Abstract

The need to make a case for the cultural identity of the member in an individual capacity can be traced to the evolution of identity politics during Enlightenment and during the phase of disenchantment with the Enlightenment. While during the Enlightenment the identity of the individual was explained through the instrument of reason and secular references, the critiques of Enlightenment were quick to point out the pitfalls of anomie, lack of rootedness and unencumberedness. Since then there has been a search for an identity that is individual and particular, within the reach of one’s will, yet expresses more than the unencumbered individual and shapes and enriches life in terms that lie beyond the will through concretely given goods.¹

The choice that emerges in the Liberal-Communitarian debate between being a rootless, unencumbered, detached individual or being a part of a community that does not allow the member an identity that is not derived from the community, is a false choice and does not address the need of the individual identify with a context yet not be subsumed by it.

The term Cultural Identity has always invoked ideas of being a group good that is defined teleologically. The concept of right on the other hand has been generally identified with deontological connotations. The thesis intends to use the concept of right, as a group right, to serve the cultural interests of each member in an individual capacity without defying cultural identity as a group good and as teleologically defined. It does this by making a distinction between cultural identity constituted at the level of the community as a single unit and the level of members who while being parts of the community also have an irreducible existence.