

RECOGNITION OF IDENTITY TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF EQUALITY

A THEORETICAL STUDY

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MSc Thesis in Human Rights and Multiculturalism

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Norway**

Date
31st of January 2017

DEDICATION

In conventional truth,

To whom I am greatly indebted in my life journey so far,

and

To those without whom this work might not have been written.

In absolute truth,

To the nature

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Name: Rev Unapane Pemananda Thero	Date: 31st of January 2017
Title and subtitle: Recognition of Identity to the Understanding of Equality: A Theoretical Study	
<u>Abstract:</u> <p>Combining the fields of Human Rights Philosophy and Buddhist thought, this study explores the relationship between self-recognition and equality. My assumption is that there is a close relationship between these two notions and frameworks, and I argue that a clear understanding of individual identity is central to formulating a comprehensive notion of equality. The thesis will first analyze sources of normative and political philosophy which discuss the principle of equality on a theoretical level, and those sources of normative philosophy including Buddhism which discuss and reflect the identity concept. This research will also examine un-uniformity in the theories of equality; I argue that still, the principle of equality requires commonly acceptable and comprehensive definition. The key question of my research is how solid understanding of individual identity is related to our understanding of equality. This study will investigate the utility of the identity concept to develop a comprehensive understanding of equality. Thus, “recognition of identity” (self-recognition) and “understanding of equality” become the major two elements of this study. Finally, I want to suggest that identity recognition is essential to the quest of understanding equality.</p>	
Key words: Equality/Egalitarianism, Allen Buchanan, Identity/Self, Paul Ricoeur, Charles Taylor, Buddhism	
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DECLARATION

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I have retained a copy of my work.

Signed:Name: Rev Unapane Pemananda Thero

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May you all be well happy and peaceful!

ABRIVATION

AN	Anguttara Nikaya
AN.e	Anguttara Nikaya (R. Davids, Trans.). (1970).
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
CSCD Rom	Vipassana Research Institute. (1995). <i>Chattha Sangayana Tipitaka 4.0</i>
DBu.	Buddhist Dictionary. (1980)
DN	Digha Nikaya
DN.e	Digha Nikaya (M. Walshe, Trans.). (1995). <i>The long Discourses of the Buddha</i> . Boston: Wisdom Publication.
EB -	Encyclopaedia of Buddhism. (1977)
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
MN	Majjhima Nikhaya
MN.e	Majjhima Nikhaya (Bhikku Bodhi. & Bhikkhu Nanamoli., Trans.). (1995)
Pati	Patisambhidhamagga. (1982)
SN.e	Samyutta Nikaya (Bodhi Bhikkhu, Trans.). (2000). <i>The Unconditione</i> .
SN	Samyutta Nikaya
SN.e IV	Samyutta Nikaya (F. L. Woodward, Trans.). (2005)
SN.e II	Samyutta Nikaya (R. Rhys Davids, Trans.). (2000)
UDHR	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
Vis.M	Visuddhi Magga Buddhagosha, B. (2010)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND METHEDODOLOGY

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Combining the fields of Human Rights Philosophy and Buddhist thought, this study explores the relationship between self-recognition and equality. My assumption is that there is a close relationship between these two notions and frameworks, and I argue that a clear understanding of individual identity is central to formulating a comprehensive notion of equality. The thesis will first analyze sources of normative and political philosophy which discuss the principle of equality on a theoretical level, and those sources of normative philosophy including Buddhism which discuss and reflect the identity concept. This research will also examine un-uniformity in the theories of equality; I argue that still, the principle of equality requires commonly acceptable and comprehensive definition. The key question of my research is how solid understanding of individual identity is related to our understanding of equality. This study will investigate the utility of the identity concept to develop a comprehensive understanding of equality. Thus, “recognition of identity” (self-recognition) and “understanding of equality” become the major two elements of this study. Finally, I want to suggest that identity recognition is essential to the quest of understanding equality.

The concept of identity is complex and has many facets. This is where I found some tangles in the definitions of identity: with such unclear interpretations, we can neither recognize what identity means nor formulate it to understand equality. Therefore, this study will examine the identity concept, focusing on normative and political theories and Buddhist theories. The principle of equality, which is a highly contested concept particularly in the social and political usages for some time, is one of the fundamental pillars of international human rights instruments. Many normative and political theories present different approaches to understand equality. Since these two conceptions; equality and identity claim broad contexts, I will analyze some of the selected theories, which can be categorized into two main approaches such as Buddhist theories, normative and political theories.

This is a theory based work and a normative study. By theories, I mean texts which discuss and reflect on identity and equality in theoretical level. Plus, theories mean that theories or philosophies or teachings/doctrine that may be informed by various fields like anthropology, normative or political philosophy and law. This thesis will use sources that are mostly in the field of normative and political philosophy that guide the construction of human rights. I call them theories since what they do is to direct in theoretical ways how identity and equality shall be understood and applied. Moreover, these may be related to general human rights as well. Equality is a fundamental principle in human rights and self-identity that links to general human rights. Identity concept, however, goes beyond the field of human rights even though all most all rights norms contain the notion of identity. Nevertheless, these two concepts can be interrelated. My main focus is on how these two principles are understood in theoretical approach to human rights norms.

Those theories or teachings in Buddhism such as three characteristics (*tilakkhana*), aggregates or skandhas (*skandha*) and dependent origination (*paticcasamuppada*) can be analyzed in relation to individual identity, which can be used to develop a comprehensive definition of equality. I select Buddhist theories because Buddhist sources address the identity concept though a different approach than what we find in Western philosophical discussions. In hermeneutic word, I will elaborate this “theoretical horizon” which can guide us to understand equality.

In normative and political philosophy, both notions; identity and equality have deployed in broad contexts. Therefore, I narrow down two of fields for the purpose of an acutance study. To study identity, I select two of philosophers; Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor who are notably relevant in the discussion of identity. I analyze their texts on identity concept. Their theories may be supportive but also critical of aspects of human rights. The discussion of equality rather debatable and can be examined from various angles. Therefore, I will explore various notable normative and political perspectives on equality. Subsequently, I will analyze Allen Buchanan's text that explores egalitarianism. I selected Buchanan because he is a distinguished contemporary philosopher and his theory reflects how egalitarian shall practice in the modern society. His theories also give foundation and legitimation to rights. All these different theoretical horizons overlap but relevant to understand either equality or identity or both.

By human rights norms, I mean the key concepts of human rights such as dignity, equality, liberty and brotherhood. Particularly, Rene Cassin, one of the key drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) presents these four principles as main columns of the UDHR. These four principles of human rights have become particularly important, and this study is to see how equality has an impact on the framework of human rights. I attempt to achieve the breadth of equality through the notion of identity.

The context of this thesis is human rights philosophy, and it focuses on the principle of equality. This is not to underestimate the sense of equality in human rights but to focus on how equality is understood. Therefore, the main question of my thesis addresses issue of inequalities in diverse, pluralistic multicultural societies. This study takes as assumptions issues as characterizing diverse and pluralistic societies, even without elaborating on specific historical and practical examples. Hence, combining in this study Western political philosophy with Buddhist philosophy may represent a "new horizon" (speaking in terms of hermeneutics) for the understanding of equality. Plus, recognition of identity will be the overlapping notion for this discussion.

1.2 PERSONAL MOTIVATION

I am interested in philosophical normative discussion of human rights. In my Master Degree in Human Rights and Multiculturalism, the course titled, “Theories of Culture” which I made an essay on Narrative Identity and Human Rights influenced me to study identity concept in depth. “Philosophy of Human Rights” which was the other course motivated me to study ideas, arguments, and contents in human rights norms.

I have been training as a Theravada Buddhist monk for eighteen years since 1998. Therefore, my academic background is based on Buddhism and other oriental and cultural studies. I moved to Norway for my master studies from Sri Lanka where I experienced identity issues within this new multi-national and pluralistic context. All these simultaneous experiences impact on me to embark on this thesis. In the meantime, I want to conjoin my previous knowledge with human rights literature. This thesis is a result of those academic processes and personal experiences.

Who is the audience of my thesis? I address normative and political theorists including human rights theorists at a philosophical level. I also target those are interested in the issues of inequalities in both academic and practical levels.

1.3 PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

My research is mainly concerned with introducing a model of identity to the understanding of equality in the human rights context with the aim of addressing issues of inequalities in pluralistic society. Both concepts identity and equality will be explored critically for this study. Significantly, it will help to understand equality via a closer analysis of individual identity. Further, it will be a motivation for any future attempt to resolve the issues arise due to inequalities in the society.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

Main question

The main question for the research is how the recognition of [individual, personal or self] identity is related to the understanding of equality.

Supporting questions

1. What are the human rights norms and what is the place of equality in human rights?
2. What is the relationship between self-recognition and equality and their frameworks?
3. To what extent and how is the identity concept reflected in the principle of equality?
4. How does self-recognition explicitly engage with and develop to contribute further to understandings/practices of equal concern and respect among human beings?
5. How self-recognition is essential to the quest for understanding of equality?

My aim is thus both exploratory - to see where principle of equality is located in human rights literature, and critical - to analyze whether recognition of individual identity can understand equality and whether this approach would be valuable according to the purpose of human rights norms. This study is analytical and normative. I am studying and analyzing theories for understanding of equality. Alternatively, it leads me to better understand the personal identity.

The normative aim is to see whether recognition of identity in diverse societies can be based to understand equality. In a way, this is a combination of two concepts; in moving from identity to equality, I expect to find a one-way direction that may be a re-formulation of the understanding of equality. In this process, I will give my comments and evaluations of the material I analyze. Finally, I will present a concluding synthesis and indicate how I understand equality through recognition of identity. My hope is to contribute to a debate on the principle of equality. Analyzing of Buddhist materials is also an interesting coalition in this process, and I hope that it will be significant contribution to human rights philosophy.

1.5 SOURCES

We are experiencing the time that the literature of human rights is expanding very fast. When I see the subject area of my thesis, there are lots of materials which explore theories of human rights. I am aware that it is impossible in this thesis to cover all of them and therefore I focus only selected materials and theories. I categorize my sample under two main fragments; 1) Pali canonical texts and 2) normative political texts.

1. Pali canonical sources

I analyze selected Pali canonical texts to investigate what the Buddhist philosophical points of view on personal identity (self). Pali (or *Pāli*) is the language of many of the earliest extant literature of Buddhism known *Tipitaka* (Three Baskets). Also, this is the language of Theravada Buddhism. From the Pali literature, I use only Sutta Pitaka (Basket of Discourses) where the key concepts related to this topic have been elaborated. Mainly, I use the translated versions published by Pali Text Society (PTS) of England. Original Pali texts may be referenced as necessary. Following two texts will be used as the key texts from Buddhist philosophical texts. 1) Digha Nikaya (*The long discourses of the Buddha*), ("DN.e," 1995) and 2) Majjhima Nikaya (*The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*), ("MN.e," 1995). In these materials, I focus theory of causality, teaching of three characteristics; and philosophy on the five aggregates. These are the key theories relate to the identity concept.

Besides them, I will also analyze some materials from Mahayana Buddhism as to support my key points. In Mahayana philosophy, I select Madyamaka tradition because of its interesting discussion on identity in conventional sense as well as real sense. *Mulamadyamikakarika* of Nagarjuna (Nagarjuna, 2000) and *Bodhicharyawatara* of Shantideva (Shantideva, n.d.) are masterpieces of these philosophers, and I will analyze parts of these two texts regarding identity concept.

2. Normative and political philosophic sources

In this category, I focus mainly on theories that contribute to and address the meaning of identity and equality, theories which deal with those two concepts. Some of them are more ethical while others are more political. However, all of them have contextual elements that can be related to human rights normatively. My selection of theories on identity is guided by two key philosophers: Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor. This selection is not a random choice. I am interested in their remarkable contribution to the discussion on identity.

Charles Taylor who provided a communitarian critique of liberal theory's understanding of the "self" emphasizes the importance of social institutions in the development of individual meaning and identity. For Taylor, 'Due recognition is not just

a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need. (Taylor, 1992, p. 26) Further, he interprets the concept in a value-focused background. "My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand." (Taylor, 1989, p. 27) Such kind of examinations presented by Taylor in his book, *The source of the self – the making of the modern identity* (Taylor, 1989). I use this masterpiece of Taylor to analyze his theories on identity. *The politics of recognition* (Taylor, 1992) will also be used for additional explanations.

In the 20th century Western philosophic discussions on identity, Paul Ricoeur is one of the foremost philosophers. I chose Ricoeur because of his prominent normative inquiries on identity. Ricoeur examines self-identity by linking it to "self-hood" and "sameness." He also contributes to terminological interpretations to this key concept. In *The Course of Recognition* (Ricoeur, 2005) Ricoeur outlines his ideas on recognition. He examines three guises of recognition: 1) recognition as identification, 2) recognition of oneself and 3) mutual recognition. I do not go to cover all the theories presented by Ricoeur, but I analyze some points of this text. The other work by Ricoeur, *Narrative Identity* (1991) which I analyze in depth presents a more interesting discussion of identity.

Equality is one of the fundamental norms in human rights literature. In normative political philosophy, it claims wide range of theories and materials. As I have mentioned elsewhere, I cover only selected theories. Egalitarianism is one of the major theoretical approaches in political philosophy adopted to interpret equality. John Rawls, through his "*A Theory of Justice* (1971), made a ground for a new literature in egalitarianism. Until him, principle of equality had been discussed through various approaches. I explore this historical development by focusing some selected remarkable theories. Theorists like J.J. Rousseau (1762), Felix Oppenheim (1970), John Rawls (1971), Dworkin Ronald (1981), Temkin (1993) who presented expertise on equality are considered in this analysis. Then I review the literature of equality that contains; descriptive and prescriptive equality; and four principles of equality such as formal, proportional, moral and presumption of equality. Subsequently, I examine three theories that are modest objectivism,

minimalism, and pluralism; I chose to prioritize these three in relation to egalitarianism because of its philosophical figure that embodies equality as a fundamental worth or moral status. I elaborate these theories based on the text, "Equality and Human Rights" by Allen Buchanan (Buchanan, 2005).

1.6 CURRENT STATUS OF THE FIELD

To give a complete presentation of the key notion, equality, firstly, is almost impossible, but I will comment in brief on the current status of the fields of exploration. The concept of identity also has been developed in both Eastern and Western philosophies for long history. Before looking at the methodology for using the sources I select, I outline the current status of Buddhist contribution to normative and political philosophy which can be related to the human rights field through identity concept. I emphasize this outline because Buddhist philosophical approach is the most distinctive part of this exploration.

Political philosophers, more prominently from J.J. Rousseau (1762) to John Rawls (1971), Dworkin Ronald (1981), Amartya Sen (1980,1992) and Larry S. Temkin (1993) observe equality in a variety of perspectives. The modern idea of equality is to be considered as a theory of rights. More specifically, the notion of human rights promoted the discussion on equality and inequality. As a fundamental pillar, equality often expresses in very general and open-textured terms in human rights literature. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and many other conventions of the United Nations take responsibility to ensure equality concerning the rights. As a normative and political ideal, equality has been developed by John Rawls (1971) making a ground for a new literature in egalitarianism. He shows relations between equality and justice and some other values. For Rawls, liberty and equality are the basic principles of justice. (Rawls, 1997, p. 39).

Diversity is a matter of the discussion of equality. Rawls, Sen, and Temkin have discussed quality on general or specific different diversities. Rawls, Temkin, and Douglas Rea postulate such source of inequality. Equality and inequality are not single concepts but a complex group of concepts (Gosepath, 2011; Rae, 1981, p. 132). One of the key

arguments in Dworkin's work, "*Severing virtue*" (2000) is that material equality or equality of recourses is the requirement that government aims at though people might be equally appropriate. Through *Inequality Reexamined*, Sen (1992) evaluates equality of effective freedom to achieve well-being (well-being freedom). Kant (1797) presents moral law as categorical imperatives which postulate the worthiness of being happy or, in other words, the conception of universal human worth. This concept emphasizes that autonomy and self-legislation cause to the understanding of the equal freedom for all rational agents as the sole principle of human rights (Kant, 1797/1886, p. 230). Egalitarianism maintains different but overlapping views. Some schools like Modest Objectivism, Minimalism, and Pluralism in Egalitarianism have been developed by scholars by making links to human rights. Allen Buchanan is one of contemporary active philosopher with this sense. Egalitarians claim that equality is always just; any justification must be needed when there is inequality. The ideal of moral equality together with equal dignity has promoted egalitarianism which is noticeable moral theory in political philosophy.

In short, the literature of equality is widely examined through various perspectives such as; descriptive and prescriptive equality; civil, political, social, economic, natural, legal or international equality. Also, equality holds four principles of equality such as formal, proportional, moral and presumption. Further, equality has admitted theoretical approaches like equality of welfare, equality of opportunity, equality of wellbeing, and equality of destitution.

The current status of Buddhist contribution to normative and political philosophy which can be related to the human rights field through identity concept is still in its formative stage. However, we find a significant number of important studies that follow different approaches related to the Buddhist perspective on personal identity or self.

Warren Lee Todd (2013) proposes in "The Ethics of Śāntideva and Śāṅkara: A Selfless Response to an Illusory World",

"Current status of these medieval Indian models may well prove themselves to be a valuable source of both metaphysical and moral

inspiration to those of us who continue to ask deeper and deeper questions about the self.”(Todd, 2013, conclusion)

This intuitive idea can be accepted when the quest of identity is investigated. My study is to explore identity concept together with human rights norms than to ask deeper questions about self. Nevertheless, this study somehow deals with deeper questions about self. 14th Dalai Lama (1998) expressed outspokenly strong support for UDHR by emphasizing human values and universal responsibility. His statement, “Humanity and Globalization: Human rights on the eve of the 21st century” also says one's responsibility to understand himself and others. L.P.N. Perera (1991) who presented a Buddhist commentary on the UDHR shows that every single article of UDHR either parallel or at least similar tendency for the Buddha's teachings. In contrast, Peter Junger mentions that “the concept of human rights is not likely to be useful in... following the Buddha Dharma”(Junger, 1998, p. 55) However, he agrees what Perera says about the Buddhism's acceptability of the content of human rights.

