

*Reconsidering Disability, Friendship and Otherness – Theological  
and Ethical Perspectives*

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**“There’s two kinds of poverty.**

**We have the poverty of material where the people are hungry for a loaf of bread – real hunger.  
But there is a much deeper, much greater hunger; and that is the hunger for love, and that terrible  
loneliness and being unwanted, unloved – being abandoned by everybody.”**

**Mother Theresa**



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## **Abbreviations**

DS	=	Disability Studies
DTh	=	Disability theology
EV	=	Evangelium Vitae
JPII	=	John Paul II
JV	=	Jean Vanier
MM	=	Medical Model
NE	=	Nicomachean Ethics
RH	=	Redemptor Hominis
SD	=	Salvifici Doloris
SM	=	Social Model
PA	=	Personal Assistant
PWD	=	People with disability
PWHD	=	People without disability

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be “different”? What does it mean to be relational? These fundamental questions not only interrogate the meaning of human life and living in the world but also provoke and are provoked by cultural, political and scientific challenges in a mainstream global modern context.<sup>1</sup> What it means to be a human person in high-speed modern society involves various strands of our modern notion of morality, friendship and the idea of the other. Modernity underlies not only the context of moral reasoning, but is also related to the way we think, argue, reason and question the personal and friendship identity. Modernity not only changes the conception of morality, but also the perception of the other, and consequently the perception of the friend.

The meaning of human in this research project underpins the meaning of the other; the difference addresses the condition of disability; and meaning of relationality refers to the friendship. If the friendship in its baseline meaning is a process that reveals a person’s relational subjectivity and tendency towards the other, than when such a process includes a person with disability, friendship should be realized as a relationship of inclusion, whereas the other should be understood more as a subject with an intrinsic dignity, instead of an object of care, pity and exclusion. This means not only that the practical and conceptual approaches to friendship, otherness and disability require integration; also, in order to grasp an adequate approach to a human person in particular and human relationships in general, these concepts require reconsideration. Moreover, forming a proper understanding of friendship first presumes a proper knowledge of the other. This entails that the theological and ethical reconsideration of disability, otherness and friendship, in questioning a human as the other and as a friend, must be clustered as the key anthropological themes crucial for reconsidering the very same framework of friendship, disability and otherness.

In line with the presumption of this thesis, this asserts that the key problem in discussing the friendship, otherness and disability is in fact anthropological. This goes beyond thinking merely of facets of human nature, the human person and the human being, and implies an exploratory character of anthropological and theological systems regarding the theme of friendship, otherness and disability. The renewal of certain anthropological categories in such regard is a search for a deeper understanding of humanity, not apart from, but in light of, the presence of disability. Once such an anthropology is established, we will be in a position to combat the utilitarian and liberal assumptions which regard a human person first as a dual entity (body and soul); and second as an end in itself. In other words, what I aim to say is that the key elements integrated into theological anthropologies and related disability anthropologies should be inclusive of an indispensable respect for human dignity and the person’s vulnerability as a criterion and condition in rethinking the anthropology of friendship.

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Person Created in the Image of God* (2004); World Council of Churches, *Christian Perspective on Theological Anthropology*, (2006).

In all of the recent contemporary discourses, the meaning of human has been most keenly touched and challenged by Jean Vanier. This has been exemplified not only in the context of L'Arche community, where Vanier spent his life, but also was one integrative theme of his public conferences and his writing opus, crowned by winning the *Templeton Prize* in 2015. In 2016 in the *Interview* with Vanier, originally published in *Pastoral Review*,<sup>2</sup> I asked Vanier about forgiveness, justice, interreligious dialogue, disability, friendship, the human condition and the problems of contemporary man and women. Vanier explicitly raises profound and challenging statements regarding the condition of a human in the contemporary world marked by injustices and dichotomies, particularly regarding the “marginal” and a “more than vulnerable person.” The three questions that I will extricate from the interview are Vanier's answers concerning the meaning of friendship and disability, echoing the meaning of the other. My purpose in placing the *Interview* with Jean Vanier into a scope of this *Introduction* first considers the practical aspect of this thesis project's research perspectives; secondly it aims to emphasize the importance of practical character in understanding the human.

## **Background and Research Perspectives**

### **a) Practical insights:**

Martina Vuk, „Interview with Jean Vanier“ in *The Pastoral Review*, January/February (2017): 37-41.

## ***Disability***

### **MV: What is disability according to you?**

**JV:** *There is a disability compared to the vision of what a human being should be. It is more defined by logos and by capacity to do or to think and grow through the thinking. So, somebody who has disability and who cannot perform is considering disabled. And the same thing is with people with Alzheimer. All of these people with disability, they lost something, they lost this capability to do things, so the handicap is the physical reality where people are unable to accomplish what we think a human being should be or should be capable to do.*

## ***The other***

**MV:** **We are living in the epoch of rapid technological progress in all areas particularly in biomedicine. Improvements in modern medicine and pharmacy have been also beneficial to people with disabilities. Yet, there are numerous attacks on human life from conception till the end with the tendency to eliminate suffering. Modern law and medicine is particularly hostile towards fragile and vulnerable life stages or individuals. What will be your answer to that? Where lies the actual problem? Could prevention of suffering bring our time more progress?**

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<sup>2</sup> Vuk, Martina „Interview with Jean Vanier“, in *The Pastoral Review*, January/February (2017): 37-41. The Interview was firstly published in *Pastoral Review* and translated into Croatian in 2017 and French in 2019.

**JV:** *You see, we are born in great fragility as babies and we end up in great fragility, and in all our lives we are fragile. So there is something about our humanity that we are born in great fragility and we will die in great fragility. The meaning of fragility is to bring us back to reality. Reality is that we are body and spirit. And what is the most important? It is to work for peace. It is a beautiful expression of Andria Riccardi which said community is founded in history and is a hope for utopia. Francis, the Pope, defines utopia as a possible outcome of what we want. Like the meaning of L'Arche is to work and to be with people with disabilities because we believe that they are fully human and that they are open and loved by God. But utopia is that we would like the world to be like that. And what is the influence of L'Arche on the world? So that other people can discover that we do not have to be in that struggle between power and love, because so often we are told even in the school that we have to be powerful and to achieve the most, but the reality is that the most important thing is not whether we are the best, it is the way we live, how we are open to people, how we love people. So there are two visions of humanity: one is the vision of winning and another vision is to be open to the other.*

**MV:** **In academia we are often confronting a gap between our theoretical knowledge and experience. Is our theoretical knowledge insufficient and why we need experience? Do you think that experience can improve theory? Or vice versa?**

**JV:** *The whole of humanity is built up through experience. And then we reflect on this experience. Like until recently Catholics shouldn't speak to Protestants - theoretically. But then we met and we discover that many Protestants are holy people. Pope Francis said go to the periphery and meet the people and when you meet them you discover something, and you receive some of their wisdom. The poor and broken on the streets have certain wisdom in front of the pain and death that we are not capable to have. So, what is particular in this? Is this a discovery of the other person's presence who has a gift to give to me? So, that means that to be with the different leads us to a very specific humility. The danger for a human person is to desire to be the best. We define our identity through winning. But we can also find our identity through the communion with another person. What is that communion? That's a difficult element to explain. What is this communion with Jesus? It is difficult to define, but we can experience, this feeling of oneness of you and me being together. We can experience these, yet not define it too closely. We can define what the war is, what separation is, but what is communion and togetherness is difficult to define. And there in the mystery of people with disabilities, through the body we can discover it. And you find that in the beggar and in the person with disability because they are more close to the wisdom of the body than the wisdom of intellectuality. So also the mentally sick or the people with Alzheimer who are close to the body have something to tell us about the body.*

### ***Friendship***

**MV:** **What is friendship according to you?**

*Strangely enough it's not a word I use very much. The word I use more is the relationship, and the mutual relationship and the communion. Friendship in Aristotle's point of view is when two*

people come together deepening their vision. It could be in a political way that together we are oriented to the future. All together we are contemplating or sharing. And for Aristotle in some way this is among two people with a similar capacities coming together. That's why Aristotle would say that the magnanimous man cannot have friendship with the poor. With the poor, you do things for the poor, but for friendship we work together for the common vision, common ideal, we are together – it's the communion. What is friendship with Jesus? „...I no longer call you to be my servants but my friends“.... and Jesus said... who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him.“ So the finality of friendship with Jesus is union with Jesus - it is becoming one. Whereas friendship with Aristotle is coming together to do and works towards the finality. But with Jesus the friendship is the finality and is through his flesh that we become one. And that happened because Jesus is seen not as the wonderful doer of things...because people were coming to see what Jesus is doing, but when He said the only thing that is important is eat my body and drink my blood - people get upset. So in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel people are happy when Jesus is doing things for them, but they get angry when he tells them to eat his body and drink his blood - because this mean becoming one and that's asking for change. But the transformation is in the view of the finality which is union with Jesus.

Now let's talk about Ludic. He is sixty this day and he starts a Faith and Light. He cannot talk, he cannot walk.... . Not long ago we went to Paris, and Odile was asking a priest in Paris who was doing the baptism for people with disabilities, “How is it, that you are particularly open to baptism for people with disabilities? “... And he answers „when I was in L'Arche 20 years ago, Ludic transformed me...“. So what is this transformation that comes with people with disabilities? Do we call it friendship? Because there is no language, but the only language is through the body. And for the people who work in Forestiere they said that the most important moments with Ludic are when they are giving him a bath. There is a special relationship there through the body....

## **b) The conceptual insights of Research Perspectives**

Friendship is a historically discussed concept (Krappmann, 1996), an important human relationship (Willmot, 1987), and a basic human need (Nussbaum, 2006).<sup>3</sup> The approaches to friendship vary from ancient and modern, and have been developed as a subject of scholarly discourse within certain academic fields (philosophy, sociology, psychology, theology,) including the occurrence of a virtual social network: “Facebook.” The emergence of various academic disciplines contours certain definitions and approaches to friendship, which is the reason different friendship definitions emerge within a contemporary scholarly literature.<sup>4</sup> The philosophical approach to friendship has been greatly influenced by ancient authors (e.g. Plato's *Lysis*, Epicurus's *Principal Doctrines*, Seneca's, *Epistulae Morales*, II, LXIII; Cicero, *Laelius de amicitia*), but reach the peak in Aristotle's treatise on friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics* book VIII and IX. According to Aristotle, friendship was important for the development of one's moral character, it was the reciprocal relationship, based on a well-wishing. Besides the distinction

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<sup>3</sup> The complete references to relevant authors mentioned in *Introduction* see in *Bibliography*

<sup>4</sup> For more see First part pp. 11-75



between true and derivative types of friendship, the emphasis on a virtue and the symmetrical character of friendship was specific to only one type of friendship, so called true or a perfect character friendship.<sup>5</sup> With a certain reframing, his definition continues impacting the modern and contemporary thinking on friendship.<sup>6</sup> The modern philosophical literature demonstrated certain shifts compared to the ancient. Modern and late modernity friendship has been impacted by dichotomies and implications of those who prescribed friendship with rational subjectivity (e.g. Kant), and those, who as a response to such rational morality, see friendship as emotional self-disclosure, including a certain amount of altruism, emotions and sentiment (e.g. Emerson, Blum, Nussbaum).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the friendship literature in late modernity and contemporary scholarship has been influenced by particular cultural, socio - anthropological and psychological understanding of a person, which manifests in fluctuations and divergences in opinions and impacted not only the meaning of friendship, but also the meaning of the otherness.

The theological literature, despite being influenced by philosophical thinking, implies approaches that include metaphysical character of friendship that is before all friendship with God. Biblical friendship brought a particular novelty in friendship conceptualization. It consists in suggesting a new order of relationship among humans and emphasizes its communitarian character. This is to say that the ethical vision of Bible, particularly the New Testament (e.g. John Gospel and Pauline Letters), differ from those of ancient world - in that it includes friendship with God, the love for one's neighbor and love for one's enemies (e.g.; Craig S. Kenner, 2009; Val Friedell, 2008). Aquinas, who incorporated Biblical and philosophical principles on friendship and Augustine's thinking on the person, in *Summa Theologiae IIa, IIae*, q.23 understood friendship with a term charity, emphasizes its communitarian dimension in relation to God and to one's neighbor.<sup>8</sup>

A number of sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists see friendship as relationship, important for one's self esteem, the contribution to one's emotional well-being, (e.g.; Pockney, 2009; Myers, 2000) manifested in a feeling of being accepted, and the sense of one's belonging. Socio-psychological literature also distinguishes between different types of friends, such as: close friends, best friends, casual friends, companions, acquaintances, etc. (e.g.; Allan, G. 1998; Willmott, 1987). The empirical research in exploring friendship includes friendship between gender (e.g. girl and boys' friendship, female and male friendship), friendship between children, adolescence, (e.g. Throne, 1993), the adults, friendship between the aging population (e.g. Darcy C. Siebert, Elizabeth J. Mutran & Donald C. Reitzes, 1999), friendship between vulnerable adults and their carers (e.g. Colley, 2003), etc.

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<sup>5</sup> John M. Cooper. "Aristotle on the Forms of friendship. " The Review of Metaphysics 30, no. 4 (1977).

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed references cf. first chapter pp. 11-24

<sup>7</sup> See first part pp. 48-65

<sup>8</sup> For more see first part, pp. 24-48

## **What about people with disability? Are they participants of the scholarly review of friendship? In what aspect are they considered the true other?**

The investigation of friendship with people with disability has been relatively new in comparison to other friendships. Recently, the number of contemporary socio-psychological and study of disability related literature indicates the distinction between types of relationship and the context where such relationships appear. Regarding the context and application, the considerable mainstream amount of exploring friendship among disabled people has been conducted within the *school settings* including children and adolescents with and without disabilities (e.g. Hughes at all., 2004; Hughes et all. 2001; Žic&Igric, 2001; Luftig, 1998). The results indicate various responses, from social acceptance and interactions (e.g. Hughes at all. 2001) to social rejection by the non - disabled peers (e.g. Luftig, 1998). Several studies from the field of philosophy and theology have also investigated the possibility of forming a friendship between people living with disability and people living without developmental disability (e.g. Greiner, 2010; Reinders, 2008; Pottie & Sumarah, 2004; Swinton, 2000). Despite these achievements, according to recent research in UK by *SENSE*<sup>9</sup> the questionnaire including 1004 participants with a range of disabilities reported that 53 percent of people questioned feel lonely; 23 per cent say they feel quite or very lonely on a typical day; and 6 per cent of disabled people have no friends at all (c.f. *SENSE*, January, 2015). All this suggests that the category of disability<sup>10</sup> and friendship with people with disabilities have been already studied as a bio-medical phenomenon, but the moral and ethical evaluations of the experience of friendship with people with disability, compared to some other themes (e.g. citizenships, equal opportunities and emancipation), have been missing. Moreover, the very meaning of the notion of the other<sup>11</sup> and the meaning of otherness has not been specifically

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<sup>9</sup> *SENSE* is a UK National charity supporting and campaigning for people who are deafblind and those with sensory impairments. The undertaken initiative to explore the terrain of friendship for disabled and deafblind people cited above has been undertaken in 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Disabilities are multiple and various. Sometimes it seems that disability can be a many things, and none of the things at all. The present internationally accepted definition according to WHO address disability as the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors) (cf. WHO, 2011). For the most of the disability scholarly literature, disability is understood as a physical, sensory, emotional or intellectual "abnormal" condition that requires either prevention, cure or commitment to normalcy. As this project particularly in exploring friendship includes reference to intellectual and developmental disabilities, it is important to provide an internationally acceptable definition of intellectual disability. According to the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD, 2002), intellectual disability is defined as limitation in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills, before the age of eighteen. (e.g. <http://aaid.org/intellectual-disability>). According to the 11th edition of terminology and classification (e.g. Schalock et al. 2010), the intellectual criterion for the diagnosis of ID is met if an individual has an IQ test score of approximately seventy percent or below. In such regard it is important to mention that scholars distinguish between four degrees of severity, reflecting the level of intellectual impairment: mild (IQ 50-70) moderate (IQ 35-50), severe (IQ 20-35) and profound (IQ less than 20). For more on disability definition see second part of the this research thesis

<sup>11</sup> The concept of scholarly discourse on otherness is a broad subject and implies a various meaning. In the brief outline here, the subject has been initiated by German philosopher Hegel (cf. Hegel, 1807) and further developed by Husserl, 1931; Sartre, 1943. The subject has been a central part of a recent discussion within academic field of

addressed in such discourses. Additionally, significant achievements that have been made in recent decades towards the emancipation of people with disabilities in society (Amado, 1993) has also shown that there is still a lack of coherent interpretation, which does not allow for an adequate understanding of the inclusion of people with disabilities into a broader context of the experience of friendship (e.g. IASSID, 2013; WHO, 2011; Cushing, 2010;). While it remains an understudied area, emergent research indicates that people with developmental disabilities suffer from widespread loneliness, stress and depression (e.g. Lunskey, 2002), as well as, lack of friendship (e.g. Cushing, 2010; Amado, 1993;). Findings also revealed that relationships with people with disabilities were represented as a form of charity or sacrifice rather than a true personal and self-transformative relationship between humans (e.g. Cushing, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Vanier, 2008).

The partial limits of such an approach lacking the adequate understanding of inclusion and friendship arise from the very concept of friendship in its classic form, which implies a degree of equality between the individuals (e.g. Schumacher, 2005) and the freedom for everyone to engage voluntarily in relationships (e.g. Reinders, 2010). Related to this is the epistemological and conceptual problem of communication and engagement with „disabled“ besides merely being reduced to the concept of solidarity and charity. Regarding the field of theology, although contemporary theological ethics and anthropology reflect a turn from the concept of *imago Dei* from over-intellectualist towards more relational perspectives (e.g. Kelsey, 2009), concepts still remain exclusionary to the persons with disabilities (e.g. Reinders, 2008). Within the last fifty years the context of L'Arche<sup>12</sup> communities - where people with and without disabilities live

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philosophy, critical theory and ethics referring Butler, 1990; Ricœur, 1992; Levinas, 1974; Derrida, 1973; Bubber, 1937; and sociology (e.g.; Jervis, 1999; Hall, 1997; Duncan, J. Ley, D., (eds). 1993). It was a subject of theological discourses particularly when the other refer the meaning of one's neighbor (e.g. John Paul II) or refer the theo-anthropological discourses of *imago Dei*. In this research thesis other is thought not as stigmatized or marginal other, but as unique and different from the self. This difference will be perceived as a quality of one's and the other identity. More specifically, it is a category that belongs to the meaning of personal and at the same time implies alterity, which underpins being different and respected in fulness of its human identity. For more see part three, first chapter of the thesis.

<sup>12</sup> According to the Charter of L'Arche, its identity and mission, L'Arche is defined as community where people with and without intellectual disabilities, share life and belong together to an International Federation of Communities of L'Arche. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of L'Arche journey together with the celebration of the unique value of every person (c.f. Spink, 2006) and mutual recognition of each other need to belong (c.f. Vanier, 2008). The mission of L'Arche is thus, to make known the gifts of people who have intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transformative relationships (c.g. Hryniuk, 2010; Salenson, 2009;); foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of members while being faithful to the core values of the founding story; and, engaged in diverse cultures, (Cushing, 2010) working together toward a more human society.

Much of the scholarly literature will address L'Arche as community of friends (e.g. Hauerwas, Swinton, Ford, Grieg, Reinders). In my opinion, its primarily challenge, to scholarly disability and friendship discourses, consist in: a) its non - typical type of inclusion that includes people with disabilities (core members) as receivers of care and people without disabilities (assistants) as their care givers (Kelly, 2010; Redley, 2005; Cushing, 2003); b) the possibility of people, with and without disabilities to build friendship relationship despite ethical respect of a power balances and equality restrictions. This means that L'Arche is not only a some good - doing organization, or the covenantal relationship, but a community that opens a possibility to build friendship relationship among differences. (Cushing, 2010; Reimer, 2009). This is the reason many scholarly literature address L'Arche as a community with a possibility of building friendship. Other, criticize L'Arche due to its religiosity, its apparent lack of a rigorous stance on the need to address policy concerning people with disabilities, its philosophy concerning disability's meanings,

together - has shown the possible richness of asymmetrical relationships and challenged the theoretical framework of the particular phenomenon, understood in its classic form, based on the cognitive, social and moral equality. The relationship in L'Arche community that includes people with and without disabilities, through the exchange of various stories and testimonies, has shown the possibility of close dyad relationship (e.g. Grieg, 2015; Vuk, 2013; Reimer, 2009; Pottie & Sumarah, 2004; Cushing, 2003;) despite involvement of the element of caring and involuntary engagement. What speaks most profoundly to this is that these relationships are characterized by a particular way of belonging that implies interdependency, the main features of which are a narrative of vulnerability and respect for each person's uniqueness (c.f. *Anthropology of L'Arche Report*, Toronto, 2007). Similarly, Vanier has frequently emphasized that the fundamental questions of relationship, rather than being explored by way of a rational autonomy, can be revised through the relational principle (cf. Buber, 1937) and priority of the heart (e.g. Vanier, 2008). Such statements, together with Vanier's previous responses, challenge: (a) the classic and modern understanding of friendship based on recognition of symmetrical inclusion dominant by cognitive and rational capacities; (b) the theoretical framework of disability; (c) the concept of the meaning of otherness; and (d) the inadequacy of contemporary theological anthropology to give an easy answer to the phenomena of friendship and otherness, when such framework includes the disabled other. From a moral point of view this is a challenging experience, since it requires more attention to be given to the concept of relationality and dependency (c.f. McIntyre, 2001; Vanier, 1998; Kittay, 1998; Ricœur, 1992; John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, 1984) as fundamental aspects of a common humanness, instead of demonstrating them as less adequate in grasping the whole picture of the meaning of human person.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The reality of disability is not only the reality of being in the world but also concerns the concept of the meaning of otherness and being created as an image of God. The constructive critique that the emergence of disability, as a human condition posits to theo-anthropological and ethical concepts, such as otherness and friendship, is the quest of the renewal of theo-anthropological and ethical knowledge on the meaning of disability, otherness and friendship. In order to achieve such knowledge, we must undertake an approach where friendship is regarded not merely as a theoretical exercise, but also a subject of a practical implication. The theological and anthropological entities, such as disability, otherness and friendship, are interconnected in a sense that the meaning of the one needs to be explained in the light of the other, and vice versa. In such my primary assumption is that in order to understand friendship, it is a necessary prerequisite for us to understand the meaning of otherness; and to understand otherness and friendship, including a person with disability, requires adequate knowledge of the notion of disability, as both concern the human condition and the context of a personal experience. In other words, in order to challenge the strongly individualistic and rational view of the concept of the human person and rethinking the rationale of friendship and disability, the intention of this research, besides exploring the conceptual meaning of such a notion, searches for the practical aspect that imbeds its realization.

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and features of its language referring disability (e.g. Burghardt, 2016; Lee, 1991;). For more on L'Arche see third chapter of the second part of the thesis.

In order to understand the person as a different other, and as a friend, in my assumption requires an integrated and interdisciplinary knowledge of the notion of the other, friend and disability. Thus, beyond impacting changes, the intention of this thesis is to propose a self-critical epistemological suspicion as something beneficial in order to grasp a better knowledge of the concepts associated with the field of disability discourses, the field of theological ethics and academic field of theological anthropology.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

Traditionally the sense of a common Christian belief about the meaning of the human person has been perceived in regard to being created in the image of God and as such a being capable of relationship. The academic discourses guided by an attempt to understand human persons as relational beings, reduces the other to an object of thought, lacking the description of a person's experience.<sup>13</sup> In such regard the very condition of a human person remains a prisoner of conceptual analyzes or a system of thought. But what happens when such a conceptual system brings into discourse a person with intellectual and severe disability? What happens when the theological anthropology concerning the meaning of a human person and the very condition of disability is challenged by the non - theological anthropology of disability and vice versa? In such regard, can the conceptual framework of theological anthropology and Christian ethics provide the adequate answers to the emerging question disability and academic disciplines of studies of disability bring to such framework, or must the framework itself be reconsidered? To what extent is the concept of friendship, perceived as the universal human relationship achievable and freely given to all, inclusive towards people with intellectual disability? Do the so called "more than vulnerable" people share the same anthropological condition as those who consider themselves "invulnerable"? The question of this thesis, besides its strong emphasis on the reconsideration of the application and redefinition of friendship, requires interrogation of the meaning of the other (particularly when the other refers to persons living with disability) and the notion of disability which will bring to the theological and ethical reconsideration of friendship, disability and otherness interchangeably and interdependently explored in this thesis. Based on such interrogation, the interim goal of this research is to show whether we can find: (a) elements of friendship in the privileged relations developed between people with and without disabilities; and (b) if yes, than in what way these relationships could lead to a reconstruction of understanding friendship in particular and the human person in general.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

This thesis consists of three parts. The first part is a brief historical conceptual analysis of most appearing approaches, definitions and evaluations of friendship from Aristotle until the contemporary friendship. The first part deals with a classic approach (e.g. Aristotle, Biblical scholarship and Thomas Aquinas); modern assessment of friendship (e.g. Kant, Emerson, Kierkegaard, Derrida, Blum, Telfer, Lewis) and evaluation of the so called "Facebook friendship." The second part of the thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter includes examination of the two academic fields: Disability studies and Disability theology. Firstly, it is a conceptual

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<sup>13</sup> Ray S. Anderson, *On being human, essays in Theological Anthropology*, p.4

presentation and the critical examination of the academic field of Disability studies, including the evaluation of their approaches to disability and friendship. Following a similar principle, the first chapter of the second part also includes exploration of the field of Disability theology as an academic field, and its most relevant sources in discussing friendship and disability. Based on the results of examined chapters, the second chapter of the second part adds my brief evaluation and critical examination of the anthropological and ethical reasons why people with disability still lack friendship. After setting forward a partial reason for such impossibility, my aim in the third chapter of the second part is to illustrate the practical evaluation of friendship based on evaluation of real friendship experience between people's in L'Arche community. The idea in pursuing the exemplification of friendship is an indispensable contribution to the complete understanding of friendship, disability and otherness. The final, third part of the research project consists of two chapters. In the first chapter my aim is to set forward the anthropology which in the second chapter of the third part will be the ground to rethink the friendship and provide my own suggestion of friendship redefinition. The anthropology of interdependency and vulnerability of John Paul II and Jean Vanier will be the framework for understanding friendship as relational anthropology and an active participation. This thesis, besides providing the solution to a more inclusive type of friendship redefinition, aims to stimulate further research through the means of its most relevant, appearing and challenging questions.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method of this research project consists of conceptual and practical evaluation of literature, approaches and experiences regarding the notion of friendship, disability and otherness. The on-going doctoral research through the systematic and critical reading of the literature, the synthetic reflection and illustration of qualitative research, questions the way in which the openness and recognition of a true self in the experience of mutual (friendly) relationships transcends the boundaries of cognitive capacities, social status, likeness or utility.

This I will do through the systematic examination and reevaluation of the approaches and established knowledge on the meaning of friendship definition, in the first part; systematic and critical literature examination of the academic field of Disability studies and Disability theology in the first chapter of the second part; and the illustration of the qualitative research based on the phenomenological method in the third chapter of the second part of the thesis. After the examination of a certain topic within a scope of academic fields and looking at the direct experience of people, I will question the way in which the openness and recognition of a true self through the implication of vulnerability and solicitude set forward the framework to reconsider the meaning of disability and otherness in particular, and rethink the concept of friendship definition in general. Based on critical examination of approaches and evaluation of experience of a relationship of friendship, I will propose my own definition of disability, (2<sup>nd</sup> part); my preference in reconsidering the notion of otherness (3<sup>rd</sup> part) and finally suggest my redefinition of friendship (3<sup>rd</sup> part).

**Part One**

**FROM ARISTOTLE TO FACEBOOK  
THE THEME OF FRIENDSHIP EXAMINED: CLASSIC, MODERN AND  
LATE MODERNITY APPROACHES**

## Introduction

Friendship is one among most discussed themes in the history of moral philosophy and ethics.<sup>14</sup> It is the one of those themes that carries universal application and essential value for the development of the human, both individually and socially. Since Aristotle, philosophers have been debating its true nature. The ancient (Greek and Romans) philosophers such as e.g. Plato, (e.g. *Lysis* and *Phaedrus*); Aristotle (e.g. *Nicomachean Ethics*, book VIII and IX), Cicero (e.g. *Laelius de Amicitia*) and Seneca (e.g. *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, *Epistle IX*) were particularly determined to discover the proper meaning and a value of friendship. The Biblical scholarship, despite showing less interest in exploring friendship, compared to the ancients, invests friendship with a profound and transcendental meaning. Friendship is not only possible between so-called natural men, but is possible between man and God, between Jesus and his disciples (supernatural dimension). There is special concern for the theme of friendship within Old Testament,<sup>15</sup> specifically in the book of Sirach; Exodus 33:11 (Moses was addressed as a friend of God); 1 Sam, 20,1-42 (the friendship narrative between Jonathan and David); Proverbs, 17:17. The New Testament (Pauline and Johannine opus) gives particular credibility to the notion of friendship in the New Testament. Up until modernity and late modernity, the theme of friendship has been reflected among different patristic authors, medieval and scholastic thinkers, culminating in thought of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The idea of friendship as fellowship continues to bear importance among people, having been reconfirmed by the historical opening of Second Vatican Council. The Council of World Churches at its opening in the 1962, in the preface of *Dei Verbum*, recalls God's desire for fellowship with human persons. Taking the direction from words of St. John, the Council writes:

We announce to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we announce to you, so that you may have fellowship with us and our common fellowship be with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Friendship is also an important subject of (late modernity) academic discourses on friendship. This can be evidenced in academic field of philosophy, theology, psychology and sociology. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* reports a growing body of research since the 1970 concerning the questions on relationship between the phenomenon of friendship and particular moral theories such as consequentialism, deontology and virtue ethics (e.g. Stocker 1976, 1981; Blum 1980, 1993; Wilcox 1987; Friedman 1989, 1993; Badhwar 1991; Cocking & Oakley 1995).<sup>17</sup> In the French context, the recent analysis of friendship in ethics and moral

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Alain Petit, s.v. "Amitié" in *Dictionnaire D'Ethique et de Philosophie Morale*, eds. Monique Canto-Sperber, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1966); See also s.v. "Friendship," in *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Becker, C. Lawrence and Charlotte B. Becker, eds. (London, St. James Press, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> As a source of reference to Scriptural text on English, I will use New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV), 1989. cf. The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), accessed via <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV-Bible/#copy>

<sup>16</sup> Cf. "Dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*," Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965." Available from [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist.councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist.councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) [assessed June 20 2017]

<sup>17</sup> I listed a few most cited authors, also referred in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Some of these authors will



philosophy, Bernard Shumacher and Jean -Christophe Merle situate friendship within the discourses between universal practical philosophy, virtue ethics and postmodern communitarian scholarship, as well as encounters between phenomenology and tradition.<sup>18</sup>

Contemporary scholarship documents a unique aspect of the importance of friendship and relates it to an increasing body of research in sociology and psychology (e.g. Argyle, 2001; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Myers, 1993; etc.) Friendship has become an important point of scholarly consideration in the psychology of wellbeing and personality development (e.g. Watson, D. et al. 1992; Cummins & Lau, 2003; Forrester-Jones et al., 2006; Seligman, 2011).<sup>19</sup> Regarding the field of sociology, contemporary work on friendship considers it as an intimate and personal relationship (e.g. Willmot, 1987; Spencer and Pahl 2006; Graham, 1998, Blatterer, 2015).<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the increasing amount of research within contemporary discourses of disability and sociology give evidence of friendship's significance for people with disabilities (e.g. Amado, 1993; Chappell, A.L. 1994; Lunsy, Y.& Benson, B.A.2001; Emerson, E. & McWilly, K. 2004; Shakespeare, 2014).

The concentration of the academic field of theology regarding friendship is on Biblical scholarship. The study of Scripture brought a particular novelty in friendship conceptualization comparing to ancient friendship and impacted the further development of theological thinking on friendship. It consists in suggesting a new order of relationship among human and emphasizes its communitarian character. This is to say that the ethical vision of Bible, particularly the New Testament (John Gospel and Pauline Letters) differ from those of ancient world - in such as it includes friendship with God, the love for one's neighbor and love for one's enemies (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2007; Val Friedell, 2008; Craig S. Kenner, 2009). Many of the references, commentaries and discussions in modernity have looked at Augustine's and Aquinas's understanding of friendship, who each, by their understanding of human person in relationship with God, broaden the theological discussion on friendship. There were attempt by some theologians to give friendship a more public and political role in the ideas of the common good and political judgement, reflecting certain ideas of Aristotle's about the *polis* and Augustine's *civitas dei* vs. *civitas terrana* (c.f. Hauerwas,1995; de Graff, 2014;). Like Hauerwas and C.S. Lewis, whose work on friendship explicitly or implicitly raises concern about the lack of consideration in modernity of the virtue character of a friendship, Paul Waddell, in a slightly different way, expresses similar ideas. Several studies from the field of ethics and theology have also investigated the possibility of forming a friendship between people living with disability and people living without developmental disability (e.g. Greig, 2015; Reinders, 2008; Swinton, 2000), but besides the fragmentary approach, the complete treatise of such type of a friendship has not been evidenced.

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be also of my concerns in ongoing chapters. For the complete references to these authors see in *Bibliography*

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Schumacher & Merle, eds. *L'amitie - collection 'Ethique et philosophie Morale'*, p.5.

<sup>19</sup> Also, as mentioned above, some of these authors will be of my concerns in the following chapter. For the complete reference to all of these authors see *Bibliography*

<sup>20</sup> Blatterer H. "Friends, Friendship, and Sociology." In: *Everyday Friendships. Palgrave Macmillan Studies in Family and Intimate Life* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

My approach to friendship within this project presupposes friendship as a category of relational anthropology and an important moral and ethical subject. I will look at classic, modern and contemporary discourses and approaches to friendship, assuming that the approaches to friendship within modernity and late modernity differs from the ancient approaches. In this regard my selection of classic authors includes Aristotle, Scriptural New Testament (John's Gospel and Paul's letters) scholarship, and Thomas Aquinas treatise on charity in *ST*, q.23. The selection of these authors is merely because not only were they among the most cited within scope of theology (including Augustine<sup>21</sup>) and moral philosophy, but they were also among the most challenging to the disability discourse on friendship. After presentation of the main aspect of the classical approaches to friendship and its relation to the disability, I will then look at mainstream modern and contemporary scholarship on friendship. This includes selection of modern philosophers (e.g. Kant, Emerson, Kierkegaard) and contemporary discourses on friendship in academic field of philosophy, sociology and theology. My interest is to briefly present the main ideas and approaches of the modern and contemporary understanding of friendship and look at how such a conception of friendship is divergent or congruent with the previously mentioned classic authors. I will complete my examination of late modernity friendship including my own assessment of friendship concerning one of the greatest virtual social platform: "Facebook friends."

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<sup>21</sup> For more on Augustine reference to friendship see for instance Augustine, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, John H.S.Burleigh (transl.), The Library of Christian Classics, VI (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1953); Augustine, *Confessions of St Augustine*, Edward B. Pusey (transl.) (New York, Random House, 1999); Frank Vander Valk, „Friendship, politics and Augustine's consolidation of the self,“ *Religious Studies*, 45 (2009):pp.125-146.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter

### 1.1.CLASSIC APPROACHES TO FRIENDSHIP

#### 1.1.1. Debates over friendship in antiquity: Aristotle

Although the discussions of friendship by the ancient Greeks were numerous, one of the most influential and cited authors in classic, modern and contemporary contexts is Aristotle. In the following section I will outline the main aspects of the context of ancient friendship by looking at the Aristotle's treatise of friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics*, books VIII and IX.<sup>22</sup> I will look at the conceptualization and the constitutive elements of such friendship. I will also search for the meaning of how his perspective of friendship relates to the contemporary idea of friendship with people with disability and friendship between persons with physical/natural differences.

Although the notion of Aristotle's idea of friendship opens multiple avenues of inquiry (e.g. friendship relation to the notion of virtue, happiness, well- wishing; its relation to meaning *polis* and *philia*; its reference to other authors such as Plato, Cicero, Aquinas, etc.), my particular interest in Aristotle's work in this research is *anthropological* in nature. This means that I aim to look at descriptive and comparative approach to his threefold distinction between the forms of friendship, the main character of the concept of friendship, the meanings and the concepts of well-wishing and well-doing have within his account of friendship, as well as, the degree of similarity and equality he ascribes to friends.

The reasons I have decided to have a closer look upon Aristotle's friends, instead of, for instance Plato's, Cicero's or Seneca's, are twofold. First, Aristotle gives friendship a prominent place within the life of the virtue: his friendship embodies pursuit of a good and is an initial element for the constitution of community.<sup>23</sup> Such characteristics infuse Aristotle's concept of friendship with a great value, and are also, to some degree, different from the modern and contemporary concepts. The second reason, which is related to the first, is a frequent critique of Aristotle's account of friendship described as symmetrical, hierarchical and exclusive towards differences. In such regard, based on the ancient expressions of deformed bodies, terminologies<sup>24</sup> and the impossibility for creating the perfect friendship when such friendship implies anthropological (naturally human), social and class differences (such as master/slave, woman/man relationships), Aristotle's friendship not only appears exclusive of people with disability, but impacts the mainstream

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<sup>22</sup> Although Aristotle extend his treatise on friendship in *Eudemian Ethics* and in *Politics*, according to Contemporary author Richard Mulgan, his main treatment of friendship occurs in *Nicomachean Ethics*. Cf. Richard Mulgan, "The Role of Friendship in Aristotle's Political Theory", in *The challenge to Friendship in modernity*, (Ilford: FrankCass & Co. Ltd), 2000., p.15

<sup>23</sup> See Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 147-180

<sup>24</sup> The Greek terminology for physical deformities includes words such as maimed (*peros*); much-maimed (*anaperos*) or ugliness (*aischos*). These terms when attached to person due to some physical deformity, exclude person's from a full participation in community of *polis*. See for instance C. Krotzl, K. Mustakallio and J. Kuuliala, *Infirmity in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Social and Cultural Approaches to Health, Weakness and Care*, Surrey, Ashgate, 2015., p.3

contemporary rationale regarding friendship between different people.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, the contemporary disability theologians, as we will see in the next chapter, are critical towards Aristotle framework of friendship not only as it is symmetrical and individualistic, but also excludes person's with disability.<sup>26</sup>

Friendship has been a privileged topic, almost like a tradition, among ancient philosophers. Besides being invested with a special significance among ancient authors, in the broader picture it remains an important moral category. Although the meaning applied to the idea of friendship reveals a slight circle of divergence, authors have been influenced by each other's commentaries across a wide range of philosophical genres. For instance, regarding its structure, the discussion on friendship in Plato, Cicero and the Stoics appears in the form of a dialogue, whereas Aristotle gave friendship a prominent place in the form of a treatise.<sup>27</sup> He, as stated earlier, associated the idea of friendship with the idea of a common good and a community life, both of crucial importance in ancient world. The contemporary commentators on Aristotle, such as Martha Nussbaum in *Fragility of Goodness* and Michal Pakaluk in *Other Selves*, address the idea that, Aristotle's friendship has been an important concept within the structure of the *polis* (the city) in relation to the idea of justice, but it has not been itself political in the way 'political' is understood in contemporary culture.<sup>28</sup> In such sense, as MacIntyre stated, Aristotle's friendship was seen as being shared between all, in a common project of creating and sustaining a life of the city, a sharing incorporated in the immediacy of an individual's particular friendship.<sup>29</sup> As a moral category it has been ordered towards achievement of justice, common good, and happiness (understood as contemplation), that in sense is close to the modern idea of flourishing, but it stays a virtue (close to the meaning of excellence), instead of a component of quality of life, often understood within a contemporary cultural framework.<sup>30</sup> Those who were within the *polis* perceived as "capable

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Sticker, *History of Disability*, The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. John Swinton, *Becoming Friends of Time. Disability, Timefulness, and Gentle Discipleship*, (Texas, Baylor University Press, 2016). Hans Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship.: Profound disability, Theological Anthropology and Ethics*. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008

<sup>27</sup> See Michael Pakaluk, eds. *Other Selves- Philosophers on Friendship*, (Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Company, 1991). See similar discussion also in Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> For more on politics of friendship in antiquity with a similar implication see for instance, Allan, James Donald, *The Philosophy of Aristotle*. 2nd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970); John Cooper, "Political Animals and Civic Friendship." In Aristoteles' "Politik": Akten Des XI. Symposium Aristotelicum Friedrichshafen/Bodensee 25.8-3.9 1987, 220-241. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1990; Julia Annas, "Comments on J. Cooper." In Aristoteles' "Politik": Akten Des XI. Symposium Aristotelicum Friedrichshafen/Bodensee 25.8-3.9, 1987, 242-248., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1990.

<sup>29</sup> See McIntyre, *After Virtue*, p.156

<sup>30</sup> It is important to emphasize that the contemporary idea of flourishing is associated with the idea of quality of life often understood as a subjective element of well-being. According to few contemporary scholars, the idea of happiness in ancient world and in modernity differ, as the former was influenced by the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham's notion of happiness understood as pleasure, whereas the former was aligned with the meaning of contemplation. This has been elaborated in e.g. Martha Nussbaum, in *Fragility of Goodness - Luck and Ethics in greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1986). See also Annas, Julia, *The Morality of Happiness*, (Oxford, University Press, USA, 1995); Stephen Engstrom and Whiting Jennifer, *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty*. (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Anthony Kenny, "Happiness." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 66 (1965): 93-102.

human” and engaged in a mutual, benevolent relationship were described in one way or another as friends. The bond between citizens that constitute the *polis*, is the bond of friendship, and friendship is a virtue.<sup>31</sup> This has been particularly on display within Aristotle’s debates on *koinonia* (community) and his understanding of a man as a political and social animal.<sup>32</sup> But the unity within the idea of *polis* for Aristotle presupposes symmetry, or some sense of harmony. Difference was something contrary to justice, self-esteem, and a threat to the composure of a virtuous man. Difference destabilizes the harmony of the *polis*<sup>33</sup>, and the friendship that in a larger sense contributes to the stability of the *polis* must have had similar structure, as his idea of friendship strongly suggest a shared endeavor towards common action. However, despite his idea of friendship applying to a large number of people, only one type of friendship, could be determined as a true friendship.

In order to grasp a whole picture of the idea of Aristotle’s friendship, there are elements within his theory that requires to be looked together. In the interest of this research, I propose we look at Aristotle’s threefold distinction of the forms of friendship, his characteristics regarding the notion of *philia*, the sense of the well-wishing, the concept of happiness and the meaning implied in a concept of unequal friendship.

#### **1.1.1.1. The assessment of elements and forms of Aristotle’s friendship: The concept of (virtue) friendship**

Aristotle’s early work on friendship has been grounded in the *Eudemian Ethics*, culminated in *Nicomachean Ethics*, and also developed in the *Rhetoric*<sup>34</sup> and *Politics*. His concept of friendship according to Kenny’s,<sup>35</sup> Cooper’s,<sup>36</sup> Pakaluk<sup>37</sup> assessment took slightly different emphasis in *Rhetoric and Politics* than in *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*. My reference to his treatise on friendship will be observed from the standpoint of *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>38</sup> The classic treatise on Aristotle’s friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics* (books 8 and 9) distinguish among three forms of friendships. These are friendship of pleasure, utility and virtue. The notion of friendship has important meaning for his development on virtues. He associates friendship with the kind of excellence, which means he sees it as an important element necessary for a good living and as a constituent of achieving happiness (*NE*, 1155a5). Therefore, friendship is a virtue (*NE*, book 8-9)

<sup>31</sup> Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue*, p.155.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, transl. by Benjamin Jowett, (Kitchener, Batoche Books, 1999)., available from <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/aristotle/Politics.pdf>. See also, Thornton Lockwood, *Aristotle's Politics*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> See for instance discussion by Cherry, K., and E.A. Goerner. "Does Aristotle’s polis exist by nature?" in *History of Political Thought* 27, no. 4 (2006): 563-85., accessed from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26222110>.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Furlley, David J. & Nehamas, Alexander (eds.), *Aristotle's Rhetoric*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); See also *The Rhetoric of Aristotle with a Commentary*., revised and edited by John Edwin Sandys. 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1970).

<sup>35</sup> Anthony Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics - A Study of the Relationship between the Eudemian and Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> e.g. John M. Cooper. "Aristotle on the Forms of friendship." *The Review of Metaphysics* 30, no. 4 (1977): 644.

<sup>37</sup> Pakaluk, Michael, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. By Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins, (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

and virtue is a form of excellence (*NE*, book 2-4) the source of life's vitality. Without friends no one would choose to live, even if he had all other goods (*NE*, 1155a5). This entails that friendship is not only important for living well, but is an important moral category, which requires ethical and moral application and assessment. However, not all of the three types of friendships mentioned, carry the same moral significance, or, in other words, not all types of friendship are virtuous. According to J.M. Cooper analysis, all three types of friendships - the friendship of pleasure, utility and virtue - are objects of a common principle, the well-wishing, understood as goodwill or flourishing (*eudaimonia*).<sup>39</sup> In each particular type there is a specific form of well-wishing that binds or connects one person to another. All three forms of friendships, despite the difference in distribution of good, reflects certain aspect of objective or subjective care and well-wishing.

