



Freedom of Expression: Counting the Costs

Glen Newey

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Freedom of expression has long been cherished as a liberal ideal. But in the political climate of the new millennium free expression finds itself under assault. Muslims greeted the publication by a Danish newspaper of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad with outrage. The Pope was forced to issue an apology after Muslims denounced his remarks about a Byzantine emperor as anti-Islamic. Meanwhile in the UK, the play *Behzti* was cancelled after protests by Sikhs and Christian activists attempted to force the BBC not to screen *Jerry Springer: the Opera*. The political establishment, as well as religious activists, has also tried to gag free speech. Moves to ban inciting religious hatred and glorifying acts of terrorism, have stirred up political ferment. In several jurisdictions Holocaust denial is already outlawed. The advent of the internet, with its lack of regulation, has fuelled long-standing feminist concerns about pornography. Child pornography has become rampant on the web. This collection explores the new challenges to free expression posed by cultural and political conflict and by technological change. It asks whether classical and modern liberalism still carry conviction against challenges to liberal orthodoxy. The contributors ask how to weigh the claims of free expression against other fundamental rights such as group membership, personal privacy, and the protection of the public sphere both as a discursive realm, and as a cultural space. Together they tackle the key questions facing free expression today: What does free expression mean in an age of global communications? How, if at all, can it be traded against other goods? Can free speech survive, given the growing awareness of its costs?

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