Some scholars like Damien V. Keown have tried to show some similarities and differences between Buddhism and human rights. He concludes, “Modern doctrines of human rights are in harmony with the moral values of classical Buddhism in that they are an explanation of what is “due” under Dharma.”(Keown, 1998, p. 34) Some thinkers criticize that Buddhism talks about compassion that should be extended towards all sentient beings; Buddhism puts human rights culture at risk as it is objection of anthropocentrism (Huxley, 1999, 167). For example, even though, Huxley puts forth such an objection between Buddhism and human rights he has not proved his assumption referring the early Buddhist texts. Obviously, many Buddhist scholars repeatedly point out that within the context of human rights, we additionally need animal rights (Harvey, 2000, p. 120; Keown, 1998, p. 34; Unno, 1988, p. 143). Some central questions such as justifying the worth of individual, self-determination and free agency link to the human rights dialogically. A number of Buddhist authors like Chamarik (19885), Rerera (1991), Keown (1998), Harvey (2000) and some others have answered those questions from different perspectives. They have considered how Buddhism presents human dignity by claiming a particular status of human being and his potential for the enlightenment and

salvation. Perry Schmidt-Leukel who has overviewed all those Buddhist approaches states that,

“One should recall first that in Buddhism human beings do not occupy an absolutely privileged position but are seen against the doctrine of rebirth as being continuous with all 'sentient beings, 'that is, with all forms of existence in which rebirth can take place.”(Schmidt - Leukel, 2006, p. 39)

He also shows how human being is most regarded as his capability going to the precise penetration of the life and world and liberation (Schmidt - Leukel, 2006, pp. 39,40). Some Buddhists authors argue that it is impossible to identify a relation between Buddhism and human rights. For instance, Masao Abe says that "the exact equivalent of the phrase 'human rights in the Western sense cannot be found anywhere in Buddhist literature" (Abe, 1986, p. 202). He recalls the Buddha's teaching on self-identity.

“The notion of absolute self-identity or substantial, enduring selfhood is an unreal, conceptual construction created by human self-consciousness. Buddhism calls it *maya*, or illusion, and emphasizes the importance of awakening to no-self by doing away with this illusory understanding of the self”(Abe, 1986, p. 204).

For Masao, even though relatively self and nature differ from one another, “on absolute level they are equal and interfuse with one another because of the lack of any fixed, substantial selfhood" (Abe, 1986, p. 205). This idea prompts to explore relation between impermanent of self and equality.

“Toward a Buddhist Philosophy and Practice of Human Rights” by Christopher Donald Kelley (2015) is more recent research on idea of self-identity and human right. Kelley argues that “Madhyamaka School of Buddhist philosophy can provide the necessary theoretical tools for reconciling the dual ideas of “inherent dignity” and “inalienable rights” with the Madhyamaka's own concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) —all things (i.e., human rights) lack intrinsic existence” (Donald Kelley, 2015, p. 3). Kelley analyzes Madhyamaka philosophy of intrinsic existence (*svabhāva*) to provide a “cognitive dimension” which promotes equalizing self and others for the understanding of

fundamentalism in human rights. Yoichi Kawada who has done insightful inquiry into how to discuss the bodhisattva path as a human rights movement states,

“Sakyamuni Buddha’s meditation went through the profound depths of the collective consciousness of humanity, and through the numerous differences of race, ethnicity, gender, or occupation, he sought out the shared horizon of the universal and fundamental equality among all human beings” (Kawada, 2011, p. 139).

The quest of this statement indicates the importance of the deepest inner life introspection which leads to seeing the universal equality. In my research, I explore this idea taking as “recognition of identity to understand equality”. Thus, my study will distinguish from other intellectual works because of that core analytical point; it will consider mutual relationship between Buddhism and human rights.

1.7 METHODS

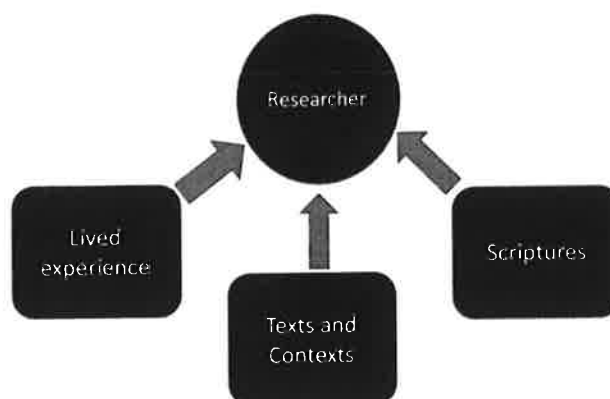
This is a text-based analysis. The method is hermeneutic which belongs to interpretive research. This is a theory/method of understanding and interpretation of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions.(Bryman, 2012, pp. 28,30) This method is used in interpreting the biblical texts, wisdom literature, and historical documents. Later, it developed increasingly as a philosophical underpinning for the interpretation of texts. Hermeneutics has a long history that runs through Greek antiquity. According to Gadamer, for the first time, Augustine introduces the universality-claim of hermeneutics that arises from the connection Augustine establishes between language and interpretation, but also from his claim that interpretation of Scripture involves a deeper, existential level of self-understanding.(Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2014) In the early periods, hermeneutics represented with two distinguishing aspects: (a) the self-defined project of hermeneutics mainly consisted of formulating precise rules, techniques, and procedures for understanding the meaning of difficult passages in written texts; and (b) the process of hermeneutic understanding and interpretation was governed by an author-intentional theory of meaning.(Prasad, 2002, p. 29) In the last century, theorist such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Willhelm Diltey and Martin Heidegger, Hand Georg Gadamer, Paul

Ricoeur and Jurgen Habermas developed hermeneutics by defining and distinguishing narrowly. Hence, important concepts such as the hermeneutic circle, the hermeneutic horizon, understanding as dialogue and fusion of horizons, the non-author-intentional view of meaning, and interpretation as critique embrace hermeneutics underpinning comprehensive epistemology and philosophy of interpretation. Now, hermeneutics is a major theoretical reinforcement of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).(Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2012, p. 21)

Next, I elaborate hermeneutics as the method of my research. In my research, critical hermeneutic (also known as “depth hermeneutic”) is my main approach. Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics includes the moment of critique. He deploys that insistence on the role of critically filtering out “unproductive” prejudices in the task of interpretation. Habermas’s critical hermeneutics is, in turn, part of a tradition, and is further linked to tradition by its project of regenerating and reinterpreting that tradition itself. Ricoeur embed these two opposite approaches within each other. In my research, I hold Ricoeur’s opinion. “We can no longer oppose hermeneutics and the critique of ideology. The critique of ideology is the necessary detour that self-understanding must take”.(Prasad, 2002, p. 23) In addition, grammatical and psychological interpretation is concerned to get exact and objective textual meaning as Schleiermacher emphasizes. Those three of hermeneutic analytical approaches will be used as necessary in each text classified in the figure 01 and 02.

Hermeneutic research conceptualizes context both synchronically as well as diachronically. This history serves an important part of context concerning my texts which consist both historical and modern. I use the Pali canon that was composed in North India and preserved orally until it was committed to writing during the Fourth Buddhist council in the first century BCE in Sri Lanka. In the explanation of *classic texts as materials*, Koskinen and Lindstrom say, “Classic texts are characterized by the fact that they have been written by authors who have had great significance for human thought during a classic period.” (Koskinen & Lindstrom, 2012, p. 760) Buddhist texts I have chosen hold this character. Hence, as hermeneutic inquiry requires, I become familiar with various aspects of the history of the modern problem.

Figure: 01

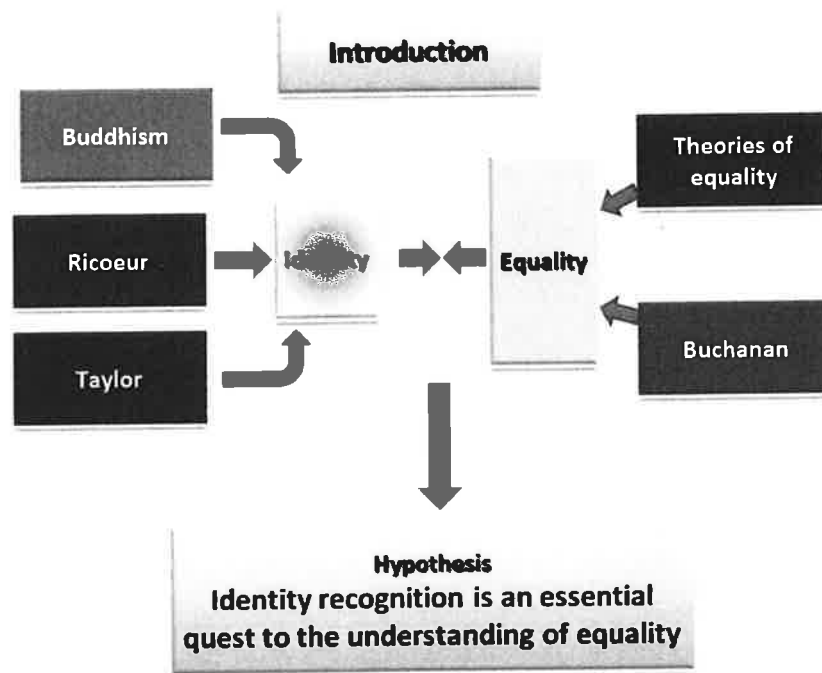


Methodological consideration for hermeneutic research follows the principle of the hermeneutic circle. Simply, hermeneutic circle explains the process of understanding a text hermeneutically. In another word, reader understands of the text as a whole is established by reference to the individual parts and her understanding of each individual part by reference to the whole. The word, circle used since neither the whole text nor any individual part can be understood without reference to one another. This understanding for hermeneutics is interpretation of text which stresses that the meaning of a text presented within its cultural, historical, and literary context. Particularly, it emphasizes the significance of the context for purposes of interpreting a text. Methodologically, two points are important: (a) the context is not a simple given but needs to be actively defined by the researcher, and (b) the context can usually be defined at different levels of comprehensiveness (Prasad, 2002, p. 24). In my research, I keep in mind these two points when defining the contexts of the texts. In the analytical level, another notable characteristic of hermeneutic circle is that process of understanding goes beyond logic and analysis. 'The part' and 'the whole' can be understood to describe a number of relationships (Smith et al., 2012, p. 28). This can be considered as a key role of my research.

Ricoeur and Taylor who are the selected philosophers of my research have deployed their works within the hermeneutic tradition as well. As I mentioned previously, critical hermeneutic by Ricoeur closely fits these philosophical interpretations. In my

normative analytical work with texts, hermeneutic phenomenological tradition will guide me to come up with interpretations subjectively.

Figure: 02



This research studies three fields of knowledge which are different but also related. I explore the concept of equality by moving to normative political theories including egalitarianism with special reference to Allen Buchanan. Next, I analyze normative philosophical theories on identity presented by Ricoeur and Taylor. Subsequently, I examine Buddhist theories on identity. In this critical analysis, my main goal is not to identify detailed similarities or differences of various notions of identity; but to study of how identity is recognized in normative and philosophical approaches with the aim of developing an understanding of equality (See: figure 02). For these purposes, hermeneutic method will be helpful to understand both philosophical and theoretical perspectives on identity and equality. I hope that this will be a thoughtful contribution to the human rights philosophy and it will open up a new approach to the understanding of equality. A hermeneutical interpretation is in one hand a positive reading, on the other hand, it takes a critical perspective. This study is identical to a theoretical work.

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CHAPTER TWO

PERSPECTIVES OF EQUALITY IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

CONTENTS

- 2.1 INTRODUCTION
- 2.2 CONTESTABILITY OF EQUALITY
- 2.3 PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY
- 2.4 ALLEN BUCHANAN
 - 2.4.1 MODEST OBJECTIVISM
 - 2.4.2 MINIMALISM
- 2.5 CONCLUSION
- 2.6 REFERENCES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The principle of equality is one of the fundamental pillars of international human rights instruments. This chapter examines the principle of equality to review various assumptions and connotations. This examination demonstrates un-uniformity in identifying equality; I argue that equality requires generally an acceptable and comprehensive definition. Even though time and space limits me to cover the entire assumptions of equality, I investigate this matter in comparison to approaches which will help us to develop a comprehensive definition of equality. The key question of my research is connected to the concept of equality; thus the understanding of equality is the heart of this thesis. Following the epistemological discipline, I will deploy the equality concept taking as a theme of normative political theory. This examination will synthesize with the identity concept to develop a comprehensive understanding of equality.

Equality is a highly contested concept, particularly in the social and political usages, since the earliest times. As a political subject, equality is constituted of the principles of liberty and justice. The understanding of equality is controversial, concerning certain characteristics of equality: its precision, its relation to justice; its ideal

measure, and its extension. Political philosophy adopts egalitarianism, a political, ideal, approach with long and diverse history, to interpret equality. John Rawls, through his "*A theory of Justice* (1971)," paved the way for a new literature in egalitarianism which favors equality of people. Even though egalitarianism contends that all humans are equal in fundamental social status, it still maintains different but overlapping views.

In this chapter, I present an overview of the contestability of equality as a value. Subsequently, I address questions as "equality of what?" and "why equality?", which shape the contours of the doctrine of egalitarianism. In addition, I examine two theories: modest objectivism and minimalism. I prioritize these three in relation to egalitarianism because of their philosophical figures that embodies equality as a fundamental worth or moral status. I elaborate these theories based on the article, *Equality and Human Rights*, by Allen Buchanan. In addition, I selected Allen Buchanan's text to examine equality because it connects with the aforementioned theories. In fact, Buchanan apparently attempts to link such theories to human rights; Buchanan shows principle of equality in a liberal democratic system. I scrutinize equality to examine how egalitarian theories conceive it. Finally, I will conclude with a critical comment on different approaches to the understanding of equality and Buchanan's approach of unifying equality with liberal democracy.

2.2 CONTESTABILITY OF EQUALITY

The principle of equality strengthens International Human Rights (IHR) instruments. However, IHR vaguely expresses equality. In contrast, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 1 proclaims that every human being born free is equal in dignity and rights (United Nations General Assembly, 1948, art 1), while Article 2 stresses that all human beings are entitled to the totality of rights and freedoms present in the Declaration "without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status"(United Nations General Assembly, 1948, art.2). Moreover, the UDHR entirely refuses distinctions "made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be

independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty”(United Nations General Assembly, 1948, art.2).

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) proclaims that states parties are pledged themselves to respect and ensure the rights set forth in the Covenant “without distinction” (United Nations General Assembly, 1966a, art.2). Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) enunciates states’ responsibility to ensure equality concerning the rights present in the Covenant grounded in the UDHR (United Nations General Assembly, 1966b, art.2(2)). Both the ICCPR (article 3) and ICESCR (article 3) assert “equal right” of men and women and their inheritance for the enjoyment of all rights. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) focuses on women and introduces a tool against all form of sexual discrimination, affirming equality of men and women and their human rights and fundamental freedoms in every field (United Nations General Assembly, 1979, art.1).

Either those articles are taken from the UDHR or from other charters, it is clear that the concept of equality becomes essential in those tools. The world has thousands of injustice experiences. For instance, American and French revolutions were fought for equality, liberty, and fraternity. Many have found these two revolutions crucial for the present idea of equality. Nevertheless, people have fought for justice in other parts of the world.

Equality, indeed, has an essential relationship with justice, as shown by many philosophers. In fact, equality and liberty work in parallel to establish the condition of human freedom. The principle of equality, as a social essentiality and a political element, claims proper continual discussions since the Greek era. For instance, Aristotle demonstrated that inequality was the cause of many rebellions in a state (Gaub, 2005, p. 331). Inequalities, with prolong history, can be seen in many ways: superiority and inferiority, rich and poor, master and slave, black and white, man and woman, high cast and low cast, morally superior, and morally inferior. Political philosophers, more prominently J.J. Rousseau (1762), C. Marx and F. Engels (1875), Felix Oppenheim (1970), John Rawls (1971), Dworkin Ronald (1981), Harry Frankfurt (1987,1997),

Gerald Cohen (1989,1993), Amartya Sen (1980,1992), Richard Andersan (1990, 1993), ; Larry S. Temkin (1993), observe equality in a variety of perspectives and also with reference to the equality/inequality experiences the world has historically faced. The modern idea of equality should be perceived as a theory of rights. Thus, the notion of human rights promotes the discussion on equality and inequality.

In the modern political philosophy, *equality* is a prominent political principle but conceptually complex and contestable. Dworkin discusses the variety of answers about the concept of equality that philosophers defended. He states, “people who praise it or disparage it disagree about what they are praising or disparaging” (Dworkin, 2000, p. 2). Dworkin’s key work, “*Severing virtue*”, contends that material and resource equality is the requirement that government aims at though people might be equally appropriate. The idea denotes that Dworkin was two minded even though he praises equality. Similarly, even though I seek a general definition of equality, my argument will scrutinize the essential definition of equality per se.

The term ‘equality’ has a qualitative relationship with “equal” or “equally”. The qualitative relationship refers to correspondent qualities between persons, groups, objects, circumstances or processes; for instance, A and B are equal in color green. Yet, functionally, equality can be confused with words like identical, same or similar. If two things are indifferent, they are called identical, not equal (Gosepath, 2011). The term identical refers to the same thing that corresponds to itself in all its properties. Meanwhile, when we distinguish about identical, it conflicts with the idea of equality or similarity. When two things are identical and they are not distinguishable, philosophers label it “Leibniz’s principle of identity of indiscernible,” (Geuss, 2008, p. 77). This is a principle to denote that both are the same thing. Thus, equality implies similarity, while identity implies ‘sameness’.

Equality cannot be seen in the common conformity. This is not a linguistic polysemy but arbitrary interpretations for the term equality. J.J. Rousseau postulates two kinds of inequalities in the social life: moral and conventional inequality.

“It is that instead of destroying natural equality, the fundamental pact... substitutes a moral and lawful equality for the physical inequality which nature

imposed upon men, so that, although unequal in strength or intellect, they all become equal by convention and legal rights” (Rousseau, 1998, p. 23)

Moral inequality refers to differences in physical bodies, age, health, strength, mental qualities and soul. In other words, Moral inequality represents biological and mental inequalities. In contrast, conventional inequality claims social conditions or differences in wealth, power and prestige. Some enjoy many privileges while some do not due to the conventional inequality. In one hand, this duality is identified in a rational answer defended by Thomas Hobbs¹, i.e., “nature has made men so equal in the faculties of the body and mind” (Oppenheim, 1970, p. 143). In addition, Oppenheim and some other theorists have scrutinized equality among men as follows,

“When two or more persons are said to be equal with respect to age or citizenship or race or income or aptitude or need, this simply means that they have the same age nationality or color or income or ability or need? or that they are substantially similar in such respects” (Oppenheim, 1970, p. 143)

According to Gauba, these two types of inequalities are a combination of natural order and man-made (Gauba, 2005, p. 334). The second inequality compels to envisage justice and to restructure the social system under the condition of justice. This is why the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* (August 1789) proclaims in the first article that “Men are born and remain free and equal rights. Social distinctions can be based only upon public utility”²(Anderson, 1904, p. 59). Moreover, Marx and Engels contributed to firmly rebuke exploitations of unjust division of classes in the society. They argued justice was defined concerning the condition of inequality and unreasonable.

