novels she has read
 - She very soon tires of her husband who reeked of medicines, and whose conversation was as humdrum as “a street pavement”
- The Ball
 - The couple was invited to a grand ball at Vaubyessard, where Emma danced with a dozen partners, drank champagne, and received compliments on her beauty
 - The memories of that ball left a perpetual longing in her for a romantic life
 - Back home, she soon lost interest in her household duties, gave up her hobbies, and languished all day in her room
 - She became irritable, a dead pallor came into her cheeks, and she had bouts of depression

Emma Has a Baby

- At Yonville
 - Charles now has to take the difficult decision of leaving Tostes for the sake of his wife
 - They move to the large market town, Yonville
- Emma's Child
 - Emma is pregnant and longs for a son, dark and strong
 - But she gives birth to a daughter, whom they call Berthe
 - Berthe is cared for by a wet nurse
 - Charles struggles to make both ends meet
 - Emma's attention is turned to laces and ribbons for the child

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Léon Dupuis

- At Yonville, Emma meets Léon Dupuis
 - A shy law clerk bored with the town
 - Longing, like Emma, for an exciting Parisian life
- The two meet often and share their interests
- Soon, people begin to gossip
- But Charles Bovary is unperturbed
- Emma realizes she is in love with Léon
 - Does nothing to prevent it
 - She transforms into a new woman: outwardly devoting herself entirely to the house, her daughter and her husband; inside, consumed with rage and hatred towards Charles
 - However, she never confesses her love to Léon
- Léon also secretly desired Emma
 - To him, she seems so virtuous that he gives up hopes of possessing her and goes to Paris to complete his studies

Rudolf Boulanger

- One day, Rudolf Boulanger, a squire of the neighbouring estate, brings a farm tenant to Charles for bloodletting
- Rudolf finds Emma attractive
- He knows he can possess her easily with his charms, but the difficulty will be to get rid of her
- He begins courting her and Emma overcame her qualms of immorality by rationally convincing herself that nothing that is so beautiful as love could be sinful
- Emma succumbs to Rudolf and they meet regularly in secret
- When he is sure of Emma's love and commitment towards him, Rudolf became openly indifferent to her

Emma is Distraught

- Charles performs an experimental surgery on a boy with clubfoot
- The surgery is an utter failure and the boy's leg had to be amputated
- Emma is ashamed and disgusted with her husband, and begins to meet her lover openly, lavishing expensive gifts on him
- Charles, his practice diminishing, is soon deep in debt
- Emma prepares to run away with Rudolf
- On the eve of their planned departure, he wrote a letter to her calling off their plan and hypocritically repenting their sins
- Emma tries to throw herself from the window, but is saved by Charles; then she became seriously ill with brain fever
- Charles has no money to pay the bills; fears he would lose his wife
- Emma slowly recovered
- One day, when Charles took her to the opera house at Rouen, where she met Léon once again
- Léon, now more confident from his relationships with other women, is now determined to possess her

Emma's Corruption

- Emma meets Léon several times in Rouen, where she abandons herself into a debauched life of extravagant spending and illegitimate love
- She no longer respected Léon, and scorned him when he could no longer give her the money to pay her bills
- Monsieur Lheureux, the sly moneylender, leads her into debt
- Emma's name was posted publicly for a debt of 8000 francs
- She knew that the bailiffs would now seize Charles's property, and his career would be ruined
- She realized that her only way out was to die a heroine's death, and she consumed arsenic
- Charles arrived just then, but too late to save his wife from a slow and painful death
- Charles was wild with grief and died soon after, leaving a legacy of just twelve francs to support his daughter

***Madame Bovary's* Reception**

- *Madame Bovary* shocked the Victorian sense of moral righteousness that was as strong in France as in England at that time
- Flaubert was prosecuted for producing such an indecent work that inaugurated a new era in fiction

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Themes

- The failure of the written word to capture life
- Adultery and the disillusionment of married life
- The powerlessness of women
- The failures of the Bourgeoisie in France

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Naturalism

- Major Figures
 - Emile Zola
 - Guy de Maupassant
 - Joris-Karl Huysmans
 - Later rebelled against Naturalism and turned to Symbolism
- A more scientifically analytic approach to the presentation of reality than in realism
- Regarded dissection of character as a prerequisite for description
- The term *naturalisme* is borrowed from Hippolyte Taine, the positivist philosopher

IES STUDY MATERIAL

Emile Zola (1840-1902)

- Novelist and a major figure in the political liberalization of France
- His 20 novels form a collection called *Les Rougon-Macquart*
 - It follows the life of a fictional family living during the Second French Empire (1852–1870)
 - *Nana* (1880) is a part of this
 - The story of how Nana, a prostitute, rises to high-class life
- The essay “Le Roman expérimental” (1880; “The Experimental Novel”) developed a parallel between the methods of the novelist and those of the experimental scientist
- In 1898, Zola wrote his explosive front-page editorial “J’Accuse” attacking the French Army for anti-semitism in framing Captain Dreyfus – an act which would cost Zola his life (though nothing could be proven about his death by carbon monoxide poisoning)

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Guy De Maupassant (1850-1893)

- Flaubert's protégé
- France's finest short story writer
- Died tragically early
- Famous works
 - “Boule de Suif” (“Ball of Fat”, 1880)
 - *Pierre et Jean* (1888, short novel); appeared together with the essay “Le Roman” (“The Novel”)
 - “The Necklace” – Mathilde borrows a necklace from Madame Forestier; loses it; works all life to replace it; finally discovers that the necklace was not made of original diamonds

The Symbolist Movement

- The movement originated when some French poets revolted against the rigid conventions of technique and theme in traditional French poetry
- Instead of describing reality and conforming to formalized oratory, they sought to describe the fleeting, immediate sensations of man's inner life and experience
- Charles Baudelaire was a major influence on them
- They believed in the association between the senses and the various arts
- Illustrated that the theme of a poem could be developed by the sensitive manipulation of the harmonies, tones, and colours inherent in carefully chosen words
- To escape rigid metrical patterns and to achieve freer poetic rhythms, many Symbolist poets resorted to the composition of prose poems and the use of *vers libre* (free verse)

Major Figures

- Charles Baudelaire
- Stéphane Mallarmé
- Paul Verlaine
- Joris-Karl Huysmans
- Arthur Rimbaud
- Paul Valéry
- Jules Laforgue
- They were a major influence on TS Eliot and the modernists

TS STUDY MATERIAL

Charles Baudelaire (1821-67)

- Much of what is known about his life is from the letters he wrote to his mother
- Lived the bohemian life of a Parisian dandy
 - Received a large inheritance
 - Developed a love for clothing and spent his days in the art galleries and cafes of Paris
 - Experimented with drugs
 - Fell in love with Jeanne Duval, who inspired the “Black Venus” section of *Les Fleurs du mal*
- Launched a revolution in poetry with *Les Fleurs du mal*
 - Outraged the right-thinkers because of its disturbing new subject matter, including sexual deviation
- Translated Edgar Allan Poe

Les Fleurs du mal (1857)

- Collection of French poems
- English title: *The Flowers of Evil*
- Expresses the changing nature of beauty in modern, industrializing Paris during the 19th century
- Themes relating to decadence and eroticism; juxtaposed urban beauty and decay
- Criticizes 19th century French modernity
 - Especially the section “Tableaux Parisiens”
- Six of the poems, which described lesbian love and vampires, were condemned as obscene, and were banned
- The foreword to the book
 - Identifies Satan with the alchemist Hermes Trismegistus
 - Calls boredom the worst of miseries

Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-98)

- Traumatic family experiences
- In his poetry, turned away from the harsh world of reality in search of another world
- Had a lifelong career as a schoolteacher which he did not enjoy
- Early poems influenced by Charles Baudelaire
 - Shared with him the theme of escape from reality
 - Baudelaire's escapism was of an emotional and sensual kind; Mallarmé's was more intellectual
- Mallarmé put his aesthetic ideas into practice in his unfinished *Grand Oeuvre* ("Great Work"), or *Le Livre* ("The Book")
- Wrote elegies for Charles Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe, Richard Wagner, Théophile Gautier, and Paul Verlaine
 - The basic idea here is that beyond the reality of this world there is nothing, and only poetry has the power to transcend this annihilation

Paul-Marie Verlaine (1844-96)

