

Dayal was the most complex personality and it is not easy to put him into any category, yet he tries to club him into the category of 'Hindu nationalist'. But at the same time the author argues that after 1909 'Har Dayal's view began to change' (p.167). But the argument provided by the author regarding pre-1909 views of Har Dayal which puts him into the category of Hindu nationalist, does not seem to be convincing. Perhaps this is the reason why he continues to discuss Har Dayal in his next chapter titled 'Beyond the Community, Towards a Secular Nationalism' wherein the Ghadar movement under Har Dayal 'was not just an anti-colonial, all-community movement, but showed distinct signs of a rational-secular discourse of the nation that tried to move beyond the religious community as a category and attempted critiques of religion itself' (p.167). In this chapter the author has taken up the Ghadar movement for discussion.

Another exponent of secular nationalism that the author dwells at length is the life, ideas and activities of Bhagat Singh. Bhagat Singh not only moved away from communitarian aspect embedded within the earlier visions of nationalism, but also provided a rational-secular critique of religion as an institution. Bhagat Singh and his associates adhered to secularism, scientific temper and reorganization of society on a socialist worldview.

In the last chapter titled 'Glimmers of a 'Dalit' Vision of Nationalism' the author deliberates upon the process of formation of political consciousness among the Dalits. Jotiba Phule's writings *Gulamgiri* (Slavery) by inverting the colonial discourse of Aryan invasion did play a significant role in fostering a critical consciousness among the Dalits of India. Phule's another work *Tritaya Netra* (third eye) not of course mentioned by the scholar, did create a sense of feeling among the Dalits that they can liberate themselves from their low status by means of education. Besides, Phule the anti-brahmanical movement in South India also create a political consciousness among the Dalits of Punjab. Another factor that provided a sense of power to the Dalits was what Sudipta Kaviraj terms as 'enumerative identity' derived from decennial census. The politics of mass mobilization and representative institutions further added a sense of power among the Dalits. In the context of Punjab the vision of Dalit nationalism was articulated through Ad Dharm movement in the 1920's. The leaders of this movement were disappointed with 'composite' as well as with the 'religious' nationalists and were in quest of autonomous and alternative communitarian identity. The early leaders of the Ad Dharm movement were Mangoo Ram, Swami Shudranand, Vasant Raj and Thakur Chand and all of them belonged to Chamar community of Punjab. They were somewhat more 'privileged' within their caste because of financial security derived from leather business

and education received from schools run by Arya Samaj. The movement celebrated Ravi Das as Bhakti saint as their guru since he belonged to Chamar caste. Some of the leaders of Ad Dharm in Punjab did not approve of Mangoo Ram's extreme line and they recognized the liberal aspects of Arya Samaj. Therefore, 'a part of movement' says the author of this book 'broke up to rejoin the Arya Samaj on the plea that the Aryas were accommodative Hindus and, later, it petered out to merge with Ambedkar's Scheduled Caste Federation, with many Ad Dharmis even joining the Congress'.

Overall the book enlarges the frontiers of our knowledge of the complexities of an ancient people trying to emerge in the garb of a new community - modern Punjab. It is worth reading.

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Anushka Singh, *Sedition in Liberal Democracies*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 406, Rs. 995/-, ISBN: 9780199481699.

Scholars have made persistent efforts to understand the meaning and concept of freedom of speech in the domains of liberal democracy and the context of law of sedition. This history of western liberal democracy predominantly traces its genealogy in the edifice of enlightenment and debates around western modernity. In this context, the recent book written by Anushka Singh, provides us an interesting window through her empirically grounded research and theoretically nuanced terrain to understand the discursive meaning of freedom of expression and how free expression of colonial subjects as well as right bearing citizens became a site of democratic resistance and also pathways of laws of sedition in western as well as non-western societies. Singh's book is an interesting and innovative addition to the existing body of knowledge in the domains of social sciences and specifically in the domains of juridical and political understanding of pedantic laws including sedition and extra-ordinary laws in a comparative framework. Liberalism is a political theory of modernity and democracy and it offers an interesting terrain to map the nuances of sedition in the liberal democracies. In this particular book Singh has established the normative universality of freedom of expression and how it has unfolded over the centuries and became a site of competing claims as also site of contestations by liberal democratic citizenry on the one hand and neo-liberal authoritarian state on the

other. In order to substantiate these claims the author has provided us multi-layered accounts on the functioning of normative liberal democracies from praxiological approach and has critiqued the positivist understanding of laws of sedition through her field-based hermeneutical and juridico-political research. In her methodological mapping of conundrum between free speech and seditious laws, she has preferred speech act theory over normative analytical methodological mapping (p. 21). She reiterates that 'the appropriate context [of modern Indian state] is informed by a form of government which she refers as a liberal democracy, which claims to be the guarantee of the liberal right to freedom of a speech and expression to all its citizens' (p.20).