¹ In the *Leviathan*, the account of Thomas Hobbs’s philosophical views can be seen rational roots of the prominent arguments in the modern social and political philosophy. In the case of equality, his point of view is a psychological. For him all human are equal in the conditions of desire and abilities. Yet, human nature as he called natural egoism leads people all against all. Though this idea faced negative criticisms from some later authors I think this point shows psychological connection between self and equality. See the chapter 13, “The natural condition of mankind as concerning their felicity and misery” in *Laviathanan* (1651).(Hayden, 2001, pp. 57-71)

² *Leviathan* (Hobbs, 1651), *Second Treatise of Government* – Chap.2 of the state nature (John Lock, 1690), *The Social Contract* – Chap.1 and 4 (Rousseau, 1762) postulate this principle as a natural law. Following both Hobbs and Lock, Rousseau strongly demonstrates this principle through his idea of the social contract. Particularly, Rousseau claims an approach of egalitarian social life as all are subjected only to a rule of law which is the common will of the community and self-imposed. This is an accomplishment joining together in order for a social contract. In *the state of nature* which offers individual freedom and security based upon the civil society, Rousseau elucidates this vision as well.

These assumptions contend that social inequality is intrinsically bad while natural inequality is not. It is hard to fathom the reason for social inequality for not claiming such plausibility. In my opinion, equal concern and respect has components of social inequality, which is another matter that requires a detail discussion. Nonetheless, I contest Aristotle's argument where he states, "justice as treating equals equally and unequal unequally" (Aristotle, 1999, Bk V, Chap. VI).

Equality requires judgments through comparison. Some scholars argue that 'complete' or 'absolute' equality is a self-contradictory tenet. Therefore, equality is possible if it has acceptable difference. In other words, without difference equality is never viable (Gosepath, 2011).

Another perspective of 'Equality' is descriptive and prescriptive. Political philosophers debate on this perspective of equality. For example, O.P. Gauba refuses equality as a descriptive term but accepts as a prescriptive one (Gauba, 2005, p. 331). In his work, "Egalitarianism as a Descriptive Concept", Felix Oppenheim shows that both connotations are equally important in equality (Oppenheim, 1970). The descriptive equality represents common descriptive ideology, e.g., an identical twin. Prescriptive term of equality takes a prescriptive approach, e.g., a norm or rule (everyone is equal before the law) (Gosepath, 2011). Prescriptive term of equality can have both components, descriptive and prescriptive component. Social and political philosophers question "who belongs to which components?" But sociological and economic analyses of inequality study how to determine and measure inequality. Thus, different fields inquire various components of equality.

Douglas Rae raises a key question, "equal in what respect?" to show equality or equal as an incomplete prediction. Equality requires fragments (components) to make a complete prediction (Rae, 1981, p. 132). This is a tripartite relation between one or more qualities of objects/persons. In other words, it is a relationship between two objects and certain respect/s. Thus, equality shares the attribution of comparison determining under the same terminus. On the other hand, diversity needs to be discussed here. This is because equality concomitantly becomes a subject of general or specific diversities; Rawls, Temkim and Rea postulate that as a source of inequality. For instance, Temkim

interprets that diversities are measurement of various inequalities (Temkin, 1986). With this respect, comparison also takes deferent stands. The major point is that to what extend comparison plays as the measurement of inequalities. Temkin also has inquired how inequality is to be subject through various stands.

Rawls distinguishes between general and specific conceptions of equality, and he mentions this condition has caused to authors to examine “equality” with diverse meaning (Rawls, 1971, p. 21). Thus, various diversities can be identified as inequality, and it must be an issue of social justice. Equality and inequality are not single concepts but a complex group of concepts that can be seen in the entire history (Gosepath, 2011; Rae, 1981, p. 132). Egalitarians claim this matter as a core principle belief that is vague, theoretical, and with moral implicitness.

2.3 PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY

Some thinkers classify equality in different ways. Harold J. Laski (1893-1950), in his insight work, *A Grammar of Politics*, examines two dimensions of equality: political and economy (Johari, 2002, p. 300). Lord Bryce refers to four kinds of equality such as civil, political, social and natural (Bryce, 1921, pp. 60,61). According to Ernest Barker, there are two types of equality: legal and political (Barker, 1945, pp. 86-120). Some other writers categorize as natural, social, political, economic, legal, and international. In her work, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, O.P. Gauba has provided critical examination on equality, and she shows dimensions of equality to be applied in social life. Those are legal equality, political equality and socio-economic equality (Gauba, 2005, p. 339). Naomi Choi, the author of “*Egalitarianism*”; in the *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*, illustrates four distinguishable forms of equality: moral, social, legal and political (Choi, 2010, p. 410). These dimensions and the related discussions insinuate that they follow the liberal, democratic way of thinking.

This tradition of classifying equality helps to comprehend equality itself. Yet, to my understanding, by examining different shapes of equality, we impose to marginalize equality to liberal democracy. It is obvious that liberalism has become a prominent political ideology in the 20th and 21st century and most of contemporary political

philosophers can be identified as liberals; they mostly favor democracy. I contend that this aspect inevitably led to the conceptualization of the principle of equality. The argument is not against the ideologies of liberalism, liberal democracy, or its implementation like equal protection of human rights or civil liberties. This argument might be closer to what Temkin refuses, “should one care about inequality?” and “to what extent?”. On the contrary, he says that these questions are valid only until understanding of inequality (Temkin, 1986, p. 102). I assume that this idea rejects the reductionist way of evaluation of equality; it does not marginalize equality to liberal democracy.

The relationship between equality and justice is crucial to be clearly understood. According to some political theorists, equality is a constitutive aspect of justice. It is arguable that lack of equality in today’s society as the cause of injustice resonates the Aristotle’s argument. For Rawls, liberty and equality are the basic principles of justice. (Rawls, 1997, p. 39). Particularly, egalitarians claim that equality is always just; any justification must be needed when there is inequality. This is a simple sign to denote the relation between equality and justice. In the connection of equality and justice, we must understand what role and correction is accountable to equality. Moreover, we must be aware that justice itself has different interpretations and identifications. Hence, distinguishing the connection between equality and justice is a necessary part of this discussion. Even though I attempt to clarify such connection as its foregone, I limit to justice in depth because this study mainly requires an inquiry of equality.

The article *Equality* of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* demonstrates four principles of equality such as formal equality, proportional equality, moral equality and presumption of equality (Gosepath, 2011). These principles are acknowledged as normative identifications, not as dimensions of identity. In addition, these principles introduces norms like justice and morality in conjoint to equality. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine four principles of equality. However, the focus will remain to highlight internal relationship between equality and other norms. The paper will cover a presumption for different egalitarian approaches as well.

The formal principle of equality is devised by Aristotle. It is based on the equal status of two persons that have at least one normatively relevant respect. According to the principle, two persons must be treated equally related to that respect (Aristotle, 1999, p. 75). Plato connotes that “treat like cases as like”-Berlin Isaiah (Berlin, 1955-56) and some authors state that this formal principle of equality is irrational and inconsistent, but it has a specific application (Gosepath, 2011). The authors assumed that the formal principle of equality is presented without sufficient reasons. Yet, many authors concede the same principle as a moral principle of justice.

The second principle of equality is the proportional equality. Aristotle divides equality into two types: numerical and proportional (Aristotle, 1999, p. 76). These two kinds of equality emphasize about two distinct concepts: treatment and distribution. These two concepts are concerned about proportional or relative equality. Therefore, it is important to confirm that proportional equality incorporates hierarchies and inegalitarian theories. Thus, treating all people fairly is not just always respected. This means that persons are relatively equal and therefore a form of treatment is proportional about relevant respect.

Two or more persons, allocations of goodness to persons, and quantity in which individuals have the relevant normative quality are very important for the proportional equality in the treatment and distribution of goodness to persons. This idea rationally accepts that individuals are unequal in relevant respect; hence treatment or distribution must be considered proportionally.

The moral equality is the third principle of equality. The moral equality is mainly based on natural rights. This principle asserts that human beings are equal by nature. This idea was controversial until the eighteenth century since the presumption raised that human beings are unequal by nature. The moral equality appreciates the natural order of human beings instead of human hierarchy. Particularly, this perspective seems like a universal one because it claims that everyone deserves the same dignity and the same respect. Hence, moral equality represents an egalitarian meaning of equality substantively. In the early development of moral equality, Stoics, Christianity, Talmud, and Islam are noteworthy. Thus, as Stefan Gosepath affirms,

"It developed among the Stoics, who emphasized the natural equality of all rational beings, and in early New Testament Christianity, which elevated the equality of human beings before God to a principle: one to be sure not always adhered to later by the Christian church. This important idea was also taken up both in the Talmud and in Islam, where it was grounded in both Greek and Hebraic elements in both systems" (Gosepath, 2011)

In the later development, mainly in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Hobbes (1651), Locke (1690), Rousseau (1755) and Kant (1785) developed the idea of the natural equality with different arguments. However, such ideas comprised to the tradition of the natural law and the social contract theory.

Particularly, Kant formulated what he called "categorical imperative" to define the moral obligation or the concept of duty. Kant defined the moral law as categorical imperatives. This principle is intrinsically valid because everyone must obey it in all situations. For Kant, the categorical imperative is a principle of reason, and it applies only to rational beings. It also postulates the worthiness of being happy or the conception of universal human worth. This concept emphasizes that autonomy and self-legislation cause to the understanding of the equal freedom for all rational agents as the sole principle of human rights (Kant 1797, p. 230). This transcendental idea effected to the Western culture to accept the concept of equal dignity and respect. Basically, in the Western political and moral culture, equal concern and respect have become as a minimal standard instead of just treating persons equally. Kymlika provokes that idea and states because of this situation. The moral equality promotes egalitarian plateau for other political theories as well- (Kymlicka 1990, p.5). However, the ideal of moral equality together with equal dignity has promoted egalitarianism which is a noticeable moral theory in political philosophy.

Presumption of Equality proclaims an ethical approach based on political justice. Construction of justice promotes equal distribution as a public distribution of good for all. Browne demonstrates that presumption equality claims onus justification, sustains that "the onus of justification is on him who would treat people differently, for, other things being equal, it is differential treatment, not equal treatment, that stands in need of

justification”(Browne, 1975, p. 47). He also distinguishes this principle from the Aristotelian formula³ on equal treatment. He partially defends what Feinberg observed:

“The presumption forin favour of equal treatment holds when the individuals involved are believed, assumed, or expected to be equal in the relevant respects, whereas the presumption for unequal treatment holds when the individuals involved are expected to be different in the relevant respects.”

However, Browne makes a distinction between the presumption of equality and inequality. This principle admires fair distribution of social goods and fair realization of distributions. According to the presumption of equality, the distribution must be impartially justified. Hence, it requires equal sharing in the distribution regardless of the differences. However, it may accept if there is any universally acceptable reason for an unequal distribution. In the past five decades, Benn & Peters (1959), Bedau (1967), Williams (1973), Tugendhat (1993 and 1997), Hinsch (2003) diversely contributed on this principle.

Moreover, the presumption of equality links to the morality of equal respect which relatively concerns equality among individuals with justification and distribution. Acknowledgment of the impartial justification of norms is reciprocal justification and autonomy of the individual under a universal rule. Equal distribution is not mere saying; it must be assumed with equal weight. Thus the principle of justice necessarily fits it.

However, Rawls presents two principles of justice in the original position.⁴ The second principle considers the distribution of income and wealth. He assumes a form of “everyone’s advantage” instead of equal distribution. “While the distribution of wealth and income need not be equal, it must be to everyone's advantage, and positions of authority and offices of command must be accessible to all.”(Rawls, 1971, p. 53) At present, he postulates such as the legal sphere of civil freedoms, political sphere,

³ “Equals are to be treated equally and unequals are to be treated unequally.” Aristotle

⁴ 1) “requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties” 2) “social and economic inequalities” (Rawls, 1971, p. 52) See: chapter two of *A Theory of Justice* (1971).

economic and social sphere as morally required. Many of them are considered as an alternative to the presumption of equality.

2.4 ALLEN BUCHANAN

Allen Buchanan is an American philosopher and a professor of International law. He has contributed to political philosophy and human rights philosophy by writing on Marx, social justice, international justice and foundations of international law. He recently published an article on, “*Equality and Human Rights*”. His work examined the practical implementation of modern philosophical literature on equality. Though he did not address all respects of egalitarianism, he was critical to some fundamental respects of egalitarianism that are most relevant to my investigation. I deal with this article to review two theories such as the Modest Objectivist View and Minimalism. Both theories come under the egalitarian doctrine.

Buchanan showed a puzzling disconnection between theory and practice of human rights. This puzzle existed for two reasons. One is the powerful modern commitment to equality. He was dissatisfied about modern philosophers who write on an equality with fewer implications of their conceptions and arguments for human rights. In other words, their works are more theoretical than practical. In fact

“Perhaps philosophers writing on equality have not articulated the implications of their work for human rights because they have operated within the strictures of a problematic, but largely unquestioned, assumption: that it is possible to develop a political philosophy for the individual state, considered in isolation.”(Buchanan, 2005, p. 70)

In modern, solo nation is the concern, not the globe in general. Buchanan attempted to revise this disconnection. His approach is based on descriptive and normative egalitarian, and he offered a modest objectivist view with rational resources to address such disconnection and to reconstruct the conventional idea of human rights. Moreover, he showed some challenges to such assumption. In the end, he examines whether the minimal egalitarianism of the Modest Objectivist View is robust for

egalitarianism. Buchanan concluded with some compatible principles and emphasized human rights as the figure of transnational justice.

Per Buchanan, literature on egalitarianism is complicated. For instance, some theorists interpret equality as a domestic case. This means equal treatment should exist 'among fellow citizens.' Though such interpretations are maintained 'among human beings,' the state remains as the advocator of equality (Buchanan, 2005, p. 70). Through this assumption, he presented ideal theories of cosmopolitan egalitarian justice which originated from the idea of domestic equality:

"For the most part, however, the major egalitarian theorists simply expound what they think equality requires, or consists in, without making it clear that equality of citizens may be more robust than equality among persons. Nor do they answer, or even ask, the obvious question: if what we owe people is significantly less than what we owe our fellow citizens, what is the basis for a commitment to human rights, where the latter are understood as universal standards that are in some meaningful sense egalitarian?" (Buchanan, 2005, p. 82)

He presented the minimal egalitarianism of human rights to show as a figure of egalitarian philosophy and to represent domestic and international cases. However, this distinguished idea does not ground on a moral consideration. The minimal or constrained egalitarianism of human rights for him fits with the more robust egalitarianism. This character promotes human rights beyond borders.

2.4.1 MODEST OBJECTIVISM

According to Buchanan, the Modest Objectivist View is the ground for the nature of egalitarian assumptions, and therefore it is crucial to justify the doctrine and practice of human rights both domestically and internationally (Buchanan, 2005, pp. 72,73). This is the basis of his argument as the Modest Objectivist View supports for the modern dynamic human rights conception and it causes to revise and evaluate such conception critically. Modest Objectivist View defends that all individuals have the opportunity for a

decent or a good human life. He pointed out the fact of human rights claims the same condition because of its normative intention.

Buchanan raises an idea, the *subject-centered* character of the human rights regarding human dignity (Buchanan, 2005, p. 72). This idea demonstrates an individual obligation to protect decent human life. All humans have right to protect their dignity and to live pain-free. This is not a moral condition as religions fundamentally imposed or a principle of a community. For him, it is a requirement of justification. He emphasizes 'inherent dignity' in which the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* present in the preambles, but he does not say conceive human rights as basic moral axioms (Buchanan, 2005, p. 72). This point mainly emphasizes a basic human interest which is common to all human beings. Therefore it is crucial to consider as the ground of human rights. In Buchanan's word, it is called subject-centered obligations.

The Moral Equality Assumption, as the Modest Objectivist View determines, is the ground for the conventional conception of human rights. Buchanan conceptualizes it through some formulas:

"Each of us has an obligation to help ensure that every individual has the opportunity to have a minimally decent human life. If it is to ground the commitment to human rights and convey the moral priority that the conventional conception of human rights claims, the Moral Equality Assumption must be understood as a fundamental moral obligation that falls on all individuals, though fulfilling it, as I elaborate below, typically requires appropriate institutions." (Buchanan, 2005, p. 73)

Buchanan distinguished an institutional function to counter the standard threats. He believes in the institutional aspect of human rights and human well-being as institutionally based. Indeed, has that all human rights are natural. If they were, they would not be practical to be as they are. Thus, the Modest Objectivist View does assume that "there is a set of characteristics common to all human beings that justify judgments about what undercuts the opportunity for a decent life" (Buchanan, 2005, p. 74).

2.4.2 MINIMALISM

Minimalism overlaps the Modest Objectivist View. As Buchanan mentions, this theoretical approach does not indicate what the ideal for all human beings is (Buchanan, 2005, p. 74). Minimalism rejects one kind of life is best for all. It also denied ~~what~~ Rawls's idea of a comprehensive conception of the good. Rawls suggests a systematic scheme of values to build the integration among private and public life (Rawls, 1999, p. 13). Buchanan's minimalism is not such scheme. The key argument of minimalism is that all human beings have an opportunity for a decent life. This is the only requirement of the theory, but it does not imply that all have a decent life. For Buchanan, this differs from what equality of opportunity is. The Modest Objectivist View does not require an outcome that advocates everyone to end up with similar opportunities. In my opinion, Buchanan's criticism is not logical because equality of opportunity does not advocate the same probability regarding the equal outcome. However, the Modest Objectivist View differs from equality of opportunity as it only requires all have an opportunity for a decent life. Buchanan emphasizes that provision of undue burdens is not meant for a reasonable opportunity for a minimally good life. According to his example, the right to health care fits minimally good life if people can avoid undue burdens like excessive costs. He demonstrates as follows:

"It is not enough that one be able to access the health-care services in question; one must also be able to do so without excessive costs. It would be either impractical or morally problematic, or both, to require that the costs of securing access be strictly equal across all individuals." (Buchanan, 2005, p. 75)

Moreover, Buchanan elucidates how minimal decent life is feasible if the international human rights institutions contribute. The current policy for human rights is not adequate. State and international institutions of human rights must examine the complexity of the minimal standards. Buchanan contends the Modest Objectivist View with Minimalism:

"Our conception of one standard threat to human well-being, premature death, might change and with it our conception of human rights. Although the Modest Objectivist View allows this sort of dynamism in our understanding of human

rights, it still presents human rights as minimal in one key respect that is relevant to the project of connecting human rights and philosophical egalitarianism: the core idea that each should have a (reasonable) opportunity for a decent life is a considerably less robust notion of equality than that of equality of outcomes, or equality of resources, or equality of welfare, or even equality of opportunity for welfare.” (Buchanan, 2005, p. 76)

Here, Buchanan accepts some egalitarian approaches. He stresses on the empirical practice of equality. He deploys the practice by stating that all human beings should have an opportunity for a decent life. His idea goes together with the international human rights institution and the domestic government conventional ideals (e.g., liberal democracy). In “The Modest Objectivist View,” Buchanan explicitly states about the Moral Equality Assumption; he captures both the universality of human rights and the notion of a ‘minimal’ standard. The Modest Objectivist View shows how human rights can be both egalitarian and yet limited in their demands” (Buchanan, 2005, p. 77). Therefore, Buchanan’s philosophical framework of equality conveys a conventional conception; his contribution to equality principle is rather different than we identify from other egalitarian assumptions.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Equality concept spreads in wider context; I explored it in normative and political philosophy. This chapter reviewed various assumptions and connotations in the principle of equality that paved the way to demonstrate un-uniformity in identifying equality. Articles from UDHR or other charters clearly state the importance of equality becomes. The most theories of equality have prioritized social, cultural and biological facts. Four principles of equality also represent a common sensitive area of equality. Buchanan examines the practical implementation of modern philosophical literature on equality. He inquires two theories such as the Modest Objectivist View and Minimalism that belong to the schools of egalitarian doctrine. This View defends that all individuals have the opportunity for a decent or minimal good human life. All those theories have developed a

literature of equality; none of them have approached to equality through the identity recognition.