- One of the greatest representatives of the fin de siècle , called “Prince of Poets”
- Abandoned his wife Mathilde and child to start a stormy affair with Arthur Rimbaud
- Shot and injured Rimbaud in a drunken rage, for which Verlaine was arrested
- Rimbaud and Verlaine were devotees of Baudelaire, and led outrageous lives
- Recollections of his relationships with Mathilde and Rimbaud are seen in the poems collected in *Romances sans paroles* (1874)
- His death followed his descent into drug addiction, alcoholism, and poverty

STUDY MATERIAL

JK Huysmans (1848-1907)

- First associated with naturalism
- Then moved to Decadence and Symbolism
- Famous novel *À rebours* (*Against the Grain* or *Against Nature*)
 - Idiosyncratic use of language
 - Major text of the Decadence
 - Depicts an aesthete, des Esseintes
 - An expression of deep pessimism (as in Schopenhauer)
 - Influenced Oscar Wilde
 - In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian devours a mysterious “yellow book” which is probably *À rebours*, and like the protagonist of that novel, Dorian spirals into a world of self-gratification and exotic sensations

Arthur Rimbaud (1854-91)

- Pre-figured surrealism
- Started writing poems in primary school; high point of his creativity was in his teens (17-20); stopped completely before he turned 21
- Was a libertine (one devoid of moral values and focuses on physical pleasures) and a restless soul
- Had a short and stormy affair with Verlaine, which soon turned bitter
 - The poems Rimbaud wrote while he lived with Verlaine in London are published as the incomplete *Illuminations* (1886)
- He travelled extensively in Europe, Africa and Asia before his death from cancer just after his 37th birthday
- His poetry influenced the Symbolists, Dadaists, and Surrealists
- *A Season in Hell* (1873)—major Symbolist prose work; one of the first works in free verse

Paul Valéry (1871-1945)

- The last of the French Symbolists; poet and critic
- Had started on a career as a poet when he had a personal transformation by which he decided to liberate himself from the falsehoods of literature as well as sentiment
- Developed a highly self-conscious and philosophical style
- Valéry's thinking and writing laid the foundations of a new aesthetics upon which structuralist criticism was based
 - For eg., Valéry envisaged the history of literature not as a history of authors and works but as a history of the mind
- TS Eliot was influenced by him

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Jules Laforgue (1860-87)

- French poet and one of the inventors of free verse
- Technical experiments: forged new words, experimented with common speech, combined popular songs with philosophic and scientific terms to create a modern imagery
- Themes of death, loneliness and boredom
- Influenced by Buddhism and German philosophy, especially by Arthur Schopenhauer's pessimism
- Died at the age of 27
- Of all the French Symbolists, Laforgue influenced TS Eliot most (when Eliot was 20 years old)

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Norwegian Literature

- Medieval Icelandic sagas of Norway and other Scandinavian countries were well-known in Europe
- Modern Norwegian literature was virtually non-existent till the 19th century
 - Ibsen called this “Four Hundred Years of Darkness”
- In the 19th century, there was a nationalist romanticism in Norwegian literature
- Henrik Ibsen was one of the great four authors in Norway at this time
- Henrik Ibsen
 - First contributed to Norwegian romanticism
 - Later became a pioneer of modern realistic drama in Europe
- A major figure in Norwegian literature after Ibsen was Knut Hamsun (1859-1952) who was a modernist

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)

- Playwright, theatre director, and poet
- Forerunner of a revolution in drama
- Founded realism (“problem literature” or “literature of ideas”) as well as modernism in theatre
- Practical experience as director at Christiania Theatre proved invaluable in his writing
- Most of his plays were controversial
- Broke the European models of family life and propriety
- He explored the reality that lay behind the facades and this insulted many of his contemporaries
- He enquired freely into the morals of his time

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Drama of Ideas

- Drama of ideas or the problem play was developed by Ibsen
- It is the drama of social criticism
- The situation faced by the protagonist is put forward by the author as a representative instance of a relevant social problem
- Author proposes a solution through the evolution of the plot or speech by a character who acts as a vehicle of thought

Early Plays

- Two long historical verse plays
- Written in Italy
- *Brand* (1865, an intellectual verse tragedy)
 - Story of a rural pastor who is so sincere to his religious calling that he loses all traces of human sympathy and warmth
- *Peer Gynt* (1867, based on a Norwegian fairy tale)
 - Story of a charming but lazy and arrogant peasant youth leaves home to seek his fortune, and is finally redeemed when old and disillusioned
- Later, gave up verse form and began writing prose plays
- In 1877, Ibsen began a series of plays in which he examines the moral faults of modern society

Ibsen and the Woman Question

- Ibsen wrote in the article “Notes for a Modern Tragedy”
 - A woman cannot be herself in modern society, since it is “an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine standpoint”
- He resolves it in *A Doll’s House* through the character of Nora who leaves her husband and children in search of her self

TES STUDY MATERIAL

A Doll's House (1879)

- Three-act play
- Presents a very ordinary family—a bank manager named Torvald Helmer, his wife Nora, and their three little children
- A play of ideas mainly because it features the lack of dignity that women suffered in the middle class family life
- Published in 1879, the play criticizes the marital roles accepted by men and women which characterized Ibsen's society

Nora's Original

- Based on the life of Laura Kieler, a good friend of Ibsen and writer who borrowed money to find a cure for her husband Victor's tuberculosis
- She thought that the sales of her book would repay her debt and asked her publisher for money but on his refusal forged a check
- When Victor discovered about Laura's secret loan, he divorced her and had her committed to an asylum
- Two years later, she returned to her husband and children at his urging, and she went on to become a well-known Danish author, living to the age of 83

Characters

- Nora Helmer – wife of Torvald, mother of three, living out the ideal of the 19th century wife
- Torvald Helmer – Nora’s husband, a newly promoted bank manager, professes to be enamoured of his wife
- Dr. Rank – Rich family friend, who is secretly in love with Nora. He is terminally ill, with “tuberculosis of the spine”
- Kristine Linde – Nora’s old school friend, widowed, seeking employment
- Nils Krogstad – Employee at Torvald’s bank, a desperate single father, a supposed scoundrel, revealed to be a long-lost lover of Kristine
- The Children – Ivar, Bobby and Emmy
- Anne Marie – Nora’s former nanny, now cares for the children

Christmas Time

- The play begins with Nora coming home with Christmas presents for her husband and family
- She is a spendthrift and her husband Torvald comes from the study and rebukes her
- He teases her about how she spent weeks making gifts and ornaments by hand last year because money was scarce
- Torvald calls her his squirrel, his lark and many endearing words but never takes her seriously or considers her not as a person but only as a plaything
- Torvald is due for promotion at the bank
- They are visited by Mrs. Kristine Linde and Dr. Rank

Nora Confesses

- Kristine has had a difficult few years, ever since her husband died, leaving her with no money or children
- Nora explains her own difficulties of the past few years as well but her friend thinks she is making it up
- Nora confesses that Torvald became sick and they had to travel to Italy so he could recover
- She borrowed money so they could travel to Italy
- But she told Torvald that her father (who dies a few days later) gave her the money
- Over the years she has been secretly working to repay it

Krogstad's Threat

- Krogstad, a lower-level employee at Torvald's bank arrives and goes into the study
- Nora is upset on his arrival
- Dr. Rank leaves the study and feels wretched because of his disease
- He says that the man in the study, Krogstad, is "morally diseased"
- Nora asks Torvald to give Kristine a position in the bank and he agrees
- Nora is with the children when Krogstad comes and tells Nora that Torvald intends to fire him at the bank
- He asks her to intercede with Torvald to allow him to keep his job
- She refuses and Krogstad threatens to blackmail her about the loan as he knows that she forged her father's signature

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Nora Has Troubles

- When Torvald returns she tries to convince him not to fire Krogstad
- Torvald refuses to hear her pleas, explaining that Krogstad is a liar and a hypocrite
- Kristine arrives to help Nora repair a dress for a costume party
- Torvald returns from the bank and Nora pleads with him to reinstate Krogstad
- She claims that she is worried about Krogstad publishing libellous articles about Torvald to ruin his career
- Torvald consoles her and goes to his study
- Dr. Rank confesses his love for Nora
- But he is about to die of syphilis that he has got from his father's fun-filled life
- She is upset but she tells him firmly that she is not in love with him

Kristine Helps

- Krogstad arrives after being dismissed by Torvald
- He threatens her with blackmail
- He tells her that he has put a letter in their mail box detailing her crime of forgery
- Nora tells Kristine of her difficult situation
- Kristine says that she and Krogstad are still in love and promises to try to convince him
- Torvald enters and tries to retrieve his mail
- Nora distracts him by begging him to help her with the dance
- She dances badly and he coaches her the whole evening
- She even thinks of committing suicide for her husband's sake
- Kristine tells Krogstad that she only married her husband out of her poverty
- They patch up their old differences
- Krogstad is moved and offers to take back his letter to Torvald

