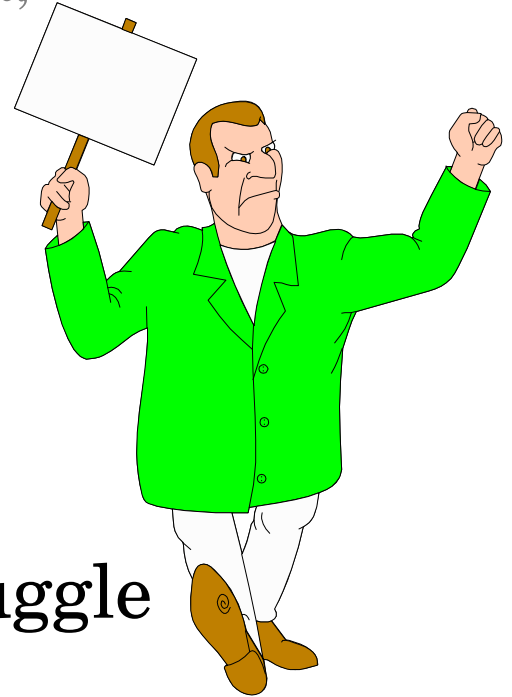


Fyodor Dostoevsky,
Gustave Flaubert,
and
Henrik Ibsen



Presents

A Timeless Struggle

A masterpiece by three influential writers about the conflict between society and the individual.

Producer: Austin Che

“Two toes up!”
-Siskel & Ebert

“This movie frighteningly showed the power and danger of ideas.”
-Los Angeles Times

“There was much disillusionment and suffering.”
-Newsweek

“Recommended for those who can handle reality.”
-USA Today

Main Characters

Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov

Emma Bovary

Dr. Stockmann



Three seemingly different characters, a student, a wife, and a doctor, came together through their common problems. Rebelling against their given roles in society, Raskolnikov, Emma, and Dr. Stockmann fought to find what they believed in. Although the doctor was “the one who [had] the real good of the town at heart” (p. 96), he was seen by the Mayor and the rest of the town as having “a turbulent, unruly, rebellious spirit” (p. 94). Both the doctor and Raskolnikov did not believe “that the common man, the ignorant, undeveloped member of society, has the same right to approve and to condemn, to counsel, and to govern, as the intellectually distinguished few” (p. 114). They believed that the rule of the masses should be changed for the rule of “the few, the individuals among us with new, vigorous ideas. These men stand at the outposts, so far in front that the solid majority has not begun to reach them — and there they fight for truths that are too new and daring to be accepted by the majority” (p. 114). The views and philosophies of Raskolnikov and the doctor were developed from their experiences. Emma, on the other hand, gathered her ideas of life from books and her fantasies. All three were unsatisfied with their lives and sought to change it. However, their subsequent encounters with reality caused disillusionment for all three. “My mind’s eyes were opened wide, and the first thing I saw was the colossal stupidity of the authorities” (p. 112), commented the doctor. Although they all eventually saw reality, they handled it differently. Raskolnikov worked on rejoining society, Emma, unable to handle reality, killed herself, and Dr. Stockmann sought to change reality to what he believed it should be. “I love my native town so much that I would rather ruin it than see it prosper on a lie” (p. 117), he said. His integrity and honesty were the most important thing to him. “What I do, I do in the name of truth and for conscience’ sake” (p. 99). His good intentions were no different from Raskolnikov’s or Emma’s intentions. “It would be dishonesty — a fraud, a lie, an absolute crime against the public, against society as a whole!” (p. 93), believed Dr. Stockmann. Raskolnikov, also, believed he was helping society by murdering the pawnbroker.