In the next chapter, I explore how normative philosophy recognizes individual identity.

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CHAPTER THREE

IDENTITY IN THE THOUGHT OF RICOEUR AND TAYLOR

“As soon as one man was recognized by another as a sentient, thinking Being similar to himself, the desire or need to communicate feelings and thoughts to him made the first man begin to look for ways to do so.” —

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Language*

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3.1 BACKGROUND

As I emphasize in the Chapter One, recognition of self identity is the parallel concept of equality. I take it as a given that self-recognition is essential to the understanding of equality. Self identity is still under achievement of the interpretation of it. This is where I found some weaknesses in the definitions of identity: with such unclear interpretations we can neither recognize what identity means nor formulate it to understand equality. This chapter examines the identity concept by means of normative philosophical discourses. Since this topic claims a broad context, I have selected the most relevant philosophical texts on the subject.

The concept of identity is interested topic to scholars those who are coming from the various fields of social sciences and humanities streams; such as Philosophy, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science etc. Identity concept is comprised of various combinations and permutations of the understanding, meaning, interpretation and unique approaches in those fields. According to some factors of these writers have related and adaptive of the core theme of this study. In normative philosophy, identity concept claims an expanded literature as well.¹ Each writers expressed their different perspectives on identity, but some are represented inter-relationship when comprise of such features. Out of those fields, my research addresses a person's identity because that is the point that can be led to understand equality.

Personal identity deals with the persistence of person through time. Therefore, it is a discussion about ourselves with virtue or our being persons. Western philosophic literature is rich with writings on questions such as "What I am?", "How did I arise?" and "What will happen after death?" Even after centuries of discussion, these questions still perplex philosophers and laypeople alike and people have yet agree upon an answer. In my research, I select two philosophers; Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) and Charles Taylor (b. 1931). In 20th century Western philosophic discussions on identity, Ricoeur is one of the foremost normative philosophers. In *The Course of Recognition* (2005) Ricoeur outlines his ideas view recognition. He examines three guises of recognition: 1) recognition as identification, 2) recognition of oneself and 3) mutual recognition. These three aspects support my idea of the concept of identity. Another work by Ricoeur, *Narrative Identity*, is utterly important for my study. This article explores the distinction between identity as sameness and identity as selfhood. In both works, Ricoeur critically examines number of philosophers such as Aristotle, Augustine, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger. Given Ricoeur's combination phenomenological description with hermeneutics, it is natural that he is included in my philosophical investigation.

¹ For instance, the number of articles in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, I drew attention to the various theories and perspectives on identity; Identity Over Time; Personal Identity; Personal Identity and Ethics; Supplement to John Locke - The Identity of Indiscernible; The Immateriality of the Soul and Personal Identity; Reid on Memory and Personal Identity; Relative Identity; The Mind/Brain Identity Theory; Identity Politics and Recognition so forth.

Likewise, Charles Taylor presents *self* concept identifying a broad meaning of its limited etymology. He surveys historical identity and the complexity of modern Western identity; he also examines identity's moral dimensions. Taylor mainly reveals this view points through his *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (1989). Taylor's ideas on the self and its moral components make for a natural pairing with the works of Paul Ricoeur and, thereby, an obvious inclusion in my thesis as a means to recognize identity and understand equality.

3.2 IDENTITY AS A NORMATIVE PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT

It is reasonable to question 'What is the problem of identity?'. Obviously, the problem occurs not because of identity, but because of personhood over time. The notion of *self* is used synonymously with identity.² However, self and identity are not entirely the same. As Eric Olson writes in his article "Personal Identity", it is a protean term. (Olson, 2014) However, he avoids the word *self* in his article, since, for him, *self* lacks a clear meaning. For Olson,

"‘self’ does sometimes mean ‘person’. But it often means something different: some sort of immaterial subject of consciousness, for instance (as in the phrase ‘the myth of the self’). The term is often used without any clear meaning at all" (Olson, 2014).

Consideration in his argument of *self* embraces several kind of mythologies and therefore, I must be predicated such un-empirical mythologies should not be involved to the discussion on person's identity. Nevertheless, it is imposible to ignore the term, *self* as Olson mentions because some philosophers use this word to mean 'person'. This appears as an splitting hairs. Thus, I assume that a word is not to be confused by taking just one single meaning because it can be used subjectively in various contexts. Deciding on the importance in a word is the context which it represents. Therefore, my exploration ensures the context, not just words.

² See *Handbook of Self and Identity* edited by Mark R Leary and June Price Tangney. This work inquires how the terms self and identity are used as they were synonyms. Also, this examination presents various dimetions of these two concepts.

The origin of the word, identity comes to English via Latin and French. It is derived from French *identité*, which is formed from the Latin *idem*, *the same* (influenced by Late Latin *essentitās*, *being* and *identidem*, *repeatedly*) (Identity, 2016, identity). In the Western philosophy, discussions about identity began with French philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650), who presented the notion, "I think, therefore I am", and later "I think, I exist". Descartes' proposition has led many to question what exactly "I" is, and if indeed we can derive an "I-ness" from doubt. In Cartesian philosophy, the mind is wholly separate from the corporeal body. Sensation and the perception of reality are thought to be the source of untruth and illusions, with the only reliable truths to be had in the existence of a metaphysical mind (Robinson, 2016). Hegel argues through his famous Master-Slave Dialectic that we do not always doubt and that we do not always have consciousness (Hegel, 1977, p. 111; Stern, 2002, pp. 71-74). He examines the mind as only becoming conscious when it encounters another mind. Nietzsche claims that the Soul is an interaction of forces, an ever-changing thing far from the immortal soul posited by both Descartes and the Christian tradition (Nietzsche, 2002, pp. 11-12). In his discussion of "Composing of the Soul" Nietzsche writes

"Body am I, and soul"—thus speaks the child. ...But the awakened and knowing say: body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body" (The Portable Nietzsche, 1976, pp. 146-147).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) encounters this field with his insight reading of Franz Brentano's treatise on Aristotle's manifold uses of the word "being", a work which provoked Heidegger to ask what kind of unity underlies this multiplicity of uses. Heidegger examines the "history of *being*", that is, the history of the forgetting of *being*. While Husserl argues that all experience is grounded in "care". This is the basis of his "existential analytic", which he develops in *Being and Time*. According to Heidegger, experience properly entails finding the being for whom such a description might matter.(Heidegger, 1996, pp. 156,157) Heidegger thus constructs his description of experience with reference to "Dasein" (existence. "Da": here/there. "Sein": being).(Heidegger, 1996, p. 159) In his question of "who it is that Dasein is in its everydayness", he rejects the idea of Dasein as a Cartesian 'I-thing' because once again

this would be to think of Dasein as present-at-hand.(Heidegger, 1996, p. 159; Ricoeur, 1991, pp. 191,192) In searching for an alternative answer, Heidegger observes that equipment is often revealed to us as being for the sake of (the lives and projects of) other Dasein. Similarly to Nietzsche, he suggests that people only really form an identity after facing death.(Nietzsche, 2002, pp. 146,147) Most people never escape the "they", a socially constructed identity of "how one ought to be" created mostly to try to escape death through ambiguity. Nevertheless, as we examined above, some philosophers talk about questionable existence of identity plausible person's identity.

Paul Ricoeur's expands and extends these ideas with two questions and which he considers to be fundamental to philosophy: "Who am I?" and "How should I live?" In relation to the question "Who am I?", Ricoeur acknowledges a long-standing debt to Marcel and Heidegger. To the moral question, the debt is to Aristotle and Kant. In addressing the question "Who am I?", Ricoeur seeks to understand the nature of selfhood. (Kim, n.d., p. The Philosophy) With this background, Ricoeur investigates personal identity and clearly reveals the distinction between the identity as sameness, or a third-person perspective that objectifies identity (*idem*) and the identity as selfhood, 'Who am I?' (*ipse*). We can examine his philosophy on identity mainly based on his work, "Narrative Identity".

3.3 PAUL RICOEUR

3.3.1 NARRATIVE IDENTITY

In this text, Ricoeur provides an epistemological interpretation to the term, identity. First, he collects some weaknesses of where he found what he called traditional conceptualizations of identity.³ For Ricoeur, commonly acceptable narrative identities are a necessary way to understand personal identity. Narrative identity is acquired through the mediation of narrative function. He raises two narratives: Historical and Fictional. Historical narrative is the time of actions, the time of inaugurations of new sequences and

³ Rosa Cabecinhas shows dominant traditional conceptualizations of identity such as belonging, sameness, stability, and continuity. She states, "Recent theoretical approaches recognize how contemporary national and transnational identity narratives require hybrid multilayered configurations."(Cabecinhas, 2013, p. 6)

arrangements. In historical narratives, individuals relate historical events of actual people and events and blend facts with imagined characters and situations. Ricoeur's argument is that the constitution of narrative identity is the sought-after site of this fusion between narrative and fiction:

"We have an intuitive pre-comprehension of this state of affairs: do not human lives become more readily intelligible when they are interpreted in the light of the stories that people tell about them? And do not these 'life stories' themselves become more intelligible when what one applies to them are the narrative models—plots—borrowed from history or fiction (a play or a novel)?" (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 188)

In designing by Ricoeur that the human narratives and, thereby, human identity become, as Ricoeur states, more plausible when considered using the following chain of assertions: self-knowledge is an interpretation; self-interpretation, in its turn, finds in narrative among other signs symbols, a privilege mediation (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 188). This mediation, for Ricoeur, "draws on history as much as it does on fiction, turning the story of a life into a fictional story or a historical fiction comparable to those biographies of great men in which history and fiction are intertwined." (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 188) Personal identity presents two elements: sameness (Latin: *idem*; English: same; German: *gleich*) and self-hood (Latin: *ipse*; English: self; German: *Selbst*), (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 189). Problematic situations occur in the identification of personal identity due to the confusion between these two terms.

3.3.1.1 IDENTITY AS SAMENESS (*idem*) AND AS SELF-HOOD (*ipse*)

According to Ricoeur, while *Idem* Identity and *Ipse* Identity are two parts of the whole, they differ in one significant way. The key to understanding the difference is in the Latin root: *idem* meaning sameness and *ipse* meaning self. *Idem* Identity is that which stays the same ("What is the same?"), while *ipse* identity changes through time ("Who takes responsibility?" and "Who is the same?"). According to many philosophers, sameness can be explained with numerical identity and qualitative identity (Noonan & Curtis, 2014; Parfit, 1984, pp. 201-202). Numerical identity is when "two objects refer to

the same thing.”. For example, a man from conception to death: the foetus and the adult are two objects that represent the same human being. Qualitative identity is when an object duplicates - two tea cups made at the same factory, for example, are similar yet different. Comprising in both of these identities are based on sameness. Yet these examples, as Paul Ricoeur points out, “The demonstration of this continuity functions as a criterion supplementary to that of similarity in the service of numerical identity.” (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 190) Ricoeur notes that the changes that occur over time are composed

“not only actions and events, but also of characters or personages. Plots relate the mutual development of a story and a character or set of characters. Every character in a story of any complexity both acts and is acted upon.” (Ricoeur, 1992, pp. 141-142)

Ricoeur realises that the characters in any narrative “only rise to the status of persons—fictional or real—who can initiate action when one evaluates their doings and sufferings and imputes them to the actors and victims as praiseworthy or otherwise.” (David & Bernard, 2016). According to Ramberg and Gjesdal, it is possible to “it is possible to “[evaluate] how [a] person responds when confronted by another living being who is in some need that the person can address.” (Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2014). Looking specifically in these interactions, those terms can ensure to create and maintain both the identities of Idem and Ipse.

Certainly, the development of identities in the terms Idem and Ipse, Ricoeur has sum up his commitment into four points.⁴ These points illustrate how people create a personal identity in order to make sense of themselves. In contrast, Ipse Identity responds to the questions “Who takes responsibility?” and “Who is the same?” These questions, in

⁴ (1) “Because my personal identity is a narrative identity, I can make sense of myself only in and through my involvement with others. (2) In my dealings with others, I do not simply enact a role or function that has been assigned to me. I can change myself through my own efforts and can reasonably encourage others to change as well. (3) Nonetheless, because I am an embodied existence and hence have inherited both biological and psychological constraints, I cannot change everything about myself. And because others are similarly constrained, I cannot sensibly call for comprehensive changes in them. (4) Though I can be evaluated in a number of ways, e.g., physical dexterity, verbal fluency, technical skill, the ethical evaluation in the light of my responsiveness to others, over time, is, on the whole, the most important evaluation.” (David & Bernard, 2016)

turn, ensure that the action taken is the owned by the action-taker and it belongs to his personality. This sense of belonging to the action-taker's personality (Ispe Identity) illustrates why the word 'self' rather than 'me' is used: the fact that an action or an event *belongs* to the action-taker's personality is an indication of the self rather than the idea of an 'I' being the doer of an action.

Next, Ricoeur deals with issues regarding permanence in time. The first difficulty is that of personal identity resulting from the confusion between two interpretations of permanence in time. The second issue is about the concept of narrative identity offering a solution to the aporias of personal identity. Ricoeur was adamant in his disagreement with the the ideas explicated by Derek Parfit, the author of *Reasons and Persons*. Parfit asserts that an impersonal description of the facts, whether relating to a psychological criterion or to a bodily criterion of identity, is 'reductionism'. (Parfit, 1984, pp. 204-209) Despite, Ricoeur assumes that self simply does not belong to the category of events and facts.

In *Reasons and Persons*, Parfit argues that person's psychological features depend upon the status of his brain (Parfit, 1984, p. 237). It is simile to Cartesian passion of ego. Parfit argues that we are separately existing entities; we differ from our brains and bodies (Parfit, 1984, pp. 230,240). To establish his reductionist view, he presents science fictions such as brain transplants, brain bisection, and the construction of an exact replica of the brain (Parfit, 1984, pp. 236-240). Ricoeur considers these science fictions as puzzling cases, and proposes a literary fiction as narrative identity. He suggests that the narrative identity can be contrasted term by term to that of Parfit. In turn, that narrativity offers an alternative solution is already anticipated or presupposed by the way in which we talk in everyday life about a life-story (Ricoeur, 1991, pp. 192-194). The confrontation with Parfit becomes interesting when literary fiction produces situations in which selfhood can be distinguished from sameness (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 194).

Ricoeur concerns himself fundamentally with narrative unity and he proposes to make a detour through the literary forms of narrative and precisely through those of fictional narrative (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 196). Narrative constructs the durable properties of a character, what one could call his narrative identity, by constructing the kind of

dynamic identity found in the plot which creates the character's identity (Ricoeur, 1991, pp. 195-196). The narrative identity of the character could only correspond to the discordant concordance of the story itself (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 195).

In the conclusion of the thesis, he illuminates his usage of purgative virtues, the thought experiments offered by literature and more precisely the limit-cases of dissolution of sameness-identity.(Ricoeur, 1991, p. 198) For Parfit, identity is not what matters, but it is still someone who says this (Parfit, 1984, p. 239; Ricoeur, 1991, p. 194). The sentence, "I am nothing" must be allowed to retain its paradoxical form: nothing would no longer mean anything if it were not imputed to an I (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 199). Moreover, He makes clear I to be a self, deprived of assistance from sameness. (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 199) It is the meaning of many dramatic, not to say terrifying experiences in respect of our own identity, that is the necessity to go through the trial of this nothingness of permanence-identity, to which nothingness would be the equivalence of the null case of the transformation dear to Straus (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 199). Many conversion narratives thus bear witness to such dark night of personal identity.

3.3.2 THE COURSE OF RECOGNITION

The Course of Recognition(Ricoeur, 2005) is one of the most well-known works of Paul Ricoeur. It is a great contribution to the debate on politics of identity and difference by uncovering the theme recognition. Ricoeur examines diverse connotations of the word 'recognition' and he identifies implicit meanings that lead to deep penetrations. For me, this lexicographical treatment of the word 'recognition' is an attempt to avoid discordance of the word and semantic deficiency.⁵ Therefore, this is a philosophical thematic treatment of the word 'recognition'.⁶ Ricoeur provides a monograph to the word 'recognition' deriving about twenty of its meaning while citing examples⁷ (Ricoeur, 2005, pp. 5-9).

⁵ He has recapitulated about twenty meanings of the term, recognition as he met in the dictionaries he went through.

⁶ For Ricoeur, defining of a word with series of meanings is a "rule-governed polysemy". Following Littré's advice about the rule that "needs to be discovered", Ricoeur emphasizes, "one governed by a methodical history of usage, which it is the task of the lexicographer to produce." (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 04).

⁷ Arto Litinen categorizes Ricoeur's work into three families. "There is, first, a family of meanings related

First three chapters of the book are a sequential amplification of major derivations of recognition. In the first chapter, he portrays “recognition” as “identifying an object or a person” that can be understood as they appear. This chapter goes with texts of Descartes, Kant, and Marcel Proust. Plus, it deals with knowledge theories as they judge an object as “the same” through an identification process.