Torvald is Angry

- Kristine thinks Torvald should know the truth for the sake of his and Nora's marriage
- Dr. Rank comes and says his goodbye as Torvald and Nora return from the party
- Torvald reads the letter and is angry with Nora and confronts her
- He is angry because of Krogstad's power over him
- He calls her a dishonest and immoral woman and tells her that she is unfit to raise their children
- A letter from Krogstad is delivered to Nora
- Krogstad has returned the forged bond with the letter
- Torvald is relieved and burns all Krogstad's papers
- He takes back his harsh words to his wife and tells her that he forgives her

Nora Leaves

- Nora realizes that her husband loves himself more than her
- She tells him she is leaving him because she wants to find out who she is and decide what to do with her life
- She feels that she has been treated like doll first by her father and then by her husband
- Torvald reminds her of her duties as a mother and wife
- But Nora says that her first duties are to herself
- She had expected him to sacrifice his reputation for hers
- She sees him as selfish, hypocritical and more concerned with public reputation than with actual morality
- Nora leaves her keys and wedding ring
- Torvald breaks down and begins to cry
- Nora leaves the house, slamming the door behind herself
- She never comes back again

Alternate Ending

- Ibsen's German agent forced him to write an alternate ending
- Nora is led to her children after having argued with Torvald
- Seeing them, she collapses, and the curtain is brought down
- Ibsen called this ending a barbaric outrage

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Symbols

- Tarantella dance
 - A wild southern Italian dance, generally danced by a couple or line of couples
 - Named after the tarantula spider, whose poisonous bite was mistakenly believed to cause 'tarantism,' an uncontrollable urge for wild dancing. The 'cure' prescribed by doctors was for the sufferer to dance to exhaustion
 - Tarantism was a hysteria, caused not the spider's bite but the repressed morals of that age. The only outlet for passionate self-expression was the Tarantella dance
 - Torvald tells Nora to practice the Tarantella while he shuts himself away in his office: "I shall hear nothing; you can make as much noise as you please."
 - The image of Nora practicing this passionate dance alone and unheard emphasizes her isolation within her marriage

Ghosts (1881)

- A scathing commentary on the morality of Ibsen's society
- An orphanage is to be opened in memory of late Captain Alving
- Mrs Alving, his widow, reveals to Pastor Manders that she had hidden the evils of her marriage
 - Captain Alving was a womaniser; had an illegitimate daughter Regina who is now Mrs Alving's maid; had contracted syphilis; their son Oswald might inherit it
- Oswald has now come home after years
 - He has learnt to idealize his father from his mother's letters
 - Flirts with Regina and wants to marry her
 - Learns of his blood relationship with Regina from his mother
 - When he felt ill, he had gone to a doctor who told him, "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children."
 - Realizes that he has got syphilis from his father which would lead to insanity

The Ending

- The orphanage is destroyed in a fire
- Having come to know of her parentage, Regina is furious that she was not brought up as a lady
- Oswald begs his mother to kill him and she offers to take care of him. At the close of the play, he is crying like a child
- The play was controversial
 - The mention of venereal disease alone was scandalous, but to show how it could poison a respectable family was considered intolerable

More Plays

- *The Wild Duck* (1884)
 - The story of Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*
- *Rosmersholm* (1886)
 - Drama in four acts
 - Ex-parson Rosmer and his housekeeper Rebecca West are haunted by the spirit of Rosmer's wife who committed suicide because of Rebecca's influence and due to her husband's high-minded indifference to sex

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Master Builder (1892)

- Drama in three acts
- More self-analytic and symbolic than the earlier realist plays
- The aging architect Halvard Solness has become a master builder because of a destructive fire on his wife's estate that took the lives of his children
 - The new houses he built on the site won him fame
 - Solness has crushed many younger architects for his own good
 - He now feels pressure from a younger, more idealistic and ambitious generation of architects and feels his creativity diminishing
 - He is going mad

Hilda Wangel

- Solness is drawn towards 24-year-old Hilda Wangel, for whom he is a hero
- Under her encouragement, he wants to stop building homes and build castles instead
- She encourages him to climb the steeples of the building he is constructing, though he has acrophobia, a morbid fear of extreme heights
- He climbs to the top, and falls and dies

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Russian Literature

- One of the most fruitful periods in world literature
 - Literature enjoyed greater prestige in Russia than in the West
 - Literature and criticism were expected to fulfill functions, such as philosophical, moral, and religious analysis, that in Europe were typically assigned to distinct disciplines
 - The philosophical novel became popular
 - Politics and literature began to be intimately connected, and a writer or critic was often called upon to be a political prophet
- It was the golden age of Russian poetry
 - Aleksandr Pushkin was the greatest poet
- Rise of the Russian intelligentsia
 - A group of men and women who shared a common set of beliefs, including a fanatic faith in revolution, atheism, and materialism
 - Regarded literature as a form of socialist propaganda and rejected aesthetic criteria or apolitical works

Literature and Society

- 19th century Russian literature reflected two polarities in the society
- There was rapid Westernization and modernization among the nobility
 - Especially the influence of France
 - This led to a divide between the conservative culture and the new liberal culture
- Moscow and St Petersburg (new capital since 18th century) constituted two poles in Russian political history as well as literature and art
 - **Moscow:** conservatism, unity, cultural inertia
 - **St Petersburg:** shallow liberalism, cosmopolitanism, change, politicized and artificial life

Major Writers of the 19th Century

- Alexander Pushkin
- Nikolai Gogol
- Mikhail Lermontov
- Fyodor Dostoevsky
- Ivan Turgenev
- Leo Tolstoy
- Anton Chekhov

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Aleksander Pushkin (1799-1837)

- Poet, novelist, dramatist, and short story writer
- Considered to be the founder of modern Russian literature
- Central representative of Romanticism in Russian literature
- His poetry had specifically Russian features
- His commitment to social reform and radical views led him to be exiled
- Married the beautiful Nathalya Goncharova
- Died in a duel with her lover

TEST STUDY MATERIAL

Works

- First completed major work, the romantic poem *Ruslan and Ludmila* (1820)
 - Written in the style of Ariosto and Voltaire
 - With an old Russian setting, using Russian folklore
- More romantic narrative poems
 - *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* (1820-21)
 - *The Robber Brothers* (1821-22)
 - *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray* (1823)
- *Boris Godunov* (1831, his most famous play)
 - Constructed on the “folk-principles” of Shakespeare’s plays
 - Historical tragedy that explores the burning issue of the relationship between the ruling classes and the masses
- *The Bronze Horseman* (1837)
 - By telling a “story of St. Petersburg”, Pushkin shows the “little man’s” happiness destroyed by the ambition of the great leader

Eugene Onegin (1833)

- A novel in verse
- A classic of Russian literature; provides a panoramic view of Russian society
- Published in serial form between 1825 and 1832
- Protagonist is
 - A disenchanting sceptic
 - The model for a number of Russian literary heroes
- Formally the work resembles Lord Byron's *Don Juan*
 - But Pushkin rejects Byron's subjective, romanticized treatment in favour of objective description
 - Pushkin shows his hero not in exotic surroundings but at the heart of a Russian way of life

The Onegin Stanza

- This novel is completely written in verse
- 389 stanzas of iambic tetrameter with the unusual rhyme scheme "AbAbCCddEffEgg"
- The uppercase letters represent feminine rhymes (with an additional unstressed syllable)
- The lowercase letters represent masculine rhymes (stressed on the final syllable)

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Themes

- Exploration of life, death, love, and passion
- Relationship between life and fiction
- The deadly inhumanity of social convention

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Eugene Meets Lensky

- Set in the 1820s, Eugene Onegin is a bored and cynical St Petersburg dandy
- His life consists of parties and balls
- He inherits a landed estate from his uncle and moves to the country
- Becomes friendly with his neighbour and poet Vladimir Lensky
- Lensky takes Onegin to dine with the family of his fiancée Olga Larina

