

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Clash Between Christian and Capitalistic Values in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*

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By

Hari Prasad Joshi

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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**Tribhuvan University**

**Central Department of English**

**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "Clash Between Christian and Capitalistic Values in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Hari Prasad Joshi has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date:

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## Abstract

In his novel *The Idiot*, Fyodor Dostoevsky attempts to convey the message that only the saving grace of God expressed in the form of the supreme sacrifice by His Son Christ can redeem the modern humanity incorrigibly corrupted by the ailments of selfishness and materialism. At the worldly level, it is the people like Prince Myshkin and the beautiful Nastasya Filipovna who can make life bearable because they are not so money-crazed and ego-centric as their fellow beings are. In fact, the novel presents Prince Myshkin as a Christ figure, because he suffers, listens and acts like Christ by trying to lighten the burdens of others. But the tragedy lies in the fact that he can neither save others nor make them satisfactorily understand his human feelings for them.

The novel is the story of capitalist problems of the Russian society faced in the nineteenth century. Dostoevsky thought the solutions lied in the socialist or communist ideology at first. But later after his experience in Europe and elsewhere, he came to realize that both capitalism and communism were based on entirely material consideration. There was no enough space in those worldviews to enable a person to face the problems of life at a nobler and higher plane with the spiritual and moral might. This led top the novelist to condemn both political ideologies and espouse the simple but profound Christian faith that God takes care of everything if only we start believing in him and let him work in our life. This is the creed of the believers, and that is what the central character of the novel, Prince Myshkin who never harms others but tolerates whatever is done upon him. This characteristic of him is reminiscent of Jesus Christ who despite his sinless life and innocence suffered at the cross so that all the sins of the world would be forgiven by the God the Father.

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