Aristotle repeatedly contrasts the two derivative types of friendship with the basic type by emphasizing the self-centeredness of pleasure and advantage friends; thus, he says that in erotic relationships (one class of pleasure-friendships) people love not one another but their accidental features (*NE*, 1164a10-12) - what gives pleasure to themselves. Similarly, for advantage-friendships: those who are friends on account of advantage cease to be such at the same time as the advantage ceases; for they were not friends of one another but of the benefit to themselves (*NE*, 1157a14-16). The problem with well-wishing in pleasure and advantageous friendship is that it may be susceptible, as friend sometimes may be objectified by another person (a friend) for his own prosperity or pleasure and vice versa. The true and pure well-wishing to another person, as Cooper indicates, is to be free of one's prosperity (to be less concerned about one's own prosperity, and more compassionate and focused at someone else's good. The types of friendships based on pleasure and utility, besides being an issue of scholarly dispute, are mainly associated with each other, since they do not include complete virtue character but sentiments of affection and utility. Only the well-wishing in the form of virtue friendship is oriented towards another person's good, or in other words it is only friendship that is oriented a person *qua person* that is called a perfect friendship. Considering *NE* 1156b10; 1157b3, character or perfect friends are those friends whose bond is not based on an exterior or accidental quality such as advantage or pleasure, but rather, an *inner* quality of a person concerning his or her virtuous character.<sup>40</sup>

What eventually the meaning of a "personal" within virtue friendship implies by Aristotle? According to Cooper's analysis, the notion of Aristotle's true or virtue friendship, contrary to friendships of utility or pleasure, not only presuppose its virtuous character, but carries involvement of a meaning of a "personal." Thus, the friendship that implies two persons of virtuous

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<sup>39</sup> The well - wishing (*Eudaimonia*) as the common ground for all three types of friendship, remain disputable notion among commentators on Aristotle's friendship. The reader is puzzled between various and often interchangeable interpretations of the meaning well - wishing in *Eudemian ethics* (VII, 7 1241a) and in *Nicomachean ethics* (IX, 5). Following contemporary commentators, the wishing well in *Eudemian* implies general scope of wishing well whereas in *Nicomachen Ethics* well - wishing is more specific and is divided between three types of friendships. Cf. Cooper, M. John. "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship." *The Review of Metaphysics* 30, no. 4 (1977): 619-648.

<sup>40</sup> In Cooper's analysis on moral virtues, „virtues are essential properties of humankind: a person realizes more or less fully his human nature according as he possesses more or less fully those properties of character which count as moral excellences.“ Cf. Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship" p.635. In such regard the virtue is perceived as an interior essence and quality that is embedded within a person's character

character is above all personal. Namely, despite all three types of friendship includes the form of well-wishing, not all of the three types of friendly relationships are recognized as true/perfect friendships, because *friendship requires at a minimum some effective concern for the other person's good (including his profit and his pleasure) out of regard for him-self*.<sup>41</sup> In the first two forms of friendships the other person is a bearer of a certain utility or pleasure. In other words, such friendship is friendship *qua* some object. In virtue or character friendship the form of friendship which includes the character, is in form friendship from person *qua* person. A friend is thus a personal subject or particular person, that addressed within perfect friendship, is irreplaceable.<sup>42</sup> The character friendship is true friendship as persons are bonded to each other based on subjective reasons, such as what they essentially are - human beings of virtues character. From such conception one wishes his friend well without being interested in one's own prosperity. The well-wishing in character friendship (which also makes a distinction between well-wishing in the other two friendships) is as Cooper stated, without adventitious qualification.<sup>43</sup> This entails divergence from pleasure and advantageous friendship that is determined and therefore limited. In virtue (character) friendship the good qualities of a person once *fully acquired are permanent or nearly so* (NE,1156b12), *since these properties belong to one's essential nature as a human being*.<sup>44</sup> The true friendship is therefore fixed on the wishing good for another person without being concerned for the well-wisher's benefits. Instead, a character friend is focused on goodness of another person, as one loves the other person not for what the person can offer him, but for what the other person truly is: a human. Although such logic bears moral significance, it apart from the Christian idea of social justice, as the persons, to be morally acceptable, must have a degree of equality, which within the idea of the *polis*, is also an important element for the stability of friendship. Put differently, the inequality in the relationship of friendship can jeopardize friendship, which is the reason friendship requires highly equal partners in order to maintain stability.<sup>45</sup>

This aspect of Aristotle's friendship made him susceptible to the scholarly critique which addressed that it is exclusivists and intellectualist. Namely, despite its broad application and moral significance, Aristotle account of the idea of friendship has a terminological gap in applying his idea of true friendship into a discourse that includes unequal people, in character, social status and their physical appearances. This when located into a contemporary context, could refer people with intellectual and profound disabilities, refugees, people of different ethnic backgrounds, classes, nationalities or religions, and sometimes even people with different mindset.

#### **1.1.1.2. The concept of unequal friendship**

Aristotle treatise on friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics* provides a number of positive insights about the nature and importance of friendship. This includes, friendship's connectedness with truth,

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<sup>41</sup> See Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship" p. 644.

<sup>42</sup> More on this discussion see Price A. W., *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, (USA, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.103.

<sup>43</sup> Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship" p.636.

<sup>44</sup> Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship" p. 636.

<sup>45</sup> See for instance D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997): pp. 53-92.

stability, self-knowledge, virtue, flourishing life, mutual valuing, etc. One of the often-disputed elements of true friendship is its highly symmetrical character. In order to become the another self, (which often implies the idea of a mirroring self)<sup>46</sup> friends should be persons of equal nature, similar character and having in common the pursuit of growth in virtue. Marko Fuchs, in his interpretation on the distinction between *philia* and *phileoi* in *Aquinas and Nicomachean Ethics*, addresses this by saying that “only the friendship between equally virtuous persons is *philia* in the proper sense.”<sup>47</sup> It is the character of similarity and equality within a perspective of Aristotelian friendships that for many Disability Studies and Disability Theology scholars poses a problem, particularly in regard to people with intellectual and profound developmental disabilities. Disability Studies scholars as we will see further, accept their biases towards master-slave relationship within Aristotle’s friendship, reflect the ancient Greek practice of infanticide of newborns with physical or congenital deformity and related terminology for bodily differences (ugliness, weakness, incompleteness, deformity, infirmity, etc.)<sup>48</sup> Hans Reinders and John Swinton among disability theologians address Aristotle’s friendship as “separationist” and symmetrical in form and status, exclusive of difference.<sup>49</sup> But the fact is that it is not only Aristotle’s friendship that is symmetrical and separationist, it is a common characteristic of ancient (and even contemporary) discourses on friendship.<sup>50</sup> Symmetry as an initial characteristic of ancient friendship reflects a specific form of composure and self-sufficiency.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the recent interpretation of Richard White on ancient friendship, suggests that ancient discussions of friendship are not only reserved for Aristotle, but have been a common characteristic of ancient friendship.<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, both Plato in *Lysis* and Cicero in *Rhetoric* show that their friendships are exclusively male-oriented relationship. Other contemporary interpretations claim that ancient friendship does not account for intimacy and appearance of emotion in the way modern friendship does,<sup>53</sup> because emotion was, in the Greek world, a sign of weakness. The friendship with women is thus not possible due to their “weaker” and “sentimental” character, which in comparison to man has been regarded as a sign of imperfect composure.

Aristotle’s forms of friendship developed in his *Nicomachean Ethics* could not escape the abovementioned cultural influences of Greek worlds, both morally and terminologically. This means that the cultural milieu of the ancient Greeks, to which Aristotle belonged, could not depart from its cultural influences. Such cultural context includes specific moral view and terminology

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<sup>46</sup> See Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, s.v. “Friendship”

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Fuchs Marko, “Philia and Caritas. Some aspects of Aquinas’s reception of Aristotle’s theory of friendship.” In *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, eds. Tobias Hoffman, Jorn Muller and Matthias Perkams (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013): p. 205

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Cornelia B.Horn, “A Nexus of Disability in Ancient Greek Miracles Stories: A Comparison of Accounts of Blindness from the Asklepieion in Epidauros and the Shrine of Thecla in Seleucia”, in *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity*” p. 115-43.

<sup>49</sup> C.f. Second Part of the thesis pp. 123-182

<sup>50</sup> I agree with W.D. Ross on such a polemic. Cf. W. D. Ross, *The basic works of Aristotle* (New York: R. Mckeeon, 1951).

<sup>51</sup> Paul J., Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

<sup>52</sup> Richard White, „Friendship: Ancient and Modern,“ in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 1999, p.19-34.

<sup>53</sup> See Martha Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, 2001., p. XXX.



on impairment and people with mental and intellectual disability, perceiving them as different and thus lower citizens.

Besides his treatise on the distinction between types of friendships among which friendship for the sake of the moral good of another person - or the friendship for the sake of virtue - is valued as a perfect friendship (*NE* 1158b13-19), Aristotle's treatise on friendship includes certain insights into the concept of so called "unequal friendship." It is the friendship between man and woman, or a man and slave, or child and parent which belongs to this category. The unequal type of friendships that took my interest in such regard will be further discussed in looking the Aristotle's treatise on relationship between master and slave, and woman and man.

The meaning of unequal friendship, (*NE* 9, ch.3) implies the possibility of friendship between two people of similar virtue, but different nature, or two people of similar nature, but different character. For instance, this form of friendship refers to friendship between perfect man and a perfect woman, or between master and slave, where both woman and slave are inferior to man, as they are less perfect in a character than a man. This is to say that as humans they can be friends with a man, but not in a virtue character, as slave and woman by dispositions of their character are lower by status than a man. In other words, the character of an inferior person (women or slave) in such a relationship is considered deficient or only imperfectly good. Although the superior person recognizes that the character of an inferior person is not perfectly good, the superior person does like the inferior for the natural (as being a human) virtues that he has (or some of them), while recognizing that his character is not perfectly good, but could improve.

[...] As a slave (different status) then, one cannot be friend with him. But as a man (nature) one can. (*NE* 1161b6-7).<sup>54</sup> [...] One can befriend a slave *qua* human but not *qua* slave in which capacity he is a mere to (inferior status) (*NE* 1161b5).<sup>55</sup>

Only two persons that are similar in status, class and virtue can be true friends as they are similar in disposition of moral good and the character of their natural status. This addresses the impossibility of friendship with woman *as woman*, and slave *as slave*; but to the degree of their humanity, one can be a friend of a woman and slave. However, such friendship may never reach the status of the third form of Aristotle's perfect, virtue friendship, which is to say that friendship with woman *as woman* and slave *as slave* fails to be considered as a true friendship. The foregoing discussion of above-mentioned type of unequal friendship in my understanding will be addressed as asymmetrical, which I will also interchangeably used with my alternative phrase "friends among difference or different type of friendship." The account of asymmetry or inequality of Aristotle's friendship, when applied to the context of contemporary disability discourses, appears exclusive of people with and without disabilities. For instance, people without disabilities are often considered superior to people with disabilities, due to the difference or some deficiency in the character, cognitive capacity and social status of the disabled person. For this reason, when Aristotle's logic on the valuation of friendship is applied to people with disability, there is an obvious conceptual impossibility for the practice of this type of friendship, due to the differences between the persons, as is often implied in mainstream contemporary logic regarding human

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<sup>54</sup> Bartlett & Collins, eds. *NE*, book VIII.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, *NE* book VIII.

relationship. Such logic, when applied to a care-giver/care-receiver relationship of independent living, for instance, creates the impossibility for the care-receiver becoming friends with the care-giver, as their status with respect to ethical boundaries, class or social status, are different.

Nevertheless, because woman and slaves are considered to have a lower moral status, an incapacity for profound intellectual reasoning, and an incapacity to attain virtue (excellence), they were also deprived of the achievement of happiness (c.f. *Politics* 1260a13-30). Friendship as a kind of virtue in such regard was directed towards its teleological end. This means towards achieving perfection in character and happiness (excellence in contemplation). As woman and slaves were considered morally inferior due to their lack of a perfect capacity to reason and contemplation, they were prevented from attaining the teleological end of friendship due to their character, not human nature. Deformed newborns or those born with a congenital or other sort of physical deformity, due to their “different” biological nature or physical appearances were a threat to stability of the *polis*: they were incapable of leading a free and full life and meeting the flourishing end of friendship. So the logic of ancient Greeks also revealed within Aristotle’s ethics proposes infanticide and exclusion of such persons from the *polis*.<sup>56</sup> If, in rare cases, the person was allowed to live, he would be considered incapable of the practice of friendship as physical deformity was a threat to the stability of the ethics of the *polis*, and therefore also to the ethics of friendship.

The overall framework of Aristotle’s friendship that precludes the inclusion of slaves and women in the practice of perfect friendship has been impacted by its static vision of reality, and the desire for the stability and order of the *polis*. This is also one of the reasons why the friendship among differences or the friendship between man and God, has not been possible to imagine for Aristotle.<sup>57</sup> This changed with the coming of the Christianity and its revolutionary message in John 15:15, which I will examine in a forthcoming section of this chapter. But before we came to that, it is still necessary to outline a few aspects of Aristotle’s idea of *philia* and happiness integrated into his idea of friendship.

### 1.1.1.3. The meaning of *philia* and the concept of happiness

Aristotle ethics of friendship discusses various elements. This includes meaning of *philia*, happiness, shared activities, reciprocity, justice, love, trust and living together (*NE* 1157b11-13). Although these elements are valuable for the meaning of friendship and require a separate analysis, my aim is to briefly outline a few of the most appealing characteristics of *philia* and happiness. One reason of such assumption is that because it is *philia* and happiness within the context of Aristotle’s treatise on friendship that have been largely augmented by modern and contemporary scholarship on friendship and are implicated in almost every discussion of friendship. Or putted slightly differently, the role of *philia*, according to contemporary analysis of ancient friendship was largely disputed in relation of the achievement of happiness (*eudemonia*).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Mackelprang, R.W and R.O.Salsgiver, “People with disabilities and Social Work: Historical and Contemporary Issues,” in *Social Work*, 41:7-14.

<sup>57</sup> Vanier, *Made for Happiness*, 2001.

<sup>58</sup> See for instance Ackrill, J.L. “Aristotle on Eudaimonia.” In *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics*, eds. by Amélie Rorty, 15–34. Major Thinkers Series 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

### The “grammar” of *philia*

I emphasized in my hypothesis in the general introduction that the relationships with people with disabilities may suggest another form of *philia*, or that the notion of *philia* may be understood differently. This is because what Aristotle could not imagine happening, became possible in the practice of friendship in L’Arche.<sup>59</sup> For instance, friendship within the community of L’Arche includes shared activities, well-wishing, love and trust, and simultaneously remains free from the requirements of equality of intellect or virtue while drawing on elements specific to Aristotle’s *philia* (benevolence, shared activities, reciprocity, trust). Does this mean that the Aristotle’s *philia*, which requires equality, and the L’Arche *philia*, which allows dissymmetry (difference) are not the same form of *philia*? Probably, the answer is both yes and no. What can the grammar of Aristotle’s *philia* teach us about the nature of friendship?

The first thing that the abovementioned statement brings to my concern is that those who are good and share in the mutual well - wishing, doesn’t need to become a friends. People who are good naturally are not the same people who we choose as friends. These views - wishing good and becoming friends - are in tension, not only because they are governed by the complexity of human logic, but because when in Aristotle’s terms they are adjusted with the meaning of the *philia* they anticipate tension on distinction between the meaning of *philia* as ethical virtue and *philia* as love for another friend.

As we know, *philia* was a common term in the mainstream system of Greek friendship,<sup>60</sup> but was also used in the system of reference in a later Greek-Roman and New Testament literature.<sup>61</sup> In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle states that a friend (*phileo*) is one who loves someone and is loved in return (Cf. Rhet.1381a). In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *philia* has multiple meanings<sup>62</sup> among which it is best aligned with the meaning of virtue. So, friendship is a virtue,<sup>63</sup> but *philia* is also something especially important for the maintenance of the communal life. In the Greek worldview, friendship was considered essential activity between individuals, characterized through the achievement of happiness and realized through the school of virtue.

The large number of contemporary commentators on *philia* are characterized by the tension in opinions. Most of the contemporary interpretations of Aristotle’s *philia* addresses his use of *philia* as a term associated with some sort of human sociality within the *polis*, but more basic than justice.<sup>64</sup> Others would straightforwardly remain loyal to its linkage with the meaning of friendship.<sup>65</sup> In his analysis of *philia*, Cooper emphasized that the Greek concept of *philia* is much

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<sup>59</sup> To bring about practical element of friendship in reference to L’Arche community will be my task in the third part of this research project

<sup>60</sup> Other authors that includes *philia* into their thinking on friendship include: e.g. Cicero (*Laelius de Amicitia*), Plutarch (*Moralia*), Philo of Alexandria (Her, 83: Spec Leg.).

<sup>61</sup> This will be more broadly examined in the next paragraph

<sup>62</sup> See for instance, meaning on reciprocity in NE 1157a; 1156a; 1166a; 1167a.

<sup>63</sup> See also examples in work of Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2001); Richard Mulgan. "The role of friendship in Aristotle’s Political Theory." *In Challenge to Friendship in modernity*, eds. Preston King and Heather Devere (Ilford:Frank Cass & Co.Ltd., 2000); John M. Cooper. "Aristotle on the Forms of friendship." *The Review of Metaphysics* 30, no. 4 (1977): p. 644.

<sup>64</sup> Guido de Graaff, *Politics in Friendship: A Theological Account*. (London: T&T Clark, 2014).

<sup>65</sup> For instance already mentioned Cooper, Pakaluk, Wadell, etc.

wider than our modern understanding of friendship. *Philia* includes diverse sorts of relationships such as intimate relationships between family members, as well as, civic friendships (common membership in religious, social and political organizations). *Philia* implies being together and the verb *to philein* refers *liking*, close to the meaning of *wishing good* to someone. A *philos* (friend) is then someone who likes another and is liked by that person.<sup>66</sup> G. J. Hughes pointed out that the term *philia* has many of the connotations of relationships between people, whereas the meaning of the verb *philein* implies “get on well with” or to like someone. The verb *philein* is closer to the implications of the sentiment and emotions such as liking, experience of joy, happiness.<sup>67</sup> This indicates that *philia* may be a very personal element, but could be something of more general value, naturally inclining each person towards greater sociability. Drawing on Aristotle’s account of virtue and *philia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cooper’s interpretation of perfect friendship, Australian scholar David Treanor, in his article, challenges such view arguing that *philia* implies more than a personal relationship. In his view, *philia* involves the scope of personal narrative and emotional entitlement that goes beyond the scope of normative account of friendship and opens the place for a mutual interdependence.<sup>68</sup> The question Treanor brought to the inquiry first questions the possibility of interactions between different people in settings of Aristotle account of *koinonia*. The second question in regard to first would be, what is the essence of such interaction?

In summing up, the most relevant explanation is that Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* classified friendship as one of the virtues, linking it with the term *philia*. He however, left us puzzled in assessment whereas *philia* could be a virtue of a certain type or it is a certain type of sociability within a *polis*. This according to my understanding of above interpretations entails that *philia* was the term that not merely surpasses the idea of friendship within a *polis* and relates to justice, but shapes discussions about friendship as an activity natural to man, and to some extent more profound than justice. This is to say that *philia* as friendship and friendship as virtue is not only a concept that implicates specific meaning, but is understood as a moral and natural activity between two or more persons in terms of sociability, and implies the knowledge mediated through the experience (the activity within a structure of a *polis*). The virtue friendship indeed includes a complete *philia*, as virtue forms the heart of such friendship. But on regard of *philia*, virtue may not be the condition of such a friendship. This nevertheless leave us with a tension whereas the true *philia* when applied into a concept of a true friendship, means to love the other friend for the sake of himself, based on who one truly is (a human person); or loving a friend for the sake of his excellence or virtue?

### **The meaning of happiness**

It is commonly understood that friendship brings people a certain amount of joy and comfort. The major number of empirical researches in exploring the experience of friendship demonstrate the application of some sort of reciprocal exchange of joy, happiness, or emotional affection within

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<sup>66</sup> Cooper, “Forms of Friendship,” 621.

<sup>67</sup> See Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, p.168.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. David Treanor, 'Disability, Critical Thinking & Personalism', *Appraisal*, 10, 2 (2014): pp. 1-20.

friendship relationships.<sup>69</sup> Is happiness constituent for every friendship? How has the ancient idea of happiness been conceptualized in its relation to friendship?

So far we could have noticed that in the Greek worldview, friendship is thought of, as an essential activity between individuals characterized by the achievement of happiness and realized through the school of virtue. Aristotle classified friendship as one of the virtues by the term *philia* whose end is in some sort of achievement of happiness. So, friendship for Aristotle is guided by a certain teleology, as is his ethics. The essential elements of happiness according to the *Eudemian Ethics* are wisdom, virtue and pleasure, (separately ordered),<sup>70</sup> whereas in the *Nicomachean Ethics* his discourses on virtue, friendship and happiness were interwoven. In this regard, being led by his teleological way of thinking, for Aristotle happiness was a complete order of virtues. Moreover, happiness, besides being a fulfillment of virtues, implies many other things. A happy life is a virtuous life and as such it requires exertion in virtue (*NE* 1176b28-1177a7). This is to say that not only was friendship for Aristotle considered a virtuous activity, it was also a necessary constituent for achievement of happiness. As the fundamental question of his general ethical reasoning is the search of the supreme good,<sup>71</sup> the purpose and the end of perfect friendship must be in some degree to attain reciprocal happiness. In other words, the end of human action must be happiness because that is the superior good of human life.

[...]verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness and identify living well and doing well with being happy. (*NE* 1095a15-20).<sup>72</sup>

Because of this, his ethics do not provide moral guidelines that will direct human will to a perfect achievement of great happiness apart from human nature. It appears, that Aristotle is not merely preoccupied with the questions of meaning of life, but with the ultimate fulfillment of such life and activity. Happiness as a fully human activity helps man to become more fully human. It starts with the human desire to be happy and ends in the achievement of such happiness. But happiness is not an emotion, it is considered a way of contemplation (cf. *NE*, book X). However, besides being described as contemplation and as a completeness of virtue, happiness cannot be attained through theory alone. It needs to be obtained through the activity. Happiness is a vital activity for Aristotle. It is that which brings the joy which is the essence of life. For Aristotle, happiness is an activity that stems from logos, and is in accordance with virtue.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, friendship is the practical way to achieve happiness, which remains incomplete without achieving it. As he stated:

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<sup>69</sup> See For instance Badhwar, Neera K, "Friendship." In Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1998., Available from <https://www.rep.routledge.com/search?searchString=friendship#>; Myers, D. G. „The funds, friends and faith of happy people.“ in *American Psychologist*, 55 (2000): 56-67; Reis, H.T. „Relationship experiences and emotional well-being,“ In C.D. Ryff and B.H. Singer eds., *Emotion, social relationships and health*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>70</sup> Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, (I. 1214 a), 8-9., Brad Inwood and Raphael Woolf, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Jean Vanier, "Le bonheur: principe et fin de la morale aristotelicienne." PhD diss., Institut Catholique de Paris, 1962.

<sup>72</sup> Bartlett & Collins, eds. *NE*, book I, ch. 4

<sup>73</sup> Bartlett & Collins, eds. *NE* book X, ch.

for the life of the man who is active in accordance with *virtue*, will be happy. (NE 1179a1-9).<sup>74</sup>

This means that, as already indicated earlier, happiness can naturally be achieved by all, woman and slaves included. But when seen from the perspective of friendship, that is virtue, happiness is a complete order of virtues, the life of contemplation, and the achievement of full happiness is the predisposition of a perfect man, not to those who are *imperfect in character*, or, in other words, *lacking the capacity to attain moral perfection*.

### **1.1.2. The New Testament idea of Friendship**

The Biblical vision of reality is evolutionary in that it is different from a static and circular vision of ancient world. The time within the Biblical perspective is linear, historical and dynamic because people who are under God's guidance believe in the fulfillment of God's promise (Gen, 17; Num 23:19; Deut 1:21; Deut 31:20) and so are oriented towards the future, relying on the hope of such a promise - the eschatological hope in dynamic between "already" and "not yet" (Heb 1,2; 1Cor 15, 52; *LG*, no. 2;). This vision of God for humanity became realized and revealed most concretely in the person of Jesus Christ, God's most beloved Son. This is to say that the ethical vision of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, is also different than those of the ancient world, in terms of giving centrality to love directed towards God, one's neighbor and even one's enemies.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, it is an open love towards all people despite their difference. This ethical and moral view offered by God is unique in comparison to other ancient, and even a modern, moral and ethical views. It suggests a new order of relationship among humans, the one that transcends the natural.

In this section my aim is to reflect upon the New Testament notion of Christian friendship, mainly looking at Paul's letters and St. John's Gospel. This does not mean that the Old Testament concept regarding the theme of friendship is of less importance.<sup>76</sup> Neither will I embark on a detailed semantic or systematic study of the New Testament references to friendship. In keeping in mind that New Testament scholarship has been influenced by a Greco - Roman culture, my first interest is to examine in what sense biblical New Testament scholarship differs from that of Aristotle and the ancient world in regard to friendship; and second, to determine in what this difference consists. In order to proceed with such an examination, I will rely upon the most relevant contemporary interpretations of the foregoing debate, adding my own reading of certain Pauline and Johannine passages.

#### **1.1.2.1. A few insights into a concept, terminology and context of a Christian (New Testament) Friendship**

*Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* says that the biblical usage of the term friend covers a broad spectrum of relationships, from expressing the normal human relationship directed by friendly conventions with neighbors and acquaintances in the Old Testament, to a more intimate and trusting relationship in the New Testament, and from a natural relationship between humans

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<sup>74</sup> Bartlett & Collins, eds. *NE*, book X, ch. 8

<sup>75</sup> See, Frank J. Matera, *God's saving grace- A Pauline Theology*, p. 176-180

<sup>76</sup> See for instance friendship between God and Moses (Ex, 33:11) or friendship narrative between David and Jonathan (1Sam 20, 1-42).

(horizontal dimension) to friendship relationship with God (vertical dimension).<sup>77</sup> The *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology* reckons that the word friend in the biblical usage (the *New Revised Standard Version of the Hebrew Bible*), occurs about the ninety-five times, whereas the term *friendship* appears thirty-five times. The most common word for a friend in New Testament is *philos* which in Jerome's Vulgate has been translated with the Latin word *amicus*.<sup>78</sup>

Embarking upon the examination of the New Testament study of the meaning and implication of friendship, it is important to be reminded that friendship was a part of a particular cultural context, and that particular terminology surrounding the meaning of the word friend has been applied in that context. Despite Judeo-Hellenic, Hellenistic-Jewish and Greco-Roman interest and influence in the theme of friendship, the New Testament does not present a unified teaching on friendship.<sup>79</sup>

The description of Jesus's friendship in John 15:15 and the friendship described in the Pauline epistles, particularly the letter to Philippians, not only consist in use of a specific vocabulary, but set forward an ethical argument for the notion of friendship. The terminology used in the discourse of Paul and John in their reference to friendship varies between brotherhood love and neighborhood love, friendship and discipleship. Despite this, the present research is mostly focused on the notion of friendship love within present Gospel narratives, but we cannot avoid its usage in relation to the other two terms. It is generally agreed that both traditions, Johannine and Pauline, as indicated by John T. Fitzgerald and A. Mitchell, were influenced by the Greco-Roman use of the words for friendship. This implies their common usage of the term *philia* or *philoï* indicating friend, friendliness or a loving spiritual relationship in ancient world.<sup>80</sup>

The *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*<sup>81</sup> interprets the word *philos* in John 15:15 (cf. Lk 12:2-4) and in Genesis (Moses to whom God spoke in confidence) as having a specific meaning of one who is a confidant, and can be trusted. In other places the adjective *philos* refers to a kin relationship (mother, child, parents); and regarding the other examples, the term expresses greeting one by name, and is associated by the affection for that very one (cf. Tit, 3:15).<sup>82</sup>

According to *Dictionary of New Testament* the terms for love for a brother and love for a neighbor were almost used equally, or even as synonymous.<sup>83</sup> The most recent biblical scholarship has shown that Paul's friendship bears inclines towards a universal application of friendship closer to

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<sup>77</sup> Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, David Noel Freedman, ed., 2000, Eerdmans, Electronic text hypertexted and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc., Version 3.7.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Samuel E. Balentine ed. *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology*, vol. 1. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014): p.384

<sup>79</sup> See Alan C. Mitchell, "'Greet the Friends by Name': New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman Topos on Friendship," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, ed. J. T. Fitzgerald (Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1997): pp. 225-62.

<sup>80</sup> John F. Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, 1997.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Ceslas Spicq, O.P., transl. and ed. by James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Hendrikson Publishers, Peabody, 1994).

<sup>82</sup> See Ceslas Spicq, O.P., transl. and ed. by James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Hendrikson Publishers, Peabody, 1994): p.448-451.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1993): p. 257.

the meaning of brotherhood, or it implies love for one neighbor. For instance, in Rom 8:29 Paul uses of the term brother (*adelphoi*), the Greek term for the full-blood relationship, which in Paul's usage signifies a brother by faith, a relationship that became possible because of the first born of the brothers, Jesus Christ, by whose blood comes reconciliation and through whom the people are bound together as brothers. In 1Cor, 15:58 and Phil, 4:1 when Paul addresses Christians as brothers he linked the word *adelphoi* with the term *agapetoi*.<sup>84</sup> What is even more important to emphasize for such a dimension of love according to the present *New Testament Dictionary*, is that the love (*agape*) when demanded for one's brother involves willingness to share the fate of Jesus Christ, even in a martyr's death (1Cor, 8:11).<sup>85</sup> This is to say that for Paul, the coming of Jesus underlines sharp distinction between relationship to God and relationship by birth.<sup>86</sup>

Friendship in John's Gospel is connected to the word *agape* in relation to *philia* more frequently than in Paul's writings. *Agape*, when related to *philo*, indicates a more intimate relationship, service, self-giving, sacrifice for another, and also, as already mentioned, trust and confidence. Instead of *philia*, the verb *phileo*, according to some New Testament scholars, occurs thirteen times in John's Gospel, but is frequently used interchangeably with the verb *agapao* (John, 11:3,36; 12:25; 15:19; 16:27; 20:2; 21:15,16,17).<sup>87</sup>

What was not possible to imagine for Aristotle, has been realized by Jesus's gesture of kneeling and taking the role of a servant, by washing the feet to his disciples in Jn 13, 1-20 and Jn 15,12-17. The gesture of washing the feet does not merely express what one, as a follower of Jesus, should do, but it is almost as a "Copernican Revolution" in the thought of Greco-Roman world, impossible to imagine earlier. Jesus's words in John 15:15 - "I called you no more servants but friends" - abandoned the impossibility of ancient thinking marked by equality in the degree of status and intelligence, expressed in Aristotle's *Politics* (*Pol* 1260a,12; master and slave distinction) and instead proposes the possibility of unity of such different persons through the practice of friendship. In this moment Jesus not only showed what the meaning of true friendship is, but removes every categorization and hierarchy between people of different social status, capacities, class, etc. Paul in his letters, particularly in the letters to Philippians, in a slightly different way demonstrates similar concerns. His list of distinctions between a Greek and Jew, master and slave has shown that this distinction has been overcome and reconciled through Christ with God Father.

### 1.1.2.2. Paul's rhetoric of friendship

In the following section my examination of Paul's friendship will mostly focus on his use of expressions and the context related to the application of such friendship terminology. Several new testament scholars<sup>88</sup> indicate that a deep investigation into Paul's references to friendship only

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.257.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 257

<sup>86</sup> Cf. N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, (Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox, 2004).

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Takaaki Haraguchi, "Philia and Agape: The Theme of friendship in the Gospel of John," in *Asia Journal of Theology*, 28, 2, (2014): p.250.

<sup>88</sup> See for instance Marshall Peter, "Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians" (Siebeck, J.C.B. Mohr, 1987); Ralph P. Martin & Peter H. Davids (eds), *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997): p. 380-388; See also Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin & Daniel G. Reid., *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press, 1993): p.



recently brought a comprehensive result. John Fitzgerald, in reference to Paul's interpretation of friendship, says that one needs to look at the context and the terminology included into the context in order to grasp a full meaning of his (Paul's) notion of friendship. Following this suggestion, I will briefly look at Paul's ideas regarding the Greco-Roman context, the applied terminology and its meaning. Embarking into the analysis of Paul's friendship, Fitzgerald notes three characteristics which should not be overlooked. These are: a) the influence of Greco-Roman culture and Paul's knowledge of Hellenistic culture as an educated Jew; b) the importance of the encounter with Christ; c) Paul's conversion and his missionary vocation as one who was sent to those who confess Christ and those who do not know God.<sup>89</sup>

This means that in describing the meaning of friendship, Paul, in contrast to Aristotle, uses various interdependent terms and expressions implicitly connected with the meaning of friendship, instead of one particular word that explicitly points to the straightforward meaning of friendship. In such regard scholars distinguish between Paul's usage of *topoi* and *linkage groups*.

The first point of Paul's phraseology of friendship that have been identified, is his reference to the word *topoi*<sup>90</sup>. This means that Paul's usage of friendship, instead of having a strong and direct reference to the standard ancient terminology of *philo* or *philia*, uses expressions associated with classical *topos* and *topoi*, stemming from a Greco-Roman terminology on friendship.<sup>91</sup> Another characteristic of specificity of Paul's terminology according to Fitzgerald is his usage of the linkage group words. Important concepts that belongs to ancient friendship linkage groups according to John Fitzgerald includes: *koinonia* (partnership, fellowship, participation); *prokope* (progress), *pepoithesis* (trust, confidence), *dokime* (attestation), *axia* (worth); *autarkeia* (self-sufficiency); *arete* (virtue); *eunoia* (good will); *isotes* (equality); *synetheia* (intimacy); *homonois* (oneness of mind); *eirene* (peace); *katallage*, *diallage* (reconciliation).<sup>92</sup>

The usage of linkage groups also includes antithetical concepts. This, in regard to friendship, means terms that are opposite to friendship in order to give friendship a more robust and explicit meaning. This includes terms such as enmity (opposes friendship or more precisely friendship with God), flattery (corollary to frankness), or hatred (opposite to love).

More precisely, Paul's emphasis is not on Christ dying for his friends, but Christ dying for the ungodly, and sinners. This theme permeates Paul's discussion of God's love for his people, ultimately perceived as friendship. This leads to another element related to the previously

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293-295.etc.

<sup>89</sup> Fitzgerald, „Christian Friendship : John, Paul and the Philippians,“ in *Interpretation* 61, 3 (2007): p. 284-96.

<sup>90</sup> The Greek word *topos*, lat. locus means place or region. *Topos* supplies a set of conditions which measured the adequacy of the answers which the user made to a common question. *Topoi* in ancient rhetoric refer to the places in which arguments were found, that is, the general headings under which one may search for a material for one's argument. Scholars points on a different approach to the tradition of *topoi*. Most fervent approach distinguish between rhetorical or strategic *topos* and the moral or substantive *topos*. For more see *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative studies in honour of Abraham J. Malherbe*, eds. John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht and L. Michael White (Boston, Brill, 2003), pp. 560-562.

<sup>91</sup> Fitzgerald, „Christian Friendship: John, Paul and the Philippians,“ p. 287.

<sup>92</sup> Fitzgerald, „Christian Friendship: John, Paul and the Philippians,“ p. 289.

mentioned emphasis on friendship (reconciliation) as an antithesis to enmity. Paul opposes friendship with world to the antithesis of friendship with God.

One of the important concepts that appears in Paul's letters as linkage group terminology is reconciliation, which means the restoration of friendship. This is particularly strong within Paul's concept of friendship between God and his people. The terminology shows the transition from hostility and enmity towards peaceful reconciliation through the death of Jesus Christ. And to be reconciled to God means to become the friend of God.<sup>93</sup> Reconciliation establishes new relationship: the one of common friends and fellowship.<sup>94</sup>

The question that still remains is who is Paul's friend that he references? Is this a community, a particular person, or God? The overall evidence of Paul's use of *topoi* indicates that his friendship reference points to an assembly or a broader audience.<sup>95</sup> Another feature of friendship in Paul's letter is the importance of material support of a friend in times of need<sup>96</sup> and requirement that one distance oneself from one's enemies.

More precise language on friendship has been noted in Paul's letter to the Philippians. Scholars documented the significance of terms like partnership, one soul, thinking the same thing, and noted the strong reciprocal nature of the friendships discussed.<sup>97</sup> Considering the complex situation in Philippi,<sup>98</sup> the two features of Letter to Philippians that are closely associated with discussions of friendship indicate the importance of providing material and financial support to a friend in time of need (Phil 4:10-20), and the requirement to distance oneself from one's enemies (see Phil 3:2-3; 18-20). Another important element is Paul's acceptance of asymmetry (referring difference) and transformation in Phil 4:10-20, keeping the strong link with the meaning of *kenosis*. Not only does Paul in his letter to the Philippians, indicate the importance of uncomplimentary interaction (read interdependency) between people in community of Philippi, but what is even more important, following Jesus' example in Phil 2:7, he emphasizes a connection between God the Father and his people mediated through Jesus's descending action towards God's loving people.

### 1.1.2.3. The friendship related terminology in the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John has been subject of research for several scholars investigating friendship (e.g. Val Friedel, 2008; Craig S. Kenner, 2009; Michaels, 2010). The theologians engaged in the study of disability as we will see next, also reference John's Gospel narrative of friendship, searching for its ethical implication (e.g. Reinders, 2008; Grieg, 2015). John's Gospel indeed adds something new to understanding of friendship that, within a Greco-Roman context, has been

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<sup>93</sup> Fitzgerald, „Christian Friendship: John, Paul and the Philippians,“ p.290.

<sup>94</sup> For more on such terminology see A. C. Mitchell, “‘Greet the Friends by Name’: New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman Topos on Friendship,” in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, ed. J. T. Fitzgerald. SBLRBS 34 (Atlanta, 1997), 225-62.

<sup>95</sup> S. Winter, “Friendship Traditions in the New Testament,” in *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies*, vol. 29, 2, (2017): p.201.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Winter, “Friendship Traditions in the New Testament,” p. 200.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p.199.

<sup>98</sup> For a more discourses on situation in Philippians, see for instance, Gordon. D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians, New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); See also Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, (Grand Rapids / Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005).

missing. As already stated this has to do with the meaning of the verbs *phileo* and *agapeo*, the two expressions of a friendship love in a Greco-Roman context. The verb *phileo*, despite being employed thirteen times in the narrative of John's Gospel, it is frequently used interchangeably with the verb *agapeo* (e.g. John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7), rather than with a distinct meaning, indicating selfless, sacrificial love. Additionally, a number of Biblical scholars agree that in certain passages of John's Gospel those verbs are used as synonymous (John 11:5, 11:3, 36).<sup>99</sup>

In John's Gospel, chapters thirteen and fifteen are marked by two peculiarities. The first is that a friend is the one who gives his life for his friend out of love for another. The second aspect is the intimate character of that symbolic gesture of Jesus washing the feet to his disciples - this implies not only a self-disclosure, but exchange of roles. The element of service implied within the first Jn, 13:13 ("*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends*"); and the element of recognition of one's friend's true identity in Jn, 15:15 ("*No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you*"), overturn the social relationship from a master-slave asymmetry into a new friendship relationship marked by social and anthropological symmetry. This entails that the new type of friendship is marked by symmetry. *By an act of testamentary manumission, he not only emancipates his disciple - "slaves" but elevates them to friendship with himself.*<sup>100</sup>

The element of such unconditional disclosure noted in Jn 15:13-15 means to act out of love for another. Such love as a self-disclosure and service is not merely a friendship of love in its relation to *phileo*. Such love as related to *agapeo*, implies risk and humility in that it demonstrates trust and disclosure of one's identity. Jesus goes beyond his own dignity as a superior in order to reconfirm the identity of the other (inferior), not in a way that humiliates him, but rather to illustrate the nature of self-giving love.<sup>101</sup> This is why Jn 15:13-15 would be incomplete without the account of the foot washing, which is the climax of this scene in a sense that it fully illustrates the action of love as service and humility, and results in reestablished order of social relationship.<sup>102</sup> The gesture of washing the feet reconfirms the above-mentioned narrative (Jn 15:13-15) of love, revealing the most intimate and personal of the oneself to another, or in other words initiating openness to the possibility of showing one's vulnerability and being vulnerable through the vulnerable presence of the other. The risk and self-disclosure, as Fitzgerald writes, is based upon a revelation that creates friendship rather than presupposes it.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> See for instance, Martin C. Culy, *Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010)

<sup>100</sup> Fitzgerald, „Christian Friendship : John, Paul and the Philippians,“ p.292

<sup>101</sup> There are different interpretations on such descending element of foot-washing narrative. See for instance Thomas, J. C., *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); See also Meeks, W. A., „The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist.‟ in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*. eds. by R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); pp.317- 326.

<sup>102</sup> See interpretation of C.S. Keener, 1993. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993); See also Bauckham, R., *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History and Theology in the Gospel of John.*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

<sup>103</sup> Fitzgerald, „Christian Friendship: John, Paul and the Philippians,“ p. 285.

The intimacy of this friendship is composed of elements of abiding with, knowing and trusting. The love that is not only a symbolic gesture, but a reality in this way has absolute fulfillment in giving one life for one's friends and revealing one's dignity to the other. The intimacy of this relationship in John's Gospel, except the above-mentioned instance, matters because it emphasizes the notion of the one's presence, particularly through the gesture of feet washing. The feet washing in such a sense actually embodies and reconfirmed the narrative in Jn 15: 13-15.

The emphasis on sacrificial love, trust, intimacy, recognition of one's true dignity and the act of humble presence, integrated into a narrative of John's Gospel are intertwined. To lay down one's life for the sake of one's friends (Jn, 15:13)<sup>104</sup> is a typical example of the meaning of supreme love as self-sacrifice. So, friendship receives a new dimension, which is that one need to love one's friends with the selfless, nearly sacrificial love.

#### **1.1.2.4. The ethical assessment of Paul's and John's Gospel friendship**

Paul's and John's friendship narratives provide friendship with a particular ethical perspective.<sup>105</sup> My attempt in this section is to assess this aspect of their friendship narrative, which is important for the scope of this project. The ethical assessment of friendship not only reveals a specific terminology, but employs particular and often related meanings. What was a common notion of friendship within Greco-Roman and Christian context was a form of an ethical practice with a distinctive identity. In the Gospel of John this is seen in the character of an *intimate* relationships between Jesus and his disciples, stressing the importance of the value of the other to the point that one would give one's life for one's friend. According to Paul's friendship, the emphasis was on reconciliation with God which creates a new relationship and distinguishes Christians from non-Christians (in Paul's particular narrative, the pagans). Paul's friendship goes in the direction of an established socio-ethical practice of reconciliation and brotherhood, rather than an intimate, entrusted relationship as presented in the Gospel of John. Both, Paul and John provide new insights on regards of a form of Christian friendship, different from the ancient concept (Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* regarding the master-slave relationship). This also shows their straightforward focus on the person of Jesus Christ, instead of the use of particular friendship terminology specific to the Greco-Roman context, and interchangeably used in Paul's and John's friendship narratives. For instance, although the main Greek word for a friend was *philos* (also applicable in New Testament literature), the term was in John's Gospel conjoined with the notion *agape*. Paul's usage of *phileo* or *adapheo* was sometimes linked and sometimes contrasted with other words (*topoi* and a linkage group words). This also shows how the New Testament account of friendship has been anchored into a Greco-Roman cultural context, but also highly influenced by the presence of an earthly Jesus and the rise of first Christian communities. Additionally, Paul, as an apostle of God's saving grace and not as an original disciple of Jesus, may have strong inclination towards establishing friendship between God and man, emphasizing reconciliation and a common mission of all Christians as brothers and sisters in faith through the blood of Jesus Christ. This is the reason why perhaps his friendship bears universal application, instead of more intimate relationship. John's friendship, also from an ethical point of view, on the

<sup>104</sup> Haraguchi, "Philia and Agape: The Theme of friendship in the Gospel of John," 256.

<sup>105</sup> See for instance, Sanders, J. T., *Ethics in the New Testament*, (London, SCM, 1986).

other hand, implies a close relationship between Jesus and John the disciple of Jesus, and the witness of His earthly presence, which is perhaps why John's friendship displays more strongly the elements of intimacy, trust and a selfless love. This does not mean that Paul's relationship with Jesus is of a lower esteem or his account of friendship is of a lower importance. This only means, as I aim to highlight here, that the presence of earthly Jesus through the direct presence of His body (e.g. confirmed through the gesture of feet washing in this particular regard) within John's narrative implies stronger emphasis on the elements of trust and intimacy. This suggests that the presence of the other matters for friendship, and this may be one of the reasons why Johannine Gospel (if we assume that the writer of John's Gospel was the living disciple of Jesus) stresses strongly the experience of Jesus's friendship, as the first line witness encountering earthly Jesus.<sup>106</sup>

Related to the above are the two (biblical) elements that in Paul's epistles and John's Gospel, present a certain novelty in comparison to the previous account of ancient friendship. These are again possibility of friendship among differences and friendship with God. This presents the possibility of a particular asymmetrical relationship such as between God and man (vertical relationship), but it also re-establishes the new order of a social (horizontal) relationships, including the people of a different status, social class and rational capacities (bound by the friendship love). This, when taken together, constitutes a distinct character of Christian friendship, different from the ancient conception.

Binding this together means that there is an evident and obvious thematic resemblance between Paul and John, but also a divergence between their understanding of friendship. The common element points to a specific elements of a Christian friendship. Paul's and John's friendship is particularly Christian friendship and as such is open and inclusive to all.

Despite employing similar terminology, as in a common root *phil*, the ethical element of this assessment understands friendship in slightly different ways. It is not only that the element of *agape* attached to the verb *phileo* sometimes refers to brotherhood, sometimes to neighborhood, and sometimes points to a selfless and sacrificial love, but it also brings into discourse the possibility of friendship between *social* and *natural character* differences and friendship between God and man.