TEST STUDY MATERIAL

Lensky is Killed

- Olga Larina's sister Tatyana is attracted to Onegin
- She professes her love in a letter and he doesn't reply
- When they meet in person he asks her to be cautious in the future in what is known as One
- Lensky plays a trick on Onegin by inviting him to Tatyana's name day celebration
- He tells Onegin that it is just them and Tatyana's family, but it turns out to be a large country gathering
- Onegin is angry with Lensky and with the guests who gossip about him and Tatyana
- Onegin dances and flirts with Olga, who gets attracted to him
- Lensky calls him to a duel and he accepts because of social convention
- Lensky is killed in the duel

Tatyana Rejects Eugene

- Onegin leaves the country to travel abroad
- Tatyana visits Onegin's mansion
- She looks through his books and the notes on his books
- She feels that there is no real Onegin
- He is but a collage of different literary heroes
- After the lapse of many years, Onegin is in St. Petersburg attending balls
- He sees a beautiful woman and it is Tatyana
- Tatyana is married to an aged prince
- He wants to win her love but she rejects him
- She says that she loves him but she will not let him ruin her
- He feels regret and pain at his lost happiness

Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852)

- Ukrainian-born Russian writer
- Belonged to the “Natural school” of literary realism
 - “Natural School” was a literary movement that arose under the influence of Nikolai Gogol in the 1840s in Russia
 - Employed an unaffected, strictly truthful depiction of reality
- Had elements of surrealism and the grotesque in his works
- He portrayed social and psychological mobility as unwise
- His most famous short story is “The Overcoat” (1842) and his famous novel is *Dead Souls* (1841-42)

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Gogol's Works

- Early work consisted of stories about Ukraine peasant life (often with supernatural elements thrown in)
- His first collection of stories, *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* (1832), was an instant success
- In these stories, he settled on a key to his style: mixing the humorous and the macabre
- Later stories would use humour, the macabre and the supernatural in more modern settings like St. Petersburg (as in “The Nose” and “The Overcoat”)
- *Dead Souls* is his first and only novel
- He also wrote several well-received plays, including “The Inspector General”

Dead Souls (1842)

- Prose novel subtitled “A Poem”
- Volume One was published in 1842
- The idea for the novel was suggested by Pushkin (Gogol’s friend and champion)
- He wrote much of the novel while living in Italy (he mentions this at certain points, like the end of Volume One)
- The novel was referred to both as “an epic poem in prose” and “a novel in verse” (latter a homage to Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*)
- *Dead Souls* was originally supposed to be three parts in length, like Dante’s *Divine Comedy*
 - Gogol never got to the third part, and most of part two was destroyed by the author days before his death
- Structure was planned thus: Chichikov journeys through “hell” in volume one, is punished and exonerated in the “purgatory” of volume two, and is redeemed in the “paradise” of volume three

The Title

- In the Russian Empire, before the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, landowners were entitled to own serfs
- A Russian landowner could buy and sell serfs, or “souls,” like any other property
- The serfs were counted, for the purpose of tax assessment, every ten years
- Thus, a landowner still had to pay taxes on the value of serfs who had died, until the next ten-year census could legally record the deaths
- “Dead souls” refers to these dead serfs on whom landowners had to pay taxes
- On another level, the title refers to the “dead souls” of Gogol’s characters, all of whom visualise different aspects of *poshlost*
 - This can be translated as “complacent vulgarity”, moral and spiritual, with overtones of middle-class pretentiousness and materialism)

The Plot

- Chichikov, the anti-hero, plans to buy the titles to the “dead souls” and use them to obtain a large loan
- He comes to a small provincial town and makes the proposal to the local landowners
 - Manilovs (the “kind-manners”)
 - Plewshkin (“Mr. Spitoon”)
 - Sobakievich (“Mr. Dog”)
 - Madame Korobachka (“Mrs. Box”)
 - Nozdryov (“Mr. Nostrils”)
- These landowners are revealed to be so petty and avaricious that not even Chichikov’s amazing offer can be worked to his advantage on them
- Some stall, some refuse for no obvious reasons, some promise and then renege
- In the end, Chichikov, having concluded that the landowners are a hopeless lot, leaves for other regions

Social Satire

- As in many of Gogol's short stories, the social criticism of *Dead Souls* is communicated primarily through absurd and hilarious satire
- Unlike the short stories, however, *Dead Souls* was meant to offer solutions rather than simply point out problems

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Structure

- Chichikov visits the estates of landowners living around the capital of Aguberniya
 - Similar to the structure of the *Odyssey*
 - Also similar to the picaresque novels of the 16th and 17th centuries
 - Divided into a series of somewhat disjointed episodes
 - The protagonist is a gentrified version of the rascal protagonist of the original picaresques
- The novel ends in mid-sentence like Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*

Ivan Turgenev (1818-1873)

- Writer who was part of the Realism movement
- Major works
 - *A Sportsman's Sketches* (1852, collection of short stories)
 - *Fathers and Sons* (1862, novel)
 - Has written poems and plays also
- Works show
 - A deep concern for the future of his native land
 - Realistic, affectionate portrayals of the Russian peasantry
 - Penetrating studies of the Russian intelligentsia

Fathers and Sons (1862)

- “Fathers and Sons” is also the title of a short story by Hemingway
- Set during the six-year period of social ferment, from Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War to the Emancipation of the Serfs (1856-61)
- The most famous of his novels that had for its theme the conflict between generations
- The older generation, reluctant to accept reforms, and the nihilistic youth
- The novel was a response to the growing cultural split between liberals of the 1830s/1840s and the growing nihilist movement
- The novel led to the spread of the term “nihilism”

Nihilism

- Turgenev refutes the theory of nihilism
- He discards Bazarov's "insignificance principle", i.e., the nihilist idea that life is utterly insignificant and that nothing remains after death
- The generations conflict is resolved in the case of Arkady

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Two Young Men

- Arkady brings his friend Bazarov to his father's Kirsanov estate at the end of their university studies
- At the estate live Arkady's father, Nikolai Petrovich (a widower), his uncle Pavel Petrovich, Fenichka (a young woman living under Nikolai's protection), and Mitya, the son whom Fenichka has borne to Nikolai
- Pavel is upset by the strange new philosophy called "nihilism" which Bazarov advocates
- Nihilism is the total rejection of all religious and moral principles as a basis for behaviour and it believes that nothing really exists

TEG STUDY MATERIAL

Madame Odintsova

- The two young men visit a relative of Arkady's, and meet Madame Odintsova, an elegant widow and her sister Katya
- Both Arkady and Bazarov are drawn towards Madame Odinstova
- This complicates their relationship with each other
- Bazarov falls in love with her though it is going against his own beliefs
- He confesses and is rejected by her
- Arkady and Bazarov leave for Bazarov's home

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Bazarov is Troubled

- Bazarov's gentle, rustic parents receive them enthusiastically
- Bazarov is still disturbed by his rejection
- Mistreats his parents and even fights with Arkady
- They decide to go back to Kirsanov's estate
- They stop on their way to see Madame Odintsova, who receives them coolly

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Bazarov's Death

- Arkady realizes that he has fallen in love with Katya, and later they get engaged
- Bazarov stays at Kirsanov's estate to do some scientific research, and tension between him and Pavel increases
- Bazarov and Pavel fight over Fenichka, to whom they are both attracted
- Bazarov returns to his parents' home, but cannot keep his mind on his work
- He fails to take the proper precautions during an autopsy and contracts typhus
- Bazarov sends for Madame Odintsova and tells her how beautiful she is
- That evening Bazarov dies
- Arkady marries Katya; his father marries Fenichka; Pavel leaves the country to live as a "noble" in Dresden, Germany

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881)

- Russian novelist, short story writer, and essayist
- Eleven novels, three novellas, seventeen short novels and three essays
- Works explore human psychology in the political, social and spiritual context of 19th century Russia
- Also depicted life under the Soviet regime
- Realism and psychological depth made him different from his contemporaries
- Influenced a number of writers from Anton Chekhov and James Joyce to Ernest Hemingway and Jean-Paul Sartre
- His descriptions of human beings confronting mortality, despair, and the anxiety of choice influenced the mid-20th century existentialist movement

Delivered from Death

- Dostoevsky was arrested for his involvement in the Petrashevsky Circle, a secret society of liberal utopians
- He was condemned to death but a note from Tsar Nicholas I was delivered to the firing squad, saving him in the nick of time

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Works

- Greatest Novels
 - *Notes from the Underground* (1864)
 - *Crime and Punishment* (1866)
 - *The Idiot* (1868-69)
 - *The Demons* (or *The Possessed*, 1872)
 - *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879-80)
- Other Novels
 - *Poor Folk* (1846, his first novel)
 - *The House of the Dead* (1861)
 - *The Gambler* (1867)

