

Reading group  
14/09/2010 - 19/10/2010

## Existential unease and the search for meaning in the late 19th century

From the beginning of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th, as a consequence of industrialisation among other factors, humanity experienced a growing rootlessness, especially in the West, as identity was shaken and a profound transformation was seen in customs and ways of life, leading to a feeling of unease among millions of people.

**Coordination:** Xabier Mendiguren Bereziartu

**Dates:** 14 September, 28 September, 5 October and 19 October

**Time:** 19:00

**Venue:** Arteleku documentation centre

**Registration deadline:** 7 September. To register, send your name, surname and telephone number to [arteleku@gipuzkoa.net](mailto:arteleku@gipuzkoa.net)

"Five titles are suggested for you to read.

It is up to each participant whether they read them in Euskera or in Spanish (for those that are also available in Euskera). Commentary will be made in Euskera, without ruling out the use of Spanish, depending on the proposals or needs of the readers.

I have suggested these works based on my own personal preferences, but above all because they are excellent, first-class works of literature, which have greatly influenced and have been a source of inspiration for many other writers in subsequent years.

I will set out to place each writer in their context, so as to better locate and understand their works. As we can see, these are works produced in Russia, America and Europe.

From the beginning of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th, as a consequence of industrialisation among other factors, humanity experienced a growing rootlessness, especially in the West, as identity was shaken and a profound transformation was seen in customs and ways of life, leading to a feeling of unease among millions of people. As the meaning that Religion had so far given to life weakened its hold, the individual began to ask more and more questions about the meaning of life, while at the same time becoming increasingly imbued in consumerism. All this manifested itself, one way or another, in the masterpieces by these four authors that we will be reading.

As well as the biographies and bibliographies of these authors, you will also find texts on the Internet that can be downloaded and printed off. Therefore, as well as expressing what each of us feels and thinks, we will set out to comment on what others have said about these authors and what they have found in their works."

*Xabier Mendiguren Bereziartu*

**Reading list:**

**Nikolai Gogol:** *The Overcoat (1842) / The Nose (1834-35)*

**Herman Melville:** *Bartleby, the Scrivener (1853)*

**Lev Tolstoy:** *The Death of Ivan Ilyich (1886)*

**Franz Kafka:** *Metamorphosis (1915)*