Due to such characteristics, it is not necessary to search for an explicit account of Paul's and John's friendship regarding people with disabilities. Grounded in the person of Christ, Christian friendship is inclusive to all, it is not separationist, neither should it be normative or elitist. As inclusive to all, it is also inclusive to people with disabilities. This means that the love, service, self-disclosure and reconciliation implied in such a perspective is freely given and bestowed through Christ to all.

When the perspective of Christian friendship discussed above is applied in the context of disability discourses, it brings a conceptual novelty in that it tends to overcome the boundaries of social status and power balances, and the dichotomy between disabled and non-disabled, which is often perceived as a master-slave relationships. Therefore, such friendship is a model of true inclusion

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. Michael W. Holmes "Polycarp of Smyrna" in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments.*, eds. by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove and Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

and deserves to be reconsidered within this account as our discourse is going beyond the possibility of our natural intellectual intuitions about friendship.

Embarking on a brief interpretation of the forms of biblical New Testament friendship (Paul's and John's narrative) I will conclude this assessment by highlighting a few ethical and anthropological remarks on the idea of friendship. The foregoing account of friendship, before all else, demonstrates and recalls friendship with God revealed through Jesus's earthly presence. One of its primary aims was to reach beyond the socially-constructed identity of individuals and enter into a deep and personal relationship with them<sup>107</sup> (c.f. John 4:7; John 15:15). Overall, the interpretation of Paul's and John's references to friendship points to its dynamic, universal and transgressive aspects that go beyond the limitations of equal status, intellect, character, and social class. In other words, God's friendship revealed through Jesus transcends the over-emphasized anthropological dichotomy and points to acceptance of dissimilarity and asymmetry in the parties involved. The notion of Paul's friendship that is closer to the meaning of brotherhood reveals such asymmetry in its universal application that includes a common mission for those reconciled with Christ. Such reconciliation surpasses the social, natural and even anthropological differences integrated into distinction between Greek and Romans, God and humans, master and slave (Gal 3:22-29).

In the John's Gospel friendship was perceived not only as an intimate relationship due to the presence of the historical Jesus, but was also received as a gift. And this particular gift embodies love and service. The service in this context implies beneficence and benevolence. Jesus's narrative in John 13,1-20 and Jn 15,13-15 is not only an act of service and a call towards selfless love, but an act of trust and recognition of the true identity of the other. This means that Jesus not only confirmed each person's identity but entrusted the others with a practice of a continuous befriending. The appeal to follow Jesus's example of friendship, consisting in entrusting love and descending character of service and acceptance (foot washing) is one aspect of the possibility of mutual relationship, not based on a strict technical exchange of beneficence and benevolence, but on an act of selfless love for another. The narrative of John's Gospel, exemplified in washing the feet, not only symbolizes a transformation of roles, from being a slave towards being a friend, or from a strict equality towards the asymmetry, but it also indicates the presence of another person's body. The body matters, but in this specific narrative, it does not matter merely as an element forming one person's identity, but the presence of one person's body matters for the narrative of the friendship.

Instead of looking merely at Aristotle's friendship, characterized by strict hierarchy of roles, the Christian (New Testament) context provides a better solution in overcoming the gap of hierarchical differences. It proposes that friendship and love are interchangeably interwoven and that the process of befriending the other based on selfless love implies self - disclosure and trust.

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<sup>107</sup> See Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person. Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems*, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2000): p. 142.

### 1.1.3. Thomas Aquinas - concept of friendship and charity

It is not necessary to address that Aquinas impact on development of Catholic theology and Christian thought has been of huge importance. His contribution, also, regarding the notion of friendship brought valuable aspects worthy of our attention. Aquinas treatise on charity in *Summa* (ST IIa IIae qq. 23-46) consist in distinction between charity as supernatural friendship with God and charity as theological virtue.

Despite, the complete treatise on charity as theological virtue ST IIa, IIae, 23-46 is of tremendous importance, I am not interested in embarking into its full examination and relation with other faculties and virtues. Not only that this is beyond the scope of this research, but such discourses have been already present within past and continuous with a present contemporary scholarly discourse.<sup>108</sup> My primarily interest is to examine the Aquinas notion of charity as supernatural *friendship* with God and our neighbor (ST IIa, IIae, q.23 a. 1) from where I will draw its connection with charity as theological virtue, ST, IIa, IIae, q.23, a. 2 and a. 3. Second element to emphasize is that I will look in what extent it is a different concept from already mentioned the charity model within Disability studies discourses and Aristotle ethics of friendship. Thirdly, my particular interest is to search whereas Aquinas notion of charity as supernatural friendship with God and our neighbor is inclusive for people with intellectual disability and what exactly is his terminology and reference to the subject of disability. I will begin my discussion in providing a few insights into Aquinas “ethics” of charity departing from the ST IIa, IIae, q. 23. My key interest will circle around Aquinas term rationality and disability terminology associated with condition of *corporis infirmatis, amens, amentia*. A brief insight into a charity as a supernatural friendship with God and one’s neighbor and its relation to happiness will be provided at the end of this section.

#### 1.1.3.1. General insights into Aquinas concept of friendship - charity polemics

In the second part of the *Summa* (ST, IIa-IIae, q. 23) Aquinas in eight articles developed his treatise on the theme of charity. Despite most of the interest of this research orbits around ST IIa, IIae, q. 23 and its correspondance to the meaning of friendship, the approach to q. 23 cannot be complete without, however, looking at implications of theological virtue of charity. Besides focusing on my own reading of ST II-II, q.23 I will also look at most relevant contemporary commentaries on the foregoing subject.<sup>109</sup> Aquinas discourse on charity in ST IIa-IIae, inititae the q.23 wheather charity is friendship? The answer proceeds that charity is friendship with God (ST, IIa-IIae, q. 23, a.1), and that man being created as a person, is called into union of friendship with

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<sup>108</sup> See for instance discourses Sherwin S. Michael, *By knowledge and by Love: Charity and knowledge in the moral theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 2005); Eberhard Schockenhoff, „The Theological Virtue of Charity(IIa, IIae, qq.23-46) in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, eds. by Stephen J.Pope (Wahington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002); Joseph P.Wawrykow, *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas* (Louisville, KY:Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), etc.

<sup>109</sup> I will list only a few authors: Daniel Schwartz, *Aquinas on Friendship* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007); Marko Fuch, “Philia and Caritas. Some aspects of Aquinas’s reception of Aristotle’s theory of friendship, 2013; Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering eds., *Aristotle in Aquinas's theology*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2015); Michael Sherwin, *Love and Virtue - Theological Essays*, (Ohio, Emmaus Academic, 2018); Sherwin, *By Knowledge and by Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 2005; Schokenhoff, „The Theological Virtue of Charity(IIa, IIa qq.23-46)., etc.

God. The possibility of such communication with and the union with God has been demonstrated through Aquinas discussion on distinction between man's corporeal and sensitive nature (life of a soul) indicating upon man's spiritual life as his inward nature, which enables man's communication with God and angels. In his reply to (*ST* IIa, IIae, q.23, a.1, objection 2 and 3) Aquinas explanation address human friendship. Friendship extends to person in respect to one's friend (implies friendship with another friend) and is extended to someone in respect of another which means, to all that belongs to one's friend out of respect for himself. Such categorization extends even towards one's enemies whom one loves not only because they are in relation to one's friend, but because one's love for God.

This is to say that regardless the person's character, friendship with the virtuous is not anymore exclusively directed from virtuous towards merely virtuous, but, because of the charity (as man's friendship for God) friendship is extended towards a "non - virtuous", sinners and enemies, who are related to one's friend:

"we love those who belong to one's friend because charity which above is love of friendship" extends to even enemies who we love for God's sake."<sup>110</sup>

The question that follows from q. 23 a. 1, and somehow completes it, starts with a. 2 and a. 3 of q. 23, asking weather charity is something created in the soul (a.2) and whether charity is a virtue (a.3). In responding to such objection, Timothy McDermott interpretation on q. 23, a. 2 and a. 3 provide a valid answer. McDermott address that in such regard:

"charity is friendship between God and man based on sharing eternal happiness: something we share not by nature but by *the free gift of God*. So, charity is not born in us by nature, nor acquired by our natural powers, but is a created share in the Holy Spirit, the love of Father and Son, instilled into us by him. Of himself God is the most lovable object of happiness there is, but our affections can only incline us towards good we can see, so we cannot love God as what most makes us happy unless he pours his charity into our hearts. Our charity and its degree depend not on the quality of our *natures* or the *capacity* of our natural powers but on the will of the Holy Spirit distributing his gifts as he pleases: giving grace to each of us according to the measure of Christ's giving."<sup>111</sup>

Now, the a. 2 and a. 3 of q.23 are important in such regard as they do not only complete q.23, a.1, but says that the charity is not only a supernatural friendship with God, but that charity as theological virtue is poured into our hearts by the free gift of Holy Spirit. This means that charity as a free gift of Holy Spirit given to all humans goes beyond intellectual and natural human actualization<sup>112</sup> and dispositions, which means that as we could assume, does include people with profound and intellectual disabilities as recipients of such a free gift of Holy spirit. This also means that the charity as theological virtue "causes" the actualization of charity as supernatural friendship with God and our neighbor. In other words, charity is a theological virtue precisely because it

<sup>110</sup> *ST*, IIa, IIae, q.23, a.1 reply to Objection 2.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Timothy McDermott, ed., *St. Thomas Aquinas, "Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, (Notre Dame IL, Christian Classics, 1989): p.352.

<sup>112</sup> I used a word actualization as technically appropriate. The capacities or powers such as will, remain in charity, But also the will remain the will before grace/charity and after grace/charity. The unique power of the will (volition) acts in a different way when grace is present (i.e. charity), but it is still the same capacity (the will itself).



places one in supernatural friendship with God. This means that based on a charity as a free gift of the Holy Spirit to all humanity, person with intellectual and profound disability despite her/his cognitive capacities are capable out of grace to participate in friendship with God and one's neighbor.

The reply to q. 23, a.1 in obj.1 first enables friendship of supernatural order which I will address as certain asymmetry, due to the difference in nature. This in such perspective includes man - God relationship. The reply to q.23, a.1., obj. 2 and 3 extends friendship towards a “*non - virtuous*”, which means that due to charity infused in man by the grace of Holy Spirit (theological virtue) the strict characteristics of Aristotle's equality and separation on regard of friendship reserved only for a virtuous and detached from a non-virtuous, (women and slaves) are according the abovementioned reasoning overcome.

This communication between man and God enabled out of love as charity, as a free gift of Holy Spirit, *evident that charity is the friendship of man for God.*<sup>113</sup> In such regard, the connection that bind people together towards friendship with each other and the God is not anymore acquired virtue as this has been by Aristotle, (whereas it is not fully overcome neither by Aquinas) but the love (charity) by whom one loves God and one's neighbor. The reply to q.23, a.1, obj. 1., referring Aquinas treatise on friendship between God and man, is a novelty in such that it transcends the natural order and places it into supernatural (impossible for Aristotle). The reply to objection 2, in q. 23., a.1, transcends the natural similarity between people of a good or virtuous character, opening the possibility for love towards “non - virtuous” or even enemies. This is possible not because another person is greater due to achieved virtue, the use of the cognitive capacities or given character, but because of a grace and a gift of Holy Spirit, that produces in a person the inclination towards charity with whom man can relate and be directed in loving God and one's neighbor. Charity is loving God and neighbor because of God. In other words, charity as supernatural love enables one to love (with a natural love) all people, despite their natural or inherent “goodness”, because one loves all people not because of themselves but because of God. Thus, applying this into the concept of rethinking the friendship, the element of charity as supernatural, employed into Aquinas understanding of friendship, enables friendship natural love between highly unequal individuals.

#### **1.1.3.2. Further characteristics of charity as friendship**

In a further presentation of Aquinas's q. 23, my aim is to portray a few elements on the insights of its relation and distinction to Aristotle friendship and the model of charity. What was impossible to imagine for Aristotle became possible for Aquinas. As we could have notice earlier, Aristotle friendship were merely hierarchical as general form of friendship in antiquity were marked by equality. Only those sharing in the equality of natural (both bodily and by class) dispositions could be friends. True friendship was possible based on a virtuous character and friendship was a way towards perfection of character. Or more straightforwardly, friendship was a virtue - the *philia* (NE 1155a). For Aquinas who integrated Aristotle friendship with Augustine treatise on love in *De Trinitate*, charity was defined as friendship of man for God. Integrating Augustine and Scriptural “supernatural” (that includes the element of Divine, so to say a vertical vision of reality)

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, IIa-IIae, (New York, Benziger Brothers, Inc.,1947).

logic with Aristotle natural “ideas” (a natural and horizontal vision of reality) open a possibility for Aquinas to develop a meaning of friendship in a supernatural category impossible to imagine for Aristotle. Therefore, for Aquinas charity is supernatural friendship with God and our neighbor, where friends mutually intend the good of the other, enjoy a common life, and have the same end, because of God himself.<sup>114</sup> This intention for doing a good to the other does not consist in a merely benevolent love (wishing - well) but in doing good to one another (beneficent love). Therefore, the non - Aristotelian aspects of Aquinas friendship according to interpretation of Marko Fuchs in his chapter on “Philia and Caritas” regarding Aquinas’ reception of Aristotle’s theory of friendship summarizes this as follows:

Unlike Aristotle, Aquinas’s highest form of perfect friendship is not a relation between equals but one between highly unequal partners. Its prime object is not a particular human person but God, while other human beings are loved in the light of this *dilection* of God.<sup>115</sup>

The reason of exceeding the natural communication and order of friendship, by setting it towards relationship with God, towards one’s self, one’s neighbour and one’s enemies, accordingly has to do with, as Fuchs addresses, Aquinas „difficulty“, in integrating the Aristotelian element of well - wishing with the reasons of his or her own sake in perfect *philia*.<sup>116</sup> This could be also an assumption why his friendship is not separated from a benevolent love but is rather put forward in a form of distinction between *amor amicitiae* and *amour concupiscence*. „Amor amicitiae is not amour concupiscence“. <sup>117</sup> This distinction does not mean that (*amicitia*) is secondary expression of love, but that charity is fully expressed in relationship of *amicitia* (friendship), and because it is benevolent love, it also differs from *amour concupiscence* (consuming love). The benevolence implied one who is also benevolent. Or according to work of Fuch interpretation on Aquinas’s charity and *philia* and its relation towards the love for another:

First we can love a person because of him-or herself (*ratione sui ipsius*) as long as we love him or her because of a good proper to him or her (*ratione boni proprii*), i.e., because he or she is morally good (*in se honestus*) or pleasant or useful for us (*nobis delectabilis, aut utilis*). Second we can love someone because of another (*ratione alterius*), i.e., because he or she belongs to or is related to someone we love because of him- or herself. Both kinds of love, however, have the same formal object, namely the good of the person whom we love *ratione alterius*. Thus, when we love God out of charity, we do so *ratione sui ipsius*, whereas we charitably love our neighbour „because God is in him or desiring that God may be in him.“<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Guy Mansini, OSB., “Aristotle and Aquinas’s Theology of Charity in the Summa Theologie“ In *Aristotle in Aquinas’s theology*, p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> See Fuch, „Philia and Caritas in Aquinas and Nicomachean Ethics“, p.213.

<sup>116</sup> See Fuchs, „Philia and Caritas in Aquinas and Nicomachean Ethics“, p.219.

<sup>117</sup> In his reflection of Aquinas, Daniel Schwarz presented Aquinas main ideas about *philia* and *amicitia*, whereas Marko Fuchs in chapter on Aquinas friendship discusses friendship in correlation with *philia* and *caritas*. My main interest in reading of Aquinas does not include straightforward semantics between *amicitia* and *caritas*, which does not mean that it is of a less importance. My interest in reading Aquinas friendship as charity in q 23 includes emphasizes its relation to difference in status, class and virtue. For more on distinction between *amicitia* and *caritas* see for instance Guy Mansini, OSB, „Duplex Amor and the Structure of Love in Aquinas“, in *Thomistica*, ed. by Eugene Manning (Leuven: Peeters, 1995): 137-196. See also Michael Sherwin in *By knowledge and by Love*, pp. 147-204.

<sup>118</sup> Fuch, „Philia and Caritas in Aquinas and Nicomachean Ethics,” pp. 215.

Similarly to Aristotle, to whom friendship was one of the virtues, Aquinas does associate natural friendship with a natural virtue, but natural friendship does not seem to be perceived explicitly as theological virtue.<sup>119</sup> Instead it is a form of charity which is an explicit theological virtue. The theological transformation of Aristotle's friendship in the thought of Aquinas makes it possible to say that "charity is friendship with God. And God is love. But God is not friendship, neither friendship is a virtue. Charity names the abundance of divine love for what is beyond God. It is in that way the *ecstasis* of divine love."<sup>120</sup> Understanding charity as love for another and vice versa, implicated into Aquinas' charity as friendship with God, love can be exercised. It is apparent that what is considered asymmetrical in God-human relationship according to Aquinas is the asymmetry of nature. This asymmetry does not result in asymmetry of degree as has been the case in Aristotle. Aristotle, contrary to Aquinas, makes asymmetrical those human relationships which are in nature symmetrical. Aquinas, on the contrary, portrays that only God-human relationships are asymmetrical, but in nature; whereas human relationships are in nature symmetrical. However, despite asymmetry in nature, there is no asymmetrical hierarchy between man and God, but equality in exchange of gifts and aspirations of love.

What is more revealing in my reading of Aquinas *ST*, IIa, IIae q.23 is that Aquinas' settlement on the implication of supernatural degree of friendship, not only opens the possibility to rethink friendship with God, but, parallel with a different understanding of human personhood. Here person understood as image of God, (*ad hoc persona*) is not merely the subject of natural events and causes, but belongs to the degree of supernatural order, which is to say that every person is a creature and a God's beloved, also capable of friendship with God.

The charity, besides being understood as supernatural friendship with God and our neighbor, is also theological virtue. Both meanings, however, open humanity access towards Divine and thus become inclusive to all. It will be my task in a next paragraph to come across charity as a friendship with God and our neighbor in relation to Aquinas' treatise on people with intellectual disabilities (*operative limitations, amens, amentia*).

### 1.1.3.3. Friendship, Charity and People with Disabilities

What is Aquinas' view on disability and how does Aquinas' notion of friendship postulate disabled people? The contemporary disability debate including disability studies and certain areas of theology of liberation are particularly targeted towards critique of antiquity and middle ages usages of terminology for people with disability addressing them by terms imbeciles, infirmities, etc.<sup>121</sup> The theological thinking on impairment and disability impacted by cultural upheavals could neither escape implication of such terminology. Aquinas' use of the term *rational* is in such regard perceived as negative and exclusive in its form towards people with disabilities. Thus, his usage of terms such as *infirmities* and *amens* are of an unavoidable consideration in such respect. In the latter paragraph I will briefly address main obstacles of Aquinas' disregarded construal regarding human nature and impairment in order to grasp full understanding of his account of charity as

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<sup>119</sup> See for instance Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics*, book VII, assessed <https://dhsprory.org/thomas/Ethics.htm>

<sup>120</sup> Mansini, "Aristotle and Aquinas' Theology of Charity in the *Summa Theologiae*," p.18.

<sup>121</sup> See for instance Sticker, *History of Disability*, 1999.

friendship with God and one's neighbor, inclusive to people with disability. Aquinas friendship remain virtuous in some degree, but his implication of terminology grounded in Augustine (Latin) and Aristotelian (Greek) tradition goes beyond the comprehension of contextual and contemporary disability discourses and cannot be grasped without first presenting some insights into his terminology on such regard. Because of perception that charity as the theological virtue is a gift of a Holy Spirit including its supernatural application that includes friendship with God, I assume that in such case, the friendship developed by Aquinas must transcend the conception of straightforward relations between equals. In such, it is my assumption that such friendship includes people with disability, and also people with a profound intellectual disability.

#### **a) operative limitations, *amentia*, *amens***

Before proceeding to further analysis on charity and the meaning "rational" and rationality understood in a camp of a contemporary scholarship as an obstacle for people with profound intellectual disability, mental disorder or severally mentally disabled to participate in God's and human friendship, I will outline a few insights on Aquinas terminology on corporeal infirmity (bodily suffering as one aspect of evil suffering) and condition *amentia* congruent in some degree of what can be understood with a contemporary notion of intellectual or profound disability. It is important to emphasize that disability as impairment and social barrier, was not a major problem in the theology of Aquinas. For him as John Berkman addressed, moral and spiritual impairments were more in focus than a person with mental and physical impairment (Cf. *ST* 1.48.5.6.) In other words, this already signify that the body (including corporeal infirmity) was not the final good or determination for a human creature. Nevertheless, Aquinas use of terms such as corporeal infirmity lat. *corporis infirmitas* (engl. transl. invalidates, disproved, impair) and lat. *amens* (engl. transl. out of senses, madman, distracted) for those afflicted with a mental and physical defect and limitations, cannot escape critique of Disability studies scholars as a negative terminology and representation of people with disability within a medieval period. The theme of Aquinas regard on *furiosi et amentes* (*ST* 3.68.12) and those who have not the use of reason (*ST*, 3.80.9), as well as, severely mentally disabled (transl. with *amentes*) have been discussed in relation to sacrament of baptism and eucharist.<sup>122</sup> My interest, however, will draw on Miguel Romero, profound analysis of such terminology in *Disability Reader* and his related articles on such discourse, as Romero not only provide precision regarding the Aquinas terminology on intellectually disabled, but undermine the caveats on related concept of rationality. The degree under which Aquinas used terminology of disability according to Romero, addresses Aquinas account of "theology of bodily weakness."<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Besides Romero, there are also other authors who address similar concerns. See for instance John Berkman, "Are the Severally Mentally Disabled Sacramental Icons of Heavenly Life? Aquinas on Impairment," in *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 26, 1 (2012): 83-96.; Ivan Bankhead, "Thomas Aquinas on Mental Disorder and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist: Summa Theologica 3.68.12 and 3.80.9 Revisited," in *Journal of Disability and Religion*, 2016; Cross, Richard. "Aquinas on Physical Impairment: Human Nature and Original Sin." In *Harvard Theological Review* 110, 3 (2017): 317- 38.

<sup>123</sup> See Miguel J. Romero, "Aquinas on the *corporis infirmitas*: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace." In *Disability in the Christian Tradition*, eds. by Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 101-51

In *Summa* (cf. *ST*, Ia, 44-48; *ST*, Ia, 1.99. 1, response; *ST*, I, 91) Aquinas provide a general account on reflection of the meaning of being a creature. This in such perspective integrates natural reasoning into a Christian understanding of human limit and dependency on God as constitutive elements of what it means to be intrinsically human. In such argumentation, Aquinas associates the loss of divine help of supernatural grace, the awareness of limits and finitude, and the experience of the bodily suffering, after the Fall, as a consequence and effect of sin, which in other words means that being susceptible of dysfunction and *aware* of such a limit, weakness and finitude is a consequence of a sin (*ST* Ia, q. 91).<sup>124</sup> Such conceptualization according to Romero's interpretation of Aquinas, implies possibility for a discourse on corporeal infirmity. Corporeal infirmity in such regards means that the bodies are being "afflicted" with operative limitations or the defection of the good.<sup>125</sup> The affliction according to Aquinas illustration implies injury, illness and cognitive disorder. When corporeal infirmity afflicts bodily part or organs such as brain (that in Aquinas terms represent the internal sense organ), it can further affect the operation of the reason why such affliction could refer to contemporary terms of cognitive disorders including intellectual disability, mental disorder, or some other brain damage such as Alzheimer disease.

More precisely, the corporeal infirmity represents one aspect of suffered evil in three distinct ways: instrumental infirmity, external sensorial infirmity and internal sensorial infirmities. Instrumental infirmity means, that, certain organ "loses" operational integrity. This for instance could respond to epilepsy and paralytica as addressed in *De Malo*, 3.3. Second type - the external sensorial infirmities - Aquinas associates with the sense organs disposed to receive external stimuli. This for instance in *ST*, 1.5.5., include privation of sight (visual impairment) or privation of hearing (hearing impairment). The third type of disorder implies internal sensorial infirmities related to brain and is associated with the dysfunctions of a mental, intellectual nature (*ST*, 1.78.4).<sup>126</sup> The third part of disorder corresponds to notion of dysfunction of intellectual or mental nature or simply mindlessness (*amentia*) (*ST*, 3.36;3.37). In other words, the condition of *amentia* (*ST*, 3.36;3.37) refer those who "lack the use of reason", but as an evil suffered due to bodily impairment (*ST* 3.24; 3.26 3.27,3.2.8),<sup>127</sup> not the moral evil. *Amentia* is thus, a privation of mental sight, due to bodily impediment, that according to Romero's interpretation refer to what we may call profound intellectual disability. In relation with the Aquinas illustration of *amentia* - as corporeal infirmity of privation of mental sight - the person that suffers this bodily evil is called *amens*.

The *amens*, according to Romero's interpretation, includes a person who is congenitally unable to communicate, who manifests no capacity for discursive reasoning or intentional acts, and is entirely dependent upon others for her proximate well-being.<sup>128</sup> However, such person is not "possessed" as some contemporary stories surrounding disability would addressed,<sup>129</sup> neither their

<sup>124</sup> Cf. <https://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/FS/FS081.html#FSQ81OUTP1>

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Romero, "Aquinas on the corporis infirmitas: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace," p.107.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Romero, *ibid.* p.110. Also for more on Aquinas discourse on senses, see Robert Edward Brennan, *Thomistic Psychology: A Philosophical Analysis of the Nature of Man*, (Tacoma, WA. Cluny Media 2016).

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Romero, "Aquinas on the corporis infirmitas: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace," p.111.

<sup>128</sup> See Romero, "Aquinas on the corporis infirmitas: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace," p.112.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Chomba Wa Munyi, "Past and Present Perceptions Towards Disability: A Historical Perspective" in *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 32, 2 (2012); See also a story shared at [https://www.saintmartin-kenya.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=127](https://www.saintmartin-kenya.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=127)

condition is prescribed due to an actual sin or moral evil such as culpable foolishness. According to Aquinas conception of privation of good<sup>130</sup> person suffers physical evil due to a lack of some bodily function, not because of some actual sin or moral evil. In principle, the person, despite his/her degree of corporeal infirmity or bodily suffering is never completely deprived from the aspirations of the divine grace, as the operation of rational soul as immaterial property of the human nature hinder the aspirations of divine grace through the act of Holy Spirit (*ST*, 1.5,5 reply, 3). In other words, someone who is born without full use of the brain or bodily function is not able to act full in the “normal” sense of the world function. However, after baptism, the person despite his/her condition (bodily incapacities of corporeal infirmity) is a receiver of a full effect of divine grace, like every other baptized person.<sup>131</sup>

#### 1.1.3.4. Charity, Rationality and Friendship in reference to people with disability

To address further problematics of charity in its relation to people with intellectual disability I will begin with the reference to Hans Reinders critical observation on Aquinas’s charity in his *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*. Reinders in his exploration of the ethics of friendship, addressed that not only is Aristotle friendship symmetrical and intellectualist, but is also the Aquinas’s. The argument for such an address he found in interpreting the Aquinas notion of charity:

[...] There is a gap in Aquinas’s argument that, when made explicit, shows that his claims here cannot be sustained theologically. “Charity“ he says, “is based on the fellowship of everlasting happiness.” Because *irrational* creatures cannot attain that, we cannot have friendship with them. However, we should note that he leaves out the fact that this particular fellowship is not based on natural gifts such as the powers of reason and will but on the gratuitous gifts of grace. Thus, he is effectively saying that “irrational creatures” do not share in the gifts of grace. It may be that, following Aristotle, these things need to be said, “properly speaking”; but it is obvious that they are not properly spoken, theologically speaking. The only way to avoid this conclusion would be to deny that Aquinas implicating any form of human being here. But despite this explanation, the next question would be: What would he say, then, about human beings who do not even come close to his conception or rational creatures? <sup>132</sup>

The vocabulary concerning human nature in Aquinas’ integrates Aristotle notion of human nature perceived as biological entity and Augustine’s understanding of human person as *imago* and *capax Dei* (*ST* I, 75.4). When looking at *ST*, IIa, IIae, q. 23, without rather a profound understanding and correspondence with other article of the q. 23, it could indeed appear that charity is infused according to capacities of mind and natural gifts, which could lead towards biased conclusion that people with profound intellectual disabilities are accordingly excluded from the friendship with God and the human friendship.

However, despite Aquinas notion of friendship remaining virtuous to a certain degree,<sup>133</sup> the systematic construct of friendship between people with and without disabilities, does not say that

<sup>130</sup> For more on distinction between moral and physical evil and original and actual sin see: <https://dhspriority.org/Thomas/summa/FS/FS081.html#FSQ81OUTP1>

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Berkman, “Are the Severally Mentally Disabled Sacramental Icons of Heavenly Life? Aquinas on Impairment”, p. 90.

<sup>132</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.353

<sup>133</sup> See “Lecture 1: Friendship, a Subject of Moral Philosophy” in *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics by Thomas Aquinas* transl. by C. I. Litzinger, O.P., (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), accessed from

charity as man's friendship for God was exclusive of people with intellectual disability. I assume that Aquinas' notion of charity as friendship of man towards God, due to the theological virtue of charity understood as infused grace of the Holy Spirit, includes all people, because grace as achievable by all, also refer people with disabilities. Therefore, I suggest that instead of a rather brief conclusion, we need a careful examination of certain concepts related to Aquinas' terminology particularly when such terminology implies discourse on natural capacities and Aquinas notion of human person (*ST*, IIa, IIae, q.76). On the one hand this first means that we need to reconsider a definition of the human person, which according to Aquinas says that by definition every human person is a fully human. The distinction between rational and irrational implies two different categories. Irrational creature for Aquinas includes those without rational nature (e.g. plants, trees, birds, fish) who cannot "formally" contemplate God, but not a human person, which is to say that people with profound intellectual disabilities, because they are human, cannot be irrational. On the other hand, we need to understand the notion of charity. Thus, regarding the meaning of charity as supernatural friendship with God, *ST*, IIa, IIae, q.23, a.1, requires conjunction reading with q 23 art. 2 and 3, where the theological virtue of charity comes to the fore. The discussion in a further paragraph will follow such propositions.

It is important to clarify that properties of intellect as capacity to know and the will as capacity to love what is known (*ST* Ia. 45,7) are the immaterial properties of the soul, embodied but independent of the body (*ST*, Ia.75, 7). What is often associated with the rational in "thought" of Aquinas does not imply the straightforward instrumental cognitive operations of the brain, and is different from the contemporary understanding of intellect and rationality. The term rational or the rational soul determines what belong to the spectrum of human. Accordingly, term rational implies the immaterial properties of intellect and will (powers of rational soul), as well as, material property - sensory powers - that refer human body, as we could have noticed in a previous paragraph (*ST*, 1.78.4.). Accordingly, the rational soul is a principle of human nature. This is to say that human nature is not based on some accidental qualities, but on principles of rational soul which is distinctive characteristic of human species. One of the most precise statement that clarifies distinction of "term rational" (principle) and "cognitive" (accidents) in reference to people with disabilities can be found in previously mentioned Romero's essays on "Aquinas and the *corporis infirmatis*" and in his study on those who "lack the use of reason."<sup>134</sup> Romero, not only give a robust presentation of Aquinas terminology on *corporis infirmatis*, *amens* and *infirmity*, but it became a helpful source in responding Reinders critique on Aquinas notion of charity stated earlier within the ongoing paragraph. In his response to Reinders regarding the notion "rational" discussed earlier, Romero emphasizes that the rational soul is before all the image of God in the human creature - insofar as the rational creature is always capable of knowledge and love, and cannot be rendered incapable of knowing and living and loving.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, the capacity "rationality" does not originate from an instrumental faculty belonging to some bodily organ, that is, the brain and human nature cannot be reduced to some corporeal operation, because the goodness and beauty of

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<https://dhsprory.org/thomas/Ethics8.htm#1>

<sup>134</sup> Miguel J. Romero, "The happiness of 'Those who lack the use of reason'" in *The Thomist* 80 (2016): p. 49-96.

See also Miguel Romer, in *Engaging Disability*

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Romero, , "The happiness of 'Those who lack the use of reason'"p. 60-65.

human existence as embodied creatures surpasses its cognitive operations. This means, as Romero put it (contra Reinders), to claim, that “the rational soul as the principle of human nature” is very different from the (false) claim which identifies the capacity for discursive reason or purposive action as constitutive of human nature and personhood (contra Reinders 2008, 22; cf. *ST*, 1.78.4, response).<sup>136</sup> My objection to Reinders’ regarding the notion of charity as exclusive to people with disability says that Reinders offer only a partial read of Aquinas, where he (Aquinas) indeed emphasizes rational capacities. However, this statement although addressing intellect and dialectics of *rational-irrational* differ from our 21<sup>st</sup> century interpretation of the notion of rationality, upon which Romero also indicated. In reference to charity, charity as supernatural friendship with God and our neighbors, cannot be distinguished from the meaning of charity in *ST*, IIa, IIae, q 23, a.2 and 3, which says that charity surpasses the will as it is infused by the grace of the Holy Spirit and recalls for *participation*.

In his reference to charity, Aquinas, gives priority to the capacities of soul and therefore no human (here rational refereeing human) being is excluded from such participation. The problem with dialectic rational - irrational in Aquinas is that irrational refer to precisely non- humans, which in my reading of Aquinas implies plants and animals, not human species.<sup>137</sup>

Additionally, in q 23, Aquinas application on God’s grace and the work of the Holy Spirit means that the friendship with God and his invitation into friendship with God is inclusive to all. This means that people with intellectual disability are not excluded from such community of friendship.

The emphasis here is not whether we are speaking about morally inferior or morally superior group of people. This distinction was not in such a tremendous interest for Aquinas as this implies to us today. Instead, what is important to emphasize is that the distinction between morally inferior-superior, rational-irrational, capable-incapable, friendship love and neighbor love are not contradictory, but were transcended by God’s intervention towards man. As expressed in answer to *ST*, IIa, IIae, q.23:

“God is faithful by whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son (1Cor, 9) - (and continue) the love which is based on this communication is charity. [...] now, since charity surpasses the proportion of human nature, as stated above (art.2), it depends not on any natural virtue, but on the sole grace of the Holy Ghost who infuses charity.”

This is to say that “charity is given not according to our natural capacity, but according to the God’s will, who through the work of Holy Spirit distribute His gifts to the human person.” (Cf. *ST*, IIa, IIae, a. 3, q. 24). In reply to obj.1, in q.24,a.3, we can find similar comment: “the virtue in accordance with which God gives His gifts to each one, is a disposition or previous preparation or effort of the one who receives grace. But the Holy Ghost forestalls even this disposition or effort

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Romero, “Aquinas on the corporis infirmitas: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace,” p.105

<sup>137</sup> The ancient notion in identifying the human person was lead by *terminus technicus* lat. *animal rationalis* (grk. *zoon logikon*) This is not the same as with our contemporary understanding of rational capacities or intelectual powers. I think that the problem with such reading comes from dualisam which not only impacts our reasoning, but also our morality. This brings that we somehow fall into a trap in forgetting about the proper distinction between intellect and rationality, as well as, distinction between rational and irrational, where the rational is a category that distinct our human species from animals, but humans from humans



by moving man's mind either more or less, according to his will." Continuing with reply to obj. 2 Aquinas further states that: "charity and nature do not belong to the same genus", so that the comparison that charity is infused according to the capacity of nature, fails.

#### **1.1.3.5. Charity (as a supernatural friendship with God and one's neighbor) and its relation to happiness**

Many contemporary reflections within academia and practice referring the subject of friendship do not necessarily share on agreement that friendship is straightforwardly inclined towards achievement of happiness. This in other words means that contrary to Aristotle, for contemporaries' happiness does not fulfill the ultimate *telos* of friendship. For instance, some disability theologians would never mention happiness as something tremendously important for achieving the end the friendship. Instead, the end of friendship they see in liberation, re-humanization, healing.<sup>138</sup> An overview of empirical results in the contemporary scholarship in sociology and psychology emphasizes happiness as an occurring element important for friendship formation and its very end.

I think that certain aspects or emotions related to happiness such as joy, laugh, serenity, could replace the meaning of happiness yet, not be definitive for friendship relationship. Despite happiness is not definitive for friendship, it is nevertheless necessary. Without happiness, the relationship of friendship would rather fail into formal relationship different from friendship. Happiness implies the element of personal within friendship, but the question is how we define when associated with the personal? The contemporary moral precepts "sees" happiness differently that our classic predecessors. By this I want to emphasize that happiness in contemporary context is an emotional inspiration often related to the fulfilment of pleasure, but the calmness, the virtue or particular merit, as this was for Aristotle. What is the role of happiness within scope of Aquinas notion of charity as friendship with God? Is charity as friendship with God and our neighbors, as for Aristotle, so for Aquinas also directed towards achievement of happiness?

For Aquinas God is the source of charity and the object of charity is the eternal happiness of man as the ultimate goal of man's life.<sup>139</sup> According to Aquinas, happiness<sup>140</sup> is an important element of human life and is described within first part of *Summa ST* I-II, q.51, a.4 and q.62, a.1 and 3, linked with the discourse of human acts. All humans seek for some good. Thus, happiness, first of all, has its beginning in the apprehension of some good.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person. Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems*, 2000.

<sup>139</sup> See Timothy McDermott, ed., *St. Thomas Aquinas, "Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, p. 350.

<sup>140</sup> To explore the notion of happiness in more details would be beyond the scope of this research. For a more comprehensive study of Aquinas on happiness and its ethical application see for instance Servais Pinckaers, "The Beatitude and the Beatitudes in Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*," in John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (eds.), *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005); See also Michael Sherwin, OP, "In what straits they suffered. St. Thomas's use of Aristotle to transform Augustine's critique of Earthly Happiness." *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 3, 2 (2005): 325-406; See also Jean Porter, "Happiness," in Denys Turner and Philip McCosker (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Summa Theologiae* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2016): p.259-276; Stenberg, Joseph, "Aquinas on Happiness" (PhD Dissertation, University of Colorado, 2016).

<sup>141</sup> Cf. *ST*, I, II, q.18

What has been prescribed with natural happiness (*eudeimonia*) by Aristotle is according to Aquinas elevated to the level of beatitudes - eternal happiness. The natural happiness that Aristotle address in *Nicomachean Ethics* was imperfect in comparison to the eternal (beatitude). According to Aquinas human person is called by God towards such happiness which is beyond proportions of man's nature and understanding. This means that for Aquinas, despite natural happiness is in continuity with supernatural happiness, charity lies not in achievement of natural happiness but in participation of beatitudes. Does the charity as friendship towards God means the ultimate end of completion of human happiness? Charity as created habitus ordered to the love of God, "*exercise merits for us the very beatitude of God, the promise of which founds our friendship.*"<sup>142</sup> Looking at the subject of charity in *ST* IIa, IIae, q.24, a. 4 and a. 6 and 7, it seems that charity is the good through which persons are enabled to reach beatitude as a principle of merit through which they come towards God. What about people with intellectual disability? Does happiness understood as beatitudes includes people with intellectual and profound disabilities?

The charity that is God happiness to man and man's friendship for God is one aspect of *reciprocal* communication. Although the reciprocity between God and man is restricted to analogy, (as there is the difference in nature) the bond with a man through revelation of God's sacred Humanity in Jesus and through the Holy Spirit - is the source of this reciprocal communication - symmetrical in participation (of happiness) and asymmetrical in nature. There is no need from God towards man to receive something from man, as God is absolute Giver. But there is the sharing love initiated by God (giver) to man (receiver) through grace of His presence. The reciprocity is than visible in reciprocal "communication" in God's faithfulness and His desire for fellowship with man, (*Dei Verbum*, no.1)<sup>143</sup> and man's free answer to that fellowship. In line with this, is the statement that reciprocity because of God as absolute giver and the man as constant receiver of God's gifts is limited and can't be never paralleled as render the inequality of status. Friendship is of what makes this exchange of reciprocity possible. But reciprocity is not based on conversation of need-as God does not need human being to fulfill his being, but on exchange of charity. This is how exchange of "communication" is possible. Not on reciprocity of need and fulfilment of this need, but out of charity, freedom and grace. (Cf. *ST* q.23, a. 2, reply 2; See also *ST* q.179, a. 1).

The integration of Augustine's knowledge of the person, enlightened through his reference to Scripture and influence of Aristotle, marked Aquinas friendship with distinct clarity and complexity regarding the meaning of participation: one can love everybody (neighborhood love), but one can still have preferences to some (John 15, 15) - *amour amicitiae* (contra Aristotle)<sup>144</sup>. From all the above reasons in a nutshell we can sum up that Aquinas friendship includes people with disabilities who are by natural gift of grace recipient of Holy Spirit and in such are invited to the full participation of friendship. When, as reconfirmed at the beginning of *Dei Verbum* (*DV*, nn. 1) God call his people into fellowship with him, he did not only called people "without" *corporis infirmatis*, but also those "who lack the capacity to reason", *amens*, *furiosi*, etc. as they all share in the same nature, who is not the end in itself. The transcendental aspect of friendship is the

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Guy Mansini, OSB, *Aristotle and Aquinas on Theology of Charity in the Summa Theologiae*. p. 5

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Dogmatic constitution on Divine revelation *Dei Verbum*, 1965.

<sup>144</sup> Let be reminded that Aristotle in *NE* 1169b10 stated that: "its finer to benefit friends, than to benefit strangers."

opening of the possibility of spiritual friendship that for Christian thinkers refer participation in friendship with the Triune God. The participation in the friendship with Triune God is thus inclusive to every creature who shares in the same nature peculiar to human person (cf. *ST*, I, q.76), so is for all “forms” and “degrees” of people.

## Concluding remarks

So far, I demonstrated that the main insights of Aristotle's ethics are understood as real and natural, hence his concern for human morality and happiness integrates the requirement of togetherness with an attachment to reality. For Aristotle, friendship is natural activity. Being a friend to another person is an essential personal characteristic of being human. Aristotle's work on friendship explores what a friendship is, and what the true/natural essence of this friendship is, but does not say much about how this friendship is formed. Accordingly, friendship should be naturally applicable to everyone who participates in shared activities and wishing-well to each other, whatever their degree of personal (family, intimate, kin friendship) and impersonal (civic) engagement. Despite such thinking, it is only a perfect friendship based on equality and similarity that is recognized as true to self-actualization, as only such friends who are similar in character are capable of loving and mirroring the other friend for the sake of himself. Thus, the equality provides friendship with a certain stability. We have seen that Aristotle's ethics of friendship sets down some important principles of the value of friendship, elevating it into the order of ethics, and including his emphasis on the notion of personal. His ethics was natural, the leading force was *logos* and for this reason, as well as, the whole Greek context, he could not escape a static and circular vision of humanity, also reflected in his treatise of friendship. Because of this, he could not think outside the framework of the idealized, male-oriented (elitist) conceptual order. Difference was a problem, and justice instead of compassion was the governing force of the *polis*. This is also the reason why his friendship is recognized as hierarchical in a sense that women and slaves are underestimated as persons (due to lower degree of character), and their engagement in the life of virtue, sharing in a true/perfect friendship, or achieving true happiness, has been largely undervalued. The account of asymmetry or inequality of Aristotle's friendship, when applied to the context of contemporary disability discourses, appears exclusive of people with and without disabilities. For instance, people without disabilities are often considered superior to people with disabilities, due to the difference or some deficiency in the character, cognitive capacity and social status of the disabled person. For this reason, when Aristotle's logic on the valuation of friendship is applied to people with disability, there is an obvious conceptual impossibility for the practice of this type of friendship, due to the differences between the persons, as is often implied in mainstream contemporary logic regarding human relationship. Such logic, when applied to a care-giver/care-receiver relationship of independent living, for instance, creates the impossibility for the care-receiver becoming friends with the care-giver, as their status with respect to ethical boundaries, class or social status, are different.

The Biblical friendship that in this research includes the perspective of Paul's and John's Gospel contrary to ancient friendship opens the possibility of friendship among differences and friendship with God - a supernatural dimension of friendship. As grounded in the person of Christ this friendship is not only inclusive to all; but because it is Christian, it should not be separationist, normative or elitist. In such regard its specificity carries an ethical and anthropological dimension. The anthropological and ethical dimension of such friendship consist in that it presents the possibility of a particular asymmetrical relationship between God to man, but also re-establishes the new order of a social (human to human) relationship, including the people of a different status,

social class and rational capacities. In other words God's friendship revealed through Jesus transcends the over-emphasized anthropological dichotomy and points to acceptance of dissimilarity and asymmetry in the parties involved. The element that includes transcendence in such regard for Paul's fellowship type of friendship is reconciliation; whereas in Johannine Gospel this element is exemplified in Jesus gesture of foot washing. Paul's emphasis on reconciliation surpasses the social, natural and even anthropological differences integrated into distinction between Greek and Romans, God and humans, master and slave. The foot washing within the narrative of John Gospel, symbolizes not only a transformation of roles, from being a slave towards being a friend, but points upon transgression from a strict equality towards asymmetry. When such logic is specifically applied in the context of disability discourses, it brings a conceptual novelty in that it tends to overcome the boundaries of social status and power balances, and the dichotomy between disabled and non-disabled (often perceived as a master-slave relationships). Thus, such friendship represents a model of true inclusion and deserves to be reconsidered within the further discourse that is going beyond the possibility of our natural intellectual intuitions about friendship.

The Biblical formulation "*I no longer call your slaves, but friends*" also incorporated in Aquinas discussion on friendship (cf. q. 23, art. 1, obj. 3) is a new Christian understanding of the order of things and human relationship. The possibility of such a friendship created a reciprocal exchange between people of different statuses and character, and friendship with God, impossible to imagine for Aristotle, but possible to imagine for Aquinas who's friendship rationale implies Biblical principles. This most importantly reveals that the supernatural or vertical dimension of friendship overcomes the horizontal natural aspect by expanding the process of dynamic inclusion.