TFS STUDY MATERIAL

***Notes from the Underground* (1864)**

- Also called *Letters from the Underworld*; a novella
- In the form of an excerpt from the rambling memoirs of a bitter, isolated, unnamed narrator
- The isolated, misanthropic narrator of *Notes from the Underground* is called the Underground Man
- The first words he says is that he is a sick man, a wicked man, an unattractive man, disillusioned with the modern society and with philosophical ideas, such as utilitarianism
- The novel was unpopular in Soviet Russia because of
 - Its rejection of utopian socialism
 - For its portrait of humans as irrational, uncontrollable, and uncooperative animals
 - His claim that human needs can never be satisfied
- Written in reaction to Nikolay Chernyshevsky's ideological utopian novel *What Is to Be Done?* (1863) which endorses scientism and rationalism

The Two Parts

- The novel is divided into 2 parts
 - “Underground”
 - The underground man gives a long monologue that encapsulates his philosophy
 - “Apropos of the Wet Snow”
 - Adventures from his life are recounted

TES STUDY MATERIAL

“Underground”

- The first part of this novel is set in the 1860s and is titled “Underground”
- In this part, the unnamed narrator’s diary reveals to us his state of intellectual and moral ennui or weariness and inactivity, in an examination of suffering and a criticism of reason and logic
- The narrator states that humanity attempts to create the indestructible “Crystal Palace” of rationality
 - A reference to a famous symbol of utopianism in Chernyshevsky’s *What Is to Be Done?*
- But anyone at any time may act in a way which might not be considered “good”, and some will do so simply to protest and confirm that they exist as individuals

Two Times Two Makes Five

- The Underground Man writes in his diary, considering the possibility of the idea that “two times two makes five”
- He proposes that it is the free will to choose or reject the logical as well as the illogical that makes mankind human
- He writes, “I admit that twice two makes four is an excellent thing, but if we are to give everything its due, twice two makes five is sometimes a very charming thing too”
- “ $2 \times 2 = 4$ ” symbolizes the tyranny of reason and “ $2 \times 2 = 5$ ” symbolizes freedom
- There is a similar situation in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
 - “ $2 + 2 = 5$ ” was a Communist party slogan from the second five-year plan, which encouraged fulfilment of the five-year plan in four years
 - In Orwell’s novel, this statement serves to highlight the regime’s continual manipulation and re-writing of history, language and “truth”

“Apropos of the Wet Snow”

- Describes specific events in the Underground Man’s life in the 1840s
- This section has this title because the falling snow reminds him of another day of snow fall
- In this part, the Underground Man’s relationship with, and alienation from, the people around him—a soldier, schoolmates, and a prostitute—is described
- He feels disgust and fear towards all of them, resulting in his own humiliation and self-loathing

The Soldier

- The Underground Man feels disgust with an officer who physically moves him out of the way without a word or warning
- He wants to take revenge on the officer
- He bumps into him but surprised that the officer didn't notice

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Schoolmates

- The Underground Man meets up with his old friends to say goodbye to Zverkov
- He used to hate them earlier but decides to go for the party anyway
- He is not aware of a change in the time and comes early
- He fights with them declaring his hatred of society

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Prostitute

- They go off without him to a secret brothel
- He follows them there to confront Zverkov
- He arrives to find that Zverkov and company have left
- Then he meets Liza, a young prostitute
- He gives her a glimpse of her future – of dying unwanted
- He gives her his address and leaves

The Decision to Stop Writing

- Then the Underground Man decides to stop writing his diary
- Dostoevsky reveals in a footnote that the Underground Man even failed to carry out his decision to stop writing and continued his manuscript for many more pages
- It should be remembered that Dostoevsky wrote this and his other major novels after his agonizing years of political exile in Siberia

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Ending

- Ends with a note from the author that while there was more to the text, “it seems that we may stop here”
- Comments on the social evils of his day
- Sartre called this novella a forerunner to his own existentialist theories
- Nietzsche admired this novel as it “cried truth from the blood”

TEST STUDY MATERIAL

Crime and Punishment (1866)

- First published as a monthly serial in a Russian literary journal
- Romantic vision of man as a unique creature composed of conflicting elements
- Study of the nature of good and evil, intellect and emotion
- Presents an interior view of criminality, a conviction that crime and its inevitable punishment are deeply seated aspects of the human spirit
- Religious principle of sanctification through suffering
- Can evil means justify honorable ends?
- Who is the real criminal?
- Character as mystery

Context

- Major upheavals, political uncertainty and war
- Napoleonic Wars 1803-1815
- Nihilism: An extreme form of skepticism that denies all existence
 - Raskolnikov is a nihilist
 - He is completely unsentimental for most part of the novel
- He cares nothing about the emotions of others

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Plot Lines

- Primary plot of Raskolnikov's crime and its consequences
- Minor plot of the lowly and good Marmeladovs
- Minor plot of the wealthy immoral Svidrigailov

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Major Characters

- Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov (“Rodya,” “Rodka”)
 - Protagonist; former student
- Sofya Semyonovna Marmeladov (“Sonya,” “Sonechka”)
 - Raskolnikov’s love; Marmeladov’s daughter
- Avdotya Romanovna Raskolnikov (“Dunya,” “Dunechka”)
 - Raskolnikov’s sister
- Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov
 - Dunya’s depraved former employer
- Dmitri Prokofych Razumikhin
 - Raskolnikov’s friend; a poor ex-student
- Pulcheria Alexandrovna
 - Raskolnikov’s long-suffering mother
- Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladov
 - The consumptive wife of Marmeladov
- Piotr Petrovitch Luzhin
 - A minor government official betrothed to Dunya, a man filled with a sense of his own importance

Raskolnikov

- A poor student; takes help not even from friend Razhumikhin
- Lives in St Petersburg
- On Crime
 - After leaving the university, Raskolnikov had written an article, titled “On Crime”, which was published in the magazine *Periodical Review* without his knowledge
 - Here, he argued that some men are above ordinary human beings, and have the right to commit murder.
 - He held Lycurgus, Solon, Mahomet, Napoleon, etc to be the models for such a “supermen”
 - Raskolnikov constantly refers to Napoleon because Napoleon had the daring to commit various acts in order to complete his plans
 - Raskolnikov believed himself to be such a superior human being

The Murder

- Raskolnikov's theory that humanitarian ends justify evil means leads him to murder the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna and her half-sister Lizaveta
- His murder of the pawnbroker, he believed, is doing a good deed which would remove a harmful "louse" from the society and put her "wasted" money to better use
- After the murder he leaves unseen and undetected
- Raskolnikov falls into a feverish state; behaves strangely
- His guilt begins to overwhelm him to the point of psychological and somatic illness, as he himself had argued in the article
- As the reader's suspense increases, there is the slowly dawning realization that Raskolnikov himself does not know his motive

Raskolnikov's Motive

- There is a gradual revelation of the protagonist's motives
- As the novel progresses, Raskolnikov's motives for the murder become complex
- He confesses to the innocent prostitute, Sonia that he did the crime because he only wanted to see if he could go beyond a normal person's revulsion against such an act
- However, Raskolnikov's impulses go more deeply than that: he wants to see if he can overstep the limits of evil itself, if he can exert ultimate power over another person
- Finally, it is clear that Raskolnikov's crime is due to his dreadful amorality

The Consequence of the Crime

- Raskolnikov committed the murder on purely logical grounds that questioned conventional morality
- He finds his feelings locked into the conventional morality that his intellect despises
- He is thus caught in an emotional vacuum, the most inescapable kind of punishment
- Raskolnikov draws more and more attention to himself and his relation to the crime
- The detective Porfiry Petrovich, a relative of Razumikhin's, suspects him
- Raskolnikov's isolation grows because he pushes away the people who try to help him (including Sonya, Dunya, Razumikhin, and even Porfiry) because of his intense guilt and the half-delirium into which his guilt throws him
- In the end, he finds the total alienation that he has brought upon himself intolerable, and it proves that he is not a "superman" after all

The Superman

- At the beginning, Raskolnikov believes himself to be a “superman,” a person who is extraordinary and thus above the moral rules that govern the rest of humanity
- His murder of the pawnbroker is, in part, an attempt to establish the truth of his superiority
- He is a Hegelian Superman
 - Exists for noble purposes; holds that if the ends are noble, then the means can be justified
 - According to Hegel, any harmful segment of society should be removed
- The murders also reveals Raskolnikov’s nihilistic attitudes, for he does not care for family or societal bonds, and till the end of the novel when he is “humanized” by Sonya’s love, he is completely unsentimental, and cares nothing about the emotions of others
- Raskolnikov is a prototype of the Nietzschean Übermensch, or Superman

