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# Islam and Controversy: The Politics of Free Speech After Rushdie

*Anshuman A. Mondal*

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**Islam and Controversy: The Politics of Free Speech After Rushdie** Anshuman A. Mondal
Was Salman Rushdie right to have written *The Satanic Verses*? Were the protestors right to have protested? What about the Danish cartoons? Is giving offence simply about the right to freedom of expression, and what is really happening when people take offence?

Using case studies of a number of Muslim-related freedom of speech controversies surrounding (in)famous, inflammatory texts such as *The Satanic Verses*, *The Jewel of Medina*, the Danish cartoons of Muhammed and the film *Submission* by Theo van Gogh, this book examines the moral questions raised by such controversies, questions that are often set aside at the time, such as whether the authors and artists involved were right to have done what they did and whether those who protested against them were right to have responded in such a way. In so doing, it argues that the giving and taking of offence are political performances that struggle to define and re-define freedom, and suggests that any attempt to establish a language of inter-cultural communication appropriate to multicultural societies is an ethical as opposed to merely political or legal task, involving dialogue and negotiation over fundamental values and principles.

Overall, this important book constitutes a sustained critique of liberal arguments for freedom of speech, in particular of the liberal discourse that took shape in response to the Rushdie controversy and has, in the twenty-five years since, become almost an orthodoxy for many intellectuals, artists, journalists and politicians living and working in Britain (and elsewhere in the West) today.

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