

**(BOOK REVIEW)****FREEDOM IS POWER: LIBERTY THROUGH POLITICAL REPRESENTATION: A CRITICAL REVIEW****ATTIKUPPAM UMAPATHI**

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Book: *Freedom is Power: Liberty through Political Representation (2014)* by Lawrence Hamilton. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper is an attempt to critically review the arguments presented by Lawrence Hamilton in his book *“Freedom is Power: Liberty through Political Representation”* in support of political representation. The work gains significance in the wake of emerging presumptions and practices that define liberty as something that defines how free an individual is from other things—including political representation or political participation. The conception of liberty has taken a particular shape where the individuals are made to perceive that they have liberties when they have freedom from external impediments from other individuals, groups, state, or society. This notion of privatized liberty makes an individual to withdraw from the political aspects of the society that she is part of. This withdrawal puts the individual in a weak position vis-à-vis others who have been engaged actively in the political process. The negative conception of liberties i.e., negative liberties, though important and inalienable, because of the autonomous space that these liberties provide, may not be sufficient for an individual to be free in a complete sense. Expanding these liberties at the cost of political representation may result in losing these liberties fully i.e., the autonomous space that the individual is trying to protect in the name of negative liberty may not withstand the power of those who are politically active. Hence, freedom from politics may make the individual experience un-freedoms in many ways—including impediments in her privatized—negative liberties. Hence, freedom can be pursued or gained through politics—and not by keeping away from political representation. Political representation helps the individual to protect and pursue her liberties (both negative and positives conceptions), it helps the individual to exert power in defense or in expansion of her liberties, and it helps the individual to resist domination by others i.e., to resist the encroachment of others on her liberties. Hamilton’s timely work critically evaluates the horizons of liberties (both negative and positive conceptions) in modern day political situation where the individual autonomy in the name of negative conception of liberties can be said to have depreciated to privatized entertainments—or reduced to being apolitical. Hamilton explores how this apolitical position of individuals may lead them to un-freedoms, and how political representation empowers them.

**Key Words:** Apolitical, Domination, Freedom, Negative Liberties, Political Representation, Positive Liberties, Power, Privatized Liberty, Republic, Resistance.

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## **References**

Hamilton, L. (2014). *Freedom is Power: Liberty through Political Representation*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.