Supporting Characters

Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov

Sonia

Razumihin

Aslaksen

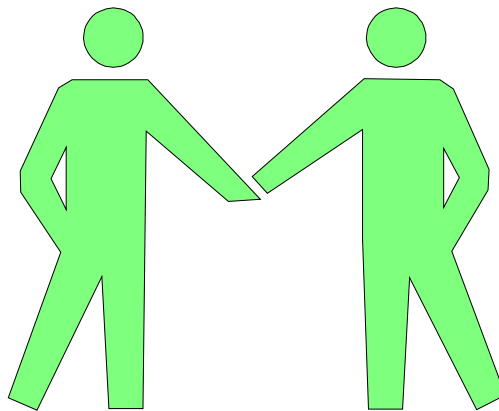
Mayor

Society

Dr. Stockmann

Mrs. Stockmann

Captain Horster



No one can survive by themselves. Many characters were supported both morally and physically. Names in blue represent moral supporters, while those in red provided physical support. Moral support included offering kind and reassuring words and working with internal problems. For example, Mrs. Stockmann stood with her husband when no one else would, and encouraged him. “Don’t give in, Thomas” (p. 108), she said. Physical support came in the form of helping with external problems, such as sickness and power. Society, and the majority, supported several characters. “What a delight it is to feel in such harmony with one’s fellow townsmen” (p. 92). Although the majority has the might, it can only give physical support. “The majority has might —unhappily— but right it does not have. It is I, and the few, the individuals, who are in the right. The minority is always right” (p. 113). “But what good is the right, if you don’t have the might?” (p. 96), asked Mrs. Stockmann. Can the beliefs of an individual stand up to the strength of a society? “Nothing to antagonize people in power. I’ve had enough of that in my time; no good ever comes of it” (p. 90), remarked Aslaksen. Raskolnikov and Emma supported the validity of Aslaksen’s claim, being unsuccessful in changing society. Similarly, Doctor Stockmann will probably not succeed, even though the doctor believes he is “one of the strongest men in the whole world” (p. 130). Both Raskolnikov and Emma believed themselves to be extraordinary, but were able to accomplish little.

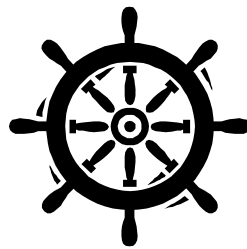
Dangerous Society

Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov

Dr. Stockmann

Sonia

Svidrigailov



“Society is like a ship: every man must put his hand to the helm” (p. 81). Does the individual control society or does society control the individual? Do the hands control the ship, or do the hands move in the direction the ship moves? What happens when the ship goes off course? The Mayor believed that, “A fine spirit of tolerance prevails in our town” (p. 77), but it seems that this tolerance is easily broken. For several different reasons, these characters had conflicts with society, causing banishment and isolation from society. Believing that “the most dangerous foe to truth and freedom in our midst is the solid majority” (p. 113), the doctor fought to resist society’s force in pulling everyone to it. Sonia and Svidrigailov could have shared the doctor’s title of “an enemy of the people” due to the prejudices of society against prostitutes and bad reputations. Although there are a few individuals, such as the doctor, many are like Emma, with her life derived from books, who gave herself to this force, joining the majority of society. The Mayor asserted that, “The individual must subordinate himself to society, or more precisely, to the authorities whose business it is to watch over the welfare of society” (p. 80). An important question exists as to the goodness of the majority and of society. Hovstad imagined a “swamp in which our whole community life is rotting” (p. 88). Dr. Stockmann asks, “Don’t they turn all ideas upside down? Don’t they make a hodge-podge of right and wrong? Don’t they call lies everything that I know to be the truth?” (p. 120). Escaping from the power of society proved to be impossible for Raskolnikov, but the doctor believed he could overcome the frighteningly powerful society. And the doctor may be on the road to success.

Morality

Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov

Dr. Stockmann



Raskolnikov and Dr. Stockmann explored morality to understand what it is. Dr. Stockmann believed, “Liberality of thought is almost exactly the same thing as morality” (p. 116). Similarly, Raskolnikov found moral truths from his own thoughts, not from society. With truth derived from personal beliefs, and “the truth before all other considerations” (p. 89), Raskolnikov and Dr. Stockmann found their ideas to be the highest law guiding their lives. These new ideas form the basis of society’s progress. “Isn’t it a citizen’s duty, when he has conceived a new idea to communicate it to the public!” (p. 94), exclaims the doctor. However, society is much less willing to accept someone else’s morality. According to the Mayor, “The public has no need for new ideas. The public gets on best with the good old recognized ideas it has already” (p. 94). Although it may be easier to follow the common road, “policies of expediency turn justice and morality upside down, until life here becomes not worth living” (p. 129). Both Raskolnikov and Dr. Stockmann saw it as their duty to lead the rest of society onto a new road. “After all, I have only done my duty” (p. 85), believed Dr. Stockmann. The doctor thought that the free man had the right to do everything but betray himself. “A free man has no right to wallow in filth; he has no right to act so that he ought to spit in his own face!” (p. 123). Raskolnikov also thought that he had the right to do anything, even commit murder. But he eventually decided that he was ordinary, and had no right to go against society. While Dr. Stockmann is at a stage six on Kohlberg’s morality scale, Raskolnikov may have surpassed stage six by admitting that his principles were wrong.

