

## A Comparative Study of Crime and Guilt in *Thérèse Raquin* and *Crime and Punishment*

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In the late nineteenth century, literature emerged as an aesthetic medium that conveyed the social, political, economic and philosophical concerns of the society. This study, based on world literature aims to present a comparative analysis on crime and guilt of two works in French and Russian literature: Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. This research seeks to explore the dominant themes of these two selected works in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A qualitative analysis of data is done by using a comparative methodology in order to provide an in depth study of the works. The research methodology will include preliminary and exploratory reading of the texts, and referential and systematic study of particular books, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias and website articles subjected to the research. The key finding of this study of literary significance presents the similarities of the dominant themes of the novels. The research critically analyses the principle of cause and effect and examines the degree to which a guilty conscience can cause danger. Zola and Dostoyevsky explore how guilt leads its victims towards their doom. In conclusion, it is evident that conscience is a provisionally state of dormant ignorance that is ensnared to life. The significance of this research lies in bringing out the moral values of two societies using methodologies of comparative literature and presents that in any society, the result of crime would be the same.

Key words: comparative literature, crime, culpability, damnation, victims

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