In accordance of literature review of Ricoeur, he briefly distinguishes three philosophical approaches to the term recognition: Kantian recognition; Bergson’s recognition of memories; and Heglian *Anerkennung*. For Ricoeur, Kant’s *Rekognition* signifies subjective knowledge for recognition. Bergson’s recognition of memories is a reflective psychological notion called survival of memories. In other words, he discusses recognition of oneself in memory. Hegel’s *Anerkennung* context is a critique of reason that emphasizes that recognition has a place in the process of actualization or realization. (Ricoeur, 2005, pp. 19-21) This is called social context of self recognition. Ricoeur demonstrates this through his lexicographical connections. Yet, Ricoeur refuses further complexity on self recognition. He takes recognition of self as “rule-governed polysemy” meaning that recognition has unity of “thought events”. He asserts that

“In order to identify it is necessary to distinguish, and it is in distinguishing that we identify. This requirement does not govern only a theory of recognition limited to the theoretical plane; it governs, with the same insistence, all the uses stemming from the reversal from the act of recognition to being recognized - being distinguished and identified is what the humiliated person aspires to.” (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 25)

This is not only a lexical definition, but also a psychological constitution. That is why Ricoeur stresses, “by grasp[ing] an object with the mind, through thought” is, more precisely, the act of identification. Considering the argument of Ricoeur, theories of knowledge have not paid sufficient attention to the lesson of recognition. Objectifying is

to identification of things. We can identify familiar people and objects directly by their holistic style or bearing, or we can identify things for the first time by some mark. Second, there is a family of meanings related to accepting some claim or document as true or valid. Third, there is a family of senses in which recognition concerns people.” (Laitinen, 2007, p. 225)

insufficient because it misses the “emotional dimension” of a “lived experience”.⁸ Martin Blanchard, who reviews *The Course of Recognition*, mentions that Ricoeur’s argument is not complete as it requires the conceptual modifications of such knowledge theories in order to include the experiential dimension. (Blanchard, 2007, p. 374) Nevertheless, Ricoeur’s show how to reconstruct knowledge dealing with lived experiences through the idea, “ruins of representation”. In addition, Litinen categorized Ricoeur’s recognition of identification into five aspects.⁹ In short, Ricoeur’s approach to recognition of identification is more phenomenological; it is an examination of the subjective experience.

Next, the second chapter treats “recognition of one’s own identity” that identifies the individual and collective capabilities. These capabilities cause to the understanding of one’s self-identity. This is more anthropological; as some commentaries pointed out, Ricoeur acknowledges a philosophy of action and a practical philosophy. These points could be expected because Ricoeur uses “acting and suffering” as a way to the recognition (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 69). In the discourse on recognition of oneself, Ricoeur creates a bridge between modern notions of self and those of ancient philosophers from Greek literature. He sees that the notion of self possesses virtues meaning and rational action. (Ricoeur, 2005, pp. 80-85) Plus, he examines Aristotle, Descartes and Lock to counterpart this development. For him, the emergence of the moral self in action asserts “the emergence of the point of view of the subject in the description of rational action.” (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 87) This intension implies a distinguishable notion called self responsibility for recognition. Before Ricoeur, other philosophers used this term. For instance, in “Recognizing Responsibility” Bernard Williams examines our own and other feelings and actions (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 70; Williams, 1993, pp. 26,27). On the contrast, Ricoeur emphasises recognition of oneself as a capable agent. He deploys this notion through mutual recognition.

Throughout the chapter Ricoeur raises various ideas on recognition of oneself. For

⁸ For instance, we identify the people who are familiar naturally as their holistic style or bearing. This is the same with familiar objects as well.

⁹ (1) “Identification as a synthesis (2) Identification as distinguishing something from other things (3) Identification on the basis of marks versus on the basis of more holistic “style” (4) the relevance of presence, disappearing and reappearing, and change (5) (with Descartes) the topic of accepting “an idea” as true” (Laitinen, 2007, p. 226).

example, he writes about “kinship between attestation and self-recognition” (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 91). Attestation means various self capacities, as in something she or he can do (*I believe that I can*). This idea of “recognizing responsibility” was connoted by the Greek philosophers Homer, Sophocles and Aristotle. (Ricoeur, 2005, pp. 91-92). Even though Ricoeur reflects this concept with the sense of “thinking as true”, he shows a gap between these two concepts. For him, attestation belongs to the idea of testifying in conversations, historiography, law courts and religion. Self-recognition claims semantic fields like recognition-identification and recognition-*Anerkennung*. (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 92).

Another important point that Ricoeur presents is the connection between virtue and self action. He acknowledges the concept of good which was represented by Greek philosophers. Eventhough he assumes that happiness is the highest good, he contends that it should also make sense. Therefore, he examines Aristotle’s notions, “kind of life” and “fulfilled” life. Then, Ricoeur presents his idea on this concept:

“Happiness has its source in us, in our activities. Here lies the most primitive condition of what we call self-recognition. Its deepest-lying possibility is its anchorage in the goal of happiness in those activities that make up the human task as such, our task.” (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 81)

In most of the above argument confirmed that why Ricoeur accepts self recognition as a responsibility and accepts it as a virtue. This approach leads Ricoeur to examine virtue in order to understand self recognition. Of course, for Ricoeur, the aim of self recognition is not to inquire what virtue is, but to show how to become good.¹⁰ (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 82) Hence, recognition is more practical than theoretical, which makes Ricoeur’s ideas sufficient for the research goals of this paper.

In the third chapter, Ricoeur presents an original and profound insight on recognition as a mutual form. This form of recognition aids in understanding the particular subtleties of asymmetry. Ricoeur appears to disagree with Husserl and Levinas,

¹⁰ Paul Ricoeur affirms what Aristotle states; “Our present inquiry, unlike all the others, does not have as its aim a speculative end. If we undertake this inquiry, it is not in order to know what virtue is—for our study would then have no use—but in order to become good. We must therefore necessarily turn our examination to the domain of our actions, and seek in what way we ought to carry them out. Is it not they, as we have said, that are the decisive element capable of determining the very quality of the habitual states of our character?” (1103b26-30) (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 82)

both of whom assume opposite notions of dissymmetry.¹¹ What Ricoeur postulates is the mutuality between the self and the others. In this sense, he reconstructs the Hegelian theme of *Anerkennung* by assuming “thoughts events”.

Next, Ricoeur shows the connection of Axel Honneth’s recognition theory with *Anerkennung*. As Honneth inquires struggle for recognition is Hegel’s *Anerkennung*. Thus following Honneth’s work, Ricoeur emphasizes, “The three models of recognition provide the speculative structure, while the negative sentiments give flesh and blood to the struggle for recognition.”(Ricoeur, 2005, p. 188) Love, universal respect and social dimension of politics are those three forms of recognition. Love concerns strong emotional attachment among a small group of people.¹²(Ricoeur, 2005, p. 189) Each of them recognizes their needs and they mutually recognize as they are needy creatures. These attachments, as Ricoeur states are inconsistent as the deprivation of approbation which harm to self-confidence. “Humiliation, experienced as the withdrawal or refusal of such approbation, touches everyone at the prejudicial level of his or her “being-with” others. The individual feels looked down on from above, even taken as insignificant. Deprived of approbation, the person is as if nonexistent.”(Ricoeur, 2005, p. 191) Universal respect of recognition concerns legal recognition of rights and it is more institutional. In this regard, humiliation arises due to denial of civil, political or welfare rights.(Ricoeur, 2005, p. 200) Thus, it stresses self-respect. Finally, social dimension of politics denotes social esteem of recognition, which concerns a broad context. In this sense, social esteem bears individual qualities for the life of others.(Ricoeur, 2005, p. 202) And therefore, it goes with notions like prestige and consideration.

Some of contemporary political philosophy who work with ongoing research of recognition and who mostly concern the question of “What is it that must be recognized?” preferred in the defense of multiculturalism. This atmosphere is more institutional and political approach. For example, Will Kymlicka as a notable figure in

¹¹ “One version, that of Husserl in his *Cartesian Meditations*, remains a phenomenology of perception. In this sense, his approach is theoretical. The other, that of Levinas, in *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, is straightforwardly ethical and, by implication, anti-ontological.” (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 154)

¹² “Love relationships are to be understood here as referring to primary relationships insofar as they – on the model of friendships, parent-child relationships, as well as erotic relationships between lovers – are constituted by strong emotional attachments among a small number of people.”(Honneth, 1995, p. 95)

political liberalism answer the question by emphasizing structure of culture connected with “characters of culture” that lead to a pluralistic world view.(Kymlicka, 1989, p. 167) My further references of Ricoeur’s text, he differs from such mainstream approaches. Ricoeur suggests a moral motivational approach on recognition. Thinking of his classic, he admits person’s capacity to the understanding of a world other than one’s own. In this respect, I emphasize, it is an accomplishment of peace, gratitude just as he highlights through the example of giving gift that signifies the adequate way of establishing mutuality.

3.4 CHARLE TAYLOR

2.4.1 SOURCES OF THE SELF - SELF AND MORALITY

In this section, I examine Charles Teylor’s text, *Sources of the Self* to exploe the relation between self identity and morality. Taylor mainly covers two intentions; the historical sources of the modern understanding of selfhood and correct understanding of selfhood which links to values. This is a radical revision to comprehend modern identity. From the phrase, ‘modern identity’ Taylor means that various standers of the modern notion of being a human agent or a person or a self. Taylor makes an interesting link between modern identity and historical sources of self. He mainly articulates the history of the modern identity. For Taylor, senses of awareness, freedom, individuality, and being embedded in nature are the connotations of human agent in the modern West.(Taylor, 1989, p. ix) He contends against the complexity and richness of modern identity. Yet he observes the modern understanding of self with its earlier picture of human identity. Many reviews of *Sources of the self* affirm that Taylor contributes to the philosophical notion of self by revising the view of self which is stripped of its good or moral framework. In other words, he has analizes the connectedness of self and morality. Taylor examines three main arias of modern identity.

1. “Modern inwardness, the sense of ourselves as being with inner depths and the connected notion that we are ‘selves’.
2. Affirmation of ordinary life which develop from the early modern period.

3. Expressive notion of nature as an inner moral source.”(Taylor, 1989, p. x)

First, the portrait of the grip on self in the book builds chronologically. Taylor traces through Augusting to Descates and on present time. Then, he reconstructs the early and contemporary form of enlightenment. Thirdly, he observes late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as transforming period and twentieth century literature as its manifestations. He shows the relationships between the senses of self and morality, in other words, connections between identity and the good. He stresses the importance of the preliminary discussions of moral philosophies to come up this core study. “To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what is not, what has meaning and importance for you and what is trivial and secondary”(Taylor, 1989, p. 28) Taylor accounts what the worth our respect as morality. Individual raises in the horizon of this space in which claims such qualitative discriminations. This means self acts in a moral horizon and as Taylor defines identification of self is impossible without such moral framework. He sets forth;

“doing without (moral) frameworks is utterly impossible for us; otherwise put, that the horizons within which we live our lives and which make sense of term have to include these strong qualitative discriminations. Moreover... living without strongly qualified horizon is constitutive of human agency, that stepping outside these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood.”(Taylor, 1989, p. 27)

We must abstract the strong idea from this argument. As I mentioned above, Taylor reconstructs a discussion on self. Yet, Taylor’s attempt is an analysis rather than a full philosophy for the self. Nevertheless, authors state that *Sources of the Self* necessarily leads for new approaches of self that ought to follow (Frisina, 2002, p. 16). It is important to know what Taylor means by “one’s life” and “connected outside”. In short, this is the ‘contact’ of the good (Taylor, 1989, p. 44). Further, one’s life has incorporation with outer thing which is the good which is to be understood by ‘contact’. But what happens to this contact when it despoiled by other nauseating? For Taylor, it could be a brute

reaction (Taylor, 1989, p. 06). Taylor defines identity that co-operates with virtues as horizon.

"My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand"(Taylor, 1989, p. 27)

This is not just only seeking the answer for who I am but also the judging position of what the worth of life is and what is not. Anca Georgescu (2008) observes this dimension of self and defends as follows.

"The dissolution of such a framework would flatten everything in our life on the scale of its worth and dignity; in tern it would lead to the emergence of the nonchalant, meaningless world. Consequently, our life would be also hurled into the abyss of meaninglessness after this moral space or horizon disappears from view. The feelings of meaningless extinguish the desire to commit one self and easily trust one into the paralis is of will. Human agency cannot dispense with such a loss."(Georgescu, 2008, p. 15)

Georgescu agreeably reviews what Taylor raised up. However, we must aware whether Taylor suggested an exemplary way to understand self identity. Some writers prove that the morality Taylor emphasized is an idealistic that is free from discriminated hierarchy origin through dimensions of religious or cultural and so on. For example, faithful devotees link values to the God by their faith. Their judgments are threatened by their own natural desire or craving for faiths, experience and rational.

3.4.2 COGNITION, NARRATIVITY AND SELF IDENTITY

As human beings, we have a biological form and mental feelings and thoughts. Our perception connects with internal body faculties and external correspondent objects. And we identify our action with body-mind experiences. Some psychologists states that individual life in the world remains by possessing qualitative dimension of him-self and

other external things. Therefore, the component of every action is this measuring mind while decision is led by either rational or emotions. Taylor contends that the the most important relationship is between person's very identity and values. According to him, identity is embraced values and such values assert the leadership for the direction of our life. Hence, mental and cognition process should not be involved to the moral dimension of self identity. Taylor links lives in narrative forms or life stories with determination of human agency.

"One could put it this way: because we cannot but orient ourselves to the good, and thus determine our place relative to it and hence determine the direction of our lives, we must inescapably understand our lives in narrative form, as a "quest." But one could perhaps start from another point: because we have to determine our place in relation to the good, therefore we cannot be without an orientation to it, and hence must see our life in story. From whichever direction, I see these conditions as connected facets of the same reality, inescapable structural requirements of human agency." (Taylor, 1989, pp. 51,52).

Taylor articulates this matter in relation to the moral reaction. As I noted above, marginalize of moral frameworks are rather difficult attempt since they appear as complicated constructions mixed with cultural tendencies, motivations for reasoning and conjoined person's experience. With this condition, Taylor's defining escapes cognitive processes of person while connecting to narratives and metaphors. "...narrativity and metaphors such as the *quest for the good* in order to preserve the nuances, ambiguities, and complexities that we bring to bear on all of our qualitative assessments about the world and ourselves"(Frisina, 2002, p. 14) But Taylor's approach requires narrative understanding of our life is related to our actions. This means the act of self narration is unavoidable; it connects with the good. It is not important whether such narration inclusion or exclusion. Narrations are moderate junks derived from innumerable episodes of the life. What narrator does is with self-narrations that evaluating as morally higher or lower. Therefore, narrative naturally deserves for moral articulation. And also narrative legitimizes and evaluates which experience or practice of narrator. Taylor holds this position of narration. Even though it provokes as true self-narrative, it is still

to be concerned 'identity crises'. Hence, this true-self narrative is nothing than self desire. This is why Taylor remarks, "We grasp our lives in a narrative" (Taylor, 1989, p. 47) Philosophers like Paul Ricoeur and Heidegger have presented simile assumptions of a qualitative discrimination of human agency (Heidegger, 1996; Ricoeur, 1991). Yet, Taylor differs from them since he conjoins narrative self with the values as inescapable relationship. This denotes that studying of sources of self means understanding of historical narratives in which consist variety of values and therefore it makes the present way of our life and thoughts. Thus, Taylor presents a naturalistic view of self.¹³

In the discussion of ultimate good, Taylor admits the theistic understanding of ultimate good. For him, even though we accept the many value of modernity, there is inadequate since they have just imposed demands without motivational sourness. With this situation, if we reflect our selves we might get self regret. This is why he agrees with St. Augustine's opinion on confession in which he addresses God.¹⁴ (Taylor, 1992, p. 29)

Moreover, Taylor links identity with other four notions; idea of authenticity; demand for recognition; idea of difference, and the principle of equal dignity.(Taylor, 1992) He has illustrated this idea in his work, "Politics of Recognition". Authenticity means "that of being true to myself and my own particular way of being" (Taylor, 1992, p. 28) According to this notion each one should live as his own way or the way that is true to him. Demand for recognition presents that other have a responsibility to be sensitive with this authenticity and they should interact with that selfhood. With this sense, Taylor agrees with St. Augustine¹⁵ as well as Jean Jacques Rousseau with his intention on individuality and morality.¹⁶ When we examine how Taylor defines authenticity this we can see a close relationship between authenticity and recognition.

¹³ In, "Human Agency and Language, Philosophical Paper" Taylor provides prolegomenon to sources of Self. (Taylor, 1985). See. 1-6 pages of "Introduction" of this paper.

¹⁴ Augustine states, "you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you." (Schneewind, 1991, p. 423)

¹⁵ As I mentioned before, Augustine suggests a path to God as through self awareness.

¹⁶ "Rousseau frequently presents the issue of morality as that of our following a voice of nature within us. This voice is often drowned out by the passions that are induced by our dependence on others, the main one being amour propre, or pride. Our moral salvation comes from recovering authentic moral contact with ourselves."(Taylor, 1992, p. 29)

“Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, which is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am realizing a potentiality that is properly my own. This is the background understanding to the modern ideal of authenticity, and to the goals of self-fulfillment and self-realization in which the ideal is usually couched.”(Taylor, 1992, p. 31)

Idea of difference denotes the deservedness for the self recognition. This is just as I think as I and you recognize as you. This infers that person to person is not the same and therefore people may have different rights. (Taylor, 1992, p. 30; Waldron, 2010, p. 157) Equal dignity however represents that equal respect for everyone. According to third and fourth notions, while it requires interpersonal respect by accepting differences in some respects everyone entitle to equal respect.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the identity concept by means of philosophical discourses. I mainly selected two philosophers; Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor. In *Narrative Identity*, explores the distinction between identity as sameness and selfhood. This work, epistemologically examines the self identity. *The Course of Recognition*, examines three guises of recognition: 1) recognition as identification, 2) recognition of oneself and 3) mutual recognition. In this text, Ricoeur deploys oneself and mutual recognition by applying some moral qualities like peace, gratitude. Charles Taylor presents *self* concept connecting to virtue. He surveys historical identity and the complexity of modern identity. In *Sources of the self*, Taylor mainly covers two intentions; the historical sources of the modern understanding of selfhood and correct understanding of selfhood which links to values. For Taylor, senses of awareness, freedom, individuality, and being embedded in nature are the connotations of human agent in the modern West. As Taylor asserts, identification of self is impossible without moral framework. Taylor also links identity with other four notions; idea of authenticity; demand for recognition; idea of difference, and the principle of equal dignity. In conclusion, both Ricoeur and Taylor claim narrative identity. Ricoeur distinguishes how recognition oneself causes to mutual

recognition. Taylor presents sources of self in a moral framework including equal dignity. Therefore, two philosophers have given signs that self recognition paws way to the understanding of others and it functions as moral dimension.

