

1  **Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky**
1821-1881

"To be a human being among human beings, and remain one forever, no matter what misfortunes befall, not to become depressed, and not to falter--this is what life is, herein lies its task." (*The Brothers Karamazov*)

2  **Dostoyevsky**

- Nationality: Russian
- Place of Birth: Moscow, Russia
- Place of Death: St. Petersburg, Russia

3  **Place in History**

- considered one of the greatest writers in world literature
- Best-known for his novels (1866; *Crime and Punishment*) and (1880; *The Brothers Karamazov*)
- attained profound philosophical and psychological insights which anticipated important developments in 20th c thought, including psychoanalysis and existentialism

4  **Influence**

- His powerful literary depictions of the human condition exerted a profound influence on modern writers, such as Franz Kafka, whose works further develop some of the Russian novelist's themes.
- Nietzsche expressed profound respect for his writings

5  **Troubled Life**

- The writer's own troubled life enabled him to portray with deep sympathy characters who are emotionally and spiritually downtrodden and who in many cases epitomize the traditional Christian conflict between the body and the spirit.

6  **Parents**

- Born into a middle-class family
- Father was a doctor but also a tyrant to the family
- Mother was a pious woman who died before D was 16
- Father insisted he study Engineering in St. Petersburg

7  **Freud's Comment**

- While at school, D's father was murdered by his own serfs
- D rarely spoke of his father's murder
- Freud theorized that D's frequent Oedipal themes recurrent in his work were clues that the novelist's epilepsy was a manifestation of guilt over his repressed wish for his father's death.

8  **Life Altering Event**

- Spared the death sentence after being charged with subversion, he was sentenced to hard labor in Siberia
- This event haunted D for the rest of his life

9  **Spiritual and Philosophical Transformation**

- While in prison he underwent a profound spiritual and philosophical transformation.
- His intense study of the *New Testament*, the only book the prisoners were allowed to read, contributed to his rejection of his earlier liberal political views
- Also led him to the conviction that redemption is possible only through suffering and faith, a belief which informed his later work.

10  ***The Brothers Karamazov***

- a family tragedy of epic proportions, which is viewed as one of the great novels of world literature
- The novel recounts the murder of a father by one of his four sons. Initially, his son

Dmitri is arrested for the crime, but as the story unfolds it is revealed that the illegitimate son Smerdyakov has killed the old man at what he believes to be the instigation of his half-brother Ivan.

11 ***The Grand Inquisitor***

- Ivan's philosophical essay, *The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*, is a work now famous in its own right.
- Presented as a debate in which the Inquisitor condemns Christ for promoting the belief that humankind has the freedom of choice between good and evil

12 ***The Grand Inquisitor***

- The piece explores
 - The conflict between intellect and faith
 - The conflict between the forces of evil and the redemptive power of Christianity

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