The integration of Jn 15, 15 with Aristotle's *koinonia* appears as a key concept in Aquinas understanding of charity as a supernatural friendship with God. Jesus call to community through service in Jn 15, 15, and Aristotle *koinonia* understood within the idea of *polis*, in thought of Aquinas are integrated concepts. This first means that charity is friendship, the habit and the theological virtue. Communication in relation to charity indicates God's free gift, having something in common and living together. Following such logic, further means that the meaning of friendship in Aquinas terms, is the integration of charity in relation to *communicatio* where both, charity and communication point on God free gift and giving.

Aquinas contrary to Aristotle portrays that despite asymmetry in nature, there is no asymmetrical hierarchy between man and God, but equality in exchange of gifts and aspirations of love.

Although Aquinas vocabularily in addressing corporeal infirmity in particular aspect - the internal sensorial infirmities (lat. *amentia*) - refer those who „lack the use of a reason,“ it still does not mean that those persons are in his thought excluded from the participation in charity. What is often associated with the rational in „though“ of Aquinas does not imply the straightforward instrumental cognitive operations of the brain, and is different from the contemporary understadnig of intellect and rationality. The problem with dialectic rational-irrational in Aquinas is that irrational refer to precisely non-humans, which in my reading of Aquinas, as indicated, refer non human species.

This means that charity is not infused according to the capacity of nature, but as theological virtue it is infused in a person as a free gift of Holy Spirit and is a man's capacity to communicate with God. In other words, addressing charity as supernatural friendship with God implies the

communication and union with God and with one's neighbour. Moreover, it includes a whole participation of a created person and a whole participation of a Triune God. This means that based on a charity as a free gift of the Holy Spirit to all humanity, person with intellectual and profound disability despite her/his cognitive capacities is capable out of grace of charity to participate in friendship with God and one's neighbour.

## 2nd Chapter

### 1.2.MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY SHOLARSHIP ON FRIENDSHIP

#### Introduction

In *After Virtue*, A. MacIntyre connects the problem of modern friendship with the absence of virtues and the primacy of emotivism. He nevertheless does not deny the importance of affection, but to him it is only secondary. As he says:

...in a modern perspective affection is often the central issue; our friends are said to be those who we *like*, perhaps whom we like very much. Friendship has become for the most part the name of a type of emotional state rather than of a type of social and political relationship.<sup>145</sup>

What McIntyre describes concerning the absence of virtue and the occurrence of emotivism echoes first of all the conceptual and practical distinction between classical and modern notions of friendship. Friendship was an important subject of observation (Aristotle), practice (New Testament) and reflection (Aristotle & Aquinas). The classical thinkers, particularly from the ancient period, for whom the discourse of friendship, together with the concept of virtue, was the heart of moral reflection, provided the foundation of theories of friendship for later thinkers. After the classical times modern theories of friendship did not eclipse these original theories.<sup>146</sup> Yet, it was not of tremendous primary importance.<sup>147</sup> With modernity and late modernity, changes across culture, time, society, and religious contexts impacted the patterns of thought and brought substantive changes.<sup>148</sup> This had an overall impact on thoughts about personal moral growth and the ethics of interpersonal relationship. In other words, the changes in circumstances and thought led to changes in personal identity, particularly in terms of moral and socio-psychological development. Such changes created an assumption that friendship in modern and contemporary times concerned a different thematic range of issues than in classic period. Besides this, the greatest innovation of late modernity regarding friendship is the idea that friendship was developed as a subject of scholarly dispute and analysis within certain academic fields (philosophy, sociology, theology, psychology) and that the new virtual platform of social networking - "Facebook friends" - gave friendship a new context.

My aim is to briefly examine the most apparent and essential considerations of the friendship tradition slightly before and during the Enlightenment and provide a summary of most decent ideas

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<sup>145</sup> MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*, (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd, 1981)., p.156.

<sup>146</sup> For more on that see for instance Albrecht Classen & Marilyn Sandig, eds. *Friendship in the Middle ages and early modern age: exploration of a fundamental ethical discourse*, (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2010).

<sup>147</sup> This on regard of reconsideration of friendship, disability and otherness, says that the classic era and modern period due to the assumption of their robust conceptual distinction could better contribute to such reconsideration.

<sup>148</sup> Preston King and Heather Devere, *In Challenge to Friendship in modernity*, eds. (Ilford:Frank Cass & Co.Ltd., 2000)., p.2.

of contemporary friendship scholarship within the academic humanities (philosophy, theology and sociology). Finally, with regards to late modernity's developments in the area of virtual communication and social media, I will examine the process of friendship according to the one of the greatest platform of social networking: Facebook friends. My reason for this selective approach to friendship is that a detailed analysis of all the possible ways in interpreting friendship in modernity and contemporary scholarship is beyond the scope of this project. The interim goal of my interest is to provide a brief overview of the concept of modern friendship, and in connection with this to outline the most important themes in contemporary scholarship and its divergence from classical scholarship. The examination of modern and late modern friendship within this research project includes the period from the Enlightenment through the present day. The meaning of modern in such regard includes a reading and interpretations of select philosophers (Kant, Emerson and Kierkegaard). The meaning of late modernity mostly includes the contemporary academic scholarship on friendship, including the reference to Facebook friendship.

### 1.2.1. Modern idea of friendship - Immanuel Kant, Ralph W. Emerson, Soren Kierkegaard

Friendship in modernity receives different attention than it did in classical times. Except perhaps in the work of Michael de Montaigne,<sup>149</sup> Francis Bacon,<sup>150</sup> Immanuel Kant,<sup>151</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson,<sup>152</sup> and Soren Kierkegaard,<sup>153</sup> no large study on the theme of friendship in modernity has been undertaken. Most of the contemporary commentaries agree that a modern notions of friendship begin with Immanuel Kant's vision of morality.<sup>154</sup> The mainstream significance of modern friendship according to the *Encyclopedia of Ethics* is that modern friendship became a matter of personal choice and a private affair.<sup>155</sup> Others commentaries regarding the theme of modern friendship address similar concerns: modern friendship was an area of tension between the individual and community,<sup>156</sup> lacking the emphasis on the moral side of its virtue character.

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<sup>149</sup> Michael Montaigne, *On Friendship*, transl. M.A.Screech, (New York, Penguin Books, 2004).

<sup>150</sup> Francis Bacon, "Of Friendship" in *Philosophers on Friendship*, Michael Pakaluk, eds., (Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), pp. 200-208.

<sup>151</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, in *Ethical Philosophy*, transl. James W. Ellington, (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1983). See also Immanuel Kant, "Lecture on Friendship", in *Philosophers on Friendship*, Michael Pakaluk, eds., (Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Company, 1991): pp. 208-218.

<sup>152</sup> Emerson, R. Waldo, "Friendship", in *Philosophers on Friendship*, Michael Pakaluk, eds. (Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Company, 1991): pp.218-233.

<sup>153</sup> Soren, Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, eds.& transl. Howard V.Hong & Edna, H.Hong (Chichester, Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Badhwar, N., s.v. "Friendship." In *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed September 2019, from <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/friendship/v-1>. doi:10.4324/9780415249126-L028-1

<sup>155</sup> Cf. s.v. "Friendship." *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Becker, C. Lawrence and Charlotte B.Becker, eds., (London, St. James Press 1992): p. 390.

<sup>156</sup> Claudia Barrachi, "Friendship: A Place for the Exploration of Being Human", in *International Journal of Philosophical studies*, 25, 3 (2017): pp.320-335; See also Richard White, "Friendship: Ancient and Modern" *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 1, 153 (1999): p.19-34.



In outlining the perspective of modern friendship in a classic fashion, I will rely on the most recent anthologies and commentaries that includes the selected authors (Kant, Emerson and Kierkegaard), and will provide a brief summary of their most dominant ideas about friendship.

Kant's conception of friendship, as we know, was developed in his *Lectures on Ethics*<sup>157</sup> and his *Metaphysics of Morals*.<sup>158</sup> Although many commentaries on Kant's friendship agree on the basic complexity in Kant's idea of the morality of friendship, they also acknowledge increasing interest in Kant's account of friendship.<sup>159</sup> The basic idea of Kant's morality is that it removes the idea of friendship from the universal and located it into the private sphere. His friendship, as his morality, is characterized by his tendency to balance tension between duty and ideal, respect and love<sup>160</sup>. Kant's friendship, contrary to the classical notions, gives primacy to respect over love, as for him friendship can never match the idea of friendship as a maximum of mutual love. For him, friendship is an idea of reason, which can never be fully achieved in experience.<sup>161</sup> Kant was probably well aware of Montaigne's and Bacon's essays on friendship, as well as changes in cultural, scientific and economic upheavals within modern period that supplied his friendship with an historical character, but also distinguished his approach regarding the historicity of friendship from Aristotle. For instance, following Aristotle's threefold distinction of friendship, Kant's three types of friendship (as his motives of action of man are divided between self-love and love of humanity) are divided between principles of an *action* (needs, tastes and dispositions), instead of the objects of *love*, as this has been for Aristotle.<sup>162</sup> Similarly, according to Pakaluk's interpretation in his anthology on friendship, Kant's maxim that "a friend is another self" means that in the ideal friendship each friend loves the other as if he were himself, that means *in place of himself*,<sup>163</sup> instead of *seeing a friend as another self* (slightly different accent from Aristotle, as we could notice).

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Soren Kierkegaard, were two authors whose work on friendship after Kant received thoughtful consideration by scholars.<sup>164</sup> Emerson, whose work on friendship took the form of an essays, had philosophical and moral concerns. His essays on friendship were mostly a collection of his letters and reflection to his friends. The characteristics of his friendship, according to Pakaluk's anthology, are sincerity and tenderness. Friendship includes emotions,

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<sup>157</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics* ed. Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind., transl. Peter Heath, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>158</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary Gregor, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996); See also Immanuel Kant, "The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue", in *Ethical Philosophy*, transl. James W. Ellington, (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1983).

<sup>159</sup> See for instance Victoria S. Wike, "Kantian friendship: duty and idea," in *Diametros* 39 (2014): pp.140-153; See also Stijn Van Impe, "Kant on Friendship" in *International journal of arts & sciences*, 4, 3 (2011): p.127-139.

<sup>160</sup> Such perception of morality addresses development of distinction between concept of autonomy and vulnerability specifically addressed by Maillard. Cf. Nathalie Maillard, "Autonomie et Vulnérabilité", in *La vulnérabilité, Une nouvelle catégorie morale?* (Geneve, Labor et Fides, 2011)., pp.23-228.

<sup>161</sup> Van Impe, "Kant on Friendship," p.138,

<sup>162</sup> See for instance Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); See also Veltman, Andrea, "Aristotle and Kant on Self-Disclosure in Friendship," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 38 (2004): 225-239.

<sup>163</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Lectures on Friendship," in *The Other Selves, - philosophers on Friendship*, Michael Pakaluk, ed., p.208

<sup>164</sup> See Emerson, Ralph Waldo, „Friendship,“ in *The Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*, p.218-233

sentiments and feelings. This means that a friend is someone real, whose presence matters and with whom one can be sincere.<sup>165</sup> Part of his friendship is a reference to the Divine, and through this reference to the Divine friends are recognized as a gift. Friendship is something received that has already been given.<sup>166</sup>

Soren Kierkegaard, in a slightly different tone than Emerson, in his *Works of Love*<sup>167</sup>, presents his reflection on friendship. The reference to Kierkegaard's *Work of Love* has been given by Pakaluk and Meilaender and have been a subject of scholarly dispute between moral philosophers and theologians. One of the significant shifts in Kierkegaard's thought is that he distinguishes between friendship love and neighborly love, referring to friendship love as preferential and neighborly love as self-renouncing. Accordingly, defining friendship love as preferential does mean that friendship is privileged or prioritized love. Friendship's love, as *eros*, is not a true love as it implies admiration for the other, which leads towards selfishness as one love one's friends because of this admiration. It is a neighborly love that Kierkegaard acknowledged as free of such admiration, and that is in the fact a true love. The love for one's neighbor has Christian roots, and love of friendship and *eros* Kierkegaard associates with a pagan love. From this reason neighborly love is a different type of love as it is a spiritual love, where two spirits do not become a single self in a selfish way. Conversely, friendship love and erotic love are grounded in loving one another on the basis of likeness, character, occupation, education, so the two can selfishly become one self.<sup>168</sup> Kierkegaard elevates neighborly love over love for the beloved (friendship and erotic love) by prioritizing the ethical demand of one's neighborly love as an obligation higher than the demands of friendship. Friendship and erotic love are deprived of ethical tasks, as its only demand lies in a task towards one's beloved for whom one's friend is good fortune, if one has found it. Neighborly love is different and more challenging but is the only true and higher form of love that originates from Christianity, which is for Kierkegaard the only true ethic.<sup>169</sup> "Love to one's neighbor is therefore eternal equality in loving, but this eternal equality is the opposite to exclusive love or preference."<sup>170</sup> Accordingly, it is only one's neighbor that is one's equal. A friend is not one's equal, as s/he is beloved based on certain preferences such as education, culture, social status, etc.

#### 1.2.4. Contemporary academic scholarship on friendship

The revival in interest in friendship within contemporary scholarship emerged around 1970/80.<sup>171</sup> Although much of the scholarship still makes reference to Immanuel Kant and his concept of morality, the larger part is still characterized by the reference to Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Stoics, and other classical authors who wrote on friendship. Moreover, special themes concerning

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid. p. 225

<sup>166</sup> Ibid. p. 221

<sup>167</sup> Soren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, Howard V. Hong & Edna H. Hong eds. and transl. (Sussex, Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>168</sup> See Soren Kierkegaard, "You shall Love your Neighbor" in *The Other Selves - Philosophers on Friendship*, p: 244

<sup>169</sup> See Kierkegaard, "You Shall Love your Neighbor" p. 238-239. In addition, in a similar tone, concerns have been raised by Benedict XVI Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas est*. Namely, Pope Emeritus gave much attention to the distinction between *eros* and *agape* and little concerns has been raised regarding the notion *philia*.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p. 245

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Preston King and Heather Devere, *In Challenge to Friendship in modernity*, eds. (Ilford:Frank Cass & Co.Ltd., 2000).

friendship has been developed and analyzed within a certain academic context. Friendship was developed as a response to classical and modern ideas, but there has not been a concerned effort in comparison to classic forms of friendship. Friendship was, however, a category of interpretation within various contemporary discourses in academia. Although the meaning of contemporary friendship has been influenced by ancient and modern ideas, including the influence of a certain epistemology and hermeneutics of such ideas, the specificity and novelty peculiar to contemporary friendship is exactly this: its conceptualization and interpretation among different academic disciplines. My intention to look at approaches to friendship within different academic fields within modernity and late modernity, is assumption that it is difficult to grasp one particular universal definition of friendship. For instance, the meaning of a friend in sociology, despite sharing some basic features, differs from the meaning a friend in theology or philosophy, and vice versa. Not only does each discipline use its particular methodology, but it also develops its particular approach and concept of friendship.

In terms of original publications, a number of academic resources, commentaries, anthologies and collections have been reviewed.<sup>172</sup> However, as already noted, no original treatise exists on friendship within contemporary scholarship like those that may be found in the classical or even modern period. Among most decent contributions to the friendship analysis in modernity I will selectively mention three works. In *The Challenge to Friendship in Modernity*, Preston King and Heather Devere, bring some important insights about the theme of friendship and its implication for modern thought. In a slightly different manner, Steve Summers in *Friendship: exploring its implication for the Church in Postmodernity*, gives a wide-ranging perspective on friendship, putting it in dialogue with Christian thought.<sup>173</sup> Bernard Schumacher and Jean Christophe Merle, coming from the francophone context in their work on friendship, (*L'amitie*), include various perspectives on the theme of friendship from contemporary authors engaged in this discourse. Although many of these works consist of translated essays, it is nevertheless a valuable guide in assessing contemporary moral and anthropological concerns for friendship.

Finally, in order to grasp the rationale of contemporary friendship analysis in certain academic fields, in the following section I will briefly outline the threefold distinction between the contemporary definition of friendship within the academic fields of philosophy, sociology and theology. My interest is to look at emerging elements, and each author's specific reasoning with reference to friendship. As a summary of the most appealing ideas, I will examine the most revealing themes of friendship present within discussions.

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<sup>172</sup> See Preston King and Heather Devere, eds., "Introduction," in *The Challenge to Friendship in Modernity*.

<sup>173</sup> See Steve Summers, Introduction, in *Friendship: Exploring its implication for the Church in Postmodernity*, London, T&T Clark, 2011).

### 1.2.1.1. Academic field of philosophy

More than in the other academic fields, the reflection on the theme of friendship was among most dominant in philosophy and most particularly, moral philosophy. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* understands friendship as an activity central to the lives of humans, a distinctively personal relationship, mostly grounded in a concern on the part of each friend for the welfare of the other, for the other's sake, involving some degree of intimacy.<sup>174</sup>

A great number of modern and contemporary authors within the field of philosophy include commentaries on the subject of Greek and Roman friendship. Their commentaries make reference to foundational writings in classical era (Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca) where most of the significant terminology regarding the concepts of friendship has been clearly articulated (See for instance Hutter, 1987; Fraisse, 1974; Konstan, 1997; Price, 1989; Pakaluk, 1991; 1992; Cooper, 1980; Annas, 1977; Motto and Clark, 1993; Nussbaum, 1986;).<sup>175</sup> Most of those authors would stress that the modern idea of friendship in comparison to ancient friendship has been lost or sparsely covered by the literature, giving the governing priority to the market exchange as the major principle for the intellectual ordering of the contemporary political world.<sup>176</sup> Other authors have been interested instead in comprehensive commentaries of the patristic, early monasticism or medieval and modern eras references to friendship.<sup>177</sup>

Friendship was also reflected in relation to modern and contemporary anthropological and ethical upheavals in thought and in practice. Such concerns have been stressed in volume of Schumacher and Merle. Their work in this regard raises concerns for friendship and marital relationship (reference to Compton-Sponville, 91-113); the phenomenology of friendship (ref. Sokolowski, pp. 115-135); relation between friendship and altruism (ref. Slote, pp. 153-166); the engagement and task of friendship (Schumacher, pp. 167-179); and loss and absence of friendship (ref. Baier, 137-152). The third part of the work questions the ethical and social implications of friendship. This includes the relationship between friendship and commercial society (ref. Badhwar, 163-208); the importance of the other for the relationship of friendship (ref. Sherman, 209-231); and friendship and solidarity (ref. Gadamer, 233-241). In the following paragraph my concern is to present a few brief details concerning the work of Jacques Derrida, Lawrence Blum and Elisabeth Telfer in their reference to the theme of friendship. These authors brought a specific novelty on regard of contemporary friendship not only to the academic field of philosophy, but also in

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<sup>174</sup> Cf. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, s.v. "Friendship", <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/friendship/> [accessed 10, 2017].

<sup>175</sup> Besides the abovementioned, most cited authors, there are numerous significant contributors with the reference to ancient, or Greco-Roman friendship which I do not list above. The complete references of all the authors is listed in Bibliography

<sup>176</sup> For instance Neera Kapur Badhwar, "Friends as Ends in Themselves" in *International Phenomenological Society* 48,1 (1987): pp. 1-23.

<sup>177</sup> For discussion on most recent Augustine aspects of friendship see for instance, Tamer Nawar, 'Adiutrix virtutum: Augustine on friendship and virtue', in S. Stern-Gillet and G.M. Gurtler (eds.) *Ancient and Medieval Concepts of Friendship* (Albany, forthcoming). Daniel Schwartz, *Aquinas on Friendship*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2007). Nathan Lefler, *Theologizing Friendship. How amicitia in the Thought of Aelred and Aquinas Inscriptes the Scholastic Turn*, (USA, Pickwick Publication, 2014), etc.

reference to this particular project, why in my opinion is a valuable reason to have a closer look on it.

#### 1.2.1.1.1. Jacques Derrida - friendship, politics and difference

Much of the contemporary interest in friendship, both in philosophy and more broadly, has focused on Jacques Derrida's *Politics Of Friendship*.<sup>178</sup> In a very brief summary, I will indicate few important characteristics of Derrida's concept of friendship in his *Politics of Friendship*, pointing to its most appealing features. Derrida's *Politics of Friendship* on the one hand deals with the tension between the universal meaning of friendship and, on the other hand, the inquiry regarding the meaning of modern/postmodern binaries, oppositions of views and counterpoints within a word "political".<sup>179</sup> Although, as one would expect, much of Derrida's thought on friendship diverges from Aristotle's, it is actually Montaigne who appears as the primary source of reference for Derrida. Indeed, Derrida acknowledges Montaigne's pivotal role in developing the Western account of friendship.<sup>180</sup> Derrida's account of friendship traces the return of friendship from private to universal consideration. In other words, Derrida places friendship back into the intellectual agenda (both political and civil) as an attempt to disrupt Cartesian subjectivity, grounded on the priority of the ego.<sup>181</sup> He elaborates his concept by rethinking the meaning of the political in conjunction with friendship - a minor issue in his political philosophy. He attempts to put friendship back into the conception of modern political theory, referring to the ancient notion of a correlation between the idea of justice, friendship and *polis* where *philia* plays an organizing role in the definition of political experience.<sup>182</sup> Although many of Derrida's references are to ancient authors, he sees a problem with their idea that friendship is reduced to sameness and symmetry of virtue. He moves in the opposite direction, proposing a radical turn towards otherness, a term that he borrowed from both E. Levinas and P. Ricœur. He proposes a concept of good friendship that includes disproportion and demands certain rupture in reciprocity or equality, as well as the interruption of all fusion or confusion between two participants.<sup>183</sup> Appealing to Kantian philosophy in respect of the other (in a still quite conceptual form), he gives respect a privileged place within the friendship dyad, and also separates it from love as a feeling. The novelty of Derrida's thought lies in his proposal of asymmetrical heteronomy as a basic moral criterion for the future of politics, that, accordingly, is the future of friendship.

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<sup>178</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, transl. George Collins, (London/New York, Verso, 2005); first published as *Politique de l'amitié*, (Paris, Galilée, 1994).

<sup>179</sup> For more insights on the meaning of *difference*, see Jacques Derrida, "Difference.," *In Margins of Philosophy*. transl. Alan Bass, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982). 1-28.

<sup>180</sup> See, Derrida, "The Politics of Friendship," (1988): essay

<sup>181</sup> See Derrida Fred Dallmayr, in *The Challenge of Friendship for Modernity*, p.106

<sup>182</sup> See for instance a discussion with Jacques Derrida, Centre for Modern French Thought at University of Sussex, 1 December 1997; available from

<sup>183</sup> See Fred Dallmayr, "Derrida and Friendship" in *The challenge to friendship in modernity*, p. 123

#### 1.2.1.1.2. Lawrence A. Blum - friendship and altruism

Number of references in the account of contemporary friendship have been made to the work of Lawrence A. Blum. Laurence Thomas, for instance, in his entry on friendship in the *Encyclopedia of Applied Bioethics*<sup>184</sup> stresses concern as a key feature of friendship and its tension with morality. Thomas, trying to present the challenge of a contemporary notion of friendship, distinguishes between the rational concern for the other grounded on Kantian morality of the categorical imperative, and the personal concerns for the other based on act of trust and self-disclosure. In an attempt to convey the significance of the latter, he makes reference to contemporary philosopher Lawrence A. Blum.<sup>185</sup> Working in the field of moral philosophy, Blum stresses the importance of morality for friendship, indicating that modern moral philosophy does not show much familiarity with its focus on morally obligatory behavior.<sup>186</sup> But unlike those who aim to rehabilitate the concept of virtue within friendship, Blum stresses the importance of a morality based on an altruistic emotion. For Blum morality is based on beneficence that, in his approach, is congruent with altruism. In other words, friendship for him includes moral excellence expressed through altruistic emotion, but it (emotion) is not a moral legitimate itself. Blum's tendency is to restore altruistic emotion understood as human concerns, sympathy and compassion, and to demonstrate its moral significance for the relationship of friendship. Through the revival of altruistic emotion, he challenges Kantian morality grounded in the categorical imperative and partial (rationalistic) morality. I am not sure whether Blum succeeds in the revival of altruistic emotion within a concept of friendship, but his attempt to redirect attention to the value of friendship apart from a rationalistic morality was nevertheless a valuable exercise. Blum is neither Aristotelian nor a virtue ethicist. His approach begins with a modern criticism of friendship grounded in Kantian rational principles. The good wished for the other through altruistic emotion, concern for the friend, is based on an intrinsic moral worth, not only a motive of a good action. Moreover, the concerns for the other involved into the concept of altruistic emotion signifies something of one's moral character. The moral action of friendship is valued according to a good for the other out of altruistic emotion understood as concerns, instead of a duty and obligations, and instead of a sort of emotional sentiment. This does not mean that altruistic emotion distorts the moral relevance of justice within friendship or involves moral feelings and sentiments, but rather it redirects friendship's value to moral character, exemplified through altruistic concerns for the other.

In other words, the overall direction of Blum's thinking places a different emphasis on friendship morality. The partiality of altruistic emotion challenges the impartiality of universal principles of rational autonomy grounded into Kantian morality. Blum's reference to altruistic emotion shows the inadequacy of a strictly Kantian account of morality, but also reopens a possibility of ambiguity

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<sup>184</sup> Laurence Thomas, "Friendship," in Ruth Chadwick, eds., *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*, (San Diego: Academic Press, 1998): pp.323-333.

<sup>185</sup> Besides Thomas, see also Michael Slote, "Relations personnelles et altruisme moral," in *L'amitié – collection 'Ethique et philosophie Morale'*, eds. Jean - Christophe Merle and Bernard N. Schumacher, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2005):p.154-166; See also Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, s.v. friendship, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/friendship/>

<sup>186</sup> Lawrence A. Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul): p.67-83

in valuing the moral stance of such an altruistic emotion. This ambiguity, in my assessment, is on the one hand a problem of logical foundation of such emotions, which could lead towards radically subjectivist view of friendship, and on the other hand, shows the limits of altruism-based morality, as due to the subjective elements, including trust and self-disclosure, one can be never quite sure about the moral reliability and leverage of such a friendship. But isn't the lack of a strict moral principles a common characteristic in all human relationship?

My assessment of Blum's friendship is rather positive in a sense that, starting from a critique of Kantian morality, he indeed challenges the idea of a strictly rational morality, deprived of moral concern for the other, besides as a duty. For Kant, feeling and emotion are distinct from reason and are not morally reliable (e.g Carol Gilligan response to Lawrence Kohlberg moral reasoning).<sup>187</sup> Such reasoning is thus "blind" towards seeing altruistic emotion as a source of moral motivation inclined towards the good of another. In my assessment, Blum, by stressing the importance of the value of altruistic emotion, expressed by a concern for the other as morally appropriate in a way that is vital for the value of friendship, helps to recognize the other's need and other's responsiveness towards the such needs. However, his thought places friendship into a position of a moral subjectivism if it is only through altruistic emotion that the moral action of friendship could be attained.

#### **1.2.1.1.3. Elisabeth Telfer - significance of woman authors**

Much of the literature in the contemporary period has been characterized by the occurrence of the female character in friendship. This does not only mean that it is contrasted with the ancient and classical idea of male oriented friendship, but that within modern period there has been much literature exploring male-female friendship relationships, as well as woman-woman relationships in the ancient and classical period.<sup>188</sup> In this regard, the contemporary friendship has been richer in a way that it also permits female authors to write on friendship. Female philosopher Elisabeth Telfer deserves academic reference in Michael Pakaluk anthology of friendship. Although Telfer left particular uncertainties regarding the account of her understanding of importance of affection in loving one's friends for their own sake, she developed her own consideration of friendship. In her essay on friendship she addresses three issues: the nature of friendship, the importance of friendship for morality (friendship and duty), and, most importantly, the value of friendship. Most of her arguments relate to Aristotle's friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics*. In this regard, considering Aristotle's shared activities, she distinguishes between reciprocated services, mutual contact and joint pursuits, showing each to be a necessary condition of friendship.<sup>189</sup> As another novelty of her approach, Telfer distinguish between familial and friendship relationships, ascribing to the latter an element of choice. Her view on the importance of friendship is associated with friendship's

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<sup>187</sup> For more concerns on this topic see for instance Lawrence A. Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory," *Ethics*, 98,3 (1988) p.473-491.

<sup>188</sup> For more see for instance Marilyn Friedman, *What are Friends for? Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral Theory*, (Ithaca, N.Y, Cornell University Press, 1994).

<sup>189</sup> Cf. Elisabeth Telfer, "Friendship" in *Other Selves: Philosophy of Friendship*., M. Pakaluk eds. p.248; See also Elisabeth Telfer, "XIII - Friendship" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 71, 1(1971):223-242., [accessed March 2018 from <https://doi.org/10.1093/aristotelian/71.1.223>]

contribution to the well-being of society, where she sees the possibility of friendship contribution to justice.

#### 1.2.1.1.4. The scholars in-between moral philosophy and Christian ethics

There have also been scholars whose work on friendship covers many of Aristotelian ideas, but may not be in a strict sense Aristotelian. These, in my brief assessment, include S. Hauerwas and C.S. Lewis. Why I call them authors “in-between” is for the reason that many of their ideas about friendship integrate philosophical (Aristotelian) and Christian views of friendship, whether in a spiritual (Lewis) or moral and communitarian sense (Hauerwas). These scholars contribute much to the moral understanding of friendship, expressing interest in the formation of character. This, in their interpretations, does include virtue, but not virtue in a strict Aristotelian sense, but rather, virtue *applied* in regard of friendship from the perspective of contemporary morality, that according to their estimation requires the revival of friendship as a virtue. Moreover, their work offers a reversal or corrective of modern ideas of friendship, which were deprived of the involvement of personal (Lewis) social and political (Hauerwas) implication in understanding the nature of friendship. Therefore, their approach to friendship as a corrective of contemporary morality, rests upon a corrective of contemporary friendship which, in my opinion, incorporates their views of virtue in light of the Christian ideal of love and service. Avoiding a deeper analysis of their account of friendship, my aim is simply to provide a few general insights of their reflections on friendship.

C.S. Lewis, in his book *Four Loves*, problematizes love and friendship. Lewis perceives friendship as one of the four loves along with affection, *eros*, and charity. Lewis rightly observed that *eros* and affection, within modernity, have been overemphasized.<sup>190</sup> Alongside his interpretation of friendship as one of the four loves, Lewis pointed to the problem of a contemporary loss of interest in friendship, apart from for entertainment, and also to the popular notion of love as an object of romantic affection. According to him, love and friendship are not only interconnected, but, as distinct concepts, are interdependent.

Following such thinking, Lewis, like many other contemporary authors, stressed that friendship in modernity became marginal, almost close to an entertainment. This means that instead of having a spiritual or virtuous meaning, friendship became an expression of sentimental love and affection. Although this observation puts him close to the classical (Aquinas and Aristotle) view on friendship, Lewis slightly departs from it. His main task lies in his desire to rehabilitate friendship as a man’s natural love<sup>191</sup> for other human beings, supplying it with a spiritual meaning and distinguishing it from love based on affection (*eros*), and sacrificial love (*agape*). This is in contrast to Kierkegaard’s reflection on friendship love as preferential, citing *philia* or friendship love as the highest form of love, but in the sense that it is a need and necessity. Thus, his main

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<sup>190</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, (London: G. Bles, 1960): p. 69.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p.103



concerns focus on inadequacy of modern ideas to integrate a spiritual aspect and necessity of friendship.<sup>192</sup>

Stanley Hauerwas does not provide a straightforward commentary on the metaphysics of Aristotle's friendship in the way that, for instance, John Cooper does. He never wrote an explicit treatise on friendship. His reflections on friendship are found in his writing on happiness, virtue and the requirements of a Christian community, that is to be found in various journals articles<sup>193</sup> and book chapters<sup>194</sup> which have been written over the course of the past thirty years. My assessment of Hauerwas's contribution to the meaning of friendship starts with his theological conversation with ancient and modern ethics regarding his contribution to the field of Christian community. In this regard, Hauerwas provides a few interesting remarks on the necessity and purpose of friendship in line with the meaning of virtue.

The first aspect is that for Hauerwas friendship makes an important contribution to the development of character. This is where he acknowledges Aristotle's account of friendship. The second aspect is that for him friendship requires application in community life and vice versa. Or in other words, the understanding of friendship in this second aspect underpin a core of Christian community.

True friendship is a relationship in which one or the other can expose their needs without an invitation to be manipulated. And, of course, friendship is central for Christians because God befriended us.<sup>195</sup>

The reason that friendship matters for him as a virtue is related to the above statement: he wants to give primacy to the development of character, as friendship in the contemporary arena became manipulated and perverted from its true form. Situating his idea of Aristotelian thinking on friendship into a Christian perspective, in my view, means dealing with a *tension*, not only between Aristotle and Christian idea of friendship, but between ideas of hospitality and hostility, unity and difference, friends and strangers. The role of virtue in the framework of his friendship consists in the fact that it is Christianity that tells us what kind of a person we should be in order to be capable of happiness. But it is also a Christian friendship that took into account suffering and salvation. This means that virtue and happiness as described by Aristotle, is given in Christianity a new eschatological character, one related to salvation; and the degree of friendship that presupposes a high sense of equality is elevated by placing its value in growing towards unity. As he states:

As Christians we can risk the kind of partiality required by friendship. Friendship is not just an instance of some more universal love, it is the attention and regard for another precisely as they are other, as they are different, from ourselves.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 69-106.

<sup>193</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, "Happiness, the life of Virtue and Friendship: Theological Reflections on Aristotelian Themes," in *Asbury Theological Journal* 45/1 (1990): p.35-48.

<sup>194</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *Hanna's Child: A theologian's Memoir*, (Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010).

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Hauerwas, "Happiness, the life of Virtue and Friendship: Theological Reflections on Aristotelian Themes," p. 40-45.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. Ibid, p.49.

In other words, Christian life does not deny a moral significance to happiness, but through suffering and resurrection (salvation) offers a new approach to happiness, which is in turn related to friendship. Putting the idea of Aristotle's happiness into the Christian belief in a crucified God, Hauerwas challenges Christian ideas of friendship and the contemporary ideal of thinking about friendship based on the desire of a happy fulfilment. From such a standpoint friendship is a necessary way of living a faithful commitment to another person and the character of life itself; or put slightly differently, it is a way to live in the world truthfully and without illusion. For virtue to be exemplified requires others. It is an actual leading element towards unity, which is the reason he places it into the midst of a Christian community. Beginning from such an understanding, friendship is a way of living in a community. Being Christian entails being in a community of friends who together form one another into selves who reflect the image of their God, but it also means being in the world, which is often hostile towards such communitarian way of living the authentic ideal of friendship.<sup>197</sup> Such a way of living, described by Hauerwas, in my opinion, actualizes the tension not only as stated earlier, between Aristotle's virtue and Christian ideal, but the tension between love as *philia* and love as *agape*.

### 1.2.2. The academic field of Theology

That the theme of fellowship (either as friends or brothers) has been, and still remains, a core interest of contemporary theological discourses, has been evidenced by the recent *International Congress of the European Society for Catholic Theology* held in the 2017 in Strasbourg. The congress was about questioning the way a common human belonging was impacted by a crisis of contemporary global challenges and divisions among people.<sup>198</sup>

The academic field of theology has produced a number of commentaries and interpretations of friendship. No larger theme than friendship as existed in the patristic era (e.g. st. Augustine), late monasticism (e.g. A. Rievaulx), or in scholasticism (e.g. Aquinas) can be identified. Similar to the field of philosophy, a number of the contemporary perspective on friendship orbit around Aristotle's friendship.<sup>199</sup> Specific theological orientation involves the Bible: the Old Testament, (e.g. Exodus 33:11 address vertical dimension God-Moses; 1Sam, 20,1-42; horizontal dimension includes friendship between Jonathan and David; Proverbs, 17:17) and the New Testament (with the crux in the Gospel of John, 15:15) perspectives of friendship. Others' interpretations include

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches., *Christians among the Virtues: Theological Conversation with Ancients and Modern Ethics*. (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1997): p.81.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. *International Congress of the European Society for Catholic Theology* „Le défi de la fraternité „, <https://sites.google.com/site/congresaetcfraunce/programme>

<sup>199</sup> See for instance: Julia Annas, “Comments on J. Cooper.” In *Aristoteles' "Politik"*: Akten Des XI. Symposium Aristotelicum Friedrichshafen/Bodensee 25.8-3.9 1987, p.242-248; See also Broadie, Sarah Broadie, *Ethics With Aristotle* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993); John M. Cooper, “Aristotle on Friendship.” In *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, edited by Amélie Rorty, 301-340. Major Thinkers Series 2. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); “Aristotle's Ethics” available from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/aristotle-ethics/>; Lear, Gabriel Richardson, *Happy Lives and the Highest Good: An Essay on Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics"*, (New York, Princeton University Press, 2005); McKerlie Dennis, “Friendship, Self-Love and Concern for Others in Aristotle's Ethics.” In *Ancient Philosophy* 11 (1991): 85-101; Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), etc.

reference to fathers of the Church (e.g. st. Gregory of Nazianzen, st. Irenaeus of Lyons), Augustine's treatise on friendship, Aquinas's notion of charity and *amicitia*. Reference was also made to various monastic reflections on friendship: already mentioned A. Rievaulx and a mixture of a contemporary reflections on friendship including moral philosophy and ethics (e.g. C.S. Lewis, Moltmann, Hauerwas, de Graaff, etc.).

Concerning the mainstream thought on friendship in the field of theology, the *Encyclopedic Theological Dictionary*<sup>200</sup> explains friendship in its vertical (friendship with God) and horizontal (human fellowship) dimension, indicating that God's love for his people is expressed in His "willingness" to have friendship with a man. God reveals Himself through various images (God as mother, spouse, father). One of these images shows God as a friend. The *Dictionary* continues in pointing out the importance of friendship as a gift and given, and friendship love as gratuitous and benevolent love. The love of friendship consists in the realization of a person (before all as an image of God) and the continuation of a person's call to love benevolently and gratuitously, which is the reason this love is differentiated from a spousal or familial love. Many of the references, commentaries and discussions have looked at Augustine's and Aquinas's understanding of friendship. Although they spoke from different periods and different theological contexts, Augustine and Aquinas each, by their understanding of human person in relationship with God, broaden the philosophical discussion on friendship.<sup>201</sup> Much of the recent theological discussion on friendship, brotherhood and fellowship reflects Jurgen Moltmann's notion of open friendship. Moltmann did not write a specific treatise on friendship, but his ideas associated with the friendship have been part of his reflections and public conferences.<sup>202</sup> Moltmann, drawing on insights of the Christian concept of friendship argues that freedom, openness towards the other and empathetic love are the central elements of an "open friendship". God's friendship is characterized by openness towards his people. This follows his explanation on open friendship, which includes friendship with God and presupposes openness to the different other, which is the reason it is an essential precondition for the mainstream account of friendship.<sup>203</sup> Empathetic love as an element of such friendship not only serves as a tool to protect one from reducing the meaning of God to an established concept, but also as a means of acceptance of difference. Accordingly, as Moltmann repeats, open friendship is the place to find hope, and an antidote to uniformity of sameness. He situates open friendship in the central Church mission, pointing out its openness towards the different and the outcast (Mt, 25) as a sign of hope and acceptance.<sup>204</sup>

There were attempt by some theologians to give friendship a more public and political role in the ideas of the common good and political judgement, reflecting certain ideas of Aristotle's about the

<sup>200</sup> Aldo Starić, eds. *Enciklopedijski Teološki Rječnik*, s.v. "Prijateljstvo/transl.Friendship", O. van Asseldonk, Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2009.

<sup>201</sup> See for instance Marie Aquinas McNamara, *Friends and Friendship for St. Augustine*, (New York: Alba House, 1964); See also C.White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge, University Press, 1992).

<sup>202</sup> For instance, on the recent theological forum of *European Society of Catholic Theology* in Strasbourg in 2017 Jurgen Moltmann was one of the key speakers on the theme of brotherhood taking the more cosmic regard on common fellowship. Cf. <https://sites.google.com/site/congresatcfrance/programme>

<sup>203</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), p.119. See similar input in Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981).

<sup>204</sup> Similar elements addressed in Moltmann's friendship, can be found in Pope Francis's Encyclical, *Laudato Si*

*polis* and Augustine's *civitas dei* vs. *civitas terrana*. For instance, Guido de Graaff raises theological and ethical questions on these matters, developing his core argument around the political significance of friendship.<sup>205</sup> De Graaff discusses how friendship going beyond both political process (the friendship between Bonhoeffer and bishop) and similarity and attraction (John 15; Rom, 12). Methodologically, de Graaff put friendship in conversation with political communities, and perceived it as a feature of the community that supports the political processes, and as the beginning of political dynamics. His structure employs a variety of perspectives, drawing on Aristotle and Hannah Arendt, the notion of political judgment includes reference to Scriptural text in Jn, 15 and Rom, 12. His discussion on friendship raises the tension and creates a dichotomy between action and thought, giving privilege to the friendship narrative, the story of friendship, which often exceeds thoughts and transcends the nature of political judgement.

Like Hauerwas and C.S. Lewis, whose work on friendship explicitly or implicitly raises concern about the lack of consideration in modernity of the virtue character of a friendship, Paul Waddell, in a slightly different way, expresses similar ideas. In his essay *Friendship and the Moral Life*, Waddell based on his reflection of Aristotle's and Aquinas's ideas of friendship, leaves little doubt about the importance of friendship for morality. He sees within the relationship of friendship a creative community, arguing that through mutual dialogue and the responses of friends to each other, we have the potential to *create* one another.<sup>206</sup> The field of theology also reopens a discussion of friendship about people with profound physical and intellectual disability, mental illness, Alzheimer's and the elderly. Among the most cited authors on this topic is Hans Reinders,<sup>207</sup> who in his book constructs an anthropology for rethinking friendship. Swinton<sup>208</sup> has a slightly different perspective with his focus on people with mental illness and Alzheimer disease, and raises awareness of the importance of friendship for the re-humanization of the person. Reimer Grieg<sup>209</sup> took Jesus's foot-washing and the friendship in L'Arche communities' narrative as the key to overcoming the medicalizing objectification of people with disabilities within contemporary bioethical discourses. The importance of their work on friendship lies in its ability to elucidate the humanity of people with disability through the relationship of friendship. It also sets out a challenge for theology, Christian ethics and contemporary culture, to rethink subjectivity and end bias towards and objectification of the disabled.

### 1.2.3. The academic field of sociology

The last three decades of research in sociology has been impacted by increasing interest in the study of friendship. The contemporary academic field of sociology interchangeably uses the theoretical (philosophical, sociological and ethical) and empirical (socio-psychological) method in examining the social relationships of friendship. Friendship is recognized by the mainstream

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<sup>205</sup> Guido De Graaff, *Politics in Friendship: A Theological Account*, (London/New York, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014): p. 335

<sup>206</sup> Paul J. Waddell, *Friendship and the Moral life*, (Indiana, University of Notre Dame, 1989): p.161.

<sup>207</sup> Hans Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship: Profound disability, Theological Anthropology and Ethics*, 2008.

<sup>208</sup> Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person. Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems*, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2000)

<sup>209</sup> Jason, R. Greig, *Reconsidering Intellectual Disability: L'Arche, Medical Ethics, and Christian Friendship*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015).

sociology research as a type of informal relationship, often contrasted with other informal relationships such as family ties and marriage.<sup>210</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*<sup>211</sup> describes friendship as a relationship that includes some type of reciprocity and obligation among individuals that are not related by family ties. The systematic study on friendship in sociology includes socio-psychological implications of friendship formation and development (particularly in childhood), and the patterns of sociability and its focus on class differences.<sup>212</sup>

The focus of sociological research implies various perspective and study groups. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* distinguish between seven different areas of applied research: the study of friendship during the later years; friendship and its interpersonal aspects; friendship within social inequality and social change; structural and contextual characteristics and effects on friendship; friendship of adolescence; friendship in childhood; friendship of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons.<sup>213</sup> A number of sociologists refer to the ancient or modern philosophical tradition regarding the conceptual meaning of friendship. Sociologist Roy Pahl referring Georg Simmel on the sociology of relationships, support the statement that the ideal of friendship was received from antiquity and the moral dimension of contemporary friendship has been lost due to a lack of trust as a common factor of late modernity.<sup>214</sup> His ideas were later supported and developed by the research Spencer and Pahl<sup>215</sup> whose study of friendship expressed merely a theoretical perspective. Among innovative studies on friendship, besides Spencer and Pahl, the sociological scholarship draws on David Morgan<sup>216</sup> and Allan Graham<sup>217</sup>. Although much of the sociological research is in fact theoretical, their method is distinct from the methods used in moral philosophy or theology. Sociologists express their interest in looking at social, cultural and economic factors in creating friendships. They also look at role of biological and sociological identities such as gender (masculinity and femininity), class, age, ethnicity and emotions.<sup>218</sup> Instead of taking a conceptual approach to friendship, a number of sociologists are inclined towards an empirical study of the interactions between friends that involves the study of emotions and class differences. Moreover,

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<sup>210</sup> See for instance Sociological Research Online available at <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/cgi-bin/perfect/search/search.pl>

<sup>211</sup> John Scott and Gordon Marshall, *The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, s.v. „Friendship“ (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>212</sup> See John Scott and Gordon Marshall eds. *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, s.v. “Friendship,” (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009): p.263.

<sup>213</sup> For more on these subjects see George Ritzer, eds. vol. IV, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, s.v. “Friendship,” (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007).