Interestingly, Singh further argues that as an ideal as well as evaluative framework, democracy realizes itself politically through a democratic state. This process of realization is, however, fraught, since it involves reconciling conflicting tendencies which inhere in the logic of democracy and the 'state'. A liberal democratic state, it may be said, is a fraught combination of competing tendencies and tradition since it attempts to bring together liberalism and democracy in one hand and imperatives of democracy and the state on the other. It is in the contestation emerging from the convergence of these conflict tendencies, that the category of 'extreme speech' emerges, of which sedition is a kind. Sedition is a form of political speech, and expression against the authority of a government and the state which is forbidden for exceeding the limit of legitimate criticism and therefore not protected by right to freedom of speech and expression. By raising the issue of condition under which speech may be freely exercised or legitimately curbed, sedition, thus, reveals a dilemma within liberal democracy (p. 366). And as a matter of consequence, this dilemma creates a creative tension between precedence of seditious laws and the well beings of rights bearing citizens whose rights are being implicated in the name of hyper securitized state and principles of panopticism.

As far as conceptual and theoretical landscape of the book is concerned, the author has critically engaged with the concept of freedom of expression and how extreme expressions of individuals, groups and communities have created the ontological conditions of emergent authoritarian state in the context of seditious laws and how state has legitimized and derived normative justifications from diverse liberal intellectual traditions within the realms of liberal political philosophies/theories of the West, including in the canonical writings of Jefferson, Rousseau, and J.S. Mill. In this section of the book, Anushka has made an attempt to map the family resemblances between freedom of expression and how freedom of expression can be restricted and controlled if it takes away the rights

of other individuals and groups who constitute the society and particular state—in order to prove the contours of liberal democracy and its promise to provide safeguards to individual's liberty and freedom. The normative political ideals of liberal democracy and the political agency of state thus becomes a site of continuous control that slips into the discourses of political governmentality and as a consequence it (state) devises different forms of strategies through seditious laws to control life of individuals and communities. There have been many kinds of control by state. Liberal democracy is inherently capitalist in nature. Therefore, it creates certain kinds of exclusions where individuals are not treated equally and the principles of political equality are not available to all the citizens in an equal manner. Over here she is taking cognizance of debates on democracy from the perspective of political liberalism and just society and she cites and critically engages with contemporary philosophers and their writings to make a mention of a few, such as Chantal Mouffe and John Rawls. John Rawls talks about political equality based on principles of justice and liberty and Chantal Mouffe talks about democratic paradox where there is always control on the freedom of others and the state plays a very important role in controlling the freedom of others. The author problematises the discourse of agnostic democracy which is inherently a site of dissent and resistance against any essentialist consensus concerning normative democracy.

In order to provide the theoretical and conceptual insights concerning sedition in liberal democracies, the introductory chapter captures the nuanced understanding of sedition as a law and its important history in the discourses of western liberal democracy as well as colonial and post-colonial Indian democracy. In this chapter, the author offers an interesting and captivating accounts about seditious laws-how these laws have come into being and are used extensively against the rights of individuals/groups and communities across the political ideology- to control freedom of expression and liberty of individuals. According to the author, there are two types of seditious laws. In the first category, there is physical violence involved and the second category is where speech or words or verbal expressions can create harm or threat to the existing state. Therefore, sedition is used by state to control freedom of expression. While proving her argument, she has used the philosophy of language of J.L. Austin and John Searle's works on speech theory and has explained why speech theory needs to be preferred because it allows scope for performative theory action when laws of seditions are used against dissenting/resisting individuals and communities. In another part of her chapter, she invokes Agamben and Michael Foucault where she demonstrates how in certain conditions ordinary becomes extraordinary and

extraordinary becomes ordinary and therefore, state creates canons of governmentality and discourses of political rationality through different forms of extraordinary laws to combat militancy and 'terrorism'.