Marmeladov

- As Raskolnikov contemplates on murdering Alyona, he visits her and pawns his watch in order to observe the surroundings
- As he leaves her, he feels disgusted, and enters a tavern
- There he meets Marmeladov, a drunken official, who gives a long monologue in a comically dignified manner
 - About his wretched life as a drunkard, his irresponsibility, how his daughter Sonya (from a previous marriage) has been driven to prostitution, and how he is unable to change his ways
- Marmeladov says he doesn't deserve any pity, and then talks about how the Lord would forgive them on Judgement Day
- Raskolnikov takes him home, and Katerina scolds her husband
- She also kicks Raskolnikov out, mistaking him to be a drunkard
- Raskolnikov leaves a sum of money on the window-sill
- Later, Marmeladov is killed by a carriage, and it is not clear whether it is an accident or suicide

The Mother and Sister

- Raskolnikov's mother and sister arrive at St Petersburg
- Alexandrovna, his mother
 - A handsome middle-aged widow
 - Has absolute faith in her son
 - Fails to see his depravity
- Dunya, his sister
 - Has left her job with the wealthy and lusty Svidrigailov
 - Wishes to marry Luzhin who turns out to be devious and selfish
 - Svidrigailov also arrives to seek out Dunya
 - Raskolnikov prevents Dunya from marrying Luzhin
 - Razumikhin falls in love with her

Marmeladov's Memorial Dinner

- Raskolnikov now has a chaste relationship with the virtuous Sonya, who is full of Christian virtue
- Luzhin hates Raskolnikov, and blames him for trying to break his engagement to Dunya
- Marmeladov's memorial dinner is conducted by his wife Katerina who is fussy and proud
- In order to embarrass Raskolnikov, Luzhin accuses Sonya of having stolen a hundred ruble bill
- Luzhin's roommate Lebezyatnikov exposes Luzhin for having slipped the bill into Sonya's pocket

Raskolnikov Confesses

- Porfiry is sure of Raskolnikov's crime; but since there is no proof, another man called Nikolai is arrested
- After Marmeladov's memorial dinner, Raskolnikov confesses his crime to Sonya; Svidrigailov overhears it; threatens to expose Raskolnikov
- Sonya and Porfiry urge Raskolnikov to confess
- Katerina goes mad: she parades her children on the street and begs for money, and later dies
- Svidrigailov threatens to rape Dunya if she refuses to marry him
 - Dunya fires several shots at him but misses
 - Realizing that she will never love him, lets her go
- As Raskolnikov goes to the police station to confess, he hears of Svidrigailov's suicide
- He ultimately confesses to the police official, Ilya Petrovich

Epilogue

- A year and a half later
- Raskolnikov is sentenced to eight years in Siberia
 - He has been in prison for nine months
 - He does not get death sentence because of the testimony about his past good deeds
- After Raskolnikov's arrest, his mother becomes delirious and dies
- Sonya moves to the town outside the prison, and she visits Raskolnikov regularly and tries to ease his burden
- Dunya and Razumikhin marry
- At first, Raskolnikov remains proud and alienated from humanity, but he eventually realizes that he truly loves Sonya and expresses remorse for his crime

Svidrigailov

- Svidrigailov is both a seducer and savior of Dunya
- All of Svidrigailov's crimes, except for his attempted rape of Dunya, are done before the novel starts
- Svidrigailov also performs good deeds, such as giving money to the family of his fiancée, to Katerina Ivanovna and her children, and to Dunya
- Whereas Raskolnikov believes unflinchingly in the rationale for Alyona Ivanovna's murder, Svidrigailov doesn't try to contest the death of his romantic vision when Dunya rejects him
 - In this regard, he functions as a foil to Raskolnikov
- He is one of the few characters in the novel to die with dignity

Svidrigailov as Nietzschean Superman

- For the following reasons, Svidrigailov can be considered a Nietzschean Superman
 - Svidrigailov exists for his own self-gratification
 - He believes that he is completely free to assert his own will
 - He thinks he is beyond punishment
 - He is isolated from the society
 - He is evil

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Two Novels

- ***The Idiot* (1868-69)**
 - The story of the unsettling effect of the guileless Prince Myshkin on the sophisticated Yepanchin family who are given to sensuality and crime
- ***The Demons* (or *The Possessed*, 1872)**
 - Based on sensational press reports of a Moscow student's murder by fellow revolutionists
 - Critical of nihilism
 - Five major characters, each representing an ideology
 - Raja Rao's Comrade Kirillov takes his name from this novel

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Brothers Karamazov (1879-80)

- A passionate philosophical novel
- The last novel by Dostoevsky
- Depicts the characters' moral struggles, set against a modernizing Russia
- The Karamazov Brothers are Dmitri, Ivan, Aloysha
- Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov is the father of the Karamazov brothers, is an immoral character
- With his sexual orgies with various women and his abhorrent treatment of his wives and children, Fyodor Pavlovich embodies amoral, obnoxious Epicureanism
 - This means a commitment to seeking pleasure rather than living responsibly or virtuously
- Smerdyakov is his illegitimate son, born of “Stinking Lizaveta”, a retarded village girl

Ivan and Dmitri

- Ivan Karamazov
 - A general's widow leaves Ivan and Alyosha some money
 - With this money, Ivan becomes a brilliant student
 - Writes a notorious article about ecclesiastical courts, arguing that ecclesiastical courts should be given authority over criminal prosecution and punishment because if criminals knew they were defying God when they committed their crimes, many of them would choose to obey the law
 - Ivan struggles to reconcile intellect with religious belief
- Dmitri Karamazov
 - Fyodor's son from his first marriage; Ivan and Alyosha are his half-brothers
 - Opposed to Ivan's critical faculties
 - Violently hates his father; uncritically loves his brothers
 - His actions are based on emotion rather than on intellect

Alyosha and Smerdyakov

- Alyosha
 - Dostoevsky describes him as the hero of the novel
 - Nearly the opposite of Fyodor Pavlovich
 - He is innocent, pious, and virtuous without being mystical or fanatical; loves mankind
- Smerdyakov
 - Raised by Fyodor Pavlovich's servants
 - Made to work in Karamazov household as a servant
 - He is cursed with epilepsy; has a mean temperament, sometimes exhibiting malice and sometimes assuming a mask of servitude
 - Likes discussing philosophy with Ivan, who always argues in favour of an anti-religious amorality

The Quarrel

- Dmitri, a soldier, is betrothed to Katerina Ivanovna, but has fallen madly in love with Grushenka
 - But Dmitri has to compete with his father for her
 - He also quarrels with him over his mother's inheritance
- However, Grushenka hopes for a reunion with her first lover, a Pole
- Fyodor Pavlovich has promised Grushenka 3,000 rubles if she becomes his lover
- Meanwhile, Dmitri stole 3,000 rubles from Katerina for a trip with Grushenka, and now wants to pay the money back
- Alyosha is an apprentice, at the monastery of the renowned elder Zosima
- He tries to reconcile the quarrel between his father and Dmitri with the help of Zosima, however they quarrel even more fiercely

Ivan Tells a Parable

- Dmitri sends Alyosha to break off his engagement with Katerina
- Later Alyosha discovers that Ivan and Katerina are in love
- Ivan explains to Alyosha the source of his religious doubt:
 - He cannot reconcile the idea of a loving God with the needless suffering of innocent people, particularly children
 - He explains this with the ambiguous parable of the Grand Inquisitor
 - The story explores Christ's biblical rejection of the temptations offered to him by Satan and concludes that Christ was wrong to have rejected them, since his rejection won free will for humanity, but took away security

Zosima Dies

- Zosima is a mild, benevolent and humble spiritual leader
- He dies after his final lesson on the importance of love and forgiveness in all human affairs
- The monks expect Zosima's death
 - To be followed by a great miracle
 - That his corpse will not emit a stench, but will smell of febreze, which will prove him to be a saint
- However, Zosima's corpse begins to stink very quickly, exuding a particularly strong and putrid odor
 - This is taken by his enemies in the monastery as proof of his inner corruption
 - However, this stench only confirms his teachings: he is no otherworldly figure; he is firmly grounded in this world

