

Preface

There is a veritable Gandhi 'industry' in the academic world. Numerous books are being published everyday and so many centers all over the world are exploring various aspects of Gandhi's ideas and works. The present research belongs to the tradition of political thought and theory rather than to the stream of Gandhian Studies. The present research seeks to re-examine key Gandhian themes in order to indicate their potential contribution to some contemporary debates centering freedom and justice. The emphasis on place-centered knowledge, as illustrated to Gandhian thought tempered by a "post-relativistic ethic", is to be highlighted by the proposed research as a valuable resource for appreciating contemporary debates in Political Theory primarily in the West and also to draw attention to the kind of enrichment that may be brought into such debate by incorporating Gandhian ideas into them. Those who take the view that individual rights must always come first, and, along with non-discrimination provision, must take precedence over collective goals, are often speaking from a liberal perspective that has become more and more widespread in the Anglo-American world. Its source is, of course, the United States, and it has recently been elaborated and defended by some of the best philosophical and legal minds in that society, including John Rawls (1971), Ronald Dworkin, Bruce Ackerman, and others. A further line in this area of debate has been opened by scholars like Pettit (1996) who has been reworking the Republican tradition of freedom that tries to steer clear off the so called Liberal – Communitarian debate by taking the autonomy of freedom to be subjugation, defenseless susceptibility to interference rather than actual interference. This attempt to break away from negative-positive dichotomy of freedom from universal and particular, needs, in our

opinion, to be evaluated in the light of Gandhian contributions on the discussion of freedom.

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