Singh says that studies on contemporary liberal democracy have shown that violence is integral to the workings of liberal democratic states despite its official denial. However, she has also interrogated the theoretical claims on which liberal democracy has been found and how governmental rationality allows the curtailment of individual liberty for the sake of security of state. Thus, if the concept of state is essentially anachronistic to the principles on which liberal democracies operate, then it is an imperative of the state to supersede other imperatives of liberal democracy to uphold the exceptions through seditious laws within the discourse of liberal democratic rights.

Apart from theoretically condensed debates on legitimacy and illegitimacy of freedom of expression in the domains of liberal democracies, Anushka finds interesting family resemblances between sedition as a law and anti-terror laws as an extension of neo-liberal global state in the name of hyper security. The book is divided into six important chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. The second theme of the book is about comparative framework between Western liberal democracies and practice of sedition in India. She takes up three western countries including England, USA and Australia as a site of advance liberal democracies and advancement in the terms of developmental discourse. She makes interesting comparison about comparative constitutional normative universalism; how it is practiced in the context of free speech, as universal values and how in these specific countries sedition has been practiced in the context of individual liberty on the one hand and threat to the state on the other. According to her, the concept of sedition owes its genesis to English law and most other liberal democracies have been influenced by common law of sedition in England though ironically England is also one of the earliest liberal democracies to have abolished the offence of sedition. The USA which is seen as the strongest liberal democracy in the contemporary world has developed a robust free speech jurisprudence. Despite these strongest free speech principles, USA has retained the laws of sedition. Australian liberal democracy has made one of the earliest and definitive attempts to modify the language of sedition to bring it within the counter terror legislation.

Singh also suggests that there are two particular paradigms to study the existence of sedition as an offence. The first one is conventional paradigm of violence as a physical act and second is a non-conventional paradigm of violence through words. Within the first paradigm, sedition is compared with elite political offence (a) treason

(b) incitement of dissatisfaction/violence/over throw (c) political conspiracies. Within the second paradigm, sedition is compared with four speech crimes; (a) personal libel (b) hate speech (c) blasphemy (d) pornography. In this chapter, the author maintains how ex-colonies like India have similar laws as in England. Seditious laws were used to control the rights of native colonial subjects of India in different forms, particularly when there was a nationalistic struggle against the British Empire. In the post-colonial scenario, India as a free and independent country did not choose to repeal seditious laws from colonial India. Rather, seditious laws have been variedly used on Indian citizens. Therefore, the theory of sedition is also informed by judicial pronouncements that contribute to an idea of sedition as a speech act and identifies what emerges as a crime of sedition within the legal juridical regime of India. Singh has also used the method of deconstruction and normative speech theory to unpack different meanings of seditions in the everyday life of individuals and communities who have been subjected to these laws. In light of the author's critical analysis, we can say that there is a return to Hobbesian Leviathan in disguised forms of sedition and extra-ordinary anti-terror laws in contemporary India.

Chapter five does an empirical mapping of seditious laws in the everyday life of individual, groups and communities from three states of India – Haryana, Maharashtra and Punjab. Regarding the choice of these three states the author states that 'the regions are not chosen as a field sites, in fact they emerged as a feel area following the case laws method in which the intertwined dynamics of sedition with socio-political variables lent it a different character' (p. 27). These regions have numerous cases where seditious laws have been imposed on the individuals, communities and classes whenever they resisted state authorities. Next section of the book focuses on how anti-terror laws have been imposed on the Indian citizens including students, peasants and working classes on different pretext. In a shift from colonial to post-colonial India, from sedition that was construed to be resistance by the nationalists and therefore, an honour and a political act, sedition now is considered to be an offence against the nation. She cites diverse cases from different parts of India to substantiate her argument concerning this alarming shift. Yet again, Singh uses speech theory to philosophically articulate this shift from '*Rashtradroh*' to '*Deshadroh*'. In English this is known as a shift from sedition as a political resistance to crime against the nation.