<sup>214</sup> Ray Pahl "Towards a More Significant Sociology of Friendship." *In European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes De Sociologie / Europäisches Archiv Für Soziologie* 43, no. 3 (2002): p. 410-23. available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23998868>.

<sup>215</sup> Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>216</sup> Cf. David Morgan, *Acquaintances: The Space Between Intimates and Strangers*, (Berkshire, McGrawHill Open University Press, 2009);

<sup>217</sup> Allan Graham, *Friendship: Developing a Sociological Perspective*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1989).

<sup>218</sup> See for instance Adams R. & Allan G. (eds.) *Placing friendship in context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); See also Holmes, M., “Emotional reflexivity in contemporary friendships: Understanding it using Elias and Facebook etiquette,” in *Sociological Research Online*, 2011, [accessed November 2017, available from <https://doi.org/10.5153%2Fsr.2292>]; See also Graham Allan, *Friendship: Developing a Sociological Perspective*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1989).

the value of such research has been expanded within the study of positive psychology, pointing to friendship's contribution to quality of life and well-being. This is to say that within sociology, the emphasis is not merely on moral dimension of friendship, but on examining the interaction among friends, pointing out the involvement of emotions and how friendship is crucial in constructing of one's identity.<sup>219</sup> In this regard friendship was perceived as one dimension of social *informal* relationship, or an interpersonal relationship characterized by varying degrees of equality, mutual good will, affection and assistance.<sup>220</sup> Sociologist also discuss friendship as a relationship of "informal sociability," as well as, a relationship of equality. The notion of equality, however, resonates differently when it is ascribed to a friendship as an interpersonal relationship, or as a relationship that renders social inequality and social change. In discussing five characteristics of friendship (voluntary, personal, mutual, affecting), William K. Rawling emphasized that friends try to treat each other as equal. This meaning of equality goes beyond social statuses and personal attributes.<sup>221</sup> Allan Graham refers to the meaning of equality differently. He points to a cultural understanding of friendship based on equality. This equality includes equal standing, reciprocity, sharing similar interests and activities, as well as economic and social equality.<sup>222</sup> Within realm of the sociology and psychology of human relationships, the emphasis was not only on friendship as a virtue, but as a relationship involving sentiment, perceiving human being as emotional. This is not to say that friendship was over-sentimentalized, but that the involvement of emotions in a human relationship was of an import in socio-psychological research. For instance, much empirical research on friendship has shown that having friends results in some positive feelings such as joy, happiness, serenity, or fulfillment.<sup>223</sup> On the other hand, research has also shown, as already indicated in the second chapter referring to people with disabilities, that the absence of friends and lack of friendship can cause negative feelings (negative perception of self-worth, loneliness, anxiety, isolation). The loneliness caused by a lack of friendship has been particularly evident in Disability Studies discourses. Those Disability Studies scholars, such as Tom Shakespeare for instance, whose approach to friendship is theoretical have shown particular interest in the sociological research on friendship referencing Pahl, Bell & Coleman,<sup>224</sup> etc. In this regard friendship was a significant topic of intersectionality between the academic field of disability and sociology.

Although various research methods within the field of sociology brought valuable results in discovering friendship, including a variety of parameters that the study of philosophy and

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<sup>219</sup> See for instance research of Jerome, D., "Good company: The sociological implication of friendship." In *Sociological Review*., 32 (1984): p. 696-718.

<sup>220</sup> See Rawlins William, K., *Friendship matters: communication, dialectics, and the life course*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2017).

<sup>221</sup> Rawlins, William, K. *The compass of Friendship: Narratives, Identities and dialogues*, (Thousand Oaks, Sage, 2009).

<sup>222</sup> See Graham, *Friendship*, 1989.

<sup>223</sup> See for instance Seligman, M.E.P., *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*, (New York, Free Press, 2011); See also Cohen, S., „Social Relationship and health.,“ In *American Psychologist*, 59, 8 (2004):p. 676-684.; Lunskey, Y.& Benson, B.A., „Association between perceived social support and strain and positive and negative outcomes for adults with mild intellectual disability.“ In *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 45 (2001):p.106-114.

<sup>224</sup> Sandra Bell & Simon Coleman eds. *The Anthropology of Friendship*, (Oxford, Berg Publisher, 1999).

theology was lacking, the approach to friendship taken by sociologists lacks a precise and concise definition, and precision in reference to its constitutive elements. As a number of sociologists have indicated, there is a persistent need for a more detailed sociological study of friendship, including the qualitative and ethnographic research on the theme of friendship.

#### **1.2.4. The brief insights into the correlation of themes**

The thematic analysis of the study of friendship in modernity and contemporary scholarship sets forth many different ideas. In the next section my aim is to give a brief summary of the connection of emerging themes in the three above-mentioned academic fields: philosophy, theology and sociology. Besides the summary in reference to these fields, the correlation also adds my attempt of a separate analysis.

There is a particular characteristic and emphasis peculiar of each of academic fields. Within the field of philosophy, friendship was investigated as a part of the critique on the dominant universalistic moral theories of deontologist (Kantianism) and utilitarianism, as well as, the overall idea of emotivism dominant in late modernity.<sup>225</sup> Lawrence Blum's and Derrida's work on friendship in the academic field of philosophy, including the emergence of women's interpretations are good examples of such critiques. With the increasing development of psychology and sociology, friendship gained a new perspective - it was not only regarded as a moral concept, but as an important element for a personal growth, self - esteem and personal well-being. In this regard, it was not merely important to rethink friendship conceptually as a moral category, it was important to look at elements that impact friendship's motivation, formation, development and maintenance. These are the areas that stresses attention upon the importance on friendship with its practical, contextual and empirical foundation, the involvement of emotions and personal elements. The academic field of theology could not escape the modern or late modernity cultural upheavals and influences either. Despite the divisions influenced by global secular liberalism<sup>226</sup> and decreasing numbers of the faithful, modern and contemporary theological approaches to friendship had some positive characteristics. As noted within contemporary theological scholarship, the attachment to a personal God showed the contemporary Christian desire for belonging with God in a responsive and trusting communion (reception of God's gifts and "person"). Moreover, theological scholarship integrates horizontal and vertical approaches to friendship. As a means to understand and reconstruct friendship, theological scholarship integrates Scriptural and philosophical insights into its friendship framework. Much of the literature is, however, marked by tensions in opinion between different approaches to morality, the nature of human person, the notions of love and charity, belonging, solidarity, Christian community, etc.

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<sup>225</sup> See for instance Diane Jeske, "Friendship, Virtue, and Impartiality, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57, 1 (1997): p. 51-72.; See Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue*, 1981.; See also Sandra Lynch, *Philosophy and Friendship*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

<sup>226</sup> Cf. Vuk, Martina. "Vjera i globalizacija. Teologija u dijalogu / Studijski dani Centra za vjerska i društvena pitanja (Center for Faith and Society) Sveučilišta u Fribourgu, Švicarska, od 10. do 12. lipnja 2015.." *Nova prisutnost* XIII, br. 2 (2015): 284-290. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/142240>

The brief review of the intersectionality of mentioned authors and their reflections upon the theme of friendship indicates that philosophy and theology share more common elements with each other than they do with sociology, but sociology is closer thematically to philosophy than it is to theology. Despite sharing the same anthropological basis of friendship, the reason of this divergence I would ascribe to the fact that much of the friendship analysis in sociology departs from empirical data, whereas the field of philosophy and theology is rather oriented towards the metaphysical and conceptual aspects of friendship rationale, and thus sometimes lacking the evidence of a practical insights. The overall collection of themes among contemporary authors demonstrated *tension* in thinking about friendship. These includes tension in thinking on friendship as something related to virtue and/or emotion (Blum, Lewis); the tension between those who think about friendship as a personal /intimate matter and those who thinks about friendship as communitarian or political matter (Hauerwas, Blum, Moltmann). There is also a tension between those who thinks about friendship as particular interruption including difference and those who thinks about friendship in a more universal terms (Derrida, Moltmann, Hauerwas). The very correlation of themes following such tension center on: friendship's importance for moral growth (philosophy); the meaning of *philia* (philosophy and theology); the correlation and tension between love as *eros*, *philia* and *agape* (moral philosophy, theology); the place of virtue in friendship (philosophy, ethics); the role of emotion in the relationship of friendship (sociology, psychology); friendship and its connection to the stability of the political community (philosophy); friendship as shared activities, including reciprocity, the meaning of well-wishing (benevolence) and flourishing; woman-woman and woman-man friendship (philosophy, theology, sociology). The question about the correlation between love and friendship, or, more precisely, the meaning of love for the meaning of friendship, is expressed through the correlation between the meanings of *philia*, *philos*, *agape* and *amicitia*. Those concepts have been continuously discussed among most prevailing contemporary authors regarding the scope of moral philosophy and Christian ethics.<sup>227</sup> Additionally, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique D'Ethique Chretienne* (cf. amitié) pointed to the importance of such discourses in its correspondence to the meaning of friendship's bond.<sup>228</sup> A number of authors in the field of philosophy, addressing Greco-Roman friendship, agree that the terms *philia* and *amicitia*, as well as, *philia* and *philos* itself, have been misinterpreted or have lost their full proper meaning within the contemporary discussions of friendship. They suggest that the ancient and classic interpretation of the terms gives a better articulation of their meanings.<sup>229</sup> Konstant argues that the term *philos* varies between ancient and classical theories, signifying something close to the term "dear" in former, and something of a more intimate meaning in a latter. Moreover, accordingly, the problem of such a biased interpretation actually shows the limitations of a modern languages' ability to grasp the proper meaning of the ancient terminology

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<sup>227</sup> e.g. A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989); Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, (London., SPCK, 1953); Gilbert Meilaender, *Friendship: A study in Theological Ethics*, (Notre Dame IN, Notre Dame University Press, 1981).

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Bruno Godefroy and Pauline Sabrier, s.v. « Amitié » in *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique D'Ethique Chretienne*, 122-130

<sup>229</sup> See for instance, David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997); Leroy S. Rouser, ed. *The Changing Face of Friendship*, (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); McIntyre, *After Virtue*, 1984.



when applied into a modern context, which may be a reason for the confused meanings used in modern friendship terminology.<sup>230</sup>

Besides abovementioned theological works, there have been many discussions among theologians and philosophers looking at the relation between *agape* and *philia*. They on the one hand point to the eclipse of the meaning of *philia* due to the over-emphasis of love as *agape*<sup>231</sup>; others, such as Kierkegaard, point to the love of friendship as preferential, meaning it would be unjust not to give preference to the *agape* as the most valuable way for expressing love for another person.<sup>232</sup> Following similar discussion, from the practical point of view, (field of sociology) one of the reasons that many scholars ascribe to the real decline of friendship in modernity is the elevated interest in romantic unions (both heterosexual or homosexual partnership) and marriage. This on the one hand implicitly reflects the often-misunderstood conception of love, and on the other hand sees friendship relationships as private and individual, rather than public or of social importance. A number of common commentaries from the field of philosophy, theology and sociology, each from their own perspective highlight the decline of moral interest in the structure of friendship or moral character of friends. Sociologists and those of a similar academic interest ground their method in empirical research, such as developmental psychology, do question the meaning of and need for friendship, friendship formation and maintenance, shared activities, measurement of friendship for quality of life, etc. Considering its moral aspect, the friendship in such regard, has been perceived as important element for the well - being, trustworthiness and self - esteem. Sociologist Roy Pahl asserts that the problem of contemporary friendship is a lack of trust. Pahl sees the problem of trust like this: on the one hand, contemporary man has a lot to hide, and on the other hand, the dominant idea of contractual trust. He strongly asserts that friendship transcends the notion of contractual trust and the trust within the relationship of friendship must be of a different kind.<sup>233</sup> For him, to trust others is more important than to trust societies or organizations, which is the opposite of the contemporary notion of trust. As he notes:

It is strange that political and social theorists have not seen the need to explore the nature of trust empirically by focusing on the deepest and closest forms of friendship. Arguably, this is the locus *classicus* for the exploration of trust in contemporary society, since social relations and the obligations inherent in them are mainly responsible for the production of trust.<sup>234</sup>

From the theological point of view, the moral dimension of friendship consist of impacting moral growth. Friendship is an important moral and ethical category, that shows that the greatest ethical dilemmas are not only those that questions on how to prevent evil and maximize good. Friendship as an ethical category must engage with the task in shifting our morality from ethics of doing

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<sup>230</sup> See Konstan David, "Greek Friendship," in *American Journal of Philology*, 117, 1 (1996a), pp.71-94.

<sup>231</sup> Gilbert Meilaender, *Friendship: A study in Theological Ethics*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 1984. Additionally, similar, but the slightly different observations can be found in the more formal theological discussion of *agape* in the Benedict XVI Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*. Frequently within this document the love of *agape* as sacrificial love dominates the importance of love as *philia*. The Encyclical does not give much attention to *philia* as a friendship love, except in reference to *agape* as the love for one's neighbor.

<sup>233</sup> Ray Pahl, *On Friendship*, (Cambridge, Polity, 2000): pp. 63-65.

<sup>234</sup> Pahl, *On Friendship*, p.66.

towards the ethics of being. Friendship is the place where achieving good can be possible on behalf of how one should live, instead of what one should do. Another theme often discussed on regard to moral dimension of friendship in academic field of philosophy and theology is the implication for virtue. Those immersed in ancient (Aristotelian) friendship, such as Hauerwas and MacIntyre, would associate the decline of moral involvement of friendship with the decline of appreciation for a virtue. By their emphasis on virtue they show the contrast between contemporary friendship's emotional focus with an approach that is more interested in a social or political relationship.<sup>235</sup>

Among other themes developed in late modernity are the possibility of friendship between men and women, and implications of female scholars discussing friendship. The occurrence of female friendship helped to overcome the bias of hierarchical differences between men and women's friendship, as well as, the distinction between better and worse persons. The occurrence of scholarly discourse on friendship between people with and without disabilities continue in overcoming the hierarchical differences based on cognitive capacities. In a particular way such friendship contributes to overcome the barriers of fear and prejudices often twisted in friendship between people with and without disabilities and can be a way towards creating a greater social justice. This is to say that friendship in modern and contemporary discourses is not determined by straightforward demands of two persons of great moral character. Despite the classical norm of the idea of friendship based on self-sufficiency, self-mastery and self-dependency, modern friendship is not free from such ideas. Although modern and contemporary friendship includes persons of different moral characters, the role morality plays within the conception of such friendship remain problematic to bear full univocal understanding. These leave us with a further question whereas friendship remains a particular moral obligation and duty related to a social justice discourse? Or it is a matter of living experience and intuition? But which social justice and whom living experience in such regard reckon as morally valuable?

### **1.2.5. Facebook Friendship**

Unlike classical friendship, which were in essence dialogical, the concept of friendship within modernity and late modernity has been subject to particular conceptual fluctuations in interpretation. Not only has the meaning of friendship changed and become virtual and disembodied, but the notion of the *other* changes as well. Modernity and late modernity brought particular shifts in understanding friendship. This does not mean that modern friendship in comparison to classical friendship is false. It just means that the full meaning and richness of friendship is pushed to the margins. For instance, instead of looking at friendship as something close to the meaning of virtue, in terms of its contribution to the moral and personal growth, there is a practical problem with friendship on such basis. This I see in relocation of friendship's value from the quality to the quantity of friends, from the pursuit of moral growth to emotional satisfaction or "feeling good," from flourishing based on mutual interdependency and the

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<sup>235</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p.156; See also Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, *Christian among the Virtues: Theological Conversation with ancient and Modern Ethics*, 1997, p.61-69.

discovery of one another's true selves, to flourishing in terms of a consumerist self-dependent pursuit of well - being. Such characteristics contribute to a conceptual problem of friendship's embodiment and historicity. Friendship in contemporary analysis has been extended by the emergence of Facebook friendship. Facebook friendship has been one of the greatest achievements of late modernity and has brought many advantages and disadvantages in terms of social networking and global connectedness. It combines the particular late modernity idea of friendship and its virtual components. The increasing empirical research on this particular subject comes from the social sciences and psychology. Sociological research online<sup>236</sup> is a relevant source of reference in this regard. The academic field of developmental psychology explores the influence of online social networks upon personality development. However, other areas of academic research, such as theology and moral philosophy, take little interest in exploring the online friendship.

In this section, my interest is to briefly reflect upon the specific impact Facebook has upon the conceptual framework of contemporary friendship and related friendship networks. I will start from a theological perspective and my own assessment of emerging online social networks, keeping in background classical and modern conceptions of friendship.

#### **1.2.6.1. Facebook friendship network: disembodied human relationship lacking historicity?**

I assume that if we ask the average teenage or young person (e.g. approx. population age 13-25) about their opinion on friendship, their answer, as consumers, may be straightforwardly related to Facebook friendship.

The *Pew Research Center* in survey findings in 2014 on the tenth anniversary of Facebook, describes Facebook as a dominant social networking platform.<sup>237</sup> According to *Facebook* statistics, the number of Facebook user in September 2018 reached 2.234 billion.<sup>238</sup> Opinions about Facebook as a social networking platform for friendship vary between those who sees Facebook as a useful, and those who think that it can be a detrimental for the human well-being and socio-emotional esteem. For instance, the research of Parks, MR and Floyd, K. (1996)<sup>239</sup> shows that internet communication with particular reference to friendship has a negative effect on our social life, as it causes impersonality, hostility, and a nonsocial orientation. Additionally, the research of Lea, Spears and Myers had shown, that internet social networking provides opportunities for false self-presentation and identity manipulation.<sup>240</sup> Others, such as John A. Bargh and Katelyn Y. A.

<sup>236</sup> For more on this subject see for instance <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/cgi-bin/perlflect/search/search.pl>; See also Graham Allan, "Personal Relationship in Late Modernity," in *Personal Relationships*, 8 (2001):p.325-339. accessed from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2001.tb00043>.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/03/what-people-like-dislike-about-facebook/> [accessed December, 2018]

<sup>238</sup> See <https://expandedramblings.com/index.php/by-the-numbers-17-amazing-facebook-stats/> [accessed January 2019]

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Malcolm R. Parks & Kory Floyd, "Making Friends in Cyberspace" *Journal of Communication*, 46, 1,(1996): pp. 80-97., [accessed December 2018, from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1996.tb01462.x>]

<sup>240</sup> Lea, M., O'Shea, T., Fung, P., & Spears, R., "Flaming" in *computer-mediated communication: Observations, explanations and implications*. In *Contexts of computer-mediated communication*, ed. Lea, M., (London:

McKenna demonstrate positive and beneficial impacts of virtual networking on personal development,<sup>241</sup> consisting in liberating the interpersonal relations from the confines of physical locality and thus creating opportunities of a new personal relationships and communication. Additionally, the research of Bruckman,<sup>242</sup> Bock,<sup>243</sup> Myres,<sup>244</sup> and Kanaley,<sup>245</sup> finds that social networking online, creates an “identity workshop” in which people learn and test social skills, overcomes the shyness they feel in face-to-face interaction and help those who are isolated or disabled in developing their social relationships.

Assuming that the overall idea about connecting via social media is beneficial, in my opinion, means giving people a sense of belonging and connectedness. Moreover, there are no limits on the number of “friends” we can talk to, and it is also a time-consuming means of forming friendships, compared to more natural means.<sup>246</sup> This goes hand in hand with the fact that most of us today do have Facebook. However, Facebook friendship express the image of culture in which we are living: global interconnectedness, fast telecommunication, false presentations of oneself, imaginary life of the other, personal contact measurement via cyber communication, global audience and administration, instead of a true “face to face” meeting. The motivation, formation and even narrative often appear to be missing elements of such relationships. Facebook friends, and any other social media with a similar agenda, are, by my estimation, networks of disembodied human relationships lacking historicity. By this I mean not only that Facebook friendships are disembodied, lacking the face to face contact, but they are less intimate, unrealistic, lacking the other person’s presence.<sup>247</sup> All this contributes that the word *friend* becoming over-popularized and even over-consumed in that everybody is potentially called a friend, without acknowledging its proper meaning. As a social networking platform Facebook friendship put modern man in an ambiguous social situation: the simultaneous existential exchange of isolation and presence between the other and the self. There is a virtual feeling of connectedness, but not a real presence.

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Harvester-Wheatshaf, 1992): pp. 89-112. See also Myers, D., “Anonymity is part of the magic:” Individual manipulation of computer-mediated communication contexts., in *Qualitative Sociology*, 10, (1987): p. 251-266 [accessed December 2018 from <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988989>]

<sup>241</sup> See for instance John A. Bargh & Katelyn Y. A. McKenna., “The Internet and Social Life” in *Annual Review of Psychology*., 55 (2004): p. 573-590.; John A. Bargh., “Beyond Simple Truths: The Human-Internet Interaction” in *Journal of Social Issues*, 58, 1 (2002): p. 1-8.

<sup>242</sup> Bruckman, A. *Identity workshop: Emergent social and psychological phenomena in text-based virtual reality*. Unpublished manuscript, (Cambridge, MA., M.I.T. Media Laboratory, 1992) Available from <http://media.mit.edu/pub/MediaMOO/Papers/identity-workshop>.

<sup>243</sup> Bock, P. “He’s not disabled in cyberspace.” In *Seattle Times* 2 (1994): A1-2.

<sup>244</sup> Myers, D. ““Anonymity is part of the magic”: Individual manipulation of computer-mediated communication contexts.” In *Qualitative Sociology*, 10, (1987): 251-266.

<sup>245</sup> Kanaley, R. “Seizing an on-line lifeline: The disabled and the net.” In *Philadelphia Inquirer* 8 (1995): A1., A8

<sup>246</sup> See for instance, R. I. M. Dunbar, N. D. C. Duncan & D. Nettle., “Size and structure of freely forming conversational groups.” in *Human Nature*, 6, 1 (1995): pp 67-78 [accessed December 2018] from <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02734136>.

<sup>247</sup> See for instance Myers, D. “Anonymity is part of the magic:” Individual manipulation of computer-mediated communication contexts, In *Qualitative Sociology*, 10 (1987): p. 251-266.

Facebook friendship creates a culture of having a friend, without knowing how to be a true friend. The formation, shared activities and face to face reciprocal exchanges, as well as, embodiment that includes affection and facial expressions are replaced by its virtual forms. The “likes” replaces affections (human touch and emotions) and create inclusion or exclusion; “celebrity” images become representative of ordinary reality; the number of friends and comments are determinative for one’s value; personal appearance is managed through offline and online statuses. The modern man, as sociologist Pahl says, is hiding or is afraid of being the true self. And Facebook is a great platform to support this type of self-expression. Facebook friends contributes to one’s self esteem in that the value of a person, instead of depending on people themselves, depends on people liking what one posts, or is determined by the number of likes. This means that a great number of likes or a great number of friends can create positive feelings for oneself, and maybe a positive image among other based on the number of likes and number of friends one has. On the other hand, a low number of likes or Facebook friends can lower people’s self-esteem. What I want to convey here is that Facebook could be one useful tool to manage false inclusion, or on the other hand bring about exclusion. With modernity we can also notice a distinction between qualitative and quantitative friendship. There is an obvious difference in how friendship is measured. But having a lot of friends does not mean having good reliable friends. This is again evident in relation to Facebook’s friendship platform. People with a large number of likes or friends sometimes portray a false image of themselves and their role as a friend. The number of one’s Facebook friends could say that the person is highly popular or desired as a friend. Whereas the lower number of friends and likes could send to a public a negative image of a person’s social transparency.

Thus, the value of the person is measured according to the number of friends and likes on Facebook. In other words, the quantity of friendships becomes more important than their quality. The collection of friends on Facebook becomes similar to accumulation, frequently without a real reason. Dunbar’s research, conducted in 1993 on animals and primates, demonstrated cognitive limits in individuals’ brains on a number of social networks.<sup>248</sup> The research that later became applied in psychology and sociology determined a number of hundred and fifty (called Dunbar’s number) as an average number of social networks friends per individual. Similarly, the research conducted later in 2016 on the constraints that limit the size of offline social networks concluded that face to face encounter and contact are preferable and prevent natural friendship decay in comparison to online friendship, which currently increasing, but departing from being natural.<sup>249</sup>

Thus, in a nutshell, contrary to Facebook friendship, the true and real friendship is not about liking and having a great number of friends. It is important, indeed, but is rather an illusory friendship,

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<sup>248</sup> Dunbar, R. I. M., “Co-evolution of neocortical size, group size and language in humans.” in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16, 4 (1993): p. 681-735 [accessed January 2018 from <http://www.uvm.edu/pdodds/files/papers/others/1993/dunbar1993a.pdf>]. See also Dunbar R.I.M., “The social brain hypothesis.” in *Evolutionary Anthropology*, 6 (1998):p.178-190.

<sup>249</sup> Dunbar R. I. M. “Do online social media cut through the constraints that limit the size of offline social networks?” published by *Royal Society Open Science* [accessed December 2018 from <http://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.150292>].

which can be very ambiguous in portraying the notion of otherness and the true value on the meaning of friendship.

#### 1.2.6.2. What about people with disabilities?

There are those people who freely choose not to have Facebook, but there are also those who are unable or are not in position to create an account by themselves without the assistance. Although many people with impairment or physical disability do use Facebook, people with intellectual disability or profound intellectual disability do not have this option. They are excluded from social network for mainly two reasons. One, as already mentioned is that they may need assistance to create an account. Another reason is that Facebook is standardized according to so called “normal” settings, which means that many people with intellectual disability are faced with the impossibility to adapt to such settings.

Recent research concerning the foregoing subject evidences a variety of opinions regarding people with disability using Facebook. First of all the research of Bricout, & Baker, in 2010, exploring the concerns of disability community report that people with disability are not being included in research conducted by the *Pew Research Center*.<sup>250</sup> Secondly, the empirical research of Shpigelman and Gill,<sup>251</sup> whose research mostly includes people with physical or mobility disability, demonstrates that on the one hand people with disabilities find Facebook a useful tool in managing inclusion and belonging, but on the other hand, they (people with disabilities) reported concerns about security and discrimination (because of disability).

This is consistent with the previously mentioned study of Bock, that demonstrated that people with disability found Facebook to be a useful and accessible tool in managing inclusion, and an opportunity to connect with a non-disabled and disabled user. The impact of the socio-emotional benefits of Facebook upon people with disabilities has been also evident in study of Kim & Lee<sup>252</sup>, and Stainfield et al.<sup>253</sup>

The negative outcomes of Facebook for people with disability have been addressed in study of Haller<sup>254</sup> Taraszow et al.,<sup>255</sup> which reported that there is consistent difficulty in understanding and

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<sup>250</sup> Jolita Viluckiene, “The Relationship between Online Social Networking and Offline Social Participation among People with Disability in Lithuania” in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 185 (2015): p.453-459. [accessed January 2019 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.413>].

<sup>251</sup> Carmit-Noa Shpigelman & Carol J. Gill., “Facebook Use by Persons with Disabilities,” In *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*., 19, 3 (2014):p. 610-624., [accessed December 2018] from <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12059>].

<sup>252</sup> Kim, Junghyun & JongEun Roselyn Lee, “The Facebook paths to happiness: effects of the number of Facebook friends and self-presentation on subjective well-being.” *Cyberpsychol Behav. Soc. Netw.* 14 (2011):p.359-64. available from doi: 10.1089/cyber.2010.0374.,[accessed December 2018]

<sup>253</sup> Charles, Steinfield, Nicole B. Ellison & Cliff Lampe. "Social capital, self-esteem, and use of online social network sites: A longitudinal analysis." In *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 29, no. 6 (2008):p.434-445.

<sup>254</sup> Haller, Beth. *Representing Disability in an Ableist World: Essays on Mass Media*. (Louisville, KY: The Avocado Press, 2010).

<sup>255</sup> Tatjana Taraszow, Elena Aristodemon, Georgina Shitta, Yiannis Laoris, Aysu Arsoy., “Disclosure of personal and contact information by young people in social networking sites: An analysis using Facebook profiles as an

reading text-based communication for people with visual impairments or intellectual disabilities. Similar results about the consistent inaccessibility and lack of integration that persons with disability continue to face has been reported also by Michalko.<sup>256</sup> The overall inclusion of such empirical data statistics in regard to friendship has shown that people with disability confront similar challenges in the use of Facebook as people without disability. There is a challenge for all Facebook users in their loss of privacy false precedence communication, impersonality, identity manipulation, ambiguity in belonging and connectedness.<sup>257</sup>

For people with disabilities Facebook is a means of positive access for managing inclusion and integration into a wider community. It opens the possibility to expand communication with people with and without disabilities. For this reason, it impacts the socio-emotional well-being of people with disabilities by creating a feeling of belonging and reducing loneliness.

However, Facebook, for people with disabilities and without disabilities alike, does not provide a safe platform of communication and is far from a natural way of building friendship. It lacks face to face communication, supports false or imaginary perception of the other because the other is mainly judged by posts, likes, appearances and text-based communication. This may be an adequate virtual way in managing inclusion, but is far from natural and true friendship where reciprocal exchange, presence of one's body and one's face are not manipulated and judged as social capital, but in presence of the true representation of the other. Therefore, Facebook friendship is not friendship in a sense we should think about friendship. Instead, it is an excellent tool for (partially) managing social inclusion.

## **Concluding remarks**

So far, I have tried to show that the development of friendship consists of different categorizations, conceptualizations and transgressions. There is a common-sense account of friendship that it is a personal and a moral matter. But the approaches to friendship changes as they are impacted by particular moral traditions and cultural upheavals. More recently, such approaches are also divided between different academic interpretations.

The aim of a good life for Aristotle was a virtuous life whose end was achieving (contemplation) happiness. Friendship in this instance was an aspect of common morality and happiness was something that was essentially non-material. The idea of a modern and late modern friendship follows this idea, but the modern idea of happiness is rather cheap in contrast to Aristotle's and Aquinas's, as it over-emphasizes pleasure, and a material end of person's well - being. It is

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example." In *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*., 6,1 (2010):p.81-102.

<sup>256</sup> Rod Michalko, *The Difference That Disability Makes*. (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2002).

<sup>257</sup> Acquisti, A. and Gross, R., "Imagined Communities: Awareness, Information Sharing, and Privacy on the Facebook." In *Privacy Enhancing Technologies. 6th International Workshop, PET 2006, Cambridge, UK, June 28-30, 2006, Revised Selected Papers*., eds. George Danezis & Philippe Golle, (Springer Berlin, Heidelberg, 2006)., pp.36-58.

impossible not to assume that such influences impacted the overall condition of modern and contemporary thinking on friendship and its very end.

Moreover, the modern influences of the eighteen and nineteenth century sense of dissolution and the irrelevance of the individual on the one hand, and the celebration of individual independence and autonomy in late modernity, on the other, impacted contemporary thinking about friendship.

This comes with the idea of simultaneous personal attachment and detachment based on a fluctuations of sentiments and emotions specific to late modernity and contemporary reflections. Hence, it appears that conceptual disagreements in opinions and approaches to friendship between those who value friendship based on approval, personal attachment and intuition, and those who fears that such elements lowering the inherent value of friendship, is, in my opinion, influenced by acceptance of different approaches to a common morality.<sup>258</sup> More precisely, divergence in opinions and approaches, besides influences of a different ethical systems of thought, implies also a different anthropological basis. Becoming a matter of a personal choice, “*applied to everyone*” friendship was put outside the context of a common morality.<sup>259</sup>

The classic contribution to the idea of friendship remain influential and, more importantly, is examined within contemporary philosophical, theological and even socio-psychological debates. Despite the influence of ancient and classical authors, friendship in the modern and contemporary context has a significantly different approach and emphasis. More has been written on friendship by modern authors than by classical authors, but friendship has been approached from a different perspective and without attaching to it a precise definition. The modern period, impacted with the recent changes in thought and global communication, not only exhibits greater interest in exploring friendship among difference, but provides a space for contextualization of friendship, not only within different fields of academia, but also in a socio-cultural perspective. This means that nowadays friendship should be thought of as something that consists of both conceptual (theoretical) and empirical (practical) aspects. More precisely, the philosophical, theological and moral dimension of friendship should be combined with a socio-psychological perspective, as friendship framework requires an interdisciplinary approach. It is the moral conception of friendship that supplies friendship with a particular direction, but it is the socio-psychological aspect that adds to a better understanding of the contemporary notion of a *friend* (the other), and thus the dynamic of the process of friendship.

Notwithstanding this, the idea of ancient and classic friendships is different from the idea of modern friendship, particularly regarding the differences in approach to the subject of friendship for morality. This, however, does not mean that modern and contemporary friendship scholarship

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<sup>258</sup> More on such conceptual dichotomies regarding the theme on friendship can be found in reference to Joel Backstrom., *The Fear of Openness: An Essay on Friendship and the Roots of Morality*, (Abo, Abo Akademi University Press, 2007); See also Sandra Lynch, *Philosophy and Friendship*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005)

<sup>259</sup> Cf. John M. Cooper, “Aristotle on Friendship.” In *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics.*, ed. by Amélie Rorty, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980)., pp.301-340.



is limited and inadequate. The modern and contemporary summary of friendship frameworks shows its specific characteristics. This, in comparison with the classical friendship, means that although much has been said about friendship in the modern period, no specific treatise on friendship has been written. However, the emergence of different academic approaches to understanding friendship in late modernity is a novelty that combines the integration and intersectionality of different academic fields, providing friendship with a more comprehensive and valuable outlook.

The modern idea of friendship, whose moral ground after Christendom continues to integrate the conception of differences into its friendship framework, became matter of personal choice. The element of personality, on the one hand, creates a strong sense of individualism, which leads to friendship becoming isolated or private in form, whereas, on the other hand, the focus on emotion supplies friendship with a “feeling” of belonging, close to romantic love. Impacted by the apparatus of a techno-liberal approaches to person and community, Facebook friendship, as an extended version of late modernity’s friendship, is a rather a controversial form of social friendly networking, as on the one hand, it is a great tool to enlarge inclusion and support privacy, but on the other hand, it could also create further isolation and risks false presentation of personality.

This, in a nutshell means, that the pluralistic society, with its mobility and speed, impacted the modern notion of the other, and even more the contemporary networks of social relationships. In other words means that not only has the notion of the other been impacted by such changes, but so was the approach to friendship.

In the next (second) part of this research project, my focus is to examine the notion of disability, and meaning of friendship in the two academic fields: Disability studies and Disability theology. Following the results of the first chapter, the second chapter add my brief evaluation and critical examination of the anthropological and ethical reasons people with disability still lacking friendship. After setting forward a partial reason of such impossibility, my aim in the third chapter of the second part is to examine the practical evaluation of friendship based on experiences of people in L’Arche community.

**Part Two**  
**DISABILITY STUDIES, THEOLOGY OF DISABILITY, L'ARCHE:**  
**CONCEPTUAL AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DISABILITY,**  
**THE CONCEPT OF OTHER AND FRIENDSHIP**

## Introduction

In the previous part of the ongoing research I was looking at development of the approaches to friendship, its caveats and upheavals. The conceptual analysis resulted in an assessment which distinguish between friendship development, formation and a very process of friendship. The particular elements have been emphasized, the divergence in opinions and approaches between various academic fields were noticed.

In the second part my aim is to look upon a contemporary scholarly literature and discourses in a field of Disability studies and Disability theology<sup>260</sup> and practical insights on friendship exemplified in L'Arche. The second part of the thesis consist of the three chapters. The first chapter includes examination of the two academic fields: Disability studies and Disability theology. The conceptual presentation and the critical examination of the academic field of Disability studies and Disability theology includes the evaluation of their approaches to disability and friendship, including exploration of the most relevant sources in discussing friendship and disability. Based on that, the second chapter of the second part add my brief evaluation and critical examination of the anthropological and ethical reasons people with disability impossibility of friendship. After setting forward a partial reasons of such impossibility, my aim in the third chapter of the second part is to demonstrate that the practical evaluation of friendship based on evaluation of people's experience in L'Arche community is requested in order to grasp a holistic understanding of friendship and the meaning of the other. Each from the fields examined, provide a separate view and a specific perspective on reality of disability and friendship. My interim interest is to look upon those aspects and features within the literature, the two academic fields and community of L'Arche which each from their own angle, as we will see, settle different friendship framework. Related to this, my aim is to emphasize the main features of each academic field, in order to grasp a detailed and adequate evaluation and understanding of disability in its definition and as a living reality. The method employed within a first part of the second chapter includes presentation, comparison and critical evaluation of the study of literature and most revealing features of each academic field. Regarding the field of Disability studies, I will outline the main features of the models of disability, disability definition, the past and contemporary rationale of academic field of Disability studies and study of disability. This includes examination of friendship in reference to formal (professional) and informal (friendship) social relationship between disabled and non - disabled people. Regarding the field of theology of disability, after I present the most challenging aspects of disability for the mainstream field of theology and Church doctrine, I will bring into focus the main features of Disability theology as an academic field and its perspectives in dealing with the subject of disability. Concerning the selection of themes, I will primarily look on those approaches and perspectives of disability, that in my opinion, bears relevant significance

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<sup>260</sup> It is important to indicate that the study of field literature includes my research visit sponsored by SNSF (DocMobility) at King's College, Disability Studies department at University of Western Ontario, Canada, and department of History, Philosophy and Divinity at University of Aberdeen, UK, including the opportunity for a direct collaboration with the authors examined

for the field of theological anthropology and Christian ethics. In such regard my interest is to examine the development of the disability definition, the notion of disabled God and the notion of the body. As within the field of Disability studies, my central interest is to look upon the main features and characteristic regarding the concept of friendship within the field of Disability theology. The second chapter of the second part is a bridging gap between conceptual and practical approaches to disability and friendship. It aims to show why the conceptual approaches including disability and friendship are insufficient and why the practical insights are required, in order to bring friendship rationale a certain flavor important for grasping its holistic meaning. The intention of the empirical research in the third chapter of the second part is to examine the experience of the phenomena of friendship by listening to voices of the people and the interpretation they ascribe to the value of such experience. In other words, in order to fulfill the gap between often abstract conceptual ideas and the lived experience, I aimed to understand the nature of relationships between people with and without disability by listening their voices and their personal interpretations of their relationship experience in L'Arche community. In the concluding part, the research proposes conceptual and empirical definition of disability and friendship, suggesting its overall redefinition.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter

### 2.1. DISABILITY STUDIES - ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVES

#### 2.1.1 The context of disability discourses

Disability is a complex and contextual phenomenon; not only is it a theoretical concept, it is also a human condition approached by and applied from, different social and cultural perspectives. As a human condition it is first and foremost a human experience, integrating bodily (biological), social, and cultural dimensions. As a concept, disability includes a variety of practical and theoretical approaches concerned with understanding and interpreting its meaning. Despite numerous approaches and conversations about disability, many share the same basis that disability is a concept to be understood, although they differ in the ways in which they conceive of it. The main scholarly difference in approaching the reality of disability is between the study of disability and Disability studies. The study of disability refers to the work of sociologist, psychologists, medical practitioners, rehabilitators and special educators. From these perspectives, disability is understood as physically, sensory, emotionally, or intellectually “abnormal” conditions that require prevention, cure or a commitment to normalcy.<sup>261</sup> Disability studies, on the other hand, perceives disability as an essential part of the diversity of human life; just as legitimate and valuable to who we are as humans, as is our gender, race, sexuality, and ethnicity.<sup>262</sup> Contrary to the study of disability, Disability studies does not conceive of disability as a problem in need for a solution, but as an occasion to interrogate the concept of normalcy.<sup>263</sup> Disability studies (Vic Finkelstein, 1980)<sup>264</sup> contrasts with medical sociology (Michael Bury, 2000)<sup>265</sup> in regard to perspectives on the cause of disability. The former (DS) places the cause of disability as primarily social oppression and exclusion, whereas the latter (MS) is guided by the idea that disability is caused by illness and impairment.<sup>266</sup> Disability is not only a concept to be understood and defined, but also a lived experience, and Disability studies offers a unique approach in this regard. Not only it is an emerging field within disability discourse, it also provides new and different ways of thinking about and approaching disability. This means that, in addition to its critique of medical approaches on the reality of disability, it also includes research on historical, political, social and professional influences, including recent poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches to disability. As the context of Disability studies may provide stimulating ideas and insights for

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<sup>261</sup> Cf. Albrecht Gary L., Seelman Katherine D., Bury Michael, eds. *Handbook of Disability Studies*. eds., (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publication Inc. 2001).

<sup>262</sup> Titchkosky, T. and Michalko, R., *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, (Toronto: Canadian Scholars/Women's Press, 2009).

<sup>263</sup> Lennard J. Davis, *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. (New York, Routledge, 2006).

<sup>264</sup> Vic Finkelstein, *Attitudes and Disabled People: issues for discussion* (New York, World Rehabilitation Fund, 1980).

<sup>265</sup> Michael Bury, “On chronic illness and disability,” in: C. E. Bird, P. Conrad & A. M. Fremont (eds.) *Handbook of medical sociology* (5th ed.), (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 2000).

<sup>266</sup> Carol Thomas, “How is disability understood? An examination of sociological approaches” in *Disability & Society*, 19,6 (2004): p.570.

understanding disability terminology and related academic discourses, the academic field of Disability studies is used as a guide throughout this research. The perspective of this research is to examine and present theoretical approaches; including models of disability, disability definitions, the past and contemporary rationale for the academic field of Disability studies, disability terminology, the context, and political actions of social inclusion policies. My main focus will be on the examination of friendship within Disability studies and related fields; in particular, I focus to examine social relationships between disabled and non - disabled people.

### 2.1.2 Medical and social models in disability studies scholarship

Discourses on disability within the academic field of Disability studies are various and can be observed and interpreted from different academic and cultural contexts. As will be discussed in the next paragraph, they can be confusing, particularly the usage of the medical model versus the social model. The mainstream past and present approaches to disability within Disability studies include a variety of models. Two dominant models around which the prevailing discourses orbit are the medical and social models. As most approaches within mainstream disability discourse, they have influenced socio - cultural responses and attitudes towards disabled people. They have also had a significant impact on the definitions of disability and influenced disability discourse within the academic context of Disability studies (an actual location of disability discourse). Moreover, these models have also influenced the occurrence of other sub-models which I regard as derivatives of the medical and social models. These include the charity model, rehabilitation model, the radical approach (Withers, 2012);<sup>267</sup> human rights paradigm, (UN, 2006);<sup>268</sup> a few versions of the social model, such as the British Social Model (Campbell&Oliver,1998);<sup>269</sup> (Barnes&Mercer, 2010);<sup>270</sup> the North American minority approach (Scotch, 1984);<sup>271</sup> the Nordic relational model (Tøssebro);<sup>272</sup> the affirmative model, etc. Additionally, the recent scholarship by L. Davis,<sup>273</sup> R. Michalko,<sup>274</sup> and D. Mitchell,<sup>275</sup> T. Shakespeare and M. Corker,<sup>276</sup> N. Wattson,<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Withers, A. J. *Disability Politics & Theory.*, (Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2012).

<sup>268</sup> Cf. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>

<sup>269</sup> Campbell, J. and Oliver, M., *Disability Politics: understanding our past, changing our future*, (London, Routledge, 1996).

<sup>270</sup> C. Barnes & G. Mercer, *Exploring Disability: A Sociological Introduction*, 2nd eds. (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2010).

<sup>271</sup> Richard K. Scotch, *From good will to civil rights: transforming federal disability policy*, (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1984.)

<sup>272</sup> Jan Tøssebro, "Two decades of disability research in Norway: 1990-2010," in *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, vol. 15, (2013):71-89.

<sup>273</sup> Davis, Lennard, J., *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability Deafness and the Body*, (London: Verso, 1996).

<sup>274</sup> Michalko, R. *The Difference that Disability Makes.*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

<sup>275</sup> Mitchell David T., & Sharon L. Snyder, eds. *The Body and Physical Difference - Discourse of Disability*, (The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997).

<sup>276</sup> Corker M.& Shakespeare T.,eds., *Disability/Postmodernity - Embodying Disability Theory.*, (London/New York, Continuum, 2002). See also M. Corker & S. French, eds. *Disability discourse*, (Buckingham, Open University Press, 1999)

<sup>277</sup> See for instance see Watson, N., "Well, I know this is going to sound very strange to you, but I don't

expose an interest in post - modernist<sup>278</sup> and post structuralist approaches to disability. These authors find the medical - social model dichotomy towards disability inconsistent, and therefore, instead suggested a renewal of such models' dichotomy, suggesting comprehension of "disability condition" in light of post - modernist and post - structuralist socio - medical analysis.

My interest in exploring the medical and social model as the most prevalent does not mean that other models or different interpretations of disability within postmodernity deserve less attention. Rather, this prevalence is attributed to the ways in which the overall discussions about disability have significantly relied on these two models, which have influenced the development of other approaches and sub-models within disability discourse. Despite the medical and social model having been "approved" and overcome by other sub-models and modern and poststructuralist approaches to disability, they have provided comprehensive knowledge of disability and demonstrate the complicated and often contrasting discourses regarding the subject. The medical and social models remain however, the ground from which the other sub - models and other interpretations of disability within Disability studies have emerged. This is the reason that my main interest in providing a comprehensive understanding on the meaning of disability will circulate around the medical and social models. I will present a few selective insights into emerging sub-models, such as the charity model, a version of the social model (North American approach), and the bio-socio-physical model. As medical and social models have been addressed by various terms such as biomedical, individual; socio-political or model of social inclusion, it is important to indicate that in my use of the model, **biomedical** is my preferred term for the meaning of the medical model; and the **social** model (as it implies a variety of socio-anthropological regard for humanity) will be synonymous to the sociopolitical version of the social model.

