The essays in this volume portray the debates concerning freedom of speech in eighteenth-century France and Britain as well as in Austria, Denmark, Russia, and Spain and its American territories. Representing the views of both moderate and radical eighteenth-century thinkers, these essays by eminent scholars discover that twenty-first-century controversies regarding the extent of permissible speech have their origins in the eighteenth century. The economic integration of Europe and its offshoots over the past three centuries into a distinctive cultural product, “the West,” has given rise to a triumphant Enlightenment narrative of universalism and tolerance that masks these divisions and the disparate national contributions to freedom of speech and other liberal rights.


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