The second last chapter of the book deals with Indian democracy and the moment of contradiction. In this section the author has demonstrated with her dense field-based and archival research, how Indian democracy is being used as a site of state control on the life of people- peasants, students, journalist, activists and minorities. Though the

National Crime Record Bureau shows that in 2014, for the first time, 58 per cent arrests were in relation to sedition and anti-terror laws, while in 2015 a total of 30 cases of sedition were filed all over India and a total of 73 persons were arrested in relation to these cases. Despite this decline in number of cases registered, the number of people arrested for sedition has risen. This data highlights the gap between executive and judicial discourse of sedition in India. While conviction for sedition at the level of higher judiciary is becoming a rarity and use of sedition laws in the domain of executive is veracious. Anushka has shown how sedition and anti-terror laws are being used against a diverse spectrum of Indian masses – wherever for raising slogans or resisting the authoritarian nature of the state (state and/or central regimes)– and have been imposed on people across political ideologies. Therefore, the author notices a juridical shift in the domain of anti-terror laws and Indian democracy that is facing continuous moments of contradictions to deliver justice and the fundamental rights of people in this country.

The conclusive part of the book has been beautifully titled ‘the life of law and contradictions of liberal democracies’ where Anushka makes an insightful comment on the life of law that exist both within and beyond the statues, therefore subject to interpretations. This assertion has been made in the background of journey of laws of sedition. The first concern itself with analysing the language of law of sedition, the second deals with studying judicial dispositions on sedition and the third pertains to interrogating the everyday life of law. The book makes a claim about Indian democracy; how it has not only been controlled but contradicted, about its practice from aspiratory perspectives of marginal people of India.

This book not only offers an interesting reading for the academic fraternity and which is engaged in social sciences and politico-juridical domains, but also for activists and ordinary citizens interested to know the practice of seditious law and extraordinary laws in contemporary India and beyond.

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E.V. Ramakrishnan, *Indigenous Imaginaries: Literature, Region, Modernity*, New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2017, pp. xvii + 274, Rs. 775/-, ISBN: 9789386689450.

E.V. Ramarkishnan’s book should be seen in the light of the statement he has made in the third chapter of the book. According to him, translating India to European terms has led to a crisis of representing ourselves which

speaks volumes about the nature and scope of the book. As Indian academics is heavily working under the influence of Western philosophy and paradigm(s) in post-colonial times, the present book by E.V. Ramakrishnan is the result of an author’s search for Indian epistemology. To use A.K. Ramanujan’s phrase, also used by the author in this book, the author is also searching the Indian way of thinking.

The book is a compilation of scholarly essays written and presented by the author in various national/international seminars in India and abroad in which the author argues for redefining the study of literature from the perspective of comparative studies. Divided into three sections, Ramakrishnan explores contestations between Western and Indian epistemologies. He is of the opinion that going back to literature written in regional languages and translation can be potent tools in this search. Besides, the author discusses Bhakti literature, relevance of literature in the age of globalization and identity politics in contemporary India. The author has studied regional literature with special focus on Rabindranath Tagore, Valmiki, Muhammad Basheer, Mahasweta Devi, Amitav Ghosh, Bhalchandra Nemade, Aga Shahid Ali to name a few, which also indicates the vast range of writers from different regions of India.

The opening chapter traces the history of English discipline in India, introduction of the printing press, its role in spreading Malayalam literature and construction of modernity in India. Prose written in Malayalam did not borrow motifs from the mythology and drifted away from the model of Sanskrit. Printing of literature in Malayalam facilitated the process of Malayalam identity formation. Thus, the author establishes a historical connect between press, modernity and Malayalam identity. Studying regional literature, for the author, is part of the politics to resist hegemonic structures of European countries which have legitimized homogenization of the world. Citing Chinua Achebe, the author makes a very valid point that the adjective ‘universal’ for European mind does not go beyond the boundaries of Europe. Study of regional literature demystifies the Western canon, it also resists their cultural hegemonic position.

Ramakrishnan finds translation studies to be symbiotically related to the study of regional literature in India. The author opines that modern Indian languages came into being in the beginning of the second millennium, which helped in resisting the hegemony of Sanskrit lasting for more than a thousand years in literary and knowledge domains. Since the advent of European colonial forces in India, regional languages have negotiated with the external influence by assimilation and resistance. According to the author, translation, especially translation of epics, has played a very important role in establishing regional languages in different parts of India and also in establishing a dialogic relation between *mārgi* and *desi*. By deviating