For this theoretical work, Buddhist perspective of self identity supports altenatively; next chapter dedicates for that investigation.

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CHAPTER FOUR

IDENTITY IN BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

“A human being is not grasped only from the human point of view, that is, not simply on an anthropocentric basis, but on a much broader trans-homocentric, cosmological basis. More concretely, in Buddhism human beings are grasped as a part of all sentient beings or even as a part of all beings, sentient and non sentient, because both human and nonhuman beings are equally subject to transiency or impermanency.” (Abe, 1986, p. 202)

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- 4.3 CONDITIONALITY, LIFE AND INTERNAL IDENTITY
- 4.4 IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE (KHANDHAS or AGGEGATES)
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4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I deploy the Buddhist perspective on identity in order to offer an alternative understating of equality. It is based on a clear idea of personal identity, I argue, that we can develop a comprehensive definition of equality. The concept of personal identity found in Buddhist sources can be helpful here. This concept is not directly addressed in the Buddhist sources as it is found in Western philosophical discussions. However, I investigate this matter by dealing with some fundamentals of the Buddhism focusing on the Pali canon, the collection of classical Buddhist texts of the Theravada school preserved in Pali language. I will not cover Buddhist texts of other

languages that belong to different schools of Buddhism since the basic points of Buddhism are almost common to the variety of Buddhist schools. While preferring to deal with the Pāli canon which is considered the earliest strata of Buddhist literature, I will also refer to related doctrines of other Buddhist schools as this investigation requires.¹

From the Pali canon (also known as Pali Tipitaka or the three baskets) I mainly focus on the Sutta Pitaka of the Pali canon. My primary touching area belongs to the four main Nikayas of the Sutta Pitaka which contain the key doctrines of the early Buddhism. Abhidhamma Pitaka, the other section of the Pāli canon will be used when necessary. The doctrines, the Three Characteristics of Existence, the Depending Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), the Non-self (*anatta*) and the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) are directly relevant themes for our understanding of the Buddhist perspective on a person's identity.

4.2 THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS AND INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

Buddhism views that everything that exists is marked by three characteristics: impermanence, un-satisfactoriness and non-self (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*). This includes what we call self, selfhood, person, personhood or ego. The Buddha uses this doctrine in a particular context to help individuals to be free from attachment to self-identity. However, this doctrine can help us here to understand how Buddhism explains the identity of a person.

The term *anicca* denotes that all conditioned things; divine or human; animate or inanimate; organic or inorganic are impermanent, transient and changing. According to this, nothing is absolute. It is clearly explained in the frequently appearing phrase, "All conditioned things are impermanent" (*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā, aniccā vata saṅkhārā*, ("MN.e," 1995, p. 322). The *Anguttara Nikaya* further explains this with use of the term, *sankhāra* which means conditioned things.

¹ A study of identity covering all Buddhist schools would be a significant scholarly contribution to the subject-field. However, it is an enormous task that cannot be achieved within a short period of time and it will be beyond the main focus of my thesis which is connecting the concept of identity to understand equality.

Impermanent, monks, are (all) saṅkhāras, unstable (not constant), monks, are [all] saṅkhāras, [hence] not a cause for comfort and satisfaction are [all] saṅkhāras, so much so that one must get tired of all these saṅkhāras, be disgusted with them, and be completely free of them ("AN.e," 1970, p. 64).

Every phenomenon is an inter-connected dynamic process and therefore everything is the product of antecedent causes. The universal law of dependent origination examines such causality. The word, *saṅkhata* which is very essential in this context denotes everything arisen which depends on antecedent conditions. O.H. de A. Wijesekera explains; “Thus we may conceive everything as the result of a concatenation of dynamic processes and, therefore, everything created or formed is only created or formed through these processes and not by any agency outside its own nature.” (O. H. de A. Wijesekera, 2008, pp. 3,4). This is a plain explanation in relation to the understanding of the nature of conditioned phenomena (*sankhata dhamma*). Samyutta Nikaya also connotes thus, “whatever has become is of the nature of passing away” (“SN.e.II,” 2000, pp. 36,37 / SN12:31)

In this context, when Buddhism explains an individual as a ceaseless “becoming” rather than a “being”. In Buddhist view, a person is a heap of conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhāra*) and, therefore he or she is impermanent and unstable as well. At the conventional level, we talk about a person or individual but in reality he is a heap of material and mental processes. This analysis of the individual given by the Buddha aims to at facilitating the emancipation. Wijesekara also says,

“The Buddha’s conclusion regarding man’s nature is in perfect agreement with his general concept of impermanence: Man himself is a compound of several factors and his supposedly persistent personality is in truth nothing more than a collection of ceaselessly changing processes; in fact, a continuous becoming or bhava” (O. H. de A. Wijesekera, 2008, p. 4).

Many of later scholars who talk about Buddha’s teaching on man accept that an analysis of five aggregates (*skandhās*) that is to say *rūpa* (material form), *vedanā* (sensations), *saññā* (perceptions), *saṅkhāra* (dynamic processes), and *viññāṇa*

(consciousness). Plus they agree that all such discourse emphatically claim that each of these aggregates (*skandhās*) is impermanent and unstable.

The *Samyutta Nikaya* in its section on the six-fold sphere of senses provides an acute account on impermanence. It analyzes impermanence in relation to personal and external. In this discourse, personal means the six-fold sphere of sense; eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. And external means correspondents of the six-fold sphere of sense; objects, sounds scents, savours and things tangible. Five aggregates and six sensory faculties will be confused when we attempt to see person from such heaps. These two ways of analysis together stress the same nature, impermanence. However, six-fold sphere of sense and external correspondents are given in two words in these discourses. They are interior (*ajjhataṃ*) and external (*bhāhiraṃ*). These two we normally interpret as subjective experience and objective world. In fact this usage in a way indicates conception of non-self. The first chapter on impermanence in the same book explains as follows; “eye is impermanent. What is impermanent, that is ill. What is ill that is void of the self. What is void of the self, that is not mine: I am not it: it is not myself. That is how it is to be regarded with perfect insight of what it really is.” (“SN.e.IV,” 2005, pp. 1,2) (and so with ear, nose, tongue, body and mind). The external six fold sensory objects (sights, sound, smell, taste, and body sensation) also claim the same condition as explained before.

Moreover, *Dvaya Sutta* (discourse of a Pair) goes a profound examination of impermanence.² This sutta conceives the impermanence of the process of eye-cum-visible objects. Next, the same nature applies to ear-cum-sounds, nose-cum-odours, tongue-cum-flavours, body-cum-tangibles, and mind-cum-ideas. Categorically, what the

² “Consciousness comes into being by dependence on a duality. What is that duality? It is the eye, which is impermanent, changing, becoming-other, and visible objects, which are impermanent, changing and becoming-other; such is the transient, fugitive duality (of eye cum-visible objects), which is impermanent, changing and becoming-other. Eye consciousness is impermanent, changing and becoming-other; for this cause and condition (namely eye cum-visible objects) for the arising of eye-consciousness being impermanent, changing and becoming-other, how could eye-consciousness, arisen by depending on an impermanent condition, be permanent? Then the coincidence, concurrence and confluence of these three impermanent dhammas is called contact ; but eye-contact too is impermanent, changing becoming-other; for how could eye-contact arisen by depending on an impermanent condition, be permanent? It is one touched by contact who feels, likewise who perceives; so these transient, fugitive dhammas too (namely, feeling, choice and perception) are impermanent, changing and becoming, other” (“SN.e.IV,” 2005, p. 35/ SN 35:93).

Buddha shows here is that the universal nature of all compounded things including individual that are subject to arising and passing away. In explaining the process of perception, impermanence and changing nature of the whole person is stressed. On account of internal senses and correspondent objects arise such and such consciousness. Because of these there are contacts. Contacts give rise to feelings. What is felt is being perceived. Each is impermanent and interdependent. Through seeing impermanence of each category what we realize is that there is nothing permanent and everlasting but interdependent and dynamic processes. What we conventionally call person, man, I or self is merely such a heap of processes. This understanding of impermanence is the key to relinquish egoistic notion of self. Hence, perception of impermanence should be cultivated for the elimination of the conceit "I am".

This teaching has been given in Buddhism in the context of pre-Buddhist notion of a permanent self or soul. The term used for this notion is *Ātman* which has several meanings. According to Encyclopedia of Buddhism,

1. 'one-self' or one's own
2. 'one's own person, the personality, including both body and mind
3. Self, as a subtle metaphysical entity, soul ("EB," 1977, p. 567)

Ātman is the author of a person; thinker of thoughts; feeler of feelings and sensations; receiver of results for good and bad actions (*karma*). This is what called in English soul or self. One of the central ideas of the entire Upanishadic philosophy is *ātman* and other idea is Brahman which means universal soul (Mahadevan, 1956, p. 59). Many of Indian religions including Hinduism and Jainism claim alternatively *ātman* (little self) and *Brahman* (God or the great self).

"Every human being had in him a part of Brahman, called ātman or 'the little self'. Brahman and ātman were one and of the same 'substance'. Salvation consisted in the little ātman entering into unity with Brahman" ("EB," 1977, p. 567).

Early Indian religious and philosophical traditions offer various perspectives on *ātman*. Many of these perspectives arose with personal meditative experiences. And some

were based on logical reasoning. The Buddha, in the *Brahmajala Sutta* of *Digha Nikaya* ("DN.e," 1995) examines all of those views. The sutta provides sixty two convictions and they fall into either one of the two categories; eternalism (*sassatavāda*) and nihilism (*uccedavāda*). They are also categorized into two according to the time; speculations about the past (total of 18 different views under five categories) and speculations about the future (total of 44 different views under five categories). Many views out of these different views are considered to be as based on self or personhood.

First four views proclaim the eternity of the self and world either based on remembering lifetimes or logical reasoning. The next four views state the partial eternity and partial non-eternity of the self and world based on remembering lifetimes and logical reasoning. View 17 holds the chance origination of the self and world. "based on falling from a meditative absorption of unconsciousness and thereby thinking that oneself (and the world) has suddenly come into being from non-being". ("DN.e," 1995, pp. 81-82; Tubb, 2002)The view 18 represents the same way but based on logical reasoning. All those convictions belong to the self and regarding the past.

Moreover, the convictions from 19 to 62 are regarding the future. Out of these 44, convictions from 19 to 50 commonly proclaim that the self after death is healthy. Views from 19 to 34 represent the post-mortem survival of conscious. They were deferent when they bear conscious with one of following; material; immaterial; both; neither; finite; infinite; both; neither; of uniform perception; of varied perception; of limited perception; of unlimited perception; wholly happy; wholly miserable; both; neither. Then the views from 35 to 42 proclaim the post-mortem survival of unconscious. They also were deferent when they bear unconscious with either materiality or immateriality or finite or infinite. Further, the convictions from 42 to 50 fall regarding neither conscious nor unconscious post-mortem survival. These convictions also were similarly deferent as mentioned in the previous category. The next category which contains 51-58 proclaims nihilistic views on self regarding post-mortem survival. Theories like; "the self is material; self is divine; self is mind-made (produced by *dhyāna*); when the body breaks up at death, it is *that* self that perishes; self is beyond the senses, realizing Formless Absorption - when the body breaks up at death, it is *that* self that perishes"("DN.e," 1995, pp. 84,85) represent some other dimensions of self.

In this way, the Buddha investigates the different views or convictions on self which were available during the time of the Buddha. P.D. Premasiri who examines Buddhist perspective of dogmatism critically shows how individual clings these views and consequently experiences harmful psychological conditions (Premasiri, 2006a, pp. 183-185; 2006b, p. 289). Moreover, the purpose of this examination, by the Buddha, as the sutta mentions, was to teach what the Buddha realizes does not fall into any of such views. Particularly, this discussion helps to clarify how the Buddha teaches the conception of *anatta*. Buddhism stands that this conception of *ātman* as false understanding or belief and such idea of permanent self causes the harmful thought of egoistic selfishness, armed with “I”, “Me”, “Mine”, “Myself” which produce much harmful defilements such as craving, sensual and selfish desire, pride, egoism, lust, hatred, ill will and many other problems. Such false understanding leads to personal problems, inter-persons or inter-nations conflicts and wars.³ In brief it is the origin of *dukkha* (suffering/unsatisfactoriness) as explained under the Four Noble Truths. Hence, the Buddha admonished for his disciples to the relinquishment of the false idea of self.

The Buddhist doctrine of non-self, *anattā* is the central doctrine of Buddhism in relation to gain precise knowledge of Buddhism. Malalasekara who considered this doctrine as the bedrock of Buddhism, indicates that *anattā* doctrine separates Buddhism from other religions (Malalasekara, 1957, p. 33). Malalasekara also mentions, “Buddhism denies all this (existence of soul) and asserts that this belief in a permanent and divine soul is the most dangerous pernicious of all errors, the most deceitful of illusions, that it will inevitably mislead its victim into the deepest pit of sorrow and suffering”(Malalasekara, 1957, p. 33). For him, modern scholars attempt to understand the doctrine of *anattā* in order to uncover the Buddhist approach of human being. However, even though the term *anattā* generally means ‘not-self’, it is not just the opposite idea of *ātman*. The Buddha has not denied individual differences and individual personalities. What he denied was a permanent psychological entity like self, ego or soul. He, of course accepts the definition of *atta* without assuming its existence or non-

³ See the research paper; *Peace Within and Peace Without: A Buddhist View* by P.D. Premasiri. He states, “There are enough instances in which people quarrel due to ideological differences or the incompatibility of their belief system. Dogmas are explained in Buddhism as consequences of craving. Hence, dogmatism is a major source of social conflict.”(Premasiri, 2006b, p. 289)

existence. Sue Hamilton also claims the idea that *anattā* does not imply in English 'there is no self', *anattā* just like the doctrine of *paticcasamuppāda*, intends to indicate how things are (Hamilton, 1996, p. 195). This description is to be examined carefully. *Anattā* is the last characteristic, out of the three characteristics of existence. Bhikkhu Nyanatiloka has interpreted *anattā* as follows;

"The anattā doctrine teaches that neither within the bodily and mental phenomena of existence, nor outside of them, can be found anything that in the ultimate sense could be regarded as a self-existing real ego-entity, soul or any other abiding substance" ("DBu," 1980, p. 33).

In the *Cūlamālunkya Sutta*, Mālunkya bhikkhu asks the Buddha about ten speculative views which were unclear to him. The Buddha does not answer such questions. These ten questions are thus known as unanswered or indeterminate questions (Pali, *avyākata*). In the list, fifth and sixth speculative views are about personal identity; the soul (*jīva*) is identical with the body; the soul is not identical with the body. So, the Buddha's view on these propositions will be a green light for our discussion. The reason of this negative response is that knowing of the answers for these questions are not necessary for liberation according to the teaching of the Buddha. If a man pierced by a poisoned arrow, he must receive medical treatment instead of knowing everything about that arrow. Likewise, wise man does not distract himself the path to enlightenment by trying to settle these disputed cosmological and metaphysical issues. Even if he found whether the soul is identical with the body or not, there is birth, ageing, dying, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair. Therefore, the Buddha strongly recommends to his disciples to strive for the relinquishment of egoistic selfishness which is like the wound of the circle of continuity (*samsara*).

According to the Buddha's teachings, the run-of-the mill person lacks full understanding of the reality. The *Mulapariyaya sutta* (the discourse of the root of all things) of the MN is remarkable to study on different ways that individuals with different level of maturity perceive the world beginning with the physical world, and higher mental levels of being and experience, and ultimate liberation (*nibbāna*). This sutta is utterly important particularly, to observe the Buddhist point of view on personhood. In fact, it is

quite deep discourse and links to the insight meditation stages. It refers how four kinds of persons perceive the world.⁴ For this sutta, we as ordinary people lack realization of non-self or anatta. What we naturally feel or perceive is self-hood as well as the pronouns in which it relates to the “self”. The ordinary person perceives modes of perceptions as just as they are; the seen as seen, the heard as the heard, the sensed as the sensed, the cognized as the cognized. Then he conceives (himself) in those modes. And he conceives (himself apart) from the perceptions. He further conceives, ‘the seen/heard/sensed/cognized as mine’. The Buddha teaches that this is because of his lack of understanding. According to this clarification, any of ordinary person claims such kinds of perception modes. The next three passages of the sutta examine how the ordinary person perceives unity, diversity and all. The perception of the ordinary person on modes of unity, diversity is also examined likewise with above modes. (“Mulapariyaya S.,” 2003, pp. 116,117) The important thing is here, meaning of these three words. According to the discourse, while unity and diversity denote in terms of five aggregates (forms, feelings, perception, mental formations and conciseness) all represents six faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and correspondent objects (visible object, sound, odour, taste, body impression and mind-object). Hence, ordinary person is almost all in an incorrect perception on personalities. We cannot see ultimately what we called self from any of those three categories.

Now, a question comes up about the perception of the ordinary person. Why does the person perceive objectives as they are? The sutta states that perception of the ordinary person naturally bases on a conceptual world made by thoughts. Eye can be taken as an example. Eye is the word which we use in general for the organ of eye. Eye organ claims deferent signed words as a result of deferent fictions in languages of the world. However, existence of eye, for Buddhism, is to be considered only for a moment (ksanika). That is

⁴ These four persons are; (1) The ordinary person (*assutavā puthujjano*) who lacks full understanding (*apariññātām*); (2) The learner on the path (*sekho*) one who is on the way to arahant hood and one who would develop full understanding (*pariññeyyam*); (3) The arahant, one liberated from all defilements and who gained full understanding (*pariññātām*) of the noble truths. (4) The Tathāgata - the Buddha who fully enlightened and who gained full understanding or self awakening (*pariññātām*) of the noble truths. (“MN.e,” 1995, pp. 83-91)

also impermanent and insubstantial. Moreover, arising of eye is not that which can be seen in surface but a process. The often repeated formula in Pali cannon asserts that on account of organ of sight and on visible form arises the sight-consciousness. Organ of sight and visible form are said to be the solid form which represents form aggregate which denotes the physical aspect of an object. And sight-consciousness belongs to the consciousness aggregate. They are not to be considered as permanent or everlasting. As the main characteristics of all phenomenality is impermanent (*anicca*) and no-self or substanceless (*anatta*) and also embodiment of suffering. Similarly with respect to the other organs and its correspondent objects the same characteristics apply. Hence, Buddhism asserts that so-called "I" or "self" is a mere⁵ fiction, a concoction of sharp imagination and exist only in the conventional truth. However, ordinary person embraces such conventional truth as real. In fact, the awakened one significantly experiences the world as a conditioned formation.