Alyosha Reforms Grushenka

- Alyosha is disillusioned by the injustice of Zosima being humiliated after his death
- Alyosha is taken by his friend to meet Grushenka, and the two of them attempt to corrupt Alyosha
- However, just the opposite happens, and a bond of sympathy and understanding springs up between Grushenka and Alyosha
- Their friendship renews Alyosha's faith, and Alyosha helps Grushenka to begin her own spiritual redemption
- Meanwhile, Alyosha also helps a dying boy Ilyusha by getting his school friends to visit him everyday

Fyodor's Murder

- One evening, Dmitri suspects that Grushenka has gone to Fyodor's house
- Frenzied, he takes a pestle and runs to his father's house
- He sees his father at an open window, wants to strike him, but strikes his servant Grigory instead
- Believing him to be dead, Dmitri leaves the place
- Dmitri learns that Grushenka has gone to meet her former lover
- He follows her, to see her one more time before he kills himself
- Grushenka, however, declares her love for Dmitri
- The police charge Dmitri with murder, not of Grigory but of Fyodor, who was found brutally murdered

The Guilty

- Dmitri has a vivid dream
 - He dreams of a mother with a suffering child, and feels determined to help
- He awakens and declares that he is ready to accept responsibility for his father's death
 - Even though he was not the actual murderer, he had had the intention of killing him
- Smerdyakov confesses to Ivan that he committed the murder of their father
- Smerdyakov says that Ivan is also implicated in the crime because the philosophical lessons Smerdyakov learned from Ivan, regarding the impossibility of evil in a world without a God
- Ivan is consumed with guilt and has a nightmare
- Then Alyosha comes with the announcement that Smerdyakov has hanged himself

The Trial

- At the trial, Ivan tries to confess that he killed Fyodor Pavlovich
- Katerina shows the jury a letter she received from Dmitri in which he wrote that he might one day murder his father
- However, the people in the courtroom are convinced of Dmitri's innocence but the jury sentences him to exile in Siberia
- After the trial, Katerina nurses Ivan through his illness
- She and Dmitri forgive each another, and she arranges for Dmitri to escape from prison and flee to America with Grushenka
- Ilyusha dies and Alyosha gives a speech to the schoolboys on the importance of love

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

- Master of realistic fiction
- Attempted to realistically portray the Russian society
- Tolstoy was born into a large and wealthy Russian landowning family
- Having lost his parents very early in life, he always had an acute awareness of the power of death
- Though an intelligent child, Tolstoy had little interest in academics and joined university after his aunt's persuasion
- He served in the Crimean War (1854-1856)
- Tolstoy appreciated the values and way of life of peasants and became quite critical of the superficiality of upper-class Russians
- Was influenced by Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*
- Tolstoy's eventual turn to Christian religion left an imprint on all his later writings

Major Works

- *War and Peace* (1865-1869)
- *Anna Karenina* (1875-1877)
- *Sevastopol Stories* (1855, Crimean war experiences)
- Autobiographies
 - *Childhood* (1852)
 - *Boyhood* (1854)
 - *Youth* (1857)
- *A Confession* (1882) and *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1893, based on Biblical Gospels)
- *What Is Art?* (1898)
 - He argued in this essay that the sole aim of great art must be moral instruction

Historical Context

- The 19th century Russian society was divided
 - Some believed Russian culture to be superior to European culture
 - Others believed that Russia needed to follow more liberal, western modes of thought and government
- Anna Karenina depicts this division
 - Whether Russia should join Europe's secular values and scientific thought
 - Or reject modernization and cherish the Asiatic elements of its culture
- By the time of Tolstoy's death in 1910, Russia had transformed from a backward agricultural economy into a major industrialized world power

Anna Karenina (1875-77)

- Opening sentence of the novel: “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”
- The novel opens in Moscow in Anna’s brother Stiva’s family
- Stiva (Oblonsky) cheated his wife Dolly by having an affair with their French governess; Anna acts as a marriage counsellor
- Meanwhile, Dolly’s younger sister, Kitty is courted by Levin and Vronsky, a dashing military man
- Kitty turns down Levin in favor of Vronsky
- But Vronsky meets Anna Karenina at the railway station and falls in love with her instead of Kitty
 - At the railway station when they meet, a rail worker falls in front of the train and dies
- The devastated Kitty falls ill
- Levin withdraws to his estate in the country
- Anna returns to St Petersburg to her husband Karenin and son Seryozha; Vronsky follows her

Anna's Relationship with Vronsky

- Anna tells Vronsky she is pregnant with his child
- Immediately afterwards Vronsky carelessly rides his horse Frou-Frou in a military horse race, and breaks her back
- Karenin notices his wife Anna's intense interest in Vronsky and reproaches her; Anna admits that she loves Vronsky
- Karenin rejects Anna's request for a divorce; he insists that they maintain outward appearances by staying together
- However, Anna moves to the family's country home, away from her husband. She meets Vronsky often, but their relationship becomes clouded

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Levin and Kitty

- Meanwhile, Kitty recovers her health at a spa in Germany
- Levin works enthusiastically with the peasants on his estate but is frustrated by their resistance to agricultural innovations
- Levin meets Kitty and the two become engaged and marry
- Eventually Kitty is pregnant

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Breach in Anna's Relationship

- Karenin agrees to divorce
- Anna, in her childbirth agony, begs for Karenin's forgiveness, and he suddenly grants it
- Anna is spurned by society, which considers her adultery disgraceful; Anna and Vronsky withdraw into seclusion
- She begins to feel jealousy for Vronsky, resenting the fact that he is free to participate in society while she is housebound and scorned
- Anna feels that Vronsky no longer loves her
- Stiva begs Karenin to grant Anna the divorce he once promised her; Karenin, following the advice of a questionable French psychic woman, refuses
- Anna picks a quarrel with Vronsky; Vronsky tries to be accommodating, but Anna remains angry
- When Vronsky leaves on an errand, Anna is tormented

Levin in Moscow

- Anna decides that she should marry Vronsky to prevent him from leaving her
- Anna and Vronsky leave for Moscow
- Levin visits Moscow for Kitty's delivery
 - He is attracted by the city's fast-paced, expensive and frivolous society life
 - He briefly comes under the spell of Anna
- After a long and arduous labour, Kitty gives birth to a son Dmitri
 - At the sight of the helpless baby, Levin is horrified as well as moved

Two Lives

- Anna sends Vronsky an apologetic note and then rides to the railway station to meet him
- At the station, despairing and dazed by the crowds, Anna throws herself under a train and dies
- Karenin takes care of Anna's and Vronsky's baby Annie
- Once during a thunderstorm, Kitty and the baby are outdoors, and Levin realizes how much he loves them
- Levin has become immersed in questions about the meaning of life but feels unable to answer them
- One day a peasant remarks to Levin that the point of life is not to fill one's belly but to serve God and goodness
 - Levin receives this advice as gospel and his life is suddenly transformed by faith
- Levin reflects again that the meaning of his life lies in the good that he can put into it

The Character of Anna Karenina

- Anna Karenina is one of literature's great heroines. One of two main protagonists in the novel
- She is the beautiful, passionate, and educated and is devoted to her family
- She's flawed, complex, and ultimately destroys herself, but we sympathize with her because she is also gentle, initially well intentioned, and very human
- She is a feminist heroine of sorts
- Anna is a martyr to the Russian patriarchal system and its double standards for male and female adultery

YES STUDY MATERIAL

The Character of Levin

- Levin is the co-protagonist, as central to the story as Anna herself
- A veiled self-portrait of the author
 - His name includes Tolstoy's first name (Lev in Russian)
- Independent-minded and socially awkward, Levin follows his own vision of things
- Levin is not self-centered
- His comfort with his peasants and his loathing of social pretension shows him as an ordinary man
- Levin, with his discovery of faith and simple virtues of life, represents Tolstoy's vision of a model human being

The Character of Karenin

- A government official with little personality of his own, Karenin maintains the facade of a cultivated man
- Karenin's entire existence consists of professional obligations, with little room for personal passion
- His interaction with Anna and Seryozha is cold, official and out of duty
- Karenin's dispassion serves as the backdrop to Anna's rebellious search for love at any price

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Character of Vronsky

- Vronsky is a wealthy and charming man who is willing to abandon social standing and professional status in pursuit of love
- At no point does he hold Anna responsible for his failures; he endures her paranoid fits with patience
- The novel also shows Vronsky's many realistic faults and imperfections
- He may be an exceptional man, but he is only a man
 - This limitation in Vronsky provides Anna's greatest disappointment in the novel

