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SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
"L'Arche" as an Example of an Inclusive Community
Theory and Practice in the Study of Jean Vanier

The issue of community life from the family to the state is the subject of research in various disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. This debate is also present in the world of philosophy, especially in the field of social and political life. The problems that are usually placed on the extreme axes: liberalism-conservatism or the left-labor, however, constitute only part of the issue concerning the vision of building communities. There are also other models, also less known in the wider academia, but with an impact, for example, on religious communities.

Jean Vanier (1928-2019), a French thinker - a Catholic philosopher and theologian - based on the foundations of a mainly Christian personalist philosophy, built the concept of an inclusive community - open mainly to people with intellectual disabilities. *The L'Arche* project, which started in 1964 in France, today has grown to over 140 countries, including Poland. And despite the controversy related to the issue of sexual harassment of adult women by Jean Vanier (this information appeared at the beginning of 2020), this project, both from the theoretical and practical side, seems to be interesting and noteworthy, also in the context of philosophical reflection.

The subject of the presented doctoral dissertation is to present Jean Vanier's views on the community, with particular emphasis on his anthropological and ethical vision. This reflection has its roots in ancient Christian thought (Vanier knows and uses the philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas perfectly), and among contemporary trends in personalism (he knew Jacques Maritain directly), the philosophy of dialogue (he drew from the thoughts of Martin Buber) and the philosophy of meetings. The community vision has been characterized in terms of inclusiveness, taking into account the broader context of the humanities and social sciences. Inclusiveness is understood as a natural openness without preliminary assumptions (restrictions) such as: origin, religion, economic status. This concept in Vanier is considered on three levels: openness to oneself (anthropological perspective: the dignity of a person, individual development, the status of an intellectually disabled person), openness to others (ethical perspective: the need to belong, forgiveness) and openness to society (socio-social perspective political: influencing local environments, understanding power and responsibility).

The aim of the doctoral thesis is to define the role of the community in relation to contemporary man and the relationship of a person to the community on the basis of selected texts by Jean Vanier. "Neutrality" towards a specific community in the texts of the founder

L'Arche is an added value and allows to indicate general, most important features that may be universal and useful for most communities, both those that are narrower and broader.

Two available methods were used in the research: logical-linguistic - especially when it comes to analysis and hermeneutics - and analytical-synthetic method. The philosopher discussed his views in several dozen books in English and French. Some of them have been translated into Polish. The investigations mainly included books written in English and publications translated into Polish.

The originality of the doctoral dissertation focuses mainly on four elements. The first element concerns the systemic compilation of Jean Vanier's philosophical views in one place. In the Polish language - on the basis of the previous knowledge of the author of the doctoral thesis - such a work has not been created. The second aspect of originality is related to this. The lack of such a study forced the author of the dissertation to act independently in terms of naming certain phenomena described by Jean Vanier (such as, for example, the three dimensions of the community in its descriptive definition presented in Chapter III) or to describe certain divisions in ethics (e.g. the issue of primary and secondary affiliation), described in Chapter II). The third thread regarding the original approach to the problem concerns the issue related to the lack of clear polemics or sympathy expressed in the texts of the author of *L'Arche*. Despite this difficulty, the author of the dissertation looks for philosophical contexts through the analysis of fragments of Jean Vanier's texts, juxtaposing them and pointing to certain similarities and differences. The last element of originality is a certain description of the world of people with intellectual disabilities from the philosophical and social point of view. The author of the dissertation devotes an appropriate place to this issue, along with an analysis and commentary.

The work has been divided into four chapters. Each chapter begins with an introduction and has a separate summary. Some subsections begin with introductory notes or contextual introductions. Their presence is dictated by the need to clarify certain concepts or indicate the context of a given issue.

The first chapter was called "Human social nature". It is a historical cross-section of the most important and selected theories on philosophical concepts that take into account the relationship between man and the community. The first section refers to ancient and medieval designs. The second section describes modern concepts, starting with Machiavelli and ending with the dispute between the liberal concept of the social contract and the conservative vision of man. The third subsection describes the most important disputes in modern social philosophy, taking into account such positions as: contemporary liberalism, communitarianism, personalism, as well as postmodernism and biopolitics. The fourth subchapter gives the work an interdisciplinary dimension, as it refers to selected analyzes relating to community life in the field of political science, sociology and Roman Catholic theology.

The second chapter, entitled "The Anthropological Assumptions of Jean Vanier" is divided into two parts. The first one describes the anthropological assumptions of the creator of *L'Arche* in two perspectives: personalistic and existential, and points to his social orientation, and describes Vanier's position on the status of people with intellectual disabilities from the personalistic and existential side. The second part is ethical and

introduces the reader to the key ethical concepts in Jean Vanier's philosophy: belonging, forgiveness and responsibility.

The third chapter, called "The Concept of a Community by Jean Vanier", consists of three subsections. The first presents the definition of a community according to the author of the Ark in three versions: the receiving community, the giving community, the receiving community, and the demanding community. Then the goals and mission of the community were discussed. The last part of this section refers to the concept of power in a community. The second section provides terminological clarifications and other explanations that seem essential to understanding the philosophy of the community. The first part indicates the description of the state of society and the problems with defining the term "community" taking into account the factors distinguishing the community from other social groups. The second part discusses the primary communities: family and friendly relations. The last subsection refers to secondary groups, and in particular to the institution of the school. The third subchapter analyzes open issues such as accompaniment and the problem of crisis in interpersonal relationships, mainly in the community.

The fourth chapter, entitled "Critical Analysis", is devoted to the analysis of Vanier's concept as a positive project and also as a kind of philosophical critique with a broader focus on the social sciences and the humanities. The first part aims to show the originality of Vanier's project in the field of: power, relations between non-believers in the religious community and partnership in interpersonal relations with intellectually disabled people. The second part critically refers to the universalization and idealization of the community as a form of life, the issue related to the principles of acceptance and exclusion from the community, and intellectual formation focused solely on one personalistic-Christian option.