



# Free Speech and Human Dignity

*Steven J. Heyman*

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Debates over hate speech, pornography, and other sorts of controversial speech raise issues that go to the core of the First Amendment. Supporters of regulation argue that these forms of expression cause serious injury to individuals and groups, assaulting their dignity as human beings and citizens. Civil libertarians respond that our commitment to free speech is measured by our willingness to protect it, even when it causes harm or offends our deepest values.

In this important book, Steven J. Heyman presents a theory of the First Amendment that seeks to overcome the conflict between free speech and human dignity. This liberal humanist theory recognizes a strong right to freedom of expression while also providing protection against the most serious forms of assaultive speech. Heyman then uses the theory to illuminate a wide range of contemporary disputes, from flag burning and antiabortion demonstrations to pornography and hate speech.

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