

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a qualitative study of Fyodor Dostoevsky's masterpiece *Crime and Punishment*. It examines the importance of laughter in any literary work generally and in the novel specifically. The role of laughter is manifold as it engenders comedy, creates satire, and moils as a change agent. The theorists like Mikahilovitch Bakhtin, Sigmund Freud, and Henri Bergson outline laughter and supply meaning to meaningless. This study spotlights the meanings and importance of laughter and proves it to be a freeing agent, a launcher of protest, and a test of truth. Laughter is hope in hopelessness, a weapon of powerless human, and a wordless protest. The novel under discussion speaks the language of laughter where the characters having positive smiles seem disposed to change and differ widely from those who possess negative smiles therefore, are not tending to change, hence, either they die or do not grow as characters. The movement of the study follows the pattern of discussion in this way that section one extends the meanings and importance of laughter in Chapter I, putting special attention on it as a change agent and exploring the psychology of laughter in Chapter II where the focus is on the generation, causes and effects of laughter. Section II examines the novel *Crime and Punishment*. In Chapter I the characters are seen in the light of their laughter as it is the index of one's personality; Chapter II takes on capitalism as a victim of laughter in the novel; and the institute of law as is reproached and ridiculed in the novel is discussed in Chapter III.

Analytical Research method has been used which analyzes the definitions of different theorists and examines the role of different characters in the novel regarding laughter and smile. The characters are analyzed through their laughs, smiles, and their growth accordingly.