### **Biomedical model - a few basic insights**

Known by its different names, such as individual, medical (e.g. Mike Oliver)<sup>279</sup> and biomedical pathology (e.g. Rioux, Roeher Institute),<sup>280</sup> the biomedical model<sup>281</sup> as addressed in this research, is a particular framework that looks at disability as a physical condition or individual

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see myself as a disabled person: identity and disability." *Disability and Society*, 17, 5,(2002): pp. 509-528

<sup>278</sup> Their postmodernist approach includes feminist scholar Judith Butler work on gender identity; See Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York, Routledge, 1990); and Jacques Derrida in

<sup>279</sup> Mike Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); See also Mike Oliver, "The social Model in action: if I had a hammer", in C. Barnes and G. Mercer (eds.) *Implementing the Social Model of Disability: theory and research*, (Leeds, The Disability Press, 2004).

<sup>280</sup> Rioux, M. H. "Disability the place of Judgement in a World of Fact." presentation to 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability (IASSID), Helsinki Finland, July 1996., In *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, vol.40. 1997. See also, Rioux, M. H. and Bach, M., *Disability is Not Measles*, (Ontario: York University, Roeher Institute, 1994).

<sup>281</sup> The reason I use biomedical rather than medical and individual in this research is that disability is not only prescribed with medical condition of impairment, but includes whole scope of questions and medical intervention departing from person being reduced to biological material (prenatal testing) towards objectification (cure or charity).

tragedy and requires remedy or cure by the expertise of medical intervention. According to the biomedical model, disability has biological causes that disable people's normal functional proficiency.<sup>282</sup> Disability is diagnosed along with disease, illness, deformity or pathology, and therefore requires medical expertise, rehabilitation, cure or prevention. The most appropriate contemporary response to such treatments within medical practice includes prevention through genetic screening and prenatal diagnostic tests. The purpose is *fixing* the individual and preparing them to function within society according to notions of normality.<sup>283</sup> As indicated earlier, many disability scholars consider the biomedical model to be synonymous with the individual or professional model. The differences between these terms consist of the emphasis on disability as an individual problem, personal tragedy or individual flaw.<sup>284</sup> This is to say that the emphasis on the use of the term *individual* for medical model according to interpretations of early disability scholars, looks upon the cause of disability as being attributed to functional limitations, psychological losses and biological anomalies,<sup>285</sup> locating disability as a problem found within the individual.

Coming from the North American context, the disability scholar Simi Linton, in her article "Disability studies/Non disability studies" addresses concerns related to the idea of overemphasizing the role of medical knowledge in understanding disability. She argues that medicalization of the different conditions of people with disabilities has resulted in pathologizing and individualizing effects. Linton is particularly critical to the established settings that ascribe to the person with disability the status of a patient who lacks self-determination and self-representation.<sup>286</sup> As a part of her recent lecture at Disability studies at Kings University College in Canada, Pamela Cushing describes a contemporary version of the professional or individual model, highlighting a few key components:

"Individual (medical, professional) model advocates focus on *biology* of impairment perceiving it as a deficit, loss, gap, and problem to be corrected (person fixing). Disability is the problem of the individual, who requires change or cure by the experience of professional help within a legalistic and paternalistic frame (master status of identity)."<sup>287</sup>

The individual or professional model as mentioned by Cushing emphasizes that the reduction of opportunity is caused by personal or individual deformity, or an individual's personal deficits, as addressed by Anita Silver in *The Oxford Handbook of Practical ethics*.<sup>288</sup> A number of disability

<sup>282</sup> Cf. Rioux M.H. "Disability the place of Judgement in a World of Fact", 13-14.

<sup>283</sup> Colin Cameron, *Disability Studies - a student's guide*, (London, SAGE, 2014): p. 98.

<sup>284</sup> Gareth Williams, "Theorizing Disability" in *Handbook of Disability Studies*, eds. Albrecht Gary L., Seelman Katherine D., Bury Michael, (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publication Inc. 2001): pp. 125-127.

<sup>285</sup> Michael Oliver, "The social model in context" in *Rethinking normalcy - a disability studies Reader*, Tanya Titchkosky and Rod Michalko eds., (Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., Toronto, 2009): p.20

<sup>286</sup> See Simi Linton, "Disability Studies/Not Disability Studies" in *Disability & Society*, vol. 13. 4 (1998):pp. 525-540.

<sup>287</sup> This was presented as definition at one of the lectures within „Exploring Disability at Kings College, University of Western Ontario, Canada, 27.September 2016.

<sup>288</sup> Anita Silvers, „*People with Disabilities*“ in *The Oxford Handbook of Practical Ethics*, eds. by Hugh



studies theorists from 1970 until recently<sup>289</sup> have criticized the notion of disability within medical practice which has traditionally held a monopoly on knowledge of disease, pain and suffering, but have failed to provide a comprehensive distinction between impairment and disability. For example, disability activists and social model proponents in the United Kingdom have provided a sharp critique to the medical model. The disabled activists and social theorists Mike Oliver (Oliver, 1983) and a follower, Dan Goodley (Goodley, 2011), see the medical model of disability as problematic for reducing disability to bodily functions, or to the flawed tragedy of individual personhood.<sup>290</sup> Accordingly, the biomedical model has had the most pervasive influence upon health care policy, disability rights<sup>291</sup> and the WHO definition of disability. Moreover, it has influenced the cultural and social considerations of disability, but considered people with disability as being lesser persons. Therefore, it was followed by criticism from disability activists in 1970. This ultimately led to the birth of the social model approach to disability. In other words, the prevailing aspect of power and control within modern medicine over the management and definitions of disability drove social theorists and disability studies activist to respond. The social model emerged as the reaction to the prevailing formula of seeing disability as a physical impairment and a person's limitation. Most of the Disability studies discourses and discussions, as we will see, are grounded in social model rationale. In the next paragraph I will briefly present a few versions of the social model cross-culturally, as well as, its contribution to understanding disability.

### **Social model perspectives**

The historical roots of the social model stems from the 1970s. First launched in the United Kingdom, the social model has followed the pioneering work of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and has been the great idea of the British disability movement.<sup>292</sup> Simultaneously it has been well supported theoretically within academia via the work of Mike Oliver (1990, 1996);<sup>293</sup> Barnes (1996)<sup>294</sup> and Finkelstein (1980).<sup>295</sup> Contrary to the medical model, the social model rationale is oriented towards people's experiences of disability,

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LaFollette, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002): p.330.

<sup>289</sup> The shift from a robust critique towards more balanced critique of medical model has been evident after Critical Disability studies as a field has emerged. Other reason of that position is that several disability studies theorist have seen disadvantages and failures of social model as a dominant approach to disability. See for instance T. Shakespeare, „The social model of disability: an outdated ideology?“ In S. Barnart and B.M. Alman (eds). *Exploring Theories and Expanding Methodologies: Where Are We and Where Do We Need To Go? Research in Social Science and Disability*, vol.2, (Amsterdam, JAI, 2001a).

<sup>290</sup> Mike Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

<sup>291</sup> In some cases medical model can have positive impact on disability rights. Cf. Anita Silvers, „People with Disabilities“ in *Oxford Handbook of Practical Ethics*, p.301-331.

<sup>292</sup> See Mike Oliver, *Understanding disability* (London, Macmillan, 1996); Shakespeare, 2002, Goodley, 2011

<sup>293</sup> Mike Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement*, (London, The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1990). See also Mike Oliver, *Understanding disability: From Theory to Practice*, (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1996).

<sup>294</sup> Colin Barnes, *Disabled people in Britain and discrimination*, (London: Hurst and Co. 1991); Barnes, C. & Mercer, G. (eds). *Exploring the divide: illness and disability* (Leeds, The Disability Press, 1996).

<sup>295</sup> Vic Finkelstein, *Attitudes and disabled people: issues for discussion* (New York, World Rehabilitation Fund, 1980).

and critical of societal and cultural prejudices towards disabled people. The reduction of opportunities for disabled people is understood in terms of social rather than personal deficit. The definition of the social model founded by the UPIAS's document, *Fundamental Principles of Disability*, highlights two main aspects. First, it distinguishes between the disability as a social situation, and the impairment, as a physical or bodily disadvantage. Second, disability is a societal problem, which is to say, that due to the societal and environmental barriers of oppression and limited participation within society, disability is not a personal disadvantage, but social problem (social barriers). The revised the 1996 version of the social model defined by Mike Oliver remains equipped for such a formulation:

“In our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society. To understand this it is necessary to grasp the distinction between the physical impairment and the social situation, called ‘disability’, of people with such impairment.”<sup>296</sup>

All this means is that disability is a problem located in society, not a person. It is society, culture and environment that *disables* the opportunities of people with disabilities by restricting their participation in normal societal functioning, limiting access to the public, and reducing involvement in social activities. It also means that given such an understanding, the disability within the social model goes beyond interpretation of bodily dysfunction or as a disadvantageous medical condition; disability is now a *social condition* understood as a barrier that is projected on people with disability from the context of society. This places society as an oppressive force in its failure to provide an adequate response to the inclusion of people with disability. As such, the social model definition has been an important liberating factor in the lives of many disabled people in the UK (where the movement started) and worldwide. The liberation consists of demonstrating that people with disabilities are not passive subjects of change and their voice has been finally recognized.<sup>297</sup> In other context such as North America, the social model has been addressed by alternative names. M. H. Rioux, at the Roeher Institute in Toronto Canada, distinguishes between socio political, environmental and human right formulations of the socially constructed nature of disability. This threefold formulation implies a threefold (socio-political, environmental, rights oriented)<sup>298</sup> perspective on disability within society, targeting its failures and modification. Disability is not an individual pathology, but instead a structural social pathology for people with disabilities due to environmental barriers<sup>299</sup> and limited mobility and access to a socio-economic and socio-political services and support.<sup>300</sup> In order to modify and increase accessibility, its tendency is oriented towards enabling participation through environmental adaptation.

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<sup>296</sup> See Oliver, *Understanding disability*, 1996.

<sup>297</sup> Tom Shakespeare., „The social model of disability: an outdated ideology?“ p.5.

<sup>298</sup> M. H. Rioux, „Disability: the place of judgement in a world of fact“, *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 41, 2 (1997): pp.102-111.

<sup>299</sup> For instance best example of such environmental barrier is absence of ramps in an office building for the wheelchair user, or a limited access to the transportation

<sup>300</sup> This for instance includes lack of application and accessibility of a certain job positions and related to that the

Other interpretations of the social model of disability are inclined towards social inclusion, seeing disability through the lens of a human rights approach and more specifically, participatory disability rights.<sup>301</sup> Despite the fact that these approaches slightly differ due to their various anthropological, philosophical and sociological backgrounds and emphasis, the common strategy of such approaches are to address social, political and economic inequalities and disadvantages in society towards people with disabilities. For instance, the social model's human rights approach according to Silvers requires: a) equal participation and inclusion of disabled people in social practices (participatory right); and b) promotion of individual good and capacity as grounded on promotion of personal well - being, and increasing individual social services and capacities of disabled individuals in order to cope with existing social norms (independent living).<sup>302</sup> Similarly as Rioux, Cushing, during her lecture at the department of Disability studies in Canada, interpreting a social model emphasizes an orientation from "person fixing", towards "society fixing". Her expanded view on disability as a push factor towards "society fixing" draw upon the meaning of disablement as a socially constructed process with socially constructed meanings that exacerbate the condition of disability.<sup>303</sup>

All of this demonstrates that the first version of the social model was built upon strong negative reactions towards the medical model. As the field of Disability studies developed, its later tendencies were oriented towards the celebration of difference and restoration of the meaning of normality within society. In spite, the medical and social models still being the most cited, referenced, and discussed conceptual approaches to disability, they also show certain limitations. It sometimes appears that disability understood solely within the realm of the social or medical model cannot be fully comprehensible. Moreover, the experiences of disability as an individual condition *per se* differ and evoke a variety of interpretations. This is to say that besides the medical and social models, other approaches and models to disability can expand our comprehension of the meaning of disability and the experiences of those living with disability. In order to provide a wider understanding of disability, I will present a few other approaches to disability that derive from the biomedical and social models, and build upon and address their limitations in grasping a full understanding of disability.

### 2.1.3 The sub-models or models in between the medical and social model

Other approaches to disability include *models* in between the medical and social models that primarily derive from the medical and social models, including a various *interpretations* of

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socio-economic and socio health benefits

<sup>301</sup> Cf. Anita Silvers, „People with Disabilities“ p.314-319.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 311-313.

<sup>303</sup> Dr Cushing is the founder of the Disability Studies program at King's College. She receives 2019 *Tanis Doe Award* for her work in "speaking the unspeakable" in advancing the study and culture of disability. Dr. Cushing brings a unique approach to Disability Studies. She encourages students to consider how disability "lives in our cultural imagination" and how that influences law, policy, and discourse, preparing DS students to be strong and articulated advocates for people with disabilities in Canada. Dr. Cushing endlessly creates new ways of fostering this kind of learning.

the social and medical model. I will address them as a *sub-models* or models *in-between* medical and social.

The importance of sub-models has a purpose that is threefold. Its primary purpose, as previously mentioned, is that they enrich our comprehension of disability. Secondly, they demonstrate that the medical and social models, as already indicated, are insufficient in providing a full understanding of disability. Thirdly, the sub-models point towards differences in understanding disability within various contexts and domains. The interpretation of these models will be helpful in broadening the comprehension of the conceptual meaning of disability that goes beyond the social and medical model, and also adds to the complexity of approaches by not reducing the notion of disability to merely one way of understanding.

Among the many different models and interpretations of disability, such as the radical model (Whithers, 2012); charity and rehabilitation model; the human rights paradigm, (UN, 2006); the economic model, or the British Social Model (Campbell&Oliver,1998; Barnes&Mercer, 2010); and the North American minority approach (Scotch, 1984); the Nordic relational model (Tøssebro 2002, 2004); affirmation model (Swain&French, 2000); the postmodernist disability approach (Corker&Shakespeare,2002); the environmental approach (Rioux, 1997) and bio-socio-psychological model (WHO, 2011), etc., I will select only three of them (the charity model, the North American social minority and bio-psycho-social model) and briefly discuss each sub-model's main components. The first reason I selected these sub-models is because they derive from either the medical (charity) and social (social minority model) models; or from within recent Disability discourse, and have demonstrated improvement in defining disability (bio-psycho-social). Secondly, I also include postmodern socio - cultural insights of disability representation, as besides this, they provoke a challenge to later discussion within disability theology discourse and the very notion of charity.

**Table 1. Sub-models-few examples**

	<b>MODELS IN-BETWEEN OR SUBMODLES (some examples)</b>			
<b>MEDICAL MODEL</b>	Rehabilitation Model	<b>Charity model</b>	Human rights paradigm	Traditional/Religious Model
<b>SOCIAL MODEL</b>	<b>Social Minority Model</b>	Economic model (m&s)	Affirmative Model	The social adaptation model
<b>POSTMODERNIST APPROACHES</b>	Radical approach	Environmental Approach	<b>Bio-psycho-social approach</b>	

### **The North American Version of Social Model**

The social definition of disability provided by Mike Oliver and UPIAS had major implications for the British framework of disability, and also spread into other contexts. What has been called the social model in a strict sense within the British context corresponds with the social minority model within North American.<sup>304</sup> The disabled people's movement in the US, (despite emphasizing social oppression, similar to the British social model), was influenced by the *Black Civil Rights movement* and the *Rehabilitation Act of disabled people in 1973*. The Social minority model not only focuses on the oppressions and disadvantages of people with disabilities, it also includes other categories of oppressed individuals who are stigmatized due to race, ethnicity and gender.<sup>305</sup> Thus, the North American minority model took an eclectic approach towards the socio-political and cultural formations of disability and developed a slightly different rationale: disabled people were one group of those who faced inequality due to their differences in capacity, ability and anatomy.<sup>306</sup> The North American version of the social model includes not only economic, but also environmental, legal, and rights-based aspects of disability. As does the British model, the

<sup>304</sup> Simi Linton, *Claiming disability: Knowledge and identity*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>305</sup> See M. Corker & T. Shakespeare, (eds.), *Disability/postmodernity: embodying disability theory*, (London, Continuum, 2002); Dan Goodely, *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011): p.13.

<sup>306</sup> Hahn, H. "Advertising the Acceptably Employable Image: Disability and Capitalism." In *The Disability Studies Reader*, eds. by L.J. Davis., (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1997): p.172-186.

North American version of the social model looks on disability as social disadvantage. This sub model differs from the British version of the social model in that it does not impart a strict separation between social and medical perspectives on disability. Secondly, besides social exclusion due to impairment, the North American minority model includes other social and cultural aspects of exclusion, such as exclusion due to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, etc. This indicates people with disability may be part of other minority groups, and therefore may get easier access to legal rights and inclusion when placed in context with other minority groups. This is also a reason for why the Disability studies field within the North American context has different approaches to disability; it emphasizes the effects of intersectionality with other minority groups, the distribution of equal rights, equal opportunities to participate in society, and critiques of power. Most concerns of the North American version of the social model has been integrated into the academic field of Disability studies in the North American context. The detailed structure of this integration will be examined in a later section regarding the rationale for the academic field of Disability studies.

### **Charity model**

The common feature of a Charity model and the rehabilitation model is that they both are derived from the biomedical model. From such reason as a common attitude towards medical model, many disability studies scholars have been critical to charity model. The slight distinction however, between this two, consist in explaining the approach to disability: in the charity model, nondisabled people attempting to explain disability described it as an individual tragedy, whereas in rehabilitation model, disability is considered biomedical disadvantage close to disease. While the charity model may have come from noble and humanitarian intentions towards disabled people, proposing care for disabled, it has reduced and objectified people with disabilities into objects in need of mercy or cure of institutional or medical intervention. In such regard disabled people were associated as images of pity, needy, impoverished, and poor, in need of care.<sup>307</sup> Not only is a true meaning of charity within such a model materialized, but disability is described as tragic, and reduced to requirements of institutional medical or social cure (or otherwise care). This resulted in many people with disability being placed into mental institutions in order to receive “adequate care.” The Charity model was also applied in fundraising, advertising campaigns, and video commercials (for instance children in needs video or *The Spastics Society* in UK). The disabled people and children with disabilities were in such regard identified with the image of poor child-like victims or tragically portrayed *as a means* to raise the moral aspiration of able-bodied people and make them a goodly donors. Carrying, patronizing (imposed by beneficiary) and limiting choice, self - esteem, respect and employment effect on disabled people, impose disabled people initiative in 1970 enfolded into a slogan “We do not want charity, we want our rights!” The reason that many Disability scholars continue being hesitant towards charitable or religious provision of

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<sup>307</sup> Marks, D., *Disability: Controversial Debates and Psychosocial Perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 1999); Sticker Henri-Jacques, *A History of Disability*. transl. by Williams Sayers, (The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1999).

care for the disabled or the very meaning “charity,” is a continuous result of the objectification of people with disabilities on the poor within charity model. The charity model simply remains perceived as negative. This not only creates confusion in discussing charity within context of disability studies and other academic fields such as philosophy or theology. The confusion is also imposed on regard of a distinction between the meaning of charity, love and almsgiving. Regarding the relation between Christian notion of charity and charity model, it is till now clear that the meaning of charity in model of charity associates with the meaning of Aquinas notion of almsgiving, instead of a friendship with God or charity understood as a theological virtue. Related to this, the charity model is a challenge of social justice and solidarity discourses within the Social Teaching of the Catholic church, including their charitable activities; particularly when such activities and concepts touch the meaning of the preferential option of the poor. At the same time, the Christian understanding of charity that goes beyond pure almsgiving of charity model, is also a part of the challenge for Disability studies scholars who only portray charity with its one dimensional materialized understanding. It is important, however, to note that the charity model does not explain the mode of Christian charity; the Christian meaning of the term goes beyond pure objectification and almsgiving. Moreover, the sacrificial love, or even charity as friendship with God, in such scenario could not be identified with the charity model. Being an act of sacrificial love or being the object of charity includes different end: the first includes the love as *agape*, whereas the second one simply reduces person upon the object of charitable action.

Despite many initiatives of disability studies scholars and disabled people activist, transforming the perception about disability remain difficult task. Charity model remain present as it serves commercial and fundraising campaigns and charity advertising. People with disabilities and particularly disabled children in such regard remains the object of tragedy and pity. Instead of challenging social attitudes, disable continue to remain the image of damaging stereotype who are in need of help and charity.

### **Bio-Psycho-Social model**

The bio-psycho-social model is a new approach to disability that was integrated into the WHO’s 2011 definition of disability. According to this model, *disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual’s contextual factors (environmental and personal factors).*<sup>308</sup> With its “workable compromise” between the medical and social models,<sup>309</sup> the model was a ground for renewing a definition of disability that includes both environmental and personal factors. Despite this, it may lack the ability to be applied practically. It shows a conceptual compromise in understanding disability, and an improvement in the development of a definition of disability. By this, I want to emphasize that the bio-psycho-social model apart from a strict distinction of impairment, portrayed as handicap, and disability

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<sup>308</sup> Cf. „Understanding Disability,“ In *World Report on Disability*, (World Health Organisation, Geneva, 2011):p. 4

<sup>309</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p.4

as social disadvantage, by providing a holistic approach to disability. Such a holistic approach includes concerns of social functioning, psychological functioning, environmental factors, personal factors, and contextual factors. This evokes a notion that disability is not a strict category that may be easily defined, but is a human condition dependent on internal (biological, psychological) and external (social, environmental, cultural) factors and capacities. The reason I select this model as a derivative or as a model in between medical and social, is to show that advances in understanding disability are necessary and achievable, and that disability is a not only a complex umbrella term, but also exists on a continuum.

#### **2.1.4 Disability: terminological distinction and definition**

A layperson's understanding of the meaning of disability might be associated with a picture of a person in a wheelchair or a person with Down syndrome. It is less likely that visual, hearing, or other sensory limitations, mental problems such as anxiety or depression, or high blood pressure would be associated with a layperson's definition of disability. Disability from the perspective of the academic field of Disability studies and other associated fields contrast with this layperson's view. On the one hand, the condition of a person in a wheelchair according to Disability studies view, may not be considered a disability in a strict sense of its meaning, whereas on the other hand, in a legal terminology, the visual impairment, depression or high blood pressure, for instance, could be considered a disability.<sup>310</sup> The confusion in determining what constitutes a disability is even greater between cultures. What is considered to constitute a high degree of disability in one culture may not even be considered a disability in another. The legal rights to social and health care benefits due to disability and the aforementioned conditions also differ across culture and political contexts. For instance, what may be considered as mental illness in Canada may not be regarded as such in some parts of India due to differences in social norms. This ambiguity can leave us feeling puzzled, but also eager to explore how disability is understood and what the actual meaning of disability is. So far, we have noticed that approaches to disability and its interpretations vary. Disability has been examined through multiple lenses; medical, social, charity, and human rights models, and most recently, the phenomena of representation. As approaches to disability differ, so do understandings of the definition of disability. While I do not intend to explore the meanings of all possible definitions of disability in the world,<sup>311</sup> my aim is to supply the reader with the sense of its complexity and portray the ways in which different understandings of disability differ by context, and how the development of its definition influences the lives of disabled people. I will do this by examining its development and understanding within historical and contemporary scholarly discourses, as well as its implication and complexities cross - culturally.

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<sup>310</sup> For more on that see Wood, P., *International classification of impairments, disabilities and handicaps* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 1980); See also Michael L. Perlin, *International Human Rights and Mental Disability Law. When The silenced are heard*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>311</sup> By this I mean that different definitions of disability apply differently in particular socio cultural context. For instance what is considered as mental disability in India, may not imply the same meaning in a Western culture. This is to address divergencies instead a coherence regarding the global definition of disability.



#### **2.1.4.1 Insights into the development of a definition of disability: historical, terminological and cultural perspectives**

People with disabilities historically have been labeled with different terms of reference. This includes shifts away from terms such as monstrous, idiotic, mentally retarded, and mentally deficient, to intellectual and developmental disabilities, learning difficulties, Down Syndrome, fragile X Syndrome, etc. (e.g. Shakespeare, 2014; Krotzl, Mustakallio&Kuuliala,2015<sup>312</sup>). Disabled people within contemporary culture have been represented with images of malignant, pitiful, leprous, catastrophic, and/or abnormal conditions. (e.g. Mitchell, 1997, Davis, 2002). These meanings are linked with cultural representations of disability and grasping an understanding of the meaning of disability is not only a task for disability studies scholars, but all of us together, who in one way (embodied experience) or another (disembodied experience) have been confronted with some aspects of disability.

#### **Historical and terminological perspectives**

Attempts to clarify the meaning and determine a comprehensive definition of disability were made after various movements organized by disability activist organizations of people with disabilities in the 1970s. Definitions have been subject to multiple changes, which have been influenced by disability policy, different human rights movements, shifts in the economy and society, improvements in psychology and health sciences, etc. Defining disability has also been a matter of interpretation among different academic disciplines (disability studies, the study of disability, medical sociology, social policy, law, etc.). The experiences of disability from disabled people themselves have provided a unique way of understanding disability as an embodied experience (Oliver, Linton, Shakespeare). Acts and organizations, including the *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA), the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA), the *World Health Organization* (WHO), the *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps* (ICIDH) in 1980, and the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICFDH) successfully managed to provide some common language regarding the terminology of disability. However, it still does not mean that such terminology is definitive. This history of defining disability reveals the impact of the social and medical (biomedical) models. For example, the biomedical model has been widely influential in defining disability as physical impairment and functional limitation.<sup>313</sup> This can be seen in the *International Classification of Impairment, Disability, and Handicaps*, (ICIDH), adopted by the *World Health Organization* in 1980. The ICIDH distinguishes between impairment (biological condition), disability (functional limitation), and handicap (consequence of impairment and disability). A new (2002) WHO report on disability has shown a significant shift; the new ICFDH framework, used by WHO, recognizes disability as an interaction between health, a

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<sup>312</sup> Kuuliala Jenni, Mustakallio Katariina, Krotzl Christina, "Infirmitas in Antiquity and the Middle Ages," in *Infirmary in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Social and Cultural Approaches to Health, Weakness and Care*, eds. Krotzl Christian, Mustakallio Katariina and Kuuliala Jenni. (Surrey, Ashgate, 2015).

<sup>313</sup> Such limited definition can still be found in legal documents where disability remain regarded as a medical or socio-medical condition and is treated as a tool in pursuing certain health benefits. More on that issues will be discussed in the section regarding the cultural definition of disability

person's environment, participation and activities, bodily functions and personal features. The emphasis on disability as a medical or biomedical condition has been gradually losing its strength. What influenced such a shift? The first robust distinction between the medical and social conceptualizations of disability was followed after the UPIAS distinction between impairment and disability. This distinction influenced worldwide changes in approaching the categorization of disability and disability definitions. Disability studies acknowledges disability as a form of medical/biological condition, but contrary to other approaches to explaining disability, it is governed by the idea that disability is structured by social oppression, inequality, and exclusion. In their chapter in *Handbook of Disability studies*, Violet Rutkowski - Kmitta and Glenn T. Fujiura state that a Disability studies perspective on disability shifts the framework from the methodology of classification and measurement to more metaphorical constructions of personal experience and social and cultural context.<sup>314</sup> From such reason, in my further examination of disability definitions, I will mostly depart from the perspective of Disability studies. Despite the endeavor of social model scholars to distinguish between impairment as a medical condition and disability as a problem of society, (which in my opinion, was beneficial), most of the impetus for establishing a clear disability definition derives from legal requirements. For instance, as already indicated earlier, many disability studies activists at the beginning of 1970 struggled in a battle for social inclusion and the distribution of equal rights and citizenship. "*Rights, not charity*," was the most prominent slogan that expresses disability activism and disabled people's desire for social inclusion. In order to achieve rights and advocate against disability discrimination, it was essential for legislation to attain clarity on the definition of disability.<sup>315</sup> There were benefits to classifying disability within a legal framework, as many disabled people were provided with protection by advocacy groups, legal rights against discrimination, and health-care benefits. However, the definition of disability within a human rights paradigm is incomplete; is inclined towards the medical model, disability within human rights is politicized, as actions are taken from non-disabled minority groups disability becomes just another example of human and political rights discourses and, as Bagenston's critique of the ADA definition explains: *the definition identifies the class of people entitled to reasonable accommodations and protections against discrimination*.<sup>316</sup> As approaches from each model influence the development of disability definitions, the frequent changes in disability terminology also influences disabled people's access to health care, social and legal policies, education, etc. Speaking from the perspective of disability studies, Tom Shakespeare recently critiqued social model perspectives on defining disability and argues that the social model that was so influential in the 1970s no longer seems to be adequate in defining disability in the twenty-first century. Shakespeare supports post-structuralist and postmodernist

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<sup>314</sup> Cf. Violet Rutkowski-Kmitta and Glenn T. Fujiura „Counting Disability“ in *Handbook of Disability studies*, p. 92

<sup>315</sup> See Paul Harpur, „From disability to ability: changing the phrasing of the debate,“ *Disability & Society*, 27:3 (2012): p. 325-337.

<sup>316</sup> Cf. Bagenstos, Samuel, „Comparative disability employment law from an American perspective“. In *Labour Law and Policy Journal* 24, (2003):p.649. cited in Paul Harpur, „From disability to ability: changing the phrasing of the debate,“ p.331.

views on disability, including an embodied ontology, where impairment is not merely regarded within a frame of strict medical definitions, but as mainstream conditions of humanity. According to Shakespeare, the ubiquity of impairment and physical limitation offers a different definition strategy for disability studies.<sup>317</sup> These ideas led to changes and transitions in the structural definitions and understandings of disability; from a medical understanding to a more societal (contextual), cultural definition, and ultimately to a recognition that *dis - ability* as an ontological human category (Shakespeare) could apply to everyone, not only disabled people. Following a similar line of thinking, the disability studies scholar Lennard Davis defines disability as a cultural representation of difference, or more precisely, the *lack of a sense or the presence of a physical or mental impairment as disability is the reception and construction of that difference*.<sup>318</sup> Recently, a formal and detailed definition of disability can be found in the 2011 *World Report on Disability*, already mentioned within a research text. This report defines disability as a complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and contested condition of human life.<sup>319</sup> This is to say, that the WHO definition integrates medical and social model aspects, showing that disability is not merely a physical condition, as has been expressed in previous reports of WHO but, rather, more integrative and applied; including cultural and social perspectives.

### **Further polemics related to disability definition**

The inconsistencies in language and disability definitions influence the identities of disabled people. For example, often, due to social discrimination, disability is confused and discussed within the spectrum of other stigmatized and minority identities such as feminist, racial, gender, class and ethnicity discourses. It may similarly be categorized with illness, aging, or mental disorder due to particular impairments or biological conditions (medical model).<sup>320</sup> These imbalances the representation of people with disabilities, both within the framework of social and moral devaluation, or with the equating of disabled people with other identities, and go beyond the evaluation of personal experience. The meaning of disability within most contemporary dictionaries still refers to some extent to biological dysfunction (medical model), and in most cases reflects the opposite of ability. For instance, the *Cambridge Online Dictionary* defines disability as an illness, injury, or condition that makes it difficult for someone to do the things that other people do;<sup>321</sup> or as within *Merriam - Webster Dictionary*, disability is described as a physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions (impairment is a cause of disability).<sup>322</sup> Understanding disability as impairment or handicap has

<sup>317</sup> See Tom Shakespeare, „The social model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology?“, in *Research in Social Science and Disability*, vol. 2, (2002): 26-27.

<sup>318</sup> See Davis, J. Lennard, *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. (New York, Routledge, 2006): p.50

<sup>319</sup> See *World Report on Disability*, 2011., p.3

<sup>320</sup> Cf. Mitchell David T. and Sharon L. Snyder, eds. *The Body and Physical Difference - Discourse of Disability*, (The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997): p.3.

<sup>321</sup> See Cambridge Online Dictionary., s.v. „Disability“ available from [https:// dictionary.cambridge.org /dictionary/english/disability](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/disability) [accessed November 2016].

<sup>322</sup> See Merriam - Webster Dictionary., s.v. “Disability” available from <https://www.merriam->

been part of disability statistics and classifications as outlined within the WHO definition, the major contemporary dictionaries still define disability according to medical model rationale, or the previous (1980's) version from the WHO. Looking at disability from a medical context or the context of medical sociology, disability is linked with biological causes. This means that disability is restriction caused by impairment, or in other words, the malformations within a biological body are the cause of disability. In this perspective, scholars distinguish between impairment and handicap; concepts understood to be synonymous with disability within mainstream contemporary culture. Impairment refers to the meaning of malfunction at the level of the bodily organ, limitations to completing activities of daily living or more complex work, and limitations to self-care or social interactions.<sup>323</sup> Handicap, according to WHO (1980) evokes disadvantage across multiple dimensions of survival roles.<sup>324</sup> The medical understanding of disability is contrasted by the social view, which does not see impairment and chronic illness as disabling conditions. It looks on disability as being socially caused. This means that sociologically, or according to the social model, disability represents a social barrier, activity limitation, and/or daily restriction, but it departs from being associated with a biological condition, such as handicap or impairment. Approaching disability as a social condition still does not mean that this has led to consensus among scholars and proponents of the social model. Although they all view disability from the perspective of the social model, they portray slightly different interpretations and emphasis of disability; often depending on context. For instance, the British context emphasizes a clear separation between social and medical model terminology. Within this approach, they refer to disability as a problem of societal disadvantage, whereas the medical model views disability as a physical disadvantage or problem of an individual. The North American version of the social model links disability with the notion of social pathology, including not only social, but also a human rights and environment-related disadvantage. Moreover, North American version of the medical model is often thought of as individual pathology (including biomedical and functional disadvantages).<sup>325</sup> The postmodernist and poststructuralist perspectives on disability criticize the social model and look upon disability as the result of bio-psycho-social causes (see previous section on sub-models). Moreover, their understanding of disability as an ontological condition (as everyone can be impaired to a certain degree at certain times) shifts the understanding of the experiences of disability, as well as insights into the distinction between the normal and abnormal dichotomy.<sup>326</sup> Many social model proponents (e.g. Dan Goodley; Colin Barnes; Mike Oliver)

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webster.com/dictionary/disability [accessed November 2016].

<sup>323</sup> See Violet Rutkowski-Kmitta and Glenn T. Fujiura „Counting Disability“ in *Handbook of Disability studies* pp.69-96

<sup>324</sup> See World Health Organisation, *International Classification of Impairment, Disabilities and Handicaps*. (Geneva, World Health Organisation, 1980).

<sup>325</sup> Rioux, M. H. "Disability the place of Judgement in a World of Fact." presentation to 10th World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability (IASSID), Helsinki Finland, July 1996.

<sup>326</sup> See John Davis & Nick Watson, „Countering stereotypes of disability: Disabled children and resistance,“ In Mairian Corker and Tom Shakespeare (ed.), *Disability/Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory*: pp.159-174.

maintain interest in a robust distinction between impairment and disability. There are also those Disability scholars who depart from such a strict distinction and recall upon conditionality between impairment and disability (e.g. Shakespeare, 2014). The most recent poststructuralist and postmodern concerns follow such a line of thought. Instead of being preoccupied with the distinction between impairment and disability, they emphasize a cultural representation of disability, where disability is a challenge to normality.<sup>327</sup> All of this points to mainstream scholarly and contextual inconsistencies regarding the equation of impairment with disability, as well as the terminology, image, and language used in historical and contemporary representations of disabled people.

### **Cultural inconsistencies on disability definition**

Disability definitions, constructed within different situations and in different cultural contexts, have shown that disability is not merely about impairment, but also implies cultural and historical connotations. Despite the WHO definition of disability's popularity, disability *cross-culturally* is still a complex concept to define.<sup>328</sup> According to the *World Report on Disability* (2011) 15% of the world's population has some form of disability.<sup>329</sup> Going beyond saying what the breakdown of specific disabilities are, the *World Report* indicates that 2-4% of people face significant difficulties in functioning, and there are increasing numbers of diseases related to chronic pain and aging. Besides being the most dominant models of disability, the biomedical and social model largely impacted the structure and definitions of disability within society. Thinking about disability on the basic level is picturing a wheelchair user or disorder limited in comparison to other physical or mental disorders of a different category (e.g. high blood pressure as particular physical disorder, as already indicated), outside the scope of physical disability. From these cultural inconsistencies in regard to definitions of disability and finding the common cultural framework in evaluating disabling conditions, not all disabled people worldwide have equal access to social and health care benefits. Due to these differences, the research report of Barnes and Mercer, for instance, indicates that only 1% of disabled people in developing countries have access to any form of rehabilitation or disability related services.<sup>330</sup> The medical model, the social model, and other sub-models have been crucial in influencing our understanding of disability and has led to scholarly disputes and conversations regarding the definition of disability. It is obvious that when disability is approached through studies of disability such as rehabilitation, psychology or medical sociology, its definition

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<sup>327</sup> For more on this discussion see Mitchell David T., and Sharon L. Snyder, eds. *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourse of Disability*, (The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997); Davis, Lennard, J., *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body*, 1995.; Thomas, C., *Female forms: Experiencing and Understanding Disability*, (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999).

<sup>328</sup> See Dan Goodley, „Beginnings: Conceptualising Disability in a Global World,“ in Dan Goodley, *Disability Studies-an interdisciplinary introduction*, (New Delhi, Sage, 2017): 1-21.

<sup>329</sup> See for instance <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs352/en/> [accessed November 2016].

<sup>330</sup> Some developing countries in Africa, Asia and India account the examples of such situations. Due to a different socio-legal regulations, that impacts definition of disability, the condition of people with disabilities in this context may not correspond to the same definitional framework, why is the reason people with disabilities loses their right to receive socio-economic benefits as their peers in wealthier countries. Cf. C.Barnes & G. Mercer (eds.), *Exploring the divide: illness and disability* (Leeds, The Disability Press, 1996).

includes elements that see disability through the lens of the medical model. Departing from the scope of Disability studies, the images and definitions of disability are influenced by socio-political arrangements. Moreover, in some cultures in East Africa, disability is still considered as demonic possession, due to the prevalence of the charity and religious model and associated with local cultural beliefs.<sup>331</sup> Another problem in grasping a definition of disability is that despite positive social and cultural contemporary achievements of disabled people, there remains confusion regarding the meaning of impairment versus disability. On the one hand there is a problem of understanding disability as the result of social barriers, and on the other hand, not all impairments are considered disability. Many sight or hearing impairments or difficulty in reading (dyslexia), are not considered to be disabilities under the social model, but in legal and biomedical contexts they are considered to be disabling human conditions. Another problem related to this, is that various readers, as well as, different contexts and cultures, use different language in interpreting disability. By this, I mean that different definitions of disability apply differently in particular socio-cultural contexts. For example, what has been called intellectual disability (*deficience intellectuelle or person avec le handicap*, in the French context), is in the UK recognized as learning disability.<sup>332</sup> Moreover, the UK notion of learning disability should not be confused with the meaning of dyslexia as a learning disability in the North American context.<sup>333</sup>

Due to inconsistency in the application of disability definitions world-wide, in some cultural contexts what is considered to be a disabling condition (for instance North American context) would not be recognized as a disability at all in some other context (e.g. India or Africa). There is some common ground on what constitutes disability, but there are also differences in opinion among scholars, and interpretations of these opinions in different cultural contexts. This means that disability is not merely a medical or social condition, as we have learned from the medical and social model perspectives, but is a highly culturally-relevant term, as certain definitions are applied differently in different socio-cultural contexts. The lack of a common definition of disability, culturally, medically and socially, is the reason for the existing gap in providing a globally acceptable terminology.

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<sup>331</sup> Angi Stone-MacDonald, "Cultural Beliefs about Disability in Practice: Experiences at a Special School in Tanzania" In *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 59:4 (2012): p.393-407. [Available from doi: 10.1080/1034912X.2012.723947, accessed December 2017]; For a detailed research on a similar topic see also: Devlieger, P. J., "Why disabled? The cultural understanding of physical disability in African society," in B. Ingstad & S. R. Whyte (eds.), *Disability and Culture*, (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1995): pp. 94-106. See also from the same author Devlieger, P. J., "Physical 'disability' in Bantu languages: understanding the relativity of classification and Meaning," in *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research*, 21,1(1998): p:51-62.

<sup>332</sup> Cf. "Introduction: The Formation of Disability Studies," in *Handbook of Disability Studies*. eds. Albrecht Gary L., Seelman Katherine D., Bury Michael, p.1-7.

<sup>333</sup> In North America the learning disability interfere with neurobiologically-based processes such as writing, reading, math, attention, short term memory, organization, instead of a permanently strict form of disability. Cf. <https://dyslexiaida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/> [accessed December 2016]. See also Youman, M., & Mather, N. Dyslexia laws in the USA *Annals of Dyslexia*. 63, (2013):133-153. [Available from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11881-012-0076-2> accessed December 2016].

## 2.1.5. Academic field of disability studies

### 2.1.5.1. The rationale and development of the field

In this section I will outline a few important aspects of Disability studies as an academic field in order to understand its broad matrix of interdisciplinary-based theories and applications. In particular, my focus will be to briefly present the field's development, rationale and purpose. Historically, disability has been the subject of numerous academic disciplines including special education, rehabilitation, and occupational therapy. It has been conceived of as a medical phenomenon (an abnormal condition that requires prevention and cure), or as a socially significant label. Disability has also been the subject of study in the fields of rehabilitation, medical sociology (study of disability), and Disability studies as separate academic fields. Disability studies as a distinct academic field has its *foundation* across different disciplines such as the humanities, social sciences, cultural studies, etc. It began with the *Disability rights movement* in the 1970.<sup>334</sup> According to Cameron and Moore, the UK version of Disability studies as a discipline emerged in the early 1980s through the teaching of disabled sociology scholar Mike Oliver.<sup>335</sup> From the Disability studies perspective, it first imposed a strong critique towards the medicalization of disabled people (Oliver, Barnes), and the conceptualization of disability within society and culture. Coming from the North American context, disability studies scholar Simi Linton has had a major impact on the development of Disability studies (and is also a direct carrier of disability<sup>336</sup>), and defines the field as a “socio-political-cultural examination of disability, different from an interventionist approach that characterizes the traditional study of disability.”<sup>337</sup> As an academic discipline, according to Linton, Disability studies is defined as an interdisciplinary liberal arts field that focuses on the concepts, meanings and experiences of disability; not just from scholarly points of view, but also from the perspective of a disabled people.<sup>338</sup> The rationale behind Disability studies is that disability is about human difference that requires understanding and expression. The purpose of disability studies is not just about studying the phenomena of disability, applying the social model, or exploring other models, but rather, the re-conceptualization and re-imagination of disability other than as a stigmatized deficit or social construction. Thus, disability as a human condition and the field of Disability studies is not an academic discourse implying medical - social model dichotomies. Neither is it a strategy that deals with how to care for disabled people, nor the study of disabled people's physical/bodily conditions. Rather, disability is a locus from which to speak and learn about the human condition, the means of social research and political action. In

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<sup>334</sup> Simi Linton, “What Is Disability Studies?,” in *Modern Language Association*, 120, 2 (2005): p.71.

<sup>335</sup> Colin Cameron and Michele Moore, “Disability studies,” in *Disability Studies - a student guide*, (London, Sage, 2014): p.37-39.

<sup>336</sup> The specific academic credibility Disability studies received from those academics who were direct carriers of the experience of disability such as Simi Linton, Dan Goodly, Mike Oliver, Tom Shakespeare.

<sup>337</sup> Besides Linton's definition in „Disability Studies/Non Disability studies“ other relevant definitions of DS with similar emphasis were addressed by Linton, S., Mello S., & O'Neill, J. “Locating Disability in Diversity.” In *Insights & Outlooks: Current Trends in Disability Studies.*, E. Makas & L. Schlesinger, eds. (Portland, The Society for Disability Studies and the E.S. Muskie Institute of Public Affairs, 1994).

<sup>338</sup> Linton, “What is Disability studies?” p. 71.

such a way it is a critique and a challenge to the established knowledge of mainstream culture towards the ideal of normalcy, or the quality of the body conceived as normal.<sup>339</sup> Disability studies also utilizes an interpretative and conversational view of disability which contradicts the mainstream sociological approaches that have shaped society's understanding of it. Disability studies offers critiques of established knowledge that opens up a dialogue between new researchers in disability, the political disability community, as well as traditional approaches to disability.<sup>340</sup> The difference between the study of disability and Disability studies lies in different perceptions of disability. Unlike other fields of the study of disability, for Disability studies scholars, disability matters in the sense that it is an integral part of the diversity of human life.<sup>341</sup> More precisely, as Shildrick and Price<sup>342</sup> and Lenard Davis in *Disability Reader* asserted, in disability studies disability is a set of meanings involved in the question of what it means to be human that is perceived as "fluid and shifting." Because of the new and complex situations of people with disabilities, as well as global crises (e.g. poverty, changes in social policies, economic and health care challenges) affecting disabled people lives, the academic field of Disability studies is ever-expanding and in need of constant engagement and keeping in line with new ideas and approaches to disability. There are a few new aspects of Disability studies; these include multiple conceptions of disability, cultural narratives that surround people with disabilities, and the experience of disability from the perspectives of the people with disability themselves.

In *Rethinking Normalcy*, Tanya Titchkosky and Rod Michalko present current challenges of disability studies as an academic field, and a similar line of thinking has been followed by Lenard Davis within Disability studies Reader. They address the emergence of new common issues within Disability studies, and also the renewal of old approaches to disability. This does not mean that the social and medical models have been overcome, but that they are not the main focus of disability studies discourses.

#### **2.1.5.2. Further perspectives regarding the development of academic field of Disability studies**

With almost fifty years of existence within academia, Disability studies has developed gradually by offering graduate, postgraduate, doctoral and postdoctoral research courses.<sup>343</sup> It has also been of interest to other established disciplines, such as sociology, the social sciences, anthropology, psychology, health sciences, etc.

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<sup>339</sup> Lennard, J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability Deafness and the Body*, (London: Verso, 1996).