Major Themes

- Social change in Russia
- The importance of family life
- The idea of Christian forgiveness
- The philosophical value of farming
- Adultery as a social rather than a moral theme
- Trains as a negative symbol of an industrialized society

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Use of Interior Monologue

- Tolstoy pioneered the use of a device that is now commonplace in novels but was new in the 19th century, the interior monologue
- The interior monologue is the author's portrayal of a character's thoughts and feelings directly
- The interior monologue gives the reader great empathy with the character
- Tolstoy uses the device in his portrayal of Anna's last moments
- Without access to her thoughts, we would have a much flimsier understanding of what drives Anna to suicide

The Death Motif

- The co-protagonists of the novel, Anna and Levin encounter death numerous times
- For Anna, death, specifically suicide, serves as a means of escape from her problems
- For Levin, death represents the complete, inescapable end of his existence, which calls the meaning of his entire life into question

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Death of Ivan Ilyich (1886)

- The novella begins with the death of Ivan Ilyich, a high-court judge, at age 45
 - The death is reported by his law colleagues, who read about his demise in the newspaper
- Immediately Ivan's colleagues begin to wonder how his death might affect their own positions in the court bureaucracy
- Several colleagues attend Ivan's wake, but reluctantly because it interferes with their weekly bridge game

STUDY MATERIAL

Ilyich's Past Life

- Ilyich had lived his life thinking only of himself and his pleasures
- In the past, when unpleasant events occurred, such as the death of a few of his children and his wife's growing irritability, he turned away from these domestic concerns and spent time working at the office
- His life continues for seventeen years in this manner, until the fateful day when he falls off a ladder while hanging curtains
- He develops symptoms, a queer taste in the mouth and stomach discomfort, and, before he knows it, he is on his deathbed

Ilyich's Suffering

- During the long and painful process of death, Ivan dwells on the idea that he does not deserve his suffering because he has lived rightly
- He begins to hate his family for avoiding the subject of his death, for pretending he is only sick and not dying
- He finds his only comfort in his peasant boy servant Gerasim, who does not fear death, and the only person who, apart from his own son, shows compassion for him
- Ivan begins to question whether he has, in fact, lived a good life.

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Last Hours

- The horrible truth that he indeed has failed to do the right thing transforms the remaining two hours of Ivan Ilyich's life
- Only Gerasim can “understand and pity him” in a compassionate and loving manner
- In his final, agonizing moments, Ivan Ilyich learns that he, too, can be compassionate and loving
- He pities his son, who weepingly kisses his hand
- He no longer hates his daughter or wife, but rather feels pity for them, and hopes his death will release them
- He can now die in peace

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904)

- Worked as a medical doctor
- Major short story writer
- Four complete plays *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard*
- Made early use of stream-of-consciousness
- The opening night of the first production of *The Seagull* was a famous failure
 - Chekhov left the audience and spent the last two acts behind the scenes
 - When supporters wrote to him that the production later became a success, he assumed that they were merely trying to be kind
 - Constantin Stanislavski's production of the play in 1898 was a major success

Early Plays

- *The Seagull*
- *Uncle Vanya*
- *The Three Sisters*

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Cherry Orchard (1904)

- Chekhov's last play
- Written after he was diagnosed with tuberculosis
- A wealthy landowning family forced to sell their cherry orchard in order to pay their debts
- The play reflects the socio-economic forces at work in Russia at the turn of the 20th century
 - The rise of the middle class after the abolition of serfdom in the mid-19th century
 - The sinking of the aristocracy
- Chekhov wanted *The Cherry Orchard* to be a comedy but it was interpreted by Stanislavski as a tragedy

Characters

- **Ranevskaya:** a gentle middle aged aristocratic woman
- **Gayev:** Her brother who stays at the estate
- **Lopakhin:** a businessman whose forefathers were serfs on the estate
- **Varya:** Ranevskaya's adopted daughter who manages the estate
- **Anya:** Ranevskaya's daughter
- **Trofimov:** A idealistic student and former tutor to Ranevskaya's son Grisha before he died in a drowning accident
- **Firs:** an 87-year-old servant of the estate
- **Yephikodov:** A clerk at the estate who is referred to Simple Simon
- **Yasha:** Ranevskaya's manservant
- **Dunyasha:** a maid on the estate, loves Yasha

Ranevskaya Arrives

- The play begins in the pre-dawn hours of a May morning; the Cherry trees are in bloom
- Lopakhin and Dunyasha wait in the nursery to receive Ranevskaya who is coming back home from Paris after five years
- Lopakhin is a successful businessman whose forefathers were serfs on the Ranevsky estate
- He feels gratitude towards her, though she treats him with condescension
- Ranevskaya arrives with her daughter Anya
- Also with her is Yasha, a manservant and Charlotte, Anya's governess
- Firs, Gayev and Varya had gone to the station to pick her up

TES STUDY MATERIAL

Ranevskaya's Situation

- Anya tells Varya about the pitiable condition her mother was in when she arrived in Paris
- Ranevskaya had left home to recover from her grief over the deaths of her husband and her son Grisha
- Though Ranevskaya is relatively poor now, she continues to spend money in the same lavish manner
- Varya tells Anya that the family estate is to be auctioned to pay their debts
- Lopakhin offers a practical solution to the auction
 - Ranevskaya should parcel out the land
 - Build cottages on this land and lease them out
- Both Gayev and Ranevskaya dismiss the idea because they dislike cutting down the family's cherry orchard
- Lopakhin offers them a loan of 50000 rubles to buy their property at the auction

More Confusions

- Ranevskaya lends some money to her poor neighbour Pischik
- Trofimov, Grisha's former tutor, comes and Ranevskaya is upset
- Gayev also proposes some plans
 - This includes borrowing some money from a wealthy aunt in Yaroslavl
- The servants on the estate, Dunyasha, Yasha and Yephikodov, form a love triangle
 - Yephikodov loves Dunyasha but Dunyasha loves Yasha
 - Yasha loves only himself

More Confusions

- Ranevskaya dislikes Lopakhin's suggestion saying that it is vulgar
- If such a thing happens, she wants to be sold along with the estate
- She reveals that she has a lover in Paris who robbed her and made her desperate enough to attempt suicide
- Trofimov talks of his philosophy of work
- A snapping of a string is heard
- A drunkard comes and Ranevskaya gives him some gold pieces

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Day of the Auction

- Anya and Trofimov talk of Varya's suspicion of them being lovers
- Trofimov declares that they are not in love but "above love"
- On the day of the auction, Ranevskaya throws a party
- She worries why Gayev and Lopakhin haven't returned
- She and Trofimov get into an argument
 - He accuses her of being unable to face the truth
 - She accuses him of not being able to fall in love

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Outcome of the Auction

- Lopakhin and Gayev return from the auction
- Lopakhin announces that he has bought the estate
- He wants to carry out his plans of building summer cottages
- Anya tries to comfort her mother but fails
- The cherry trees are being cut down
- People are leaving the place
 - Lopakhin is going to Kharkov for winter
 - Varya to the Ragulin family
 - Gayev leaves for the town to work in a bank
 - Anya will go to her school and Ranevskaya to Paris

The Ending

- Yasha leaves Dunyasha, who is weeping
- Ranevskaya encourages Lopakhin to propose to Varya
 - But nothing happens and Varya cries
- Gayev and Ranevskaya leave the house
- Firs is left behind
- Firs mutters to himself and lies down; probably dies
- Two sounds are heard
 - The sound of a string snapping
 - Sound of an axe cutting down a cherry tree in the orchard

Themes

- The struggle over memory, which can bring both happiness and misery
- Ranveskaya wants to forget the past that includes her husband's death and her son's drowning also
- The conflict between the Old Russia and the modern one, especially in the attitudes of Trofimov and Lopakhin on the one hand and Ranveskaya and her brother Gayev on the other

TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Symbol of the Cherry Orchard

- It is a symbol of the fragile and doomed beauty of Madame Ranevsky's world
- Everything in the play revolves around it
- Earlier, the produce from the estate which was around 2500 acres could sustain the family
- But now the recipe of cherry jam is lost and it has become the symbol of a happy past
- At the beginning of the play, it is in full bloom; denuded of its blossoms at the end
- The youth see the orchard as a place of suffering of the serfs

Major Short Stories

- 50 short stories
- Humour main feature
- Later works psychologically probing
- “The Bet”
- “The Lady with the Dog”
- “Ward No. 6”
- “The Black Monk”
- “The Death of a Government Clerk”