4.3 CONDITIONALITY, LIFE AND INTERNAL IDENTITY

While the above Buddhist doctrines explained the conventional nature of personal identity, the doctrine of dependent origination (*paticcasamuppāda*) elucidates its conditionality. Through this doctrine, the Buddha teaches how everything (physical, mental, abstract, concrete, subjective, objective...) is dependently originated. The teaching of *paticcasamuppāda* claims more specific purpose that is the explanation of how all mass of *dukkha* or the *samsāric* experience of being conditionally exists. Twelfefold formula of *paticcasamuppāda*⁶ ("MN.e," 1995, pp. 355-356; "SN.e.II," 2000,

⁵ Or I would say that a grammatical fiction with the purpose of communication.

⁶ Ignorance is the condition for (the arising of) the *formations*

The *formations* is the condition for (the arising of) consciousness

Consciousness is the condition for (the arising of) *mentality and materiality*

Mentality and Materiality are the condition for (the arising of) the six senses

The six senses are the condition for (the arising of) contact

Contact is the condition for (the arising of) feeling

Feeling is the condition for (the arising of) craving

Craving is the condition for (the arising of) clinging

Clinging is the condition for (the arising of) becoming

Becoming is the condition for (the arising of) birth

Birth is the condition for (the arising of) aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair

Such is the whole mass of *dukkha* ("DN.e," 1995, Mahanidana Sutta)

p. 25; Vipassana Research Institute, 1995. Majjhima Nikaya, Mulapannāsaka, VRI. 1. 324) significantly refers this conditionality. However, most scholarships describe this formula as how the human being dependently originated. Sue Hamilton, by suggesting the same manner mentions that ignorance, consciousness, senses, feeling, birth, old age, and death specifically refer to a human being since the purpose of the formula leads to the liberation of human being (Hamilton, 1996, p. 68). Further, she elaborates through the *Māhanidāna sutta* of Dīgha Nikaya which describes dependent origination stage by stage in terms of human experience. Indeed, *paticcasamuppāda* covers the constitutions of human being with her experiential life. Meanwhile, we must understand that in various contexts, the doctrine of *paticcasamuppāda* can elucidate different aspect of conditionality of existence. It mainly reveals the conditionality of so-called person. It particularly argues against the existence of a person in strict sense that can be extended to past, present or future.

In this sub topic, the key term, *viññāna*, I refer to uncover nature of identity taking as an internal sense. The discourse on *viññāna* (consciousness) in early Buddhism claims a profound discussion and with the rejection of the soul and the mind as permanent substance. Hamilton presents mass of contexts of *viññāna* under five headings; “1) *viññāna* as impermanent, 2) *viññāna* as consciousness of, 3) *viññāna* as a factors in cognition, 4) *viññāna* as providing continuity, and 5) *viññāna* as evolving.” (Hamilton, 1996, p. 82) [Though this elaboration enhances understanding I do not wish to consider these headings separately since it will lead it to be more descriptive.] However, even in the late period, various interpretations of *viññāna* has been presented.

Moreover, Buddhist canonical texts contend that *viññāna* is just as a momentary psychic occurrence and *viññāna* is a particular appearance of what is called mind. (SN, Assutawantu Sutta, Buddha Jayanti p.148) When there is a connection between the organ and the correspondent object cognitive function of *viññāna* begins. This causal function is given in the phrase, “sight consciousness arises when...” (*uppajati cakkhu viññānam*).

(avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññānaṃ, viññānapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ, nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanam, saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānam, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇam sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.) (Vipassana Research Institute, 1995)

This means that *viññāna* comes in to function in relation to organs (sight...etc). E.J. Thomas thus says, “manifest itself through the six sense organs” (Thomas, 1951, p. 104; O. H. de A. Wijesekera, 1964, p. 255). And O.H. de A. Wijesekera suggests that the usage of the English word, consciousness for *viññāna* may be based on the above formula of perception. In his research article, the concept of *viññāna* in Theravada Buddhism Wijesekera has given very critical examination to the conception on *viññāna*. He particularly raises points on *viññāna* in relation to the cognitive function and the problem of rebirth. He also deploys several aspects of *viññāna* by showing inter-connection among such connotations. Moreover, with respect to the flux of continuous becoming, *viññāna* holds the characteristic of impermanent. The *Majjhima Nikaya* asserts this as “*samvattanika viññāna*” which means *viññāna* that evolves (in to the next life) (“MN.e,” 1995, p. 870; Vipassana Research Institute, 1995. VRI 3.45). This is called samsāric *viññāna* (In the Pali canon and commentaries, this conception appears as *patisandhiviññāna*). This samsāric *viññāna* has a [contiguity] with *viññānāhāra* (nutriment of consciousness) and *bija* (cause) of rebirth. A Buddha’s monk disciple known as Sāti held a pernicious view on *viññāna*: “it is the same consciousness runs and wanders through the round of rebirths, not another.” (“MN.e,” 1995, p. 349) As the sutta shows, for him, consciousness fares on and continue and without change identity (“*tadeva anaññam*”). Despite, the Buddha rejects such kind of misrepresentation and asserts the conditionality of consciousness. “Consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. When consciousness arises dependent on eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye-consciousness... When consciousness arises dependent on mind and mind objects, it is reckoned as mind-consciousness” (“MN.e,” 1995, p. 351)

Later, in the Yogācāra Buddhist school of thought which belongs to the Mahayana tradition, the impermanence of consciousness is presented quite differently from the early Buddhist analysis in the Pali canon. A key conception of Yogācāra school, *Ālayaviññāna*, explains their position on the process of consciousness in the circle of continuity. The famous Buddhist text composed in the 7th century, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra* interprets *Ālayaviññāna* as a grounding but evolving

consciousness, consisting of ever-changing seeds whose subliminal existence warrants a congruity between successive dharmic moments.”(Jiang, 2005, p. 245) For the Yogācāra doctrine, continuity claims three aspects.

“First, continuity is change of properties of an unchanging substance. Second, continuity is due to an entity within change persisting from one stage into the next – identity in difference. Finally, continuity is nothing but an immediate contiguity, with the immediately preceding moment being the efficient cause of the immediately succeeding moment” (Jiang, 2005, pp. 244,245).

This signifies a doctrinal development of initial notion of *viññāṇa*. In fact, this sense of consciousness entirely differs from *ātman* in the Upanishad philosophy since it does not connote un-change identity of *viññāṇa*. It is obvious that *Ālayaviññāṇa* asserts the conditionality of *viññāṇa* in the circle of becoming. Hence, some scholars suggest that the conception of *Ālayaviññāṇa* represents early Buddhist discourse on craving (*tanha*) that causes becoming. As above discussion shows, “I” or “self” is a mere fiction for a psycho-physical complex of man or in other words so called a heap of five aggregates. Buddhist doctrine states strongly that the life and world lie upon *dukkha*. The Pali word, *dukkha* is one of the most difficult terms to translate into other language since its strong usage in the Pali canon. English words like suffering, sorrow, ill, pain and so on are very often used in term of *dukkha* thought they are limited concerning the general philosophical and both narrower psychological and physical. However, *dukkha* signifies the key universal characteristic of the samsaric existence, very simply called unsatisfactoriness. Many suttas assert thus;

“This, indeed, monks, is the Noble Truth of dukkha, namely the fact that birth itself is dukkha, disease is dukkha, death is dukkha; to be joined with what is unpleasant is dukkha, to be separated from what is pleasant is dukkha, failure in getting what one wants is dukkha, in short the five groups of physical and mental qualities making up the individual due to grasping are themselves dukkha” (“DN.e,” 1995, p. 344).

The Buddha clearly examines what the true nature of life. When we review this observation in relation to person's life it is obvious that dukkha covers mainly physical and psychic parts of a life and all experiences from birth to death. This means what we called person is a composition of characterized by dukkha. Moti Lal Pandith, by concerning three characteristics says in short thus all objects suffer from identical modification and change. (Pandith, 1993, p. 223) And further he observes,

“The identification of pain with birth, old age, and death must not be understood in literal terms. Behind this understanding of pain there is what may be termed spiritual dissatisfaction in terms of which uncertainties of life are expressed. The Buddha is not speaking of pain which is caused by the limitations of body or mind; rather he is speaking of a fundamental problem with both mind and body, as both them being phenomenal categories, suffer from constant birth and destruction” (Pandith, 1993, p. 227).

Hence, this examination in relation to the circle of becoming (samsara) has to be interpreted in term of flux of continuous becoming to realize internal and external suffering (dukkha). According to Buddhism, not seen this condition we take a false view of a continuous personality.

4.4 IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE (KHANDHAS or AGGEGATES)

This section explains the experiential aspect of identity in the Buddhist discourses. Though Buddhism rejects a permanent identity or a fixed individuality, it admits the temporary existence of the five dynamic processes known as Khandas or aggregates which is generally misrecognized self or I. When one may ask the Buddha, “what am I?” or “what is my real self?”, the Buddha often replies the individuality should be understood, through the combination of phenomena which contains mental and physical continuum (kandhas). Hence, combination of five aggregates or constituents (*pañcakkhandha*) is to be termed as the personality or the individual life. They are namely; aggregate of body or forms (*rūpakkhandha*); aggregate of sensations or feelings (*vedanakkhandha*); aggregate of Perception (*saññākkhandha*); aggregate of Mental Formations (*saṅkhārakkhandha*); and aggregate of Consciousness (*viññāṇakkhandha*).

The doctrine of *khanda* has a closed association with the doctrine of *anatta*. For an example, the Buddha contends that none of *kandha* can be identified as *ātman*. The *Alagaddūpama Sutta* (the simile of the snake) of MN examines the various aspects of these five aggregates;

“Is the corporeality (physical personality) permanent or impermanent?” - “Impermanent, Venerable Sir.” - “And what is impermanent, is it painful or pleasant?” - “Painful, Venerable Sir.” - “What is impermanent, painful, subject to change, is it fit to be considered thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?’” - “Certainly not, Venerable Sir” - “What do you think, monks: Is feeling... is perception... are mental formations... is consciousness... permanent or impermanent?...”(“MN.e,” 1995, p. 233).

The same dialogue is repeated for other aspects of personality as well. Sue Hamilton has offered a clear explanation of the above passage with the title ‘Identity and Experience’. The particular argument of this dialogue is that [empirically cannot be investigated any such personalities]. The Buddha answers in this way instead of a direct one word answer. This is because the answer must be reliable. What we perceive as self is the the five skandhas. The Buddha has clearly demonstrated it. “All ascetics and brahmins who conceive a self in various ways, all those conceive the five groups [as the self] or one or another of them. Which are the five? Herein an ignorant worldling conceives materiality, feeling, perception, formations or consciousness as the self; or the self as the owner of any of these groups; or that group as included in the self; or the self as included in that group” (“SN 22.47,” 1997). This perception naturally we have because of our own latent tendencies of identity (I will examine this in the next part). This sort of perception of course arises and vanishes differently through each moment in the worldling mind. In comparison to the body, the mind and thoughts change so quickly than body. Hence, the Buddha strongly stresses impermanence of mind or consciousness.

“It would be better for an untaught ordinary man to treat as self this body, which is constructed upon the four great primaries of matter, than mind. Why? Because the body can last one year, two years ... even a hundred

years: but what is called "mind" and "thinking" and "consciousness" arises and ceases differently through night and day"(SN 12.61," 2005)

Buddhism decline taking the five aggregates as self or I. In fact that Buddhism connotes self, person or I as a fiction.⁷ This fictional usage of self-identity in Buddhism takes almost general and in the conventional truth and it appears without any distinction to language. Madyamika tradition of Mahayana Buddhism goes more philosophical discussion on this. For example, Nāgārjuna (c.150 - c.250 CE) presents daring critic on identity while showing emptiness of all phenomena. Plus, he stresses that the Buddha teaches there is nothing which is "neither self nor non-self." (Nagarjuna, 2000, chap 18, "Self"; 2001, p. 24) This is a descriptive elaboration⁸. Nevertheless, I conclude that Madyamika School more prominently asserts emptiness or illusion of the concept of "I".

As the Buddhist teaching shows, the perception of identity of worldling is entirely opposite from the noble or learned disciple. He is free from inner conflict of defilements in relation to the five aggregates as I, My or Myself. In many Suttas, Buddha has explained and this is a mental transformation or meditative realization instead of just understanding.

"The learned and noble disciple does not consider materiality, feeling, perception, formations, or consciousness as self; nor the self as the owner of these groups; nor these groups as included within the self; nor the self

⁷ See: the Chariot Simile (43-45pp) of The questions of King Milinda, translated by Rhys Davids. ("Milindapañha," 1997).

⁸ The chapter 18 of Mulamadyamakakarika deploys Madyamaka teaching of self. Following versers of the chapter help to understand how Mahayana Buddhism analyzes early Buddhist taught on self. "1. If the aggregates were self, it would be possessed of arising and decaying. If it were other than the aggregates, it would not have the characteristics of the aggregates. 2. If the self did not exist, where could what is mine exist? In order to pacify self and what is mine, grasping I and grasping mine can exist no more. 3. The one who does not grasp at me and mine likewise does not exist. Whoever sees the one who does not grasp at me and mine does not see. 4. When one ceases thinking of inner and outer things as self and mine, clinging will come to a stop. Through that ceasing, birth will cease. 5. Through the ceasing of action and affliction, there is freedom. Action and affliction [come] from thoughts and they from fixations. Fixations are stopped by emptiness. 6. It is said that "there is a self," but "non-self" too is taught. The buddhas also teach there is nothing which is "neither self nor non-self." 7. That to which language refers is denied, because an object experienced by the mind is denied. The unborn and unceasing nature of reality is comparable to nirvana. 8. Everything is real, not real; both real and not real; neither not real nor real: this is the teaching of the Buddha. 9. Not known through others, peaceful, not fixed by fixations, without conceptual thought, without differentiation: these are the characteristics of suchness" (Nagarjuna, 2000chap.18).

as included within the groups. Of such a learned and noble disciple it is said that he is no longer fettered by any group of existence, [his] own or external. Thus I say" ("SN.e.IV," 2005, p. SN 22:117).

The main point of this abstract is a significant since it requires a mental transformation. This transformation itself indicates a noble perception on five groups. As this denotes, though we have knowledge of this matter as a fact yet we are not in the noble state which claims the realization of such truth. Apart from that stage, we can discuss and interpret this conception only taking as a subjective knowledge. In other words, as Buddhist discourses explain, fundamental teachings of Buddhism can be entirely realized through practice and they are experienceable here and now. Even false conceptions on identity or personhood are to be entirely emancipated through a mental transformation.

4.5 SAKKĀYA (IDENTITY) AND SAKKĀYA DIṬṬHI (IDENTITY VIEW)

The Pali word, *sakkhāya* is important to examine because it is generally translated into English as identity. For example, Bhikkhu Bodhi, in his translations of Pali Tipitaka translates this word as identity; Bhikkhu Thanissaro takes it as self identification ("MN. PTS," 1998; "MN.e," 1995, p. 1129) Ven Nyanatiloka provides two words; existing groups and personality ("DBu," 1980, pp. 288,289). Many of previous scholars simply used personality but at present commonly *sakkhāya* is translated as identity. However, the Buddha repeatedly uses *Sakkhāya* to mean the clinging of five aggregates (*pañcupādānakkhando*). The Cūlvedalla Sutta, provides excellent example for this.

"Self-identification (Sakkhāya), self-identification,' it is said, lady. Which self-identification is described by the Blessed One?" "There are these five clinging-aggregates, friend Visakha: form as a clinging-aggregate, feeling as a clinging-aggregate, perception as a clinging-aggregate, fabrications as a clinging-aggregate, consciousness as a clinging-aggregate. These five clinging-aggregates are the self-identification described by the Blessed One." ("MN. PTS," 1998, pp. i, 299)

Moreover, the sutta explains following steps as well; “the origination of self-identification (craving for sensual pleasure, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming); the cessation of self-identification (relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving); The way of practice leading to the cessation of self-identification (The noble eightfold path).” (“MN. PTS,” 1998, pp. i, 299)

Now, we meet another new word called “clinging” (*upādāna*) that is related to identity. The Buddha taught four types of clinging (*upādāna*); clinging to sense pleasures (*kāma upādāna*), clinging to views (*diṭṭhi upādāna*), clinging to mere rules and ritual (*sīlabbata upādāna*) and clinging to the concept of self (*attavāda upādāna*). The Buddha admonishes to relinquish all kind of clinging. What is relevant to our discussion is the fourth form of clinging (*attavāda upādāna*) because it has direct relationship to selfhood, ego or personality (Premasiri, 2006a, p. 181). As Buddhist suttas explain, *Attavāda upādāna* or clinging to the personal identity causes to many misunderstanding and struggles just as unanswered determinate. The Brahmajā Sutta provides 62 view points and many of them are link with *attavāda upādāna*.

The next overlapping word is *sakkāya diṭṭhi* which means view of identity are belief of personality. This is one out of ten fetters (*dasa sayomjāna*). Patisambhidāmagga inquires different aspects of view or dogmas. This canonical text enumerates 20 aspects of view about self (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*).⁹ (“Pati,” 1982, pp. 144,145) Paul Fuller, in his book,

⁹ “Five annihilationist view (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*): (1) form as self (2) feeling as self (3) apperception as self (4) volitional formations as self (5) consciousness as self

Fifteen eternalist view (*sassata-diṭṭhi*): (6-8) Self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form (9-11) Self as possessed of feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling (12-14) Self as possessed of apperception, or apperception as in self, or self as in apperception (15-17) Self as possessed of volitional formations, or volitional formations as in self, or self as in volitional formations (18-20) Self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness” (Fuller, 2005, p. 27; “Pati,” 1982, pp. 144-148)

Five *uccheda-diṭṭhi* (annihilationist - view): (1) *rūpaṃ attato samanupassati* (2) *vedanaṃ attato samanupassati* (3) *saññāṃ attato samanupassati* (4) *saṃkhāre attato samanupassati* (5) *viññāṃ attato samanupassati*

Fifteen *sassata-diṭṭhi* (eternalist-view): (6-8) *rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmim vā attānaṃ* (9-11) *vedanāvantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā vedanaṃ, vedanāya vā attānaṃ* (12-14) *saññāvantaṃ*

The Notion of Ditthi in Theravāda Buddhism discusses these aspects and he shows how individual arises the view “I have a self” (Fuller, 2005, p. 27).

As the Buddha explains these all of view are weak understandings of self. Because of this weakness ordinary person proliferates with cankers by clinging to the self identity. Five aggregates are the basis for this proliferation. The Sabbāsava Sutta of Majjhima Nikaya shows that following speculative views.