<sup>340</sup> Tom Shakespeare, "Cultural representation of disabled people: Dustbins for disavowal?" In *Disability studies: Past present and future.*, Len Barton and Michael Oliver, eds. (Leeds: The Disability Press, 1997):p.217-233.

<sup>341</sup> Titchkosky, T. and Michalko, R., *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, (Toronto: Canadian Scholars/Women's Press, 2009): p.6

<sup>342</sup> Margrit Shildrick & Janet Price, "Breaking the Boundaries of the Broken Body" in *Body&Society*, 2, 4, (1996): 93-113.

<sup>343</sup> Albrecht Gary L. Ravaud J.F., Stiker Henri-Jacques. "L'émergence des *disability studies* etat des lieux et perspectives." In *Science sociales et sante*, vol.19,4 (2001): pp.43-73.



The primary idea or groundwork behind Disability studies was a critique of the social attitudes that see impairment as a cause of disability and social disadvantage.<sup>344</sup> As the field has developed, however, Disability studies departed from merely a social model perspective; beginning to include a matrix of theories, pedagogies, practices and ideas that overpass its merely social, or the medical and social model dichotomy understandings of disability.<sup>345</sup> Disability studies, as an academic field exists in North America, New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom. In recent research by Cushing and Smith entitled “Multinational Review of English-language<sup>346</sup> Disability Studies Degrees and Courses”, a comprehensive and evidence-based account of the development of Disability studies as an academic field was provided. The data demonstrate that the DS field is expanding in a way that is sustainable, with three key dimensions of growth: independent, (independent DS department); hybridize (DS courses incorporated into traditionally applied disciplines) and integrated (DS courses within Humanities and Social Science departments).<sup>347</sup> Disability studies research, questions, emerging ideas, and conferences are framed and gathered in an academic journal entitled *Disability & Society*, founded by Mike Oliver. Other, most recent academic Journals concerned with the subject of disability includes *The Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, *The Journal of Literary and Critical Disability Studies* and *Disability Studies Quarterly*. The field of research in the past fifty years has moved from political activism of disabled people in the UK and North America, social and medical model dichotomies and sub-model reasoning, to the more recent cultural, post-structuralist and postmodern inquiries (Titchkosky & Mitchalko 2009;<sup>348</sup> Mitchell & Snyder, 1997;<sup>349</sup> Corker & Shakespeare, 1998;<sup>350</sup> Davis 1996;<sup>351</sup>). By this I would like to note one important aspect within the Disability studies field itself: As with the definitions of disability, the approaches to disability within various cultural context evokes slightly different interest and focus in exploring it as a concept. Because disability is expressed mostly in English-speaking literature, the approaches to the same phenomena of teaching disability make disability scholars puzzled regarding the scrutiny of certain themes. Not only does the field recognize different emphases on its foundational issues and themes, but the field itself is brought under scrutiny. The emergence of Critical Disability studies or Cultural disability studies differentiate from the British materialist approach by its interest in cultural representation (imagery) of disability, and orbits around issues of economic and social disadvantage. Moreover, the recent turn in development in the exploration of disability within

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<sup>344</sup> See Barnes, C. „Disability, disability studies and the academy,” in *Disabling Barriers - Enabling Environments*, J. Swain, S. French, C. Barnes and S. Thomas, eds., (London, Sage, 2004): p.28-34.

<sup>345</sup> Garland-Thomson, R., „Integrating disability, transforming feminist theory.” In *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, 14,3, (2002), p: 1-32.

<sup>346</sup> Includes, North American (US and Canada), Australian, New Zealand and UK context

<sup>347</sup> See Cushing & Taylor, “A Multinational Review of English-language Disability Studies Degrees and Courses,” In *Disability studies quarterly*, vol 29, 3 (2009)., [available from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/940/1121>, accessed December 2016].

<sup>348</sup> Cf. Titchkosky, T. and Michalko, R., *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, 2009.

<sup>349</sup> Mitchell David T. and Sharon L. Snyder, eds. *The Body and Physical Difference - Discourse of Disability*, (The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997).

<sup>350</sup> M. Corker & T. Shakespeare, (eds.), *Disability/postmodernity: embodying disability theory*, 1998.

<sup>351</sup> e.g. Lennard, J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability Deafness and the Body*, (London: Verso, 1996).

Disability studies in general and Critical Disability studies in particular, was influenced by poststructuralist and postmodernist authors such as Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.<sup>352</sup> These recent developments demonstrate interest in the cultural interpretation of disability, and also imply intersectionality and parallels with other oppressed groups. This means that disability, particularly within a North American context and Critical and Cultural disability studies, is approached in line with queer theory perspectives, race, gender and sexuality. Concerning the “disability themes and subjects”, the aforementioned academic contexts demonstrate interest in issues such as normalcy, ableism, and diversity; or on the other hand, more attention has been stressed upon questions of stigma, identity, and politics of disability (e.g. Titchkosky & Michalko, 2009; Lennard Davis, 1995). Other topics and ideas incorporated and formulated into the Disability studies discipline include subjects such as exploring, rethinking and understanding disability; or disability reflected within law and bioethics, disability cross-culturally, the study of madness, etc.<sup>353</sup> Despite disability still being viewed as an unexpected, undesired, asocial, bodily condition thanks to Disability studies and other fields of study of disability, so far we know more about disability than ever. What Disability studies can offer to the mainstream scope of academia is, as Titchkosky asserted, a disciplined way to study the strategies in managing inclusion, and a source of critique to the normative culture in regard to normalcy and bodily identity.<sup>354</sup> While disability studies integrates and at the same time departs from social model rationale (e.g. disabled people’s experiences, social inclusion strategies), it cannot, as many Disability studies proponents think, be reduced to merely social inclusion as its guiding force. By this I first mean that not all of Disability studies concerns is and should be about the distribution of rights and adaptation of people with disabilities into a public environment. Secondly, I mean that despite disability within Disability studies or social policy being discussed as intersecting with sexuality and gender issues<sup>355</sup> or with other stigmatized identities such as race, nationality, or ethnicity, it also involve a separate and unique approach to inclusion. By this I mean that disability, as Shakespeare indicated, carries a biological dimension more strongly than other oppressed identities, and is therefore hardly possible that its biological aspect, impairment, could be entirely removed or underpinned with socio cultural questions such as race, gender and sexuality.<sup>356</sup> Together with Shakespeare I agree that disability cannot be used as a tool or a metaphor together with a cultural or women’s studies; disability can share aspects of cultural inequality with race, ethnicity and gender, but at the same time can be a separate - a social and political issue of wider public discussion. My view on the fields of disability studies and the study of disability suggest an integration of North American and United Kingdom perspectives on

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<sup>352</sup> Such references can be found in for instance Tom Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited*, (Abingdon, Routledge 2014): p. 47-70; See also Barbara Gibson, “Disability, Connectivity and Transgressing the Autonomous Body,” in *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 27:3 (2006):p.187-196

<sup>353</sup> e.g. department of Disability studies at Kings College, University of Western Ontario, Canada

<sup>354</sup> Tanya Titchkosky, “Disability Studies: The Old and the New”, in *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, 2009, p.56.

<sup>355</sup> For instance see the summer 2017 lectures on intersection between disability-sexuality-gender at Kings College University of Western Ontario

<sup>356</sup> See for instance Shakespeare Tom, *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited*, (Abingdon, Routledge 2014): p. 49

disability; this is because I believe that the emerging research in recent poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches are necessary, as are the social and economic concerns of people with disabilities presented by proponents of the British social model. The integration of both approaches can create a more complete and clear picture of disability and provide an adequate meaning of disability, rather than an ambiguous one.

Disability studies is a necessary and important field in exploring disability and related issues. However, it is also limited until more spiritual and religious perspectives are integrated into disability identity. I suggest that in order to grasp a holistic and integrative understanding of the human condition of disability and disabled people's experiences, Disability studies requires complete anthropology; the one that includes sociological, psychological and medical perspectives and sees people with disability as having full human potential, including spiritual and religious perspectives.

#### **2.1.6. Friendship with people with disability: from the perspective of disability studies and related disability discourses**

The research on friendship between disabled and non-disabled people, as well as between people with disabilities themselves, has been relatively recent in comparison with some other themes in Disability Studies and related fields of study of disability. The main studies within above-mentioned academic fields orbit around the models of disability, distribution of equal rights, rehabilitation, education, the cultural and contextual implication and meanings of disability, disability's definition, the history of institutional treatments of disabled people, disability representation, etc. When the inquiry addresses social relationship, debates often go into the direction of social inclusion, special education, or independent living as a formal type of social relationship. In this section, my aim is to discuss a few reasons for the theme of friendship being marginalized or replaced with some other means of social inclusion. One of the most common reason referred to is the lack of visibility of people with disability within society. The second reason is the focus on the process of managing inclusion merely via distribution of rights and citizenship. Regarding the lack of visibility and poor social relationships for people with disability, Disability Studies scholars associates with the people with disability stigmatized identities (disabled, mentally retarded, idiots, etc.), which consequently result in a lack of inclusion into a social and public environment. Disability Studies scholar Simi Linton addresses the impossibility of social inclusion more specifically. According to Linton, limited environmental and public spaces for people with disabilities make it impossible for people with disability to be present, visible and have opportunity to freely interact within society.<sup>357</sup> Related to this, many people with disabilities find their social relationships are reduced to either family members (household) or social interactions with their co-workers (resulting in a limited workplace interactions).

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<sup>357</sup> Simi Linton, *Disability studies*, p. 10

Sticker, in *History of Disability* follows a similar line: people with disability, historically, were indeed not fully included in society and their social relationships were poor and limited.<sup>358</sup> This is to say that prior to the formation of, or even opportunity to establish, friendship, people with disability needed to be included and visible within society. Considering the reason of social policy inclusion, it is important to first emphasize that the modern cultural context manages inclusion via merely the distribution of civil rights and freedoms. This can be evident via the social policy and human rights disability discourses (e.g. Anita Silvers; WHO) resulting in distribution of rights and equal participation. Little, however, has been said within such documents on the importance of friendship as a type of managing inclusion and social participation. It shows that managing inclusion through mere distribution of rights, freedoms and citizenships, instead of emphasizing the inclusion through the value of encounter, communication, social relationships and friendship, remain insufficient. This further entails that conceptually, as a theme and theoretical concept, research on friendship within Disability Studies literature (including voices of its proponents such as Mike Oliver, Simi Linton, Dan Goodley, Lenard Davis, Mitchell and Snyder; Tania T., Corker, etc.) has not been addressed as a separate concept. Only, upon recently, friendship was conceptually discussed within edition of a chapter in a book of disability scholar, T. Shakespeare (Shakespeare, 2014). In congruence with above-mentioned reasons, Shakespeare address a lack of conceptual analysis regarding the theme of friendship within the field of Disability Studies<sup>359</sup> and a limited empirical research that, in line with his assessments, does not go far enough, except including people with learning disability.<sup>360</sup> Apart from a lack of theoretical analysis, friendship as a separate theme within Disability Studies, has been given *practical credibility* through an *empirical* analysis of dyad relationships. Most of this research focuses on managing social inclusion and social acceptance, which involves the element of a notion of *personal*. The most relevant and recent journals where such a theme are investigated, and where I will ground my investigation regarding friendship, include *Disability and Society*, *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disability*, *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, *British Journal of Learning Disability*, etc. Most of these studies question the quality of friendship of people with disability in terms of its motivation and their capacity to establish and maintain friendship. It also discusses non-disabled people in regard to their friendship with people with disabilities as a tool to promote respectful and trustworthy relationships. The most common questions examined empirical research in such journals are: although, people with disability have friends, what is the actual possibility for them to establish friendship?; what is their response to friendship?; who do they choose as friends?; to what extent does the established social relationship between people with disabilities and their care workers or personal assistants correspond to the relationship of friendship, etc. Moreover, Disability Studies scholarship, when considers social relationships, distinguishes between the context and the relationship. Both settings (context and relationship) are concerned with the questions of social inclusion and social acceptance. The

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<sup>358</sup> Sticker, *History of Disability*, p.1-14.

<sup>359</sup> Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited*, p.188.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid. p.203

context-related settings include mainstream and special schools' environments, as well as the context of household and independent living (care) settings. These environments are interesting as they open a real possibility of friendship formation, enabling social inclusion, via participation (school) and empowerment (distribution of care, independent living), but still, they left researchers puzzled as they do not provide an exact answer to how social inclusion of this type, enables a friendship formation. Regarding the type of relationship settings, Disability Studies discourses distinguish between formal or professional, and informal or personal social interaction. The formal type of relationships are mostly professional, like the relationships between an employer and employee or receiver of care and their personal assistant. The personal or informal relationships include family, school peer's ties, and kinship. The difference is that in formal settings the interactions are based on paid work and respect of ethical boundaries, including formal behaviors, like concern for managing the power balances and avoidance of the exploitation of either care-provider (PA) or the person who receives care, in this case a person with disability. Within the type of informal settings, such as friendship, tasks and ethical boundaries are perceived less as an obstacle for relationship creation, and communication is more flexible and spontaneous. The interesting point of such types of relationships emerges when the formal (paid care) relationship involves an element of informal (friendly) behavior. The overall conclusion of such reasoning leads to three questions: (1) in what ways can human relationships become depersonalized? (2) To what extent can care within informal (e.g. friendly) types of relationships become depersonalized? and (3) to what extent can the formal (e.g. independent living) relationships become personalized. My final question addresses the rationale of friendship formation, including the elements that such friendly relationship involves.

As this subject is not only discussed within the field of Disability Studies, but also within other academic disciplines such as social policy, rehabilitation, special education and humanities, my purpose in further research is to collate the empirical data on a theme of friendship within its most relevant journal: *Disability and Society*. Although the major references on the subject of friendship within *Disability and Society* relates to adults with disability, there are no age and gender classification preferences in exploring the theme of friendship. My research includes the mainstream disability discourse's relevant literature with its reference to the theme of friendship. Besides the factual importance of disability classification (that includes language and terminology), my interest is to go beyond such narrow classification and provide a wider perspective on the practice of friendship. This in most cases includes reference to developmental and intellectual disabilities, but also goes beyond these to look at specific types of disability.<sup>361</sup> As my observation includes conceptual and empirical analysis of friendship, its meaning and application for both people with and without disability, this research will interchangeably explore the area of empirical research that includes friendship between people with and without disabilities, as well as, people with disability *themselves*. In the first part, the research concerns

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<sup>361</sup> This is in accordance with the phenomenological research in the third chapter which mostly includes people with developmental disabilities, but also other types of disability

the empirical investigation of friendship relationships, or informal, personal social interactions, between people with and people without disabilities, as well as, people with disability themselves. In the second part of the research I will look at formal social relationships that include professional settings of distribution of care, such as independent living. This process includes person with disability or care-receiver and his or her personal assistants, or a care provider.

#### **2.1.6.1. Conceptual discourses on friendship in the field of Disability studies and related disability Literature**

In a previous section I presented the most common and evidence-based reasons of the lack of social and participatory inclusion for people with disabilities. My next step in a further analysis, include conceptually and empirically distinct and detailed approach to the theme of friendship.

Despite social relationships, including friendship, having a positive impact on people's self-esteem and moral growth, the impossibility of friendship has a negative impact on people. Research finds that one of most common issues arising from a lack of friendship is loneliness. Those who experience poor social interactions and low-quality social relationships report not only loneliness (McVilly at all, 2005a),<sup>362</sup> but, according to some researchers, can suffer further socio-psychosocial conditions such as depression or criminal behavior, or neuro-psychological condition such as Alzheimer's disease (Wilson at all., 2007).<sup>363</sup> As in the mainstream population, the consequences of a lack of friendship have been found in people with disability. Disability Studies researchers in exploring the theme of friendship listed a few reasons of a poor network of social relationships between disabled people. Accordingly, this includes at first a negative effect and the historical representation of disabled people as stigmatized individuals. Secondly, most contemporary discussions of a lack of friendship refer to social, economic and environmental reasons. Social reasons include ignorance, prejudices and hostility, lack of social support, isolation (Priestly at all.2000)<sup>364</sup> the need to be accompanied by adults or assistants, difficulties in communication, etc. The economic and environmental reasons are associated with the lack of financial support, and related poverty, lack of mobility and poor access to transport, accommodation restrictions, etc. The third reason of a poor network of social relationship as discussed by Disability Studies scholar Tom Shakespeare, is the poor interest in exploring the theme of friendship, as opposed to the theme of sexuality. Namely, the interest into the topic of sexuality overshadowed the theme of friendship. Although culture and media say the opposite by prioritizing the sexual bodies and sexual acts, friendship and acceptance, according to

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<sup>362</sup> McVilly, Keith & Stancliffe, Roger & Parmenter, Trevor & Burton-Smith, Rosanne., "I Get by with a Little Help from my Friends': Adults with Intellectual Disability Discuss Loneliness.," *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*., 19 (2005): p.191-203.

<sup>363</sup> Such consequences are not solely peculiar of people with disability, but can apply to all people who experience lack of social contact particularly in a more vulnerable state such as aging. For more see Wilson RS, Krueger KR, Arnold SE, Schneider JA, Kelly JF, Barnes LL, Tang Y, Bennett DA., "Loneliness and risk of Alzheimer Disease.," In *Arch Gen Psychiatry*, 64, 2 (2007): p.234-240.

<sup>364</sup> Mark Priestley, "Adults Only: Disability, Social Policy and the Life Course" In *Journal of Social Policy* 29, 3 (2000): p. 421-439

Shakespeare, are not only more fundamental, but are more important for the well-being of people with disabilities.<sup>365</sup> As already mentioned earlier, Disability Studies scholarship, for a theme of friendship, as with the theme of social inclusion, indicates a distinction between the type (or here more precisely the form) of friendship relationship and the context where such a friendship relationship appears. Regarding the first distinction (type/form of relationship): frequently, when it comes to the question of who people with disability name as friend, the response varies from being a friend with a member of the family or a caring co-worker, as well as friendship occurring between *people with disability* and *people with and without disabilities*. According to Lutfiyya's research, the friendship relationship between people with and without disabilities has been considered an extension of a community-based services for people with disabilities (Lutfiyya, 1991). The considerable research within this area has been conducted by exploring friendship relationships between people with and without disabilities. Only recently research within field of Disability Studies and other associated fields (Rehabilitation Therapy, Special Education) went in a different direction by exploring the meaning of friendship including the *people with disabilities themselves*.<sup>366</sup> Regarding the theme of friendship in this particular context, a considerable amount of research has been conducted within *school settings*, including children and adolescents with and without disabilities (e.g. Luftig, 1988;<sup>367</sup> Žic & Igric, 2001;<sup>368</sup> Hughes et al. 2001;<sup>369</sup> Hughes et al., 2004;<sup>370</sup>). The results indicate various responses from social acceptance and interactions to social rejection by the non-disabled peers. Yet, not all social interactions between children and adolescents in a school setting imply friendship. Friendship was also investigated as a theme within a *policy documents* (Sullivan, Bowden, McKenzie and Quayle, 2016).<sup>371</sup> For instance, a recent project on *Friendship, Profound disabilities and Policy* within English policy documents acknowledged friendship as one of the human "goods" also applicable for people with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities as a means of establishing their social and moral standing.<sup>372</sup>

In this regard, the theme of friendship explored in the two (English) social policy documents, (Hughes et al., Redley, Ring. 2011) "Valuing People" (DOH, 2001) and "Valuing People Now"

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<sup>365</sup> Cf. Shakespeare, *Disability rights and wrongs revisited.*, pp.188-208; See also *The Sexual Politics of Disability*, Shakespeare, T., Gillespie-Sells, K., and Davis, D., eds. (London, Cassell, 1996).

<sup>366</sup> More on this see in discourse within this chapter, pp.32-35

<sup>367</sup> Luftig, R.L., "Assessment of the perceived school loneliness and isolation of mentally retarded and nonretarded Students," *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 92 (1988):p. 472-475.

<sup>368</sup> Žic, A. & Igric L. "Self-assessment of relationships with peers in children with intellectual disability." *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 45 (2001): p. 202-211.

<sup>369</sup> Hughes, C., Copeland, S. R., Guth, C., Rung, L.L., Hwang, B., Kleeb, G., & Strong, M. "General education students' perspectives on their involvement in a high school peer buddy program." In *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 36 (2001): p. 343-356.

<sup>370</sup> Hughes, C. Fowler, S.E., Copeland, S. R., Agran, M., Wehmeyer, M.L., Church-Pupke, P.P., "Supporting high school students to engage in recreational activities with peers." In *Behavior Modification*, 28 (2004):p.3-27.

<sup>371</sup> Sullivan F., Bowden K., McKenzie K., Quayle E., "The Close Relationships of People with Intellectual Disabilities: A Qualitative Study", in *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual disabilities*, 29, 2 (2016): 172-84.

<sup>372</sup> Hughes, R.P., Redley, M., & Ring, H. "Friendship and Adults with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities and English Disability Policy," *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 8 (2011):p.197-206.

(DOH, 2009),<sup>373</sup>- demonstrated recognition of the personalization and value of friendship. In particular, *The Valuing People* 2001 acknowledged friendship as integrative element within mainstream community service (secondary good): in *Valuing People Now*, 2009, friendship was recognized as a subject on the list of recommendations, as well as a good worth pursuing in its own right.<sup>374</sup> The revised version of *Valuing People Now* addresses explicit (includes case studies and stories of particular individuals) and implicit (application and recommendation of friendship) possibilities for friendship. The authors conclude that although friendship within such documents has been recognized as a *good*, and policy documents do acknowledge friendship, *the relevance of empirical data of tensions and complexities entailed in the idea of friendship with adults with profound disabilities* has been missing<sup>375</sup>. What is meant by “complexities and tensions” to which the study of Hughes et al. refers?

Hughes’s (Hughes, 2011) research has shown a positive example of how friendship within policy documents is recognized as a good and as a possibility for all, people with disabilities included. However, he indirectly raises awareness of the peculiarity and complexity of the *right to* friendship, due to the existing tension between friendship as “stalled” well-being (sociology) and friendship as moral good (ethics). This demonstrates the concern that relationships with people with profound intellectual disabilities, as particularly referred to within the documents, although valuable, may not embody friendship as commonly understood, due to the nature of profound disability and a conceptual tension between understanding friendship either as a good or a hyper-good. My problem with regard to friendship, as implemented in such policy documents, consist in being skeptical that friendship can be considered a legislative right, as it could lose its spontaneity and informality. The discussion on friendship within inclusion policy in my observation appears insufficient. The possibility and limitation of implementing friendship as outlined within policy documents shown: a) the problem of understanding friendship either as a good (social policy) or as a hyper good (ethics and philosophy); and b) the tensions related to this friendship, and prejudices associated with disabled people’s cognitive and behavior capabilities. This suggests that the idea of friendship with adults with profound disabilities becomes problematic when placed in the context of social scientific research and philosophical thinking on friendship, as on the one hand it appears difficult to achieve, and on the other hand it implies a contradiction in terms (Hughes, 2011). Friendship is indeed an element that impacts social well-being and contributes the quality of life. Thus, instead of being considered an aspect of quality of

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<sup>373</sup> For more information about the content of this two documents See Department of Health (DOH), Document *Valuing people*. London: The Stationary Office & *Valuing People now: a new three years strategy for people with learning disabilities*. London: The Stationary Office, (2001). Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuing-people-a-new-strategy-for-learning-disability-for-the-21st-century> [accessed November 2016]

<sup>374</sup> See Rachel Parry Hughes, Marcus Redley Howard Ring, „Friendship and Adults with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities and English Disability Policy,“ in *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 8, 3 (2011): p.203.

<sup>375</sup> See Hugh at all., „Friendship and Adults with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities and English Disability Policy,“ p.200.



life, friendship is a way of living otherness. This is to say that when thinking about friendship we should move from considering it as a category to looking on it as living participation.

#### **2.1.6.2. Practical evidence of friendship analysis**

Some qualitative studies on disability and friendship have shown that people with disabilities do experience friendships (Knox and Hickson, 2001;<sup>376</sup> McVilly, 2006a;<sup>377</sup> 2006b;<sup>378</sup> Griffiths & Smith, 2015;<sup>379</sup> Callus, 2017<sup>380</sup>). These studies reveal features and qualities of the nature of this friendship evaluation, its meaning and importance between people with disabilities, and between people with and without disabilities. In a further assessment of the practical or empirical data on friendship, I will look separately at friendship a) between people with disabilities, and b) friendship relationships between people with and without disabilities. My intention is to show common features and elements apparent within such friendship relationships.

##### **2.1.6.2.1. Friendship relationship between people with disabilities themselves**

The studies involving friendship relationships between people with disabilities, according to Duck et al., and Chappell,<sup>381</sup> have been of less value than those studies of relationships between people with and without disabilities. The studies that included persons with disabilities have even been ignored. Despite the lack of research in that area, the reason for such a problem, according to many Disability Studies scholars, stems from an exaggerated focus on normalization, particularly applied in the context of friendship between people with and without disability. This resulted in first devaluing people with disabilities' social networks among themselves and disassociating them from one another, and second "forcing" them to identify with the non-disabled people. The related assumption of many disability scholars is that such relationships can be exploitative to people with disabilities due to the unequal distribution and possession of power, which can lead to people with disabilities being manipulated and devalued by people without disability. All this was the reason why many disability studies and social work scholars decided to study relationships between people with disability. Most of the input for this research comes from a social model perspective, particularly regarding the importance of people with disabilities' voices being heard (instead a

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<sup>376</sup> Knox M. & Hickson Fay, "The Meanings of Close Friendship: the Views of Four People with Intellectual Disabilities," *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 14, (2001):p.276 - 291.

<sup>377</sup> McVilly Keith R., Stancliffe Roger J., Parmenter Trevor R. Burton-Smith Rosanne M., "Self-advocates have the last say on friendship," *Disability & Society* 21, 7 (2006a):p. 693-708.

<sup>378</sup> McVilly Keith R., Stancliffe Roger J., Parmenter Trevor R. Burton-Smith Rosanne M., "I get by with a Little Help from my Friends': Adults with Intellectual Disability Discuss Loneliness," *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*,19 (2006b):p.191-203.

<sup>379</sup> Griffiths C., Smith, M., "Attuning: A Communication Process between People with Severe and Profound Intellectual Disability and Their Interaction Partners," *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 29 (2014): p. 124-138.

<sup>380</sup> Callus Anne-Marie, "'Being friends means helping each other, making coffee for each other': reciprocity in the friendships of people with intellectual disability," *Disability & Society*, 32, 1 (2017): p. 1-16.

<sup>381</sup> Duck S., West L. & Acitelli L.K. "Sewing the field: the tapestry of relationship in life and research". In *Handbook of Personal Relationships: Theory, Research and Interventions*, S. Duck, ed. (Chichester, John Wiley & Sons,1997): pp.1-23., See also Chappell, Anne L. "A question of Friendship: Community Care and the Relationships of People with Learning Difficulties", In *Disability & Society*, 9,4 (1994): p.426.

voice of researcher); or has been governed by the people with disabilities' slogan: "nothing for us, without us." In the following section I will present a perspective on the friendship relationships, and personal interpretations of friendship between people with disabilities themselves, based on my selection of case studies by Knox and Hickson 2001, and McVilly et al., 2006a/b.

The valuable research of Knox and Hickson in an Australian context investigates the meaning of close friendship in the views of four people with intellectual disabilities. The research presents people with ID's participation and their insights into the experience and knowledge of friendship. The participants - the four people with ID - have described friends with whom they have close non-intimate relationships as "good mates." The good mate relationships are distinguished from work friends or club friends, and are considered as actual friendship. The meanings attached to the good mate relationship yielded some common elements, such as: the meaning of a pivotal relationship ("he is an important friend"); the importance of doing things together, ("e.g going out together"); a sense of shared history, ("we grew up together"), shared common interests ("we like doing the same things"); helpfulness ("we help each other"); reciprocal support and desire to maintain friendship by making visiting arrangements ("working out what we're going to do").<sup>382</sup> Except by indicating that friendship was pervasive and pivotal in their lives, the four participants showed a lack of resultant feeling in experiencing connectedness, as well as the lack of a frame of reference in understanding the friendship and the meaning they attached to that experience. A similar approach has been taken by McVilly and colleagues in investigating the friendship experiences of adults with intellectual disability. This study engages people with intellectual disabilities as participants but also, in light of a phrase "nothing about us without us" as experts of their own experience. This emphasizes that people with intellectual disabilities were not merely participants, but they were involved in formulating the topic and inquiry, as well as, reviewing and analyzing the data (McVilly et al.<sup>383</sup>) The research findings reported the main aspects and qualities of these friendships, the rationale of best friends, the barriers to making friendships, and the importance of maintaining friendships, as well as the meaning of assistance and support. The study reported that friendship is one of the most valuable aspects of the lives of people with disabilities. For the four participants friendship was of a moral importance and a way of managing interpersonal communication. The consensus of all participants was that the most important aspects of friendship are trust, respect, understanding, acceptance of who you truly are (moral standards), talking, sharing, and having fun (interpersonal communication). When defining the meaning of best friends, people with intellectual disabilities reported that it is difficult to have best friends outside the group due to the categorical and physical differences that in some way could impact the meaning of similar interest. The reasons mentioned by people with disabilities when discussing lack of friends outside the group were feeling of stigma, feeling of inferiority, such as not belonging to the same level or failing, to being equal to

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<sup>382</sup> Knox & Hickson, "The Meanings of Close Friendship: the Views of Four People with Intellectual Disabilities," p. 280-282.

<sup>383</sup> McVilly Keith R., et al., "Self-advocates have the last say on friendship" in *Disability & Society*, 21, 7 (2006a): p.649.

the general population.<sup>384</sup>To have best friends for people with intellectual disabilities entailed *similarity* in terms of sharing the same socio-cultural identity of intellectual disability that implicitly means being on the same path. The inclusive type of forming friendship between people with disabilities seems to be better established due to having the same shared interests and the same idea of belonging (sense of sharing history, source of support, common interest).

## Discussion

In the above study people with disability who live in residential homes had the opportunity to express their evaluation of experiences and the importance of social relationships. Both research articles presenting the reason for people with disabilities' lack of friendship related to a lack of opportunities to establish friendships. The reasons listed include people with disabilities' restricted access to income and residential properties resulting in a lack of autonomy, little control over privacy and choice, which all together reinforce social isolation. The research also pointed to the need for, value and importance of friendship in people with disabilities, and also the impact friendship has upon their social wellbeing. The common features in both studies were reciprocity and shared history as recognized elements of friendship dyads. Based on this, both studies come to the conclusion that people with disabilities may be better integrated with their peers who have the same socio-cultural condition. Such assumptions have been followed by many other Disability Studies scholars, as already indicated at the beginning of this section. Although promoting friendship between people with disabilities is valuable, particularly in terms of promoting a special type of inclusion and perceiving people with disabilities themselves to be capable of friendship, without the support of non-disabled people, it seems that this way of forming friendship does not bring about full inclusion. The reason I think this happens is that exaggerated equality and shared values among people with disabilities could foster further stigmatization categorization or, on the other hand, fail to bring about full integration within the scope of the broader community (non-disabled people included). How can one be included and visible if social interactions are only possible and promoted among those of similar attitudes, and are therefore symmetrical? The idea of many Disability Studies scholars to have friends only between people with disabilities can indeed strengthen their capabilities and skills and neutralize power balances that sometime can be jeopardized by able-bodied persons. However, in my opinion each relationship is in some way asymmetrical or dissymmetrical, as we are never fully equal to each other. Any asymmetry or dissymmetry can be a challenge, but it can be also a better way to understand one's own existence within the word. Friendship is a complicated and complex relationship to maintain, but it overcomes barriers of power balances in order to promotes another person's agency. Such dynamic should equally apply to both people with and people without disabilities.

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<sup>384</sup> McVilly Keith R., at all., "Self-advocates have the last say on friendship" in *Disability & Society*, 21, 7 (2006a): p. 699.

#### 2.1.6.2.2. Friendship between people with and without disabilities

Anne Marie Callus's<sup>385</sup> recent research demonstrated people with disability understanding of friendship in the cultural context of Malta. The participants were seven people with intellectual disability living in the same self-advocacy group. The results were divided between two themes: selection of groups of people considered to be their friends, and behaviors and actions as markers of friendships.<sup>386</sup> Callus's research shows that people with intellectual disability identified their co-workers, self-advocates, family members and support workers as friends. Intimate relationships were also identified in that some of the participants identified their girlfriends or boyfriends as best friends. Common activities were assigned as important markers of their friendship. These include helping each other, having a good time together, sharing jokes, shared activities, and behaviors such as spending time together, shared leisure time, and reciprocal help (Cf. Callus, 2017). People with intellectual disabilities identified undesirable treatment towards them such as using abusive language from other people with ID, or lack of respect from staff residence as unfriendly behaviors. This marker demonstrates people with ID have the capacity to distinguish between unfriendly and friendly behavior. The essential element presented within this research is identification of the informal behavior (sharing jokes, spending leisure time) and reciprocity (reciprocal help and leisure) as marker of friendship and a challenge for an established understanding of friendship. Specifically, regarding reciprocity, Callus's research identifies the presence of implicit reciprocity present through reciprocal help and leisure as an essential, yet not explicitly visible, element of this friendship. For instance, reciprocity was referred to giving, not just receiving, help (helping friends as much as their friends help them) or spending evening activities together as friends, not as residents-staff dichotomy. These examples of exercising reciprocity were not identified as sign of dependence, *but as act that arises naturally of their interaction with friendly others.*<sup>387</sup>

A report from Lutfiyya<sup>388</sup> demonstrated shared characteristics of friendship between four pairs of people with and without learning disabilities. The research addressed the necessity of exploring and promoting friendship between people with and without disability as an actual possibility and realization.<sup>389</sup> Contrary to the established opinion of a number of Disability Studies scholars (e.g.

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<sup>385</sup> Anne - Marie Callus, „Being friends means helping each other, making coffee for each other: reciprocity in the friendships of people with intellectual disability“, in *Disability and Society*, 32:1(2017): 1-16.

<sup>386</sup> Callus, „Being friends means helping each other, making coffee for each other: reciprocity in the friendships of people with intellectual disability“, p.7.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>388</sup> Zana Marie Lutfiyya, „A Felling of Being Connected:” Friendships between People with and without Learning Difficulties,” in *Disability, Handicap & Society*, 6:3 (1991): pp.233-245.

<sup>389</sup> Lutfiyya, „A Felling of Being Connected:” Friendships between People with and without Learning Difficulties,”p.234.

Chappell, 1994;<sup>390</sup> Knox et al., 2000;<sup>391</sup> McVilly et al., 2006a;<sup>392</sup> Mason et al., 2013;<sup>393</sup> etc.) that friendships between people with and without disability do not correspond to reciprocal exchange and the true equality, this article demonstrates robust evidence that friendship in its definition, applies as a dynamic and mutual process to both parties.<sup>394</sup> The common features of these friendships include mutuality; a feeling of being connected (breaking rules of formal boundaries); practical assistance and emotional support; inspiration; voluntary nature, understood as freely chosen and given; assistance and support as a common feature of friendship, responsibility and obligation towards each other, and affection. All participants identified themselves as friends, and the friendship was identified as a type of interpersonal relationship. Lutfiyya's research brings up several elements that require closer attention. For instance, reciprocity is not restricted to the straightforward exchange of a certain goods. The meaning of reciprocity in Lutfiyya's research is mutuality. Mutuality includes practical assistance and emotional support, inspiration, rule breaking and dispersions of certain societal norms, as well as enjoyment of being together. This is to say that reciprocity is not reduced to a strict formula of exchange understood as giving and receiving. The voluntarily nature of friendship in the participants' responses means that friendship is not controlled, but freely chosen and accepted. The research also reported a number of critical events such as disagreement or critical behavior, which, in participants' descriptions, were seen not as limits, but as opportunities to improve the quality of friendship.<sup>395</sup> The obligations and responsibilities identified by non-disabled peers underline assistance and support. For people with ID, responsibility consists as initiative to make a phone calls to their friend, suggest activities or willingness to spend time together.

## Discussion

The above-mentioned research evidences the fact that friendship, or "making friends", is among the most essential goods for people with disabilities. Both studies exploring friendship between people with and without disabilities and between people with disability shows a possible opportunity. Moreover, together they brought some positive insights, which help us to understand people's aspirations for the experience of friendship, and to foster social inclusion. The emerging elements of both friendships (disabled and non-disabled people) indicate that despite different ways of forming, processing and experiencing friendship, certain similarities and congruences appears. For instance, participation in shared activity, the process of making friends,

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<sup>390</sup> Chappell, Anne L. "A question of Friendship: Community Care and the Relationships of People with Learning Difficulties", *Disability & Society* 9,4 (1994):p.419 - 434.

<sup>391</sup> Knox M. & Hickson Fay, "The Meanings of Close Friendship: the Views of Four People with Intellectual Disabilities," *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 14 (2001):p.276 - 291.

<sup>392</sup> McVilly Keith R., Stancliffe Roger J., Parmenter Trevor R. Burton-Smith Rosanne M., "Self-advocates have the last say on friendship," *Disability & Society* 21,7 (2006a):p.693-708

<sup>393</sup> Mason, P., K. Timms, T. Hayburn, and C. Watters, "How Do People Described as Having a Learning Disability Make Sense of Friendship?" *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 26, 2 (2013):p.108-118.

<sup>394</sup> Lutfiyya, "A Felling of Being Connected": Friendships between People with and without Learning Difficulties," p.236

<sup>395</sup> Lutfiyya, "A Felling of Being Connected: Friendships between People with and without Learning Difficulties," p.240.

communication, and reflection on friendship were among common elements in both forms of friendship. Furthermore, more explicit elements present in both friendships include helping each other, spending time together, sharing jokes and common activities, support to each other, reciprocity, responsibility and sense of emotional belonging or affection. All this demonstrate that in order to properly understand friendship or recognize something as friendship, we need to understand the features and characteristics that this relationship consists in. The conceptual reasoning about friendship is of no less importance, but when such a framework includes person with disability, the approach may be slightly different, as friendship in such regard does includes slightly a different framework. But what happened when a friendship with people with disability include care? In what extent the social network of formal relationship, in such circumstances, corresponds to friendship?

#### **2.1.7. Social relationship between staff (caregivers) - residents (care receivers) relationships: are they friendships?**

In a previous section I presented dyad relationships where friendship was considered a voluntary choice and where the outcome or identification of a relationship corresponds to friendship. Another context where friendship within Disability Studies discourses and the study of disability has been studied is in the social networks between staff-resident relationships. The term “staff-resident relationship” in this research address the interaction between care giver and the care receiver, or personal assistants and recipient of care, evident in the scholarly literature of the ethics of care, and in studies of disability and nursing. These interactions, according to mainstream disability and care research, are addressed formal or professional relationships.<sup>396</sup> The term “formal” was also determinative for professional or impersonal caring relationship in Disability studies discussion session during my research visit at Kings College, UWO, Canada. The general characteristics of these formal relationships is that they are involuntary, they include respect for power balances, and are often assumed to create a formal or hierarchical communication gap between the giver and the receiver of care. What complicates the formality of such a relationship is the element of care that is involved and processed through the interdependent communication that often involves reciprocity. In other words, the element of care involved, means that such relationships on the one hand include a respect of power balances (formal element), but also a personal exchange, including, for instance, the intimacy of touch, laugh, anger, openness. This is to say that due to the implications of the care element in such relationships, the subjects involved in care provision and care receiving are *formally* interdependent, their communication may become highly reciprocal and sometimes even personal. The question is to what extent could such relationships be equated with friendship? Or could the respect of power balances, understood

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<sup>396</sup> For instance see Jenny Morris, „Care of Empowerment? In *A Disability Rights Perspective*, 31, 1 (1997): 54-60  
 Claire Ungerson, „Personal Assistants and disabled people: an examination of a hybrid form of work and care,“  
 in *Work, Employment and Society* 13,4 (1999):p.583-600; Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited*,  
 2014: pp.138-187; John Sumarah, „Metaphors as a Means of Understanding Staff - Resident Relationships“ in  
*Mental Retardation*, 27, 1 (1989): p.19. etc.

within the scope of this thesis as a sort of hierarchical gap, prevent such relationships from falling into a friendship? The straightforward identification of formal/caring relationship with the relationship of friendship is puzzling and ambiguous. Some studies<sup>397</sup> have shown that friendship between care workers and recipient of care is possible. Similarly, research has also shown that many staff-resident or caring relationships have friendship like elements, but do not correspond straightforwardly to friendship (e.g. Pockney, 2006; Ungerson, 1999). According to Pockney's<sup>398</sup> research on relationships between professional care-workers, or staff, and persons with disability showed that people with disability identified professional worker as their friend, whereas the same identification cannot be applied to the choice of professional worker. Also, the study of Callus, examined earlier in this research, demonstrates that the selection of friends by people with disability includes co-workers and support workers, or self-advocacy group member. Similarly, in his research on care and interdependency, Kroger finds that the relationships between disabled people and their personal assistants has many of the same characteristics as personal friendship relationships.<sup>399</sup> In contrast to this, a number of disability studies scholars, in discussing relationship between people with disability and their care worker, would be rather reluctant to acknowledge this relationships as friendship. The transition of the relationships that involves care from formal (impersonal) to informal (personal or friendship relationship), for many Disability Studies scholars, presents a problem, as they are less likely to identify formal relationship that involve care with friendship. The transition from formal towards informal or personal was particularly puzzling within the context of Disability Studies regarding social care relationship and the context of independent living as an aspect of quality of life. One of its advocates, Jenny Morris, perceives independent living as an aspect of empowerment for disabled people, instead of seeing it as an element that can stimulate the reciprocal interdependency of friendly relationships.<sup>400</sup> Her emphasis and concern, as for a large number of Disability Studies scholars, is to prioritize respect for power balances and protection of the person's independence, for the reason that a) it prevents the exposure of increased vulnerability of both care giver and care receiver, and b) improves the quality of life of disabled people via social networks. The aim of the following section is to examine the nature of the relationship in two formal care settings between person with and without disability. The context of independent living and a few examples from the mainstream research on

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<sup>397</sup> See for instance Callus Anne-Marie, "“Being friends means helping each other, making coffee for each other”: reciprocity in the friendships of people with intellectual disability", *Disability & Society*, 32, 1 (2017): 1-16; Cushing, P. *Shaping the moral imagination of caregivers: Disability, difference and inequality in L'Arche*. PhD diss., (Hamilton, Ont. McMaster University, 2003); Pottie, C., Sumarah, J. (2004). "Friendships between persons with and without developmental disabilities." in *Mental retardation*, 42, 1 (2004): 55-66; Lutfiyya, Z.M. "When staff and clients become friends". In *Friendship and community connections between people with and without intellectual disabilities*, ed. A.N. Amado, (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 1993): p.97-108.

<sup>398</sup> Rebecca Pockney, "Friendship or facilitation: people with learning difficulties and their paid carers", *Sociological Research Online*, 11, 3 (2006).

<sup>399</sup> Teppo Kroger "Care research and disability studies: Nothing in common?" *Critical Social Policy*, 29, 3 (2009): p.1.

<sup>400</sup> See for instance Jenny Morris. *Pride Against Prejudice* (London, Women's Press, 1991); See also from the same author, *Independnet Lives? Community Care and Disabled People*. (Macmillian, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1993); „Community care or independnet living?“ In *Critical Social Policy*, 40, 1, (1993): p. 24-45. Also, Kittay, Eva F. *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency*. (London, Routledge, 1999).

care will be examined in a next section. Although the independent living and formal deliveries of care could be discussed in many ways, as this social settings marks various interesting and challenging factors (e.g. poor working conditions, paid wages, segregation of employee, limited access to employer determination, quality of life variable etc.) my interest in this research is to specifically look at the meaning and the nature of relationships between care worker and care user where the care user is in a role of “employer” and the care worker or personal assistant is its “employee.”

#### **2.1.7.1. Caring relationship from the perspective of a personal assistant, and in the context of independent living<sup>401</sup>**

Caring and dependency as elements of dyad relationships in a different context implies various meanings. In Disability Studies literature care (understood as medical intervention) and related dependency (understood as charity) as we could have seen, required a slightly different formulation and various meanings, often influenced by a social model rationale, the mainstream account of a feminist literature (e.g. J.C.Tronto1993;<sup>402</sup>and E.F. Kittay, 1999<sup>403</sup>), and the emergence of a *Critical disability studies* literature. In this regard, the social model influence upon the perception of care and dependency was specifically defined by negative connotations. The reason for his situation primarily consists in a social model response to the medical model strategy that reduces people with disabilities’ freedom and choice to medical interventions, cure and medical treatments; or the pity and charity of charitable organizations, including altruistic help of non-disabled people for afflicted individuals. Stemming from this, the independent living strategy was the reaction to a lack of independence, and was an alternative to remedy this problematic situation, increasing people with disabilities’ ability to make choices and control their own lives. Independent living in most recent discussions of disability is among the most important variables in the quality of life (QQL)<sup>404</sup> strategy. The social relationships based on a professional provision of help are regarded as a means of individualized support that enhances human functioning, ameliorates the impact of one’s disability, and facilitates the adaptation to everyday life, etc.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> There are other formal settings of care provision. Independent living is only one example of such formal care provision that is of my interest to explore within this chapter.

<sup>402</sup> J.C. Tronto, *Moral Boundries: A Political Argument for an Ethics of Care* (London, Routledge, 1993).

<sup>403</sup> Kittay, *Love’s Labour*, 1999.

<sup>404</sup> QQL is according to WHO defined as „*individuals’ perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns* (WHOQQL, p.1405). My intention within this research is not oriented towards exploring the QQL rationale. I am looking on it only in relation to independent living strategy.

