

Tribhuvan University

Hate Speech or Free Speech:

Study of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja*

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science,

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This thesis submitted to the English Department of Tribhuvan University, by Mr Gaurav Bhattarai entitled "Hate Speech or Free Speech: Study of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja*" has been accepted by the undersigned members of the thesis committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External examiner

Head of the Faculty

Dedicated to

All those who keep their eyes and minds open
and see things as they are, not as they should be or they ought to be

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Abstract

How the hate speech should be separated from the free speech and why the blasphemous laws should be banned to shield free thought and freedom of expression from any danger or damage? The dissertation examines the argument that whether blasphemous art should be publicly displayed, and if yes, in what manner artist are free and to what extent they should be responsible while exercising their artistic freedom. The dissertation argues against those who say blasphemy is an offence, an attack on religion and sacred, to aver that blasphemy shouldn't be understood merely on the moral and ethical lines, but through the contextual and philosophical understandings of the issue. Particularly, the dissertation criticizes the blasphemy laws, including *fatwas* and death threats issued against two writers--Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin. Finally, the thesis discusses how the notion of blasphemy itself is the product of misunderstanding and misreading the free speech as the hate speech. The thesis concludes that the line between aesthetics and ethics, between art and religion, should be drawn only by the rationalistic judgment of the contextual issues and for that artist's intention should be realized at first, before colligating it with the religious matters, ethical issues and falsely apprehending freedom of thought as a sacrilege and profanation.