“This is how he attends inappropriately: ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?’ Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’” (“MN.e,” 1995, p. 92).

Then discourse explains seven techniques to overcome all cankers or fermentations (*āsava*). So the first method is overcoming by seeing (*dassanā pahātabba*). The Buddha recommends understanding the reality of mere conventional truths (*vohāra-sacca*). The law of dependent origination (*paticcasamuppāda*) shows that everything is inter-related, nothing is absolute. (“SN.e.II,” 2000, p. 387) This doctrine entirely discusses the all process of the life which asserts inter connectivity. Hence, according to Buddhism, in the ultimate sense (*paramattha-sacca*) personal identity is lack of full of knowledge. It is entirely abandoned only by attaining to the path of Stream-winning (*sotāpatti-magga*).

The Saṅgīti Sutta (DN 33.2.3.12/3:254) lists seven anusayas or latent tendencies; the latent tendency of; sensual lust; aversion; conceit; views; doubt; lust for existence; and ignorance. And Buddhism teaches how they overcome. However, the fourth latent

vā attānaṃ, attani vā saññāṃ, saññāya vā attānaṃ (15-17) saṃkhāravantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā saṃkhāre, saṃkhāresu vā attānaṃ (18-20) viññāṇavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇasmim vā attānaṃ (Patisambhidhamagga, Mahavagga, VRI 130, Vipassana Research Institute, 1995)

tendency is quite fit with our investigation. “Latent tendency of view lies latent in all states related to identity.” We must comprehend this idea with the conception of *anusaya*. Of course, the Buddhist term, *anusaya* gives distinctive perception for the discussion on identity. *Anusaya*, generally defines as latent tendencies and connotes somewhere else as proclivities. However, *anusaya* also are kind of defilements as the commentary to the *Anusaya Sutta* (SN 45.175) says. Buddhagosa says, “These things are called ‘proclivities’ since, in consequence of their pertinacity, they ever and again tend to become the conditions for the arising of ever new sensuous greed, etc.” (Vis.M. XXII, 60). For him, they exist forever life after life, and consequently arising of new and renewed greed, and so on. The *Abhidhammattha, sangaha* explains: “The latent dispositions (*anusaya*) are defilements which ‘lie along with’ (*anusenti*) the mental process to which they belong, rising to the surface as obsessions whenever they meet with suitable conditions” (Anuruddha, 2010, p. 268). Hence, natural feeling or perception on identity is a latent tendency. The *Mahā Māluṅkyaputta Sutta* (MN 64) also provides a list of five latent tendencies with the name of “the five lower fetters” (*orambhāgiya saṃyojana*). The first one of this list is that the latent tendency of self-identity (*sakkāya, ditthanusaya*). Similarly, the latent tendency of self-identity represents the ten fetters (*dasa saṃyojana*) as the first latent tendency out of the five lower fetters.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the Buddhist perspective on individual identity. I analyzed some selected theories from Buddhism such as Three Characteristics (*tilakkhana*), the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) and the Depending Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) to investigate the Buddhist view on self identity. Buddhism views that everything that exists is marked by three characteristics: impermanence, un-satisfactoriness and non-self. According to Buddhist view, there is nothing permanent and everlasting but interdependent and dynamic processes. What we conventionally call person, man, I or self is merely such a heap of processes. This understanding of impermanence is the key to relinquish egoistic notion of self. Buddha strongly recommends the relinquishment of egoistic selfishness. Buddhism asserts that “I” or “self” is a fiction, a concoction of sharp

imagination and exist only in the conventional truth. Though Buddhism rejects a permanent identity or a fixed individuality, it admits the temporary existence of the five dynamic processes known as Khandas or aggregates which is generally misrecognized self or I. For Buddhism, this is because we need convention/relative truth to understand things and to communicate. Plus, existence occurs through a causality (*paticcasamuppada* or combination of cause and effect), parts and mental labels. Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings are subject to the three characteristics; impermanence, suffering and non-self. Relative identity differs from one another, and on the other hand absolute identities are equal because of the fundamental nature of the life. Ultimately, this understanding leads a person to view others with equal concern dignity and brotherhood.

The final provides comments for the main three chapters and concludes with suggestions.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESIONS

CONTENTS

- 5.1 PERSPECTIVES OF EQUALITY IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY:
COMMENT
- 5.2 IDENTITY IN THE THOUGHT OF RICOEUR AND TAYLOR;
COMMENT
- 5.3 IDENTITY IN BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY: COMMENT
- 5.4 CONCLUDING REFLECTION
- 5.5 REFERENCES

My thesis is primarily a theoretical reflection on the understanding of human equality. It should prove to have practical relevance in the Western world because the aim of this thesis is to contribute to the discourse on human rights from a unique perspective, specifically from a Theravadin Buddhist perspective. This chapter sums up the issues I have been dealing with throughout this thesis. These are, first, to see how equality, a human rights norm, is understood in various normative and political theories. Secondly, to examine how the concept of identity is recognized in *normative* philosophical theories. Thirdly, to juxtapose the concept of self-identity from a Buddhist perspective. Lastly, to explore how the recognition of identity paves a way to the understanding of equality.

5.1 PERSPECTIVES OF EQUALITY IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: COMMENT

Inequalities have a history that pervades to a broad area of human life and divides it into dichotomies such as superiority and inferiority; rich and poor; master and slave; black and white; man and woman, high cast and low cast; and morally superior and morally inferior. Historically, many political philosophers perceive equality in different

ways based on the equality and inequality experiences. Articles from UDHR or other charters clearly state the importance of equality.

This chapter reviewed various assumptions and connotations in the principle of equality that paved the way to demonstrate un-uniformity in identifying equality. Thus, I argue that equality requires an acceptable and comprehensive definition.

In my first comment, I contend that most theories of equality have prioritized social, cultural and biological facts. For example, J.J. Rousseau(1998) postulated two kinds of inequalities in the social life: moral and conventional inequality. Moral inequality refers to the differences in physical body, age, health, strength, mental qualities, and soul. In contrast, conventional inequality claims social conditions or differences in wealth, power, and prestige. Another aspect of equality is descriptive and prescriptive. The descriptive equality represents a common descriptive ideology. The prescriptive term of equality takes a prescriptive approach. Rawls (1997), Temkim (1986), and Douglas Rae (1981) argue that diversities are a measurement of various inequalities. Some thinkers classify equality in different dimensions: civil, political, social, economic, natural, legal, and international. Most of the liberal theorists have marginalized equality to liberal democracy. All those theories have cultivated a literature of equality, yet none have approached the concept of equality by way of understanding identity.

Second, I acknowledge the four principles of equality: formal equality, proportional equality, moral equality, and the presumption of equality. According to the formal principle of equality, two persons must be treated equally in that respect. The proportional equality emphasizes about the difference between treatment and distribution. The presumption of equality proclaims an ethical approach based on political justice. For this principle, construction of justice promotes equal distribution as a public distribution of good for all. These three principles represent a common sensitive area of equality as I mentioned above.

Moral equality is mainly based on the idea of natural rights; that is, human beings are equal by nature. This idea appreciates natural order among human beings instead of hierarchy. Particularly, this perspective seems like a universal one because it claims that

everyone deserves the same dignity and same respect. Hence, moral equality represents an egalitarian meaning of equality substantively. Despite that, the moral equality has not emphasized self-understanding as a moral quality for the understanding of others equally. Therefore, equality is defined by denying the recognition of individual identity. Douglas Rae (1981) shows equality as an incomplete prediction which is not only based on grammar but also on connotation.

Third, Kant (1797/1886) emphasizes categorical imperative; autonomy and self-legislation lead to the understanding of the equal freedom for all rational agents as the sole principle of human rights. Egalitarians assume Kantian emphasis as a core principle belief that is vague, theoretical, and with moral implicitness. This approach may appear that equality is a self-value. Self-legislation is more political; it must be cognitive.

Next, Buchanan(2005) examines the practical implementation of modern philosophical literature on equality. He inquires two theories such as the Modest Objectivist View and Minimalism that belong to the schools of egalitarian doctrine. Modest Objectivist View is the ground for the nature of egalitarian assumptions; it is crucial to justify the doctrine and practice of human rights, domestically and internationally. This View defends that all individuals have the opportunity for a decent or minimal good human life. Buchanan distinguishes an institutional function to counter the standard threats. Minimalism is an overlapping part of the Modest Objectivist View. Minimalism rejects one kind of life is best for all. It also denies systematic scheme of values to build the integration among private and public life. The key argument of minimalism is that all human beings have an opportunity for a decent life. Moreover, for Buchanan, current policies for human rights are not adequate; State and international institutions of human rights must be qualified concerning the complexity of the minimal standards. Buchanan's perspectives are interesting. Even though I agree with his domestic and international approaches of equality, I question why a self-understanding is insignificant for other-understanding from the equality perspective. Should not self understanding come before "all individuals have the opportunity for a decent or minimally good human life"?

Finally, it is explicit that understanding of individual identity is central to formulate a comprehensive notion of equality before admitting the theoretical approaches like equality of welfare, equality of opportunity, equality of well-being, and equality of distribution.

5.2 IDENTITY IN THE THOUGHT OF RICOEUR AND TAYLOR; COMMENT

I contend that the recognition of self-identity is the parallel concept of equality. Chapter three of my thesis explored the concept of identity in normative philosophical discourses. Such discussions of self identity is interesting; it claims a variety of different perspectives. Sometimes it takes an epistemological stance, sometimes psychological and other times ethical. With such divergence of interpretations we can neither conclude a singular definition of identity nor formulate one to help better understand the principle of equality. However, I found two perspectives to be most relevant regarding the subject of identity, which are made by Paul Ricour and Charles Taylor.

In my first comment, I assume that Ricouer's phenomonological and hermenutic approach gives an explicit inspiration to understand self-identity. In the texts, *Narrative Identity* (1991), and *The Course of Recognition*(2005), Ricoeur presents us with the perspectives of the foremost philosophers who contributed to the topic. Ricoeur's expands and extends on self quests with two questions, which he considers to be fundamental to philosophy: "Who am I?" and "How should I live?" With regards to the question "Who am I?", Ricoeur acknowledges a long-standing debt to Marcel and Heidegger. To the moral question, the debt is to Aristotle and Kant. In addressing the question "Who am I?", Ricoeur seeks to understand the nature of selfhood. Ricoeur investigates personal identity and clearly reveals the distinction between the identity as sameness, or a third-person perspective that objectifies identity (*idem*) and the identity as selfhood, 'Who am I?' (*ipse*).

Second, Ricour's assumption on narrative identity leads to understand self as well as others. In concluding the discussion of *Idem* and *Ipse* identity, Ricoeur develops four commitments: (1) "Because my personal identity is a narrative identity, I can make sense of myself only in and through my involvement with others. (2) In my dealings with

others, I do not simply enact a role or function that has been assigned to me. I can change myself through my own efforts and can reasonably encourage others to change as well. (3) Nonetheless, because I am an embodied existence and hence have inherited both biological and psychological constraints, I cannot change everything about myself. And because others are similarly constrained, I cannot sensibly call for comprehensive changes in them. (4) Though I can be evaluated in a number of ways, e.g., physical dexterity, verbal fluency, technical skill, the ethical evaluation in the light of my responsiveness to others, over time, is, on the whole, the most important evaluation” (David & Bernard, 2016). These points explicitly show a sense of belonging to the action-taker’s personality (Ispe Identity) and self responsibility.

The Course of Recognition examines three guises of recognition: 1) recognition as identification, 2) recognition of oneself and 3) mutual recognition. Indeed, Ricœur’s approach to the recognition of identification is an examination of the subjective experience. For Ricoeur, the emergence of the moral self in action asserts “the emergence of the point of view of the subject in the description of rational action.” (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 87) This intension implies self responsibility for recognition. Ricoeur’s aim of self recognition is not to inquire what virtue is, but to show how to become good. This is why Ricoeur postulates mutuality between the self and the others. Hence, Ricoeur’s moral motivational approach of recognition admits the capacity of a person to the understand a world other than one’s own.

Next, I examined Charles Taylor’s text, *Sources of the Self* (1989) to explore the relation between self identity and morality. Taylor makes an interesting link between modern identity and historical sources of self. He mainly articulates that the sense of awareness, freedom, individuality, and being embedded in nature are the connotations of human agent in the modern West. Plus, Taylor contributes to the philosophical notion of self by revising the view of self which is stripped of its good or moral framework. In other words, he shows the connections between identity and the good. Taylor presents “one’s life” and “connected outside” similarly as Ricoeur conceived of mutual recognition. By ‘contact’ he means that one’s life has is incorporated with something external, which is the concept of good. Taylor also assumes that a narrative

understanding of our life is related to our actions. This means that the act of self narration is unavoidable; it connects with the good.

Finally, Taylor links identity with four notions: the idea of authenticity; the demand for recognition; the idea of difference, and the principle of equal dignity. Authenticity admits that each one should live as his own way or a way that is true to himself. Demand for recognition presents that others have a responsibility to be sensitive with this authenticity and they should interact with that selfhood. The idea of difference denotes the deservedness for self recognition. Equal dignity assumes equal respect for everyone. Therefore, it is explicit that Taylor's approach on self can be supportively used to the understanding of equality.

5.3 IDENTITY IN BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY: COMMENT

The fourth chapter of my thesis examined the Buddhist perspective on identity or self. As we saw, Buddhism does not talk about the persistence of a self in reality. In other words, Buddhism does not argue the persistence of a personal identity over time. Buddhism claims that impermanence is the true nature of all phenomena, including the nature of the human being who contains both mental and corporeal qualities. In his masterpiece, *Bodhicaryawatara* (Guide to the Bodhisattvawa's way of life) Shantideve, the Mahayana philosopher radically states thus;

“Even the parts can be broken down into atoms, and the atoms into directions. Being without parts, the directions are space. Therefore, the atom has no [ultimate] existence. Who, upon reflection, would take delight in this dream-like form? And since the body does not [ultimately] exist, what is “woman”, what is “man”? (Shantideva, n.d., p. 428/ 86,87-7 ; Todd, 2013, p. 194)

This is how later Buddhist schools have analyzed impermanence in relation to the five skandas or what we refer to as a being. Yet, Theravada tradition mostly asserts the emptiness of self (concept of “I”). Mahayana schools emphasize not only the emptiness of self but also emptiness of all inner and outer phenomenon world (aggregates and outer

world).¹ If this is a commonly acceptable truth, why have we established personhood or self? For Buddhism, this is because we need a conventional, relative truth to help us communicate our understanding about complex concepts regarding reality and existence.² Furthermore, existence occurs through a causality (*paticcasamuppada*, which is a combination of cause and effect), parts and mental labels. As Shantideva says, though there is no inherently existing self because the formation of a self “required many factors to give rise to self” (Shantideva, n.d., p. 428). Thus, in reality, self identity is not real at all. It is something created for the sake of conventional truth.

Next, Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings are subject to three characteristics: impermanence, suffering and non-self. Fragments of sufferings like birth, aging, illness, and death are equal for all. Therefore, I agree with Shantideva who analyzed Buddhist texts and who writes, “One should first earnestly meditate on the equality of oneself and others in this way: “All equally experience suffering and happiness, and I must protect them as I do myself” (Donald Kelley, 2015, p. 123; Shantideva, n.d., p. 355). In one hand, relative identity differs from one another, and on the other hand absolute identities are equal. As Masao Abe illustrates “on absolute level they are equal and interfuse with one another because of the lack of any fixed, substantial selfhood” (Abe, 1986, p. 205). Ultimately, this understanding leads a person equal concern and dignity.

Finally, the theory of causality in Buddhism presents a causal continuity of an impermanent identity; this is fundamentally equal to all human beings. That is, all phenomena, including human life, is equally and inherently subject to the process of becoming (or Samsaric life). This becomes the foundation of equality: that every human being is equally subject to the process of becoming; that every human being is subject to the forces of impermanence regardless of race, caste, ethnicity, or gender. In conclusion,

¹ See: Bodhicaryawatara of Shantideva; chapter 09, wisdom.

² Theravada Buddhist commentaries and Mahayana Buddhist schools emphasize that the Buddha teaches only two truths; conventional truth and ultimate truth (Pali: *sammuti sacca* and *paramattha sacca*, Sanskrit: *Smvrti satya* and *paramartha satya*). “The teaching of the doctrine of the Buddhas is based upon two truths: truth relating to worldly convention and truth in terms of ultimate fruit.” (Kalupahana, 2004, p. 331)

the Buddhist view of identity assumes the deepest inner life introspection which leads to seeing the horizon of the universal and fundamental equality among all sentient beings.

5.4 CONCLUDING REFLECTION

The principle of equality possesses broader context. I admit that various normative or political theories and perspectives help to the understanding of equality. Yet, as mentioned earlier, most theories of equality have prioritized social, cultural and biological facts. All those theories have developed a literature of equality; none of them have approached equality by analyzing the construct of identity. Again, theories of equality have not emphasized self-understanding as a moral dimension for the understanding of others equally. Equality is often defined by denying the recognition of individual identity. Even though I agree with the theoretical approaches like equality of welfare, equality of opportunity, equality of well-being, equality of distribution and other practical theories of egalitarianism, I question why a self-understanding is insignificant for other-understanding from the equality perspective.

My thesis has been dealing with the identity concept in normative philosophy and Buddhism. Normative philosophical perspectives of self identity have accepted the idea of a self as a narrative. Also, those theories admire mutual recognition, oneself and others. Then, those theorists conjoin identity recognition with moral values. I define these normative approaches of self-identity necessarily help to understand equality in the convention truth. Thus, those normative theories are admirably essential in a certain level to realize equality. Buddhist perspective on individual identity considers both conventional and ultimate truths. Relative identity differs from one another, yet absolute identities are equal. Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings are subject to the three characteristics: impermanence, suffering and non-self. Fundamental unsatisfactoriness and painfulness of the life equally are common to all sentient beings. Each and every one equally is subject to the process of becoming (in this life and also in Samsaric life). And the theory of causality is fundamentally equal to all human beings. An example of the fundamental relationship between individual identity and equality is found in a Buddhist saying, "All equally experience suffering and happiness, and I must protect them as I do myself," Ultimately, this understanding leads a person to view others with

equal concern and dignity. Thus, the Buddhist view of identity assumes the deepest inner life introspection which leads to seeing the horizon of the universal and fundamental equality among all sentient beings. Therefore, I suggest that the recognition of individual identity is a solid understanding of individual identity in relation to our understanding of equality. Finally, together with normative philosophic approach and the Buddhist view on identity pave the way in our quest for the human rights norm, equality; it is similarly applicable with regard to other alternative human rights norms: dignity, liberty and brotherhood.

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