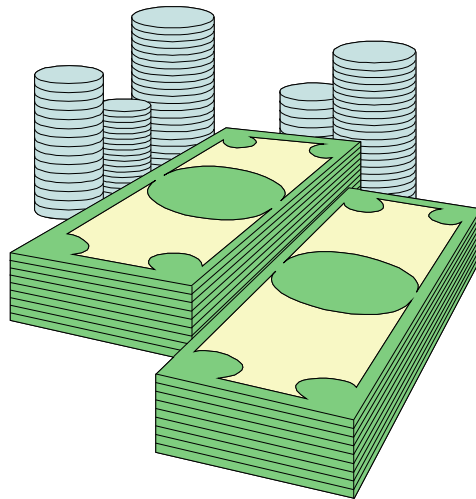
Prejudice and Self-interest

Emma Bovary

Mayor

Aslaksen

Hovstad



“This just shows how we men can go about forming judgments like the blindest moles” (p. 83). Prejudice was shown as an unhealthy trait in both Emma and the Mayor. Dr. Stockmann said, “My brother Peter — empty of ideas, full of prejudice” (p. 113). The Mayor with his prejudiced views lacked new ideas and did not accept the ideas of others. In contrast, Emma accepted the view of others on love and life. She read books, and then tried to follow those ideas. Both Emma and the Mayor did not try to see the world as it was. Rather they attempted to stick to their prejudices. They both tried to make the world conform to their prejudices. Others were influenced by their selfish interests. “When a man has vested interest to protect, he can’t think of everything” (p. 100). Aslaksen and Hovstad was easily influenced when a matter deals with the personal issue of taxes. “I am in favor of self-government by the people, as long as it doesn’t cost the taxpayers too much” (p. 111), asserted Aslaksen. Dr. Stockmann wondered, “Does a man with a wife and children have no right to proclaim the truth? Has he no right to be an active and useful citizen?” (p. 105). Selfishness and close-mindedness severely hamper the individual.

Love and Infatuation

Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov

Sonia

Razumihin

Luzhin

Svidrigailov

Dounia

Charles

Emma

Emma

Leon

Rudolphe

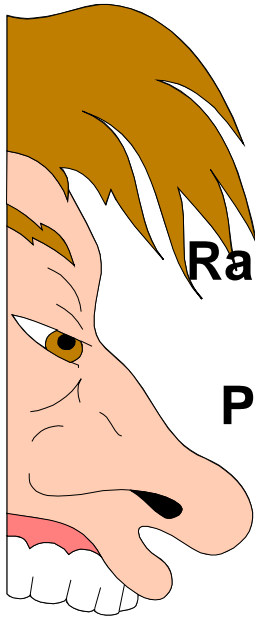
Hovstad

Petra



Love was a widespread theme, motivating characters in their pursuit of happiness. Nothing could stop the determined characters in love, which usually lead to disaster. Many times, the willingness of the lover to pursue danger was an important factor in causing trouble. Emma, raised huge debts while she was with Leon, as she would not spare anything on her love. Hovstad, revealing his feelings for Petra, lost his credibility and trustworthiness. However, for Raskolnikov, love gave him the necessary strength to proceed with his internal healing.

Similar Characters



Raskolnikov and Porfiry

Intellectually similar

Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov

Emotionally similar

Porfiry and Dr. Stockmann

Desire for the truth

Mayor and Homais

Desire for power

Homais and Luzhin

Ambition

Luzhin and Lheureux

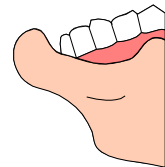
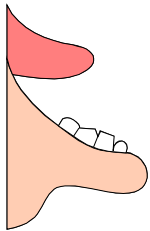
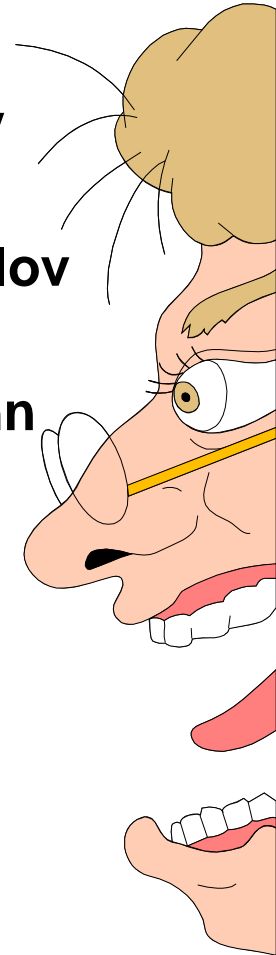
Capitalistic

Aslaksen and Charles

Mediocre / Does not take risks

Svidrigailov and Emma

Suicidal



The same themes and types of people exist throughout the works of these three writers. These universal messages come together as the struggle for survival. Each individual hopes to fulfill his or her dreams. Some will find that their dreams are unrealistic like Emma's. Some will find resistance to their dreams such as the opposition that Dr. Stockmann faced. Some will learn and grow through their dream, as Raskolnikov did. The characters are our society, and to understand them, we must first understand ourselves, for we will be the ones in the next battle.