<sup>405</sup> For more on QQL strategy and its impact on people with disabilities daily functioning see Fallowfield L. *The Quality of Life :The Missing Measurement in Health Care*. (London, Souvenir Press, 1990); Lunskey, Y. & Benson B.A. “Association between perceived social support and strain and positive and negative outcome for adults with mild intellectual disability.” In *Journal of Intellectual Disability* 45, (2001):p.106 - 14; Schalock R.L., Verdugo M.A. & Jenaro C., “Cross-cultural study of quality of life indicators.” *American Journal on Mental Retardation* 110, (2005):p.298-311.



My intention in this section is to look at a care giver and care receiver *relationship* in the two *formal* types of delivery of care: the mainstream care settings environment, and independent living. The care provision in both contexts is managed through the help of a care worker, or support worker, often called a personal assistant. Despite the fact that in some scholarly disputes<sup>406</sup>, the care that is undertaken by a personal assistant could be perceived as a separate caring context, within the scope of this research the care giver will be referred to as a personal assistant. But what exactly is the relationship between the role of a personal assistant and independent living strategy, and to what extent does it differ from an informal, personal relationship? Before I continue to explore the nature of the relationship between the PA and the PWD, I would like to briefly highlight few elements that predispose a personal assistant working in an independent living context to the formal type of relationship. The role of personal assistant in the delivery of care and in independent living has a large impact on disability discourses understanding of care. Disability Studies scholar T. Shakespeare, discusses personal assistance delivery of care as a new strategy for giving personal support, and as an alternative to traditional models of care. Others, such as Jane Morris, would connect the role of the personal assistant with the meaning of individual support specific to the independent living framework. The general idea of personal assistant within independent living was devised after 1970 (UPIAS) and presented in North America, Europe and UK as an alternative model of traditional care. *Article 19* of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) addresses persons with disabilities' right to independent living, community support and a personal assistant.<sup>407</sup> The article most strongly refers to Adolf Ratzka's philosophy of independent living which promotes the independence of persons with disabilities by means of the support of a personal assistant, in order to have equal opportunities, self-determination and self-respect (Ratzka, A. (ed), the 2004 Model of National Assistance Policy).<sup>408</sup> The 2002, Disability Rights Commission (DRC) discusses independent living, saying:

“disabled people having the same choice, control and freedom as any other citizen - at home, at work, and as members of the community. This does not necessarily mean disabled people 'doing everything for themselves', but it does mean that any practical assistance people need should be based on their own choices and aspirations.”<sup>409</sup>

The emphasis on choices, empowerment and self-reliance as intrinsic to the wellbeing of people with disability in and through relationships with their personal assistants is central to this research.

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<sup>406</sup> In other words, the PA model is very heterogenous and delicate in distributing care and include diversity of approaches (for instance PA model includes provision of care to elderly, people with physical impairments, people with intellectual disabilities, etc.) For more see in Pearson, C. “Independent living,” in N. Watson, A. Roulstone and C. Thomas (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2012): pp.240-252.

<sup>407</sup> Cf. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-19-living-independently-and-being-included-in-the-community.html>

<sup>408</sup> Cf. <http://www.independentliving.org/docs6/ratzka200410a.html>

<sup>409</sup> Jenny Morris, “Barriers to Independent Living: A scoping paper prepared for the Disability Rights Commission,” (2003): p.3, Available from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.598.4176&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Independent living was a new structure of (*individual*) help and support service where people with disabilities (care receivers) received direct payment from the state or local funds, and have right and responsibility to decide who they will employ as a care worker, how their help will be distributed and so on.<sup>410</sup> The main purpose of independent living is to empower disabled people, to promote their self-reliance, and to enable their choice, autonomy and control. In other words, independent living, by empowering people with disability to be autonomous and self-reliant, enables people with disability way to flourish and act as the key *player* in the employment of a personal assistant.<sup>411</sup> Theoretically, a person with disability has the choice, power and control over assistant as his/her employees,<sup>412</sup> but at the same time the role of personal assistant, at least theoretically, is subverted. The strict subversion of roles indicates a hierarchical organization of the PWD-PA interaction and relationships. The question is: can such interaction, based on the strategy of independent living, be derived from narrative of interpersonal communication, or, at some stages, friendly interaction?

#### **2.1.7.2. The nature of relationships within independent living**

The questions which pertain most strongly to my enquiry revolve around the implied boundary between professional and personal in an independent living social context; the nature of relationships between personal assistants and the receiver of care; the meaning and limits of this independence; and the question of voluntarily interaction and control. According to the independent living framework, the relationships within independent living should remain formal, the care worker and the receiver of care should remain independent, the communication between them should include a proper measurement of *power balances*, and should remain detached from any shared emotions or exploitation. However, there are examples in which a majority of professional care givers employed in disability agencies find it hard to remain formal with their receivers of care, despite ethical or professional respect of boundaries. Participating in the discussion at Disability Studies department at Kings college during my research visit, discourse demonstrated that despite respect of professional boundaries within formal relationships there are elements within formal caring, including independent living, that involve elements such as the emotion, listening, conversation and the body language. These elements defy a strict sense of independent relationships and move the care giver and the care receiver towards formation of a closer relationship, but are still not sufficient to be admitted as friendship. The work and social interaction of many care providers or personal assistants bears witness to the importance of elements such as touch, respect, time, laughter, emotion and trust, moving beyond merely formal

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<sup>410</sup> Morris, *Independent lives? Community Care and Disabled People*, p.22-23.

<sup>411</sup> See Jenny Morris, "Care of Empowerment? A Disability Rights Perspective," In *Social Policy Administration*, 31,1(1997): p.56.

<sup>412</sup> There is no need to indicate that independent living departs from social model approach. It was closely developed within response to health care services and traditional informal care provisions, which has been marked by neglect of autonomy, independence, power, control and self -advocacy. Nowadays independent living framework is highly influenced by disability rights movement in order to promote people with disability right to autonomy and control over their finances.

and professional boundaries. How can one, on the one hand, distinguish, between clear professional boundaries and tasks, and on the other hand, personal involvement based on acceptance and care? To answer that question, I will briefly look at a selection of the research of Val Williams et al. as my first example of caring relationships, and Clare Ungerson's research on care and work as my second example.

#### **a) Val Williams et al. Research**

In exploring interactions between people with learning difficulties and their personal assistants, the research of Val Williams et al.<sup>413</sup> is most revealing as it demonstrates the type of communication between PA and PWD. More precisely, Williams's study on interaction between people with learning difficulties and their personal assistants marked collaborative and supportive relationships, including mutual smiling, laughter, body language, emotions and friendliness. Their findings reveal that the communication between the PA and the person with disability has warm and informality. The elements identified within this research were: respect, choices, friendliness, advice, support, freedom, etc. Looking at the theme friendliness as a separate category within research, several elements signal that these may be friendship interactions. For instance, the usage of the word "mate" was identified as a marker of a relationship of equality, camaraderie or friendliness.<sup>414</sup> Another element determinative of this type of friendly communication involves a set of informal components such as making jokes, simple activities like making coffee together, mutual smiling, relaxed atmosphere in each other presence. The intellectual components of such friendliness are also noted. These include, friendly communication, understanding, light-hearted mood, body language and facial expressions. Overall, their interaction involves reciprocity based on a praxis of giving and receiving support, exchange of gestures, tasks, jokes, words, etc.

Although the relationship described in this research may not imply a full sense of friendship, the above elements has shown that independent living as one type of social care cannot be fully depersonalized and fails to reflect a strict power balance that would indicate a hierarchical relationship (one person over the other). Thus, we could say that the research presented by Williams has shown that the interaction between the person with disability and their personal assistant differs from strongly professional and institutional relationships. The close, friendly interactions listed above demonstrate the personal character of care. The language and gestures point to the presence of equal exchange instead of hierarchical awareness of control and power balances. Although the independent living strategy is about professional, informal interaction that is asymmetrical in nature, the previous example of Williams et al, suggests instead a relationship of symmetry that includes spontaneity.

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<sup>413</sup> Val Williams, Lisa Ponting & Kerrie Ford, "'I do like the subtle touch': interactions between people with learning difficulties and their personal assistants," In *Disability & Society*, 24:7, (2008):p.815-828.

<sup>414</sup> Val Williams et al., „*I do like a subtle touch*““ p.819-20

## b) Claire Ungersons' Research

Another example of similar concerns is Claire Ungerson's research on the relationship between personal assistants and disabled people,<sup>415</sup> and the link between care, work and feeling within such relationships.<sup>416</sup> She highlights some robust evidence of informal or personal elements in interdependent communication between care giver (PA) and care receiver (person with disability). Ungerson's main argument in both articles demonstrated that the care worker-care user relationships does include emotions and affection, and can vary from being strongly professional, to being exploitative, to being properly balanced. The imbalanced relationship between employers/employee in the independent living strategy, according to Ungerson, presents a problem, for the reason that, on the one hand, it is a way of the PWD exercising the power to live independently, but on the other hand, there is often emotion between individuals who work, talk and act together. In the first article regarding the hybrid form of work and care, including the relationship of personal assistants and disabled people, Ungerson investigate the meaning of control, power and issues related to ethical boundaries between PA and person with disability. Research has shown the emergence of so-called hybridity (interchangeable implication) of care and work within examined relationship, implying a risk of becoming informal (friendly) or crossing the ethical boundary between the paid work and unpaid care. This indirectly involves the element of a personal, and therefore informal or friendly, relationship between the PA and the person with disability as the recipient of care. Ungerson's second example in exploring the nature of relationship between work, care and feeling in five European countries, also demonstrates that the nature of relationships between paid care worker, unpaid worker, and their recipients of care in partaking the voluntary activities<sup>417</sup> involves an element of emotion and a personal behavior. Ungerson's research challenges the formal settings of independent living, pointing to the shortcomings that come within its strategic philosophy of independence vs interdependence. Demonstrating the occurrence of a mixture of a positive and negative emotions between care worker and care user, Ungerson has shown that the relationship that includes care, and so become more personal, also become less formal. Her research reported that care giving-care receiving relationships, when including people with disabilities, feature both positive and negative emotions. For instance, positive emotion exists in support, feeling of connectedness, whereas negative emotions include bad feelings, frustrations, exploitation or increased vulnerability of care giver. In addition to this, Ungerson, in "Care, Work and Feeling", discusses four different types of emotions that she calls cold, cool, warm and hot. Cold relationships are strictly contractual and professional. Cool relationships were characterized by feeling of acceptance, mutual respect. They were professionally organized, and task oriented, including mutual agreement, and the boundaries of the relationships was respected. Warm relationships feature support, appreciation, positive encouragement, interest in each other's personal stories, and are fully commodified and equitable.

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<sup>415</sup> Claire Ungerson, „Personal Assistants ad Disabled People: an examination of hybrid form of work and care.,“ In *Work, Employment and Society*, 13, 4, (1999): pp.583-600.

<sup>416</sup> Claire Ungerson, "Care, work and feeling," in *Sociological Review*, 53, 2 (2005): pp. 188-203.

<sup>417</sup> This includes Austria, France UK, Netherlands, and Italy

They appear stable, and not at risk of breaking down. The fourth “hot” type of relationship involves not just mutual appreciation and long-term validity, but the continuation of relationships despite the tension. These relationships involve strong feelings and affection; they were less formal and more personal. However, this type of relationships also involves exploitation and vulnerability, which points to its complexity. In exploring independent living personal assistants’ interaction with disabled persons, Ungerson’s study shows a puzzling interdependence based on the balance between power and feeling. Addressing the importance of the involvement of emotions and feelings within caring relationships, Ungerson’s research demonstrated the particular interdependence between care worker and care users.

All this points to a problem, that despite the assertion by Disability Studies researchers and independent living supporters, the strict respect of ethical boundaries in managing independence cannot be maintained, as the personal element of communication between two human subjects not only loses its professional formality but becomes “friendlier”. On the other hand, the respect of strict professional boundaries between the personal assistant and their employer, a person with disability for instance, could create another hierarchical gap where the role of a personal assistant is subverted to the power and obedience to person with disability. This means that a relationship that includes care simultaneously involves an element of “personal” attachment from one person towards the another and to some extent, they could be perceived as a friendly relationships. This, however, still does not say that such relationship corresponds to the full meaning of friendship, but rather features friendliness. On the other hand, the relationship that is focused on the respect of professional boundaries could lead to the subversion of roles and create a so-called master–slave relationship based on confusion and disproportion between the role of the personal assistant and the person with disability.

## **Discussion**

This investigation has shown that friendly relationships can feature both hierarchy and equality, the emergence of emotions and the respect of boundaries (formality), but also depart from a strict sense of a formality. The formal caring relationship is evidently complex, but even more demanding when such a relationship involves an element of caring. Related to this are three conclusions: a) care cannot be depersonalized; b) that formal relationships, including independent living, are sometimes inclined to become relationships of interdependent communication, and c) that, although such relationships involve emotions, caring and particular friendly elements, they still do not correspond to a straightforward meaning of friendship. Stemming from the social model of disability, the idea of independence within the independent living strategy was to counterbalance dependency as a negative attribute of people with disability in the history of disability, and also to promote independence as a means of flourishing. It is correct that independence is empowering, and that this is a positive strategic outcome of such a relationship. However, when we question the very concept of independence in the very process of dynamic communication, then it appears to me that the denial of dependency is hardly possible. This is because the very process of independence, including exchange and support, cannot be detached

from a full, functional and emotional interdependence. This is to say that the independence within idea of independent living is never fully realized. This is what Ungerson's study demonstrated. The type of interaction explored by Ungerson shows a puzzling combination of interdependency and care. Addressing the importance of the involvement of emotion and feelings within a caring relationship, Ungerson's research demonstrated the occurrence of a particular type of interdependence (including physical touch and emotion) between care worker and care user.

The strict respect of power balances can indeed contribute to supporting the independence of people with disabilities and prevent the exposure of vulnerability, but it could also develop into a master-slave relationship that goes beyond that respect. This, overall, indicates that the appearance of human interdependence is an unavoidable fact of human interactions. The caring relationship, which includes personal assistant as care provider and person with disability as care receiver, are specific and delicate. As they fluctuate between formal and personal, the caring and friendship, they highlight the need for recognition of the other, instead of merely provision of a formal care. This is to say that within caring relationships, one of which is independent living, people should not only experience empowerment via choice and self-sufficiency, but the recognition of personal identity that goes beyond a specific profession or social role. This, as presented within above-mentioned relationship, includes a proper balance of established boundaries, but also touch, affection and emotions, conversation, laughter, listening, openness, reciprocity, sharing and togetherness. Those elements demonstrate that despite the professional requirement for the respect of ethical boundaries, caring does demonstrate involvement of a certain "friendship" elements. Moreover, the relationships which implies human pain and suffering sometimes does transcend the boundaries of professional respect and control in a positive and negative direction. The relationships that require response to human need, the relationships that involve touch or a certain amount of intimacy sometimes are less likely to remain strictly professional. The reciprocal nature of human communication and interdependence (persons with disability depend on PA support, and PA depends on persons with disability payment) is an aspect that cannot be controlled and goes beyond dynamic of power balances and ethical control. In such instances, the disability does not present the limit to communication, and neither the relationships between PA and PWD always addresses professional or hierarchical inequality. This is because the communication between care givers, or personal assistants, and their recipient of care involves positive and negative emotion, which is the reason that the respect of power balances, independence and privacy, fails to fully depersonalize communication and care. However, I would also argue that despite the friendly nature of the caring process, the fairness and justice on both sides must be respected and present within such communication, in order to avoid any kind of hierarchical communication. Due to the involvement of an element of care, it seems difficult to act indifferently and independently in these relationships. Independent living cannot be fully depersonalized, but neither can the respect of ethical boundaries be fully personalized.<sup>418</sup> For instance, trust within independent living or care

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<sup>418</sup> In this research my intention was not investigate reasons about forms and structures of personal assistance. However, it is worth to mention that the problem of personal assistant's motivation and her/his competences may go

settings can be one important indicator of friendship for people with disabilities, whereas for PA's trust is a guarantee of professional conduct and responsibility. Despite the tendency of independent living to be distinct from other mainstream organizations in the promotion of social care, with the strong emphasis on empowerment of people with disabilities, independent living, in my view, is just one means of delivering social care (*contra* Morris, 1997) as the interaction between receiver and giver of care establishes a special narrative and can sometimes even grow into friendship.

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beyond the independent living requirements. For instance, personal assistants are sometimes motivated by reasons of financial means, or they may not be trained as professional provider of care, nurses, etc. All this highlights the problem confronted within independent living professional framework and requires a refreshing approach to the equal exchange of the power balances, PA motivation and forms of interaction between PA and PWD. Another problematic element that concerns personal assistants within independent living implies segregation. For instance, in many disability agencies or home-based care, staff or PA are either women, students, migrants or individuals who are economically poor. For them this is rather a paid job and thus an obligation which serves as a means to cover their existential living costs. Some of them manage to build the friendship or at least friendly relationships. However, their motivation does not involve freedom to choose, but are merely guided by the monetary benefits that come with a job. Due to the paid work conditions which requires responsibility and good care many PA experiences limits in acting spontaneously or friendly. The curtain thus, between professional and personal involvement of the professional staff in independent living or social care relationships, is difficult task to determine.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter

### 2.2. DISABILITY THEOLOGY AND FRIENDSHIP - CONTEXT AND ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVES

#### 2.2.1. The past and current challenges on Disability inclusion in a perspective of Catholic tradition and Christian Theology

As evident and already mentioned, the contemporary cultural framework supplies us with the knowledge of what it means to be a normal human being. Theology on the other hand supplies us with the knowledge of what it means to be a creature. As culture is part of Christianity and Christianity is part of culture, many contemporary Christians still consider people with disabilities either as supernatural angels, or on the other hand, sick and non-normal. Besides that, the view on people with disability remain pervaded with attitudes of sorrow, pity and mercy. Therefore, what we need as Christians is a different approach to disability, one that sees in a person with disability the image of God, and a fellow creature who shares the same dignity as our own. This does not mean to say that we need to divinize people with disabilities, or on the other hand neglect their biological or sometimes physical conditions. We need to accept their condition, as our own, not as abnormal, sick, or diabolic, but rather normal, but different. All this already indicates that thinking about disability within the scope of theology could be at some points either a troublesome or liberating task. The following chapter aims to explore the meaning and application of the subject of disability within the scope of the academic field of Theology, the context of Christian doctrine and Church practice.

My approach includes a threefold examination of this theme. Firstly, I will present the view of disability to be found in the doctrine of Catholic Church and Christian theology. In this, my focus will be not only on contemporary challenges, but also on positive and negative approaches to disability within the history of Christian tradition. Secondly, I will bring into focus the emergence of disability theology as an academic field and its perspectives in dealing with the subject of disability. I will present the main features, the themes, ideas and authors from this perspective. Thirdly, although the field of disability theology offers various approaches, I will primarily look on approaches and perspectives of disability, that in my opinion, are relevantly significant for the field of theological anthropology and Christian ethics. All this intends to examine the development of the definition of disability, the notion of disabled God and the notion of the body.

##### 2.2.1.1. The theme “Disability” in practice of the Church and the doctrine of Christian Theology: Contemporary Concerns and Pope Francis’s Interventions

Pope Francis in his Pontificate has since 2013 shown serious and emphatic concern for people with disabilities.<sup>419</sup> The ongoing process of his pastoral mission, he raises awareness about respect for each person’s life, value and dignity. In the light of that, on his Twitter in December 2017, he underlined specifically that: *“Every person is unique and unrepeatable. Let us ensure the*

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<sup>419</sup> This includes, speeches, meeting receptions in various locations. Pope speeches and letters specifically on disabled can be found at <http://w2.vatican.va/content/Francesco/enspeeches/>



*disabled are always welcomed by the communities in which they live.*"<sup>420</sup> Although the message of Pope Francis address a straightforward appeal to welcome and include people with disabilities within the body of the Church and Christian Community, his messages not only echo broader implications and concerns, but challenge the utilitarian and self-centered mentality of modern, individuals, and society at large. Francis, in his concerns for disability, condemns the mentality of rejection, utilitarian, narcissism and eugenic attitudes towards disabled people, following the line of his predecessors: pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Likewise, at the recent conference in October 2017, "*Catechesis and Persons with Disabilities: A Necessary Engagement in the Daily Pastoral Life of the Church*" organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, the Pope, criticizes those attitudes within Catholic Church itself and its Catechesis, that banned and excluded people with disability from participation in the sacraments of initiation, on the basis of the person's with disability cognitive impossibility of *understanding* the holy mysteries.<sup>421</sup> Encouraging Christians to make an effort to respect the dignity and share the respectful love, the Pope said: "*No physical or psychic limit may ever be an obstacle to the encounter with Christ, because the face of Christ shines in the intimacy of every person.*"<sup>422</sup> Pope Francis's pastoral concerns which express his awareness on today's commodities and uncaring attitudes towards disabled within the body of the Church and society at large, in fact reflects John Paul II anthropological understanding in his social encyclical such as *Redemptor Hominis*, *Salvifici Doloris*, *Evangelium Vitae*, *Veritatis Splendor* and reveals the concerns integrated within the documents of Catholic social teaching (e.g. *Centesimus Annus*). This further entails in the content of Pope Francis message emphasis on pastoral dimension on disability inclusion, stresses concerns over anthropological dimension of person with disability, respect for their dignity, integrity, and capacity to flourish.<sup>423</sup> All the three Pope's, despite their different emphasis: pastoral, (Francis) dogmatic (Benedict XVI) or anthropological (John Paul II)<sup>424</sup> emphasis, share in common the dictum already mentioned above: "*physical or psychic condition of a person, can be a ground for devaluing the person's dignity and integration.*"<sup>425</sup> Within this introduction I aim to demonstrate that contemporary concerns for disabled, although having a different emphasis, have been and still are part of the Church's mission and have been the integrative subject of reflection in its leaders. Yet, their concerns, despite various interpretations of disability, also reveal the problem of disability interpretation (that often remains a self - interpretation) and unjust treatment of people

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<sup>420</sup> Cf. <https://twitter.com/pontifex/status/937297871212367873?lang=en>

<sup>421</sup> Cf. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2017-10/time-for-persons-with-disabilities-to-become-catechists.html>

<sup>422</sup> Cf. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20171021\\_convegno-pcpne.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco_20171021_convegno-pcpne.html). See also see <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/catechesis-must-encounter-the-disabled-with-love-archbishop-says-52187>

<sup>423</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, 30; See also Pope's Homily on *Jubilee of the Disabled*, 7, (2000); *Message on the occasion of the International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled Person*, (2004).

<sup>424</sup> Besides I have briefly indicated here Pope's reference to relevant sources, the closer evaluation and examination of John Paul II thinking on anthropology and disability within social encyclics, will be my task in a third part of this thesis.

<sup>425</sup> Cf. <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2017/10/21/pope-decries-eugenic-tendency-eradicate-people-disabilities/>

with disabilities. What I mean by unjust attitudes in this regard are not only maleficent (eugenic) and charity actions undertaken on behalf of disabled people, that often reduce them to the objects of pity and mercy. The problem has to do with *the regard*, the view, that goes beyond seeing people with disability in the light of image of God, with a potential for relationships. In such regard the Pope's messages do not only appeal with urgency for social inclusion of people with disability on the pastoral or practical level. Inclusion targets *conceptual* and *theoretical* thinking on disability and more particularly integration of people with disability into this thinking. Related to this, in the next paragraph I will discuss the historical and contemporary approaches to disability that within the scope of a doctrine of Christian theology and Church practice intertwines and distinguishes cultural and Christian attitudes. This will show the way for a proper conceptual and theoretical treatment of the subject of disability, situating it with a thinking of theological anthropology and Christian ethics.

#### **2.2.1.2. Disability within the scope of Christian doctrine - a brief overview and contemporary insights**

The academic field of Christian theology conceptually (theoretical thinking) and traditionally (within the history of church teaching) has been constructed without much consideration for the experience of disability. Recent events show a considerable number of cases involving exclusion of people with disabilities from participation in the holy sacraments and practice of the Church. Most of the reasons for such practice have to do with a lack of conceptual knowledge about disability and cultural biases about disability with often impacting the theological or Christian thinking about disability. Despite the lack of a proper conceptual evaluation and understanding of disability, pastoral concern for disabled was at the heart of Church's focus. It would be wrong to say that Church practice historically and at the present time remains indifferent to the lives of disabled people and left them uncared for. This is why I think proper attention should be given to the distinction between practical and theoretical aspects of disability, and secondly, to a positive and negative approaches within this practice. The main question that still remain after the analysis regards the distinction between the Christian attitudes, the Church practice and the theological discourse of the rest of contemporary society about disability. The following discussion aims to offer an adequate answer to such demands. Instead of painting a historical portrait of all possible approaches to disability, my idea within the following discussion is to highlight the selection of the main features of these approaches.

#### **2.2.1.3. Terminology and the mainstream attitudes to disability – a brief historical overview**

The first problems about the lack of interest and attitudes of dislikes involved in approaches to disability is the terminology that reveals the meaning of disability; and the cultural prejudices about disabled people. Historically, disability often appear to have been regarded as a sinful, diabolic, pathological or paranormal condition.<sup>426</sup> Likewise, the clear and detailed interest of a

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<sup>426</sup> See for instance Stiker Henri-Jacques, *A History of Disability*. transl. by Williams Sayers, (The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1999); David L. Braddock and Susan L. Parish, „An Institutional History of

robust theological reflection, and correct and appropriate terminology of disability, evidenced within the history of disability. Although, people with disability have been described according to prevailing contextual and cultural etiologies. Drawing on evidence from research on the history of disability,<sup>427</sup> I will distinguish between the four most dominant etiologies attached to disabled people identities. These were biological etiology (Roman and Ancient period, late Medieval Period) supernatural etiology (Medieval Period), socio-economic etiology (prevailing in almost all periods, particularly the Middle Ages and Renaissance) and intellectual etiology (Enlightenment and Modernity). Although the etiologies of one time period do not follow one line of distinction, the following terminologies have been among the most prevalent labels attached to people with disability. According to such etiologies and terminologies, people with disabilities, have been excluded from mainstream culture and society, as well as, addressed within most dominant theological texts<sup>428</sup> as: unreasonable creatures, deformed, dysfunctional, crippled (biological etiology), poor, beggars, (socio-economic etiology); possessed, diabolic condition, demonized, witch - crafted (supernatural etiology); idiots, inmates, mentally ill, insane, freaks, feeble-minded, retarded, etc. (intellectual etiology). The most dominant theological texts including Augustine and Aquinas, do not apart from these terminologies. This within *De Civitate* and Aquinas's *Summa*, the disabled were described as deformities, malformities, morons, simpletons,<sup>429</sup> *furiosi et amentes* related to the context of *corporis infirmatis*.<sup>430</sup> Translated into contemporary language, such terminologies presume condition analogous to some set of severe mental illnesses, mindlessness, insanity, imbecils or mentally deficient. Similar terminology continues to be used in some cultures

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Disability“ in *Handbook of Disability Studies* Albrecht Gary L., Seelman Katherine D., Bury Michael, eds., (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publication Inc. 2001); pp.11-69.; Gladstone, D., “Western Counties Idiot Asylum 1864-1914.”, in *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities*, eds. D. Wright and A. Digby, (London, Routledge Kegan Paul, 1996):pp.134-160.

<sup>427</sup> In such regard I will specifically look on Sticker, *History of Disability*, 1999; and David L. Braddock and Susan L. Parish, „An Institutional History of Disability,“ pp.11-69.

<sup>428</sup> I will come into detailed analysis of such terminologies in the third chapter. What I meant here by “most dominant theological texts” include st. Augustine, Church Fathers, Thomas Aquinas, Church Tradition, Papal texts.

<sup>429</sup> See Augustine *City of God*, quoted in Sticker, 75-78; See also Brian Brock, „Augustine's Hierarchies of Human Wholeness and Their Healing in *Disability in the Christian Tradition*, Brock, Brian, and John Swinton, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012): pp.65-100.

<sup>430</sup> Miguel Romero to whom I refer in a first part of the thesis on *corporis infirmatis*, attempt to structure an answer regarding the disability terminology in Aquinas' texts. Romero addresses threefold distinction considering corporeal infirmity and its terminological departure from „evil suffered.“First type concerns instrumentatl infirmity (such as e.g. infirmity of body organ); second infirmity concerns external sensorial infirmities (e.g.privation of sight or hearing); the third type concerns internal sensorial infirmities related to brain. Although this third type of *infirmatas* is the most complex one, this is where according to Romero, Aquinas situated instrumental and sensorial faculties of the brain, various dysfunctions and diseases of mental, intellectual and neurological nature, and the conditions of those who lacks the use of reason. See Miguel J.Romero, „Aquinas on the corporis infirmitas: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace“ in *Disability in the Christian Tradition - A Reader.*, Brian Brock and John Swinton, eds. (Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012): pp.110-112. Other contemporary theologian who reflected a similar topic as already mentioned, includes John Berkman, „Are the Severely Mentally Disabled Sacramental Icons of Heavenly Life? Aquinas on Impairment.“ In *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 0 (2012): p. 1-14; Ivan Bankhead, „Thomas Aquinas on Mental Disorder and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist: Summa Theologica 3.68.12 and 3.80.9 Revisited,“In *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 20:4 (2016): p.329-264.

even nowadays.<sup>431</sup> A number of cases within the tradition and practice of the Church also show people with disabilities being excluded and oppressed,<sup>432</sup> sometimes even rejected. Often, without much consideration they were objects of pity and charity which as a consequence diminished their moral status and their human dignity (contra JP II implication during the *World day of the sick*). Although such attitudes have fortunately been overcome by recent positive social and cultural upheavals, what still remain are the fearful and biased images of the disabled prevailing in the contemporary mentality. *This mentality* needs both a challenge and encounter with the truth about disability by hearing the voices of those whom we called *disabled*.

Jacques Sticker to whom I referred earlier, together with a number of disability studies and disability theology scholars, is correct in observing the exclusion of people with disabilities within the Church and a related lack of a proper terminology about the meaning of disability. Despite a lack of theoretical concerns, the Church did demonstrate a practical concern and positive approaches to initiating care for people with disability. This, as already indicated, requires a clarification of the distinction between theoretical reflection on disability and practical endeavors for people with disability within the Church.

The early Church fathers insisted that the poor among whom were certainly people with disabilities, should be at the center of Christian life. The common belief of the early church fathers particular the Cappadocians, (Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianus and Basil the Great) stated that the poor presents the Christ, and whenever there were poor, there was Christ present, and vice versa.<sup>433</sup> John Chrysostom in his analysis of wealth and poverty according to his sermon on Luke 16: 19-31 followed the same line.<sup>434</sup> Overall, as has been the case in modernity through the work of the saints, the church fathers did not demonstrate great theoretical or conceptual interest in explaining disability. Neither did they use relevant terminology. The *poor* were all those who were at the margins of society, facing social poverty, physical deformity, particular illness or epidemics. The poor were the center of father's of the Church concerns and the concerns of the early Church. Instead of describing a relevant terminology about the disabled, the work of the church fathers rather showed great pastoral orientation and care, setting the ground for Christian (seeing Christ in the poor) philanthropy and humanitarianism.<sup>435</sup> In other words, disability, following socio-

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<sup>431</sup> The term mentally retarded was of high use in North American context referring people with disabilities also by many theologians, e.g. Stanley Hauerwas. It shows the cultural biases towards disability and disabled people. Such attitudes and terminologies are still prevailing within context of culture and even academia.

<sup>432</sup> See in Stiker, *A History of Disability*, p. 39-89. Also Pope Francis in his recent speeches indicated above; See also Black, K., *Healing Homiletic, Preaching and Disability* (Nashville, TN, Abington, 1996); Covey, H.C., *Social Perception of People with Disabilities in History*, (Springfield, IL, Charles C Thomas Publisher, 1998).

<sup>433</sup> J. Pavić & T.Z. Tenšek, *Patrologija*, (Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 1993): pp.180-194

<sup>434</sup> John Chrysostom, *St. John Chrysostom on Wealth and Poverty*, transl. by Catharine P. Roth; (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984).

<sup>435</sup> See Basil the Great, „*Letters 1-185*.“ transl. by A.C. Way. In *Fathers of the Church*, vol.13, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1951); Gregory of Nazianus, „*Oration 14*“, transl. by Brian E. Daley, s.j. In *The Early Church Fathers* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006); Gregory of Nyssa, 2001, „*On the Love of the Poor, 1: On Good Works*“, transl. by Susan R. Holman. In Holman, *The Hungry Are Dying*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): p.193-199.

cultural constructions, was terminologically and socially associated with deformity, diseases, poverty, being a social outcast or disfiguring disease, such as leprosy. Attitudes towards the disabled were aligned with general social attitudes towards outcasts and poor. However, the church fathers appealed to their hearers to see the poor and disfigured in light of a Christological perspective (recognizing Christ in every poor or disfigured body); as the image of God; and as belonging (the poor and disfigured are our brothers and sisters). They also initiated greater socio-ethical concerns in the form of charitable acts to both cure and care, as response to sickness, physical wounds or suffering.

In early monasticism, particularly in the rule of St. Benedict, chapter 36, the care for the weak was among central activities for the monks.<sup>436</sup> The theological work of St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas is ambiguous in there. On the one hand their terminology in referring to disability and their lack of conceptual analysis of disability is of a fierce with biological etiology. On the other hand, their theological construct of, for example the notion of *imago Dei*, the theology of creation, the treatise on human person as applicable to all God's creatures, demonstrates openness and inclusion towards those with disability.<sup>437</sup>

In a period when care for the poor within Church began downsizing, it was Francis of Assisi, who through his encounter with leprosy in the leper, reconstructed the view of Christian charity, in a way by placing the dignity of the poor (based on his encounter with the leper) at the center of Church mission. Jesus appeal "Go and fix my church" was a call to the *internal* reconstruction of the Church. The meaning and flourishing of church charity will perish without icons of saints, or those figures who within the history of the Church took heroic actions and radical steps towards the care for the marginalized and outcast, risking their status and social security. Elizabeth of Hungary, in the 13th century was among those examples who personally cared for the poor, sick and marginalized. According to her biography she was a witness of true love for the weak, deformed and diseased.<sup>438</sup> Stepping from the 13<sup>th</sup> century towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to look at the most recent contemporary figures who within the Church reopen of a new possibility for the Church and humanity to rethink concern for the poor and marginalized, among whom are certainly people with disability. Mother Theresa and Jean Vanier deserve to be placed within this framework. Not only because they are the most appealing and constantly referred contemporary examples of charitable work, but because of their common emphasis on placing true *metanoia* and *the meaning of charity* in the encounter, instead of an often-misunderstood notion of charity thought of as almsgiving, material charity or formal care. Like the early church fathers, they sees in the encounter with the poor, disabled or marginalized, the encounter with the wounded (Vanier)

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<sup>436</sup> Luke Dyysinger, O.S.B, transl., *The rule of saint Benedict: ch. 36&37* (lat.&eng.), (St Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, California, 1996).

<sup>437</sup> See for instance Brian Brock, „Augustine's Hierarchies of Human Wholeness and Their Healing“ in *Disability in the Christian Tradition - A Reader*, pp. 65-100.

<sup>438</sup> Kenneth Baxter Wolf, transl. *The Life and Afterlife of St. Elizabeth of Hungary: Testimony from Her Canonization Hearings*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 200.

or thirsty (Mother Theresa) Christ in light of Matt 5, 1-12 and Matt, 25, 40.<sup>439</sup> These few practical examples highlighted the contemporary theological attempt to rethink charity and solidarity.

Such examples were always an inspiration, but also a sign for the Catholic Church to remain intentional and aware about the basis of communal life and shared solidarity with the word. The Second Vatican document *Gaudium et Spes*, (no. 24) together with the Social teachings of the Catholic Church and the Papal social encyclicals such as, *Rerum Novarum*, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* (para. 39) and *Centesimus Annus* speak strongly on concern for the love of one's neighbor, the poor and marginalized. The *option or preferential option for the poor* set within this framework, has in the particular goal of reminding Christians to look at the world from the perspective of the marginalized and to work in solidarity for justice. The term "option for the poor" aims to asks everyone to realize the plight of those who struggle to survive, and to put the needs of these *most vulnerable* members of society ahead of individual selfish interests. But, aren't we all poor and vulnerable at some stages and points in our lives? In what exactly lies our common human preferences? The problem with the social encyclicals on the one hand, and preferential option for the poor on the other, is that they situate the disabled among the poor, marginalized and preferential. This is to say that the community of the Church as an institution and membership, could not find a stable position, nor an effective praxis to address disability, except within option for the poor and its social teachings. Reflection on disability and Church's disabled members requires another settings: one that values dignity in light of Gen 1:26, *Centesimus Annus* no. 11, and *Gaudium et Spes* no. 22, prior to person social condition and their earthly achievements. More on that will be a content of a later discussions.

#### **2.2.1.4. The contemporary cultural and theological attitudes towards disability**

The above-mentioned attitudes and terminology within Christian theology evidence that the mainstream social and cultural terminologies on disability have been somehow integrated into theological texts, which is to say that often culture impacted theological consideration of disability terminology. This is to say that cultural biases towards disability impacted theological reasoning or more precisely, the Christian mentality towards disability and those living with experience of disability shared the common cultural ground. This is contrary the opinion of certain disability studies scholars who within the context of the Church sees offensive and diminishing attitudes, separating the disabled from the rest of culture. In my opinion, cultural and theological attitudes

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<sup>439</sup> For instance, mother Theresa did not speak only about poverty in Calcutta. In her speech at UN in New York on the 26 October, 1985, she recalls upon poverty of loneliness, isolation, and abandonment addressisng them among the greatest sufferings in the Western world.Cf. <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/10/27/world/mother-teresa-is-honored-at-un-ceremony.html>

Similar direction was taken by Jean Vanier. Vanier did not only speak about disabled who need to be carried for. He spoke about all the humanity who need to re-process the learning of the encounter. For him the encounter with disabled can potentially bring freedom from fear and isolation. This is to say that the abovementioned examples do not indicate on problem of merely material charity, but also problem of moral charity which start with encounter and rebuild the broken relationship in order to conquer the isolation. The aspect of moral charity has been often overlooked in evaluation of their contribution to social charity, but in my opinion is the key element on regard of their common mission impacting the words sufferings.

and considerations relating to this, have been rather intertwined. Attitudes within Catholic tradition towards the disabled show positive shifts after the Vatican Second Council's Constitution, on the Church in the Modern World, - *Gaudium et Spes* - had been launched. Its appeal for the respect of rights and human dignity of every person has been of significant importance in this regard.<sup>440</sup> Although Vatican II marked a significant shift in opening up towards the world (and openness often means inclusion), biased prejudices and attitudes on disability culturally and socially remain even within the context of Church practice. For instance, in some cultures and societies in Africa, disability is still equated with denigrating images such as the sin or even demon possession and requires healing within Church ministry.<sup>441</sup> In the West people with disability are still perceived as helpless objects of pity, with a cross to bear, or inspirations for others. Elsewhere, they are perceived with trivializing or divinizing images, such as icons of virtuous sufferings, angels, saints, etc.<sup>442</sup> All this is the reason why I argue that it could be an instructive and constructive task, to look at the experience of disability beyond merely pastoral care and rethink disability in the light of reflection on other spheres of Catholic theology, such as social Christian ethics and theological anthropology, or vice versa.

In the following paragraph I will select common attitudes towards people with disabilities present within mainstream culture. These attitudes to disability are commonly shared in both culture and theology. This will already indicate upon reasons why an adequate theological reflection on disability is necessary. The attitudes presented below I address as obstacles to a true encounter. A first attitude concerns cultural hesitance towards encounter with person with disability. Prejudices arising from encounters with person with disabilities frequently establish a boundary line of interaction between the disabled and the "non-disabled." I call this the psychological barrier as fear and prejudices about the disabled person can close people to the encounter with the disabled as other, equal in rights and dignity. Secondly, our cultural attitudes are often highly impacted by the medicalization of disability which creates an assumption that the disabled ought to be cured and made normal. The third temptation, as theologian Pia Matthews wrote, is perhaps the one that links disabled children with angelic appearances (or angels) as if they do not quite belong in the earthly realm.<sup>443</sup> This I call the disembodiment and spiritualization

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<sup>440</sup> Cf. "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*." Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965." Available from [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)

<sup>441</sup> See Pauline A. Otieno, "Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Disability: Implications on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Kenya", in *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 29,4 (2009). Available from <http://www.dsqu-sds.org/article/view/988/1164>

<sup>442</sup> Cf. Pia Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently "non-acting" Person*, (Gracewing: Herefordshire, 2013):p. 60-65; See also Bernd Wannenwetsch, „Angels with Clipped Wings: The Disabled as Key to the Recognition,“ in *Theology, Disability and the New Genetics*, John Swinton & Brian Brock, (eds.), (London, T&T Clark, 2007).

<sup>443</sup> Pia Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently „Non-acting“ Person*, p. 164.

of disabled people. The fourth difficulty when speaking about disability is that encounter with disabled person provokes within mainstream society the feeling of pity and charity. This has been evident within the scope of social and charitable organizations including the framework of the preferential option for the poor within the Catholic Church. Such cultural biases often impact mainstream Christian attitudes towards the disabled and require remedy. I suggest a separate discourse on disability within the field of theology is needed. Not only does this require a dialogue to distinguished Christian attitudes from the rest of contemporary society regarding disability, but also a renewal of moral and ethical principles that we as Christians must acquire in order to demonstrate that difference. First, we need to rethink established theological knowledge concerning the theology of creation, and theological anthropology in encounter and together with the presence of the reality of disability. Secondly, within the scope of theological ethics and moral theology, we as theologians, need to be aware of the liberal cultural framework, that is hostile towards fragile and dependent lives, and in the light of that, we need to renew our knowledge of theological ethics particularly regarding the morality of suffering, and pain, the notion of hospitality, the ethics of relationality and the meaning of otherness. All this suggests that in order to reach this goal, above all we need to establish an interdisciplinary approach to disability which means having a constructive dialogue with academic fields such as disability theology, disability studies or studies of disability, as well as engaging in conversation with other theological traditions (protestant and orthodox) that are interested in sharing the same interest in the particular subject of disability. But above all we need a discourse that will open a dialogue on the need for an adequate anthropology and a proper disability terminology to provide an adequate answer to contemporary cultural and theological upheavals about disability.

### **2.2.2. Theological perspectives on disability. Why theology need a discourse on disability?**

Recently, a number of theologians from different theological fields, gather to explain the reasons for which there is a great need for a theological examination and interpretation of disability. Although, there may be many reasons for such an initiative, I will highlight two main reasons that guide these attempts. The first reason I believe arises from the intention to look at disability from a perspective different from that of disability studies and a socio-anthropological evaluation of disability. This for instance implies a view of disability that goes beyond its physical and anthropological connotations, attaching to it a theological (eschatological and pneumatological) and spiritual dimension. The second reason arises insufficiency for an interdisciplinary approach and a coherent dialogue between different theological traditions and academic disciplines interested in the theme of disability (e.g. Disability studies, study of Disability, Special Education, Psychology, etc). One field where the dialogue on disability was particularly absent were the field of theological ethics and the already mentioned theological anthropology. Despite the reflections and efforts of John Paul II during the *World Day of Mental*



*illness*, and a few inputs on these themes in his social encyclicals, there is not much effort of the Catholic theological ethics and theological anthropology scholarly dispute giving evidence of such a debate in the context of academia. Apart from initiatives within the context of pastoral or practical theology, little has been done regarding the conceptual interpretation of disability. The multiple positive examples of social activity and care within pastoral theology are insufficient to provide systematic and structural exploration of disability in other theological fields. Therefore, I suggest an open, epistemological and constructive dialogue, with disability theology and disability studies. The dialogue will, on the one hand grasp inclusion and recognition of disability as anthropological reality, and on the other hand, lead towards recognition of a person with disability as a “different other”, a common companion and friend - equal in dignity and rights. This, I assume, to be a necessary inquiry for theologians in order to grasp an interdisciplinary view of human condition, but also, helping to build the gap with other theological traditions in order to properly understand our own. In a further paragraph I will examine the rationale of theological reasoning on disability and present the main aspects of disability theology. This will lead me towards a more robust examination of particular theological themes in relation to the reinterpretation on disability. In the second part of this chapter I will search for the meaning and place friendship has within disability theology. Particular attention will be paid to John Swinton and Hans Reinders discourse on friendship and disability and emerging concepts within disability theology related to the theme of friendship. The theology of disability seeks to remedy the “disability challenge” in situating it in theological discourse, by clarifying the proper use of disability terminologies within a certain historical period; and also providing clarification of often arbitrary accusation labelled of the Church tradition within the history of disability in interpreting disability. In contrast to Disability studies, of which the main concerns revolve around inclusion based on social justice, equal distribution of rights and empowerment by increasing self- determination and independency, disability theology offers an alternative approach. The approach consists on drawing a close link between aspects of Christian tradition and modern theology integrating the terminological questions on disability, the meaning of these conditions and its relevance for contemporary theological discourses on the meaning of being human.

### **What type of theology is Disability theology?**

The *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology* defines disability theology as an attempt by disabled and non-disabled Christians to understand and interpret the Gospel, God and humanity against the backdrop of historical and contemporary experiences of people with disabilities.<sup>444</sup> As its definition further says, disability theology is informative and transformative. It is informative in a way that seeks to raise people’s consciousness to the experience of disability and its significance for the development and practice of Church, theology and culture; it is transformative in seeking to challenge the primacy of disabling theological and cultural interpretations, attitudes,

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<sup>444</sup> John Swinton, s.v. „Disability theology,” In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, eds. Ian A. McFarland, David A. S. Fergusson, Karen Kilbly, Ian, R. Torrence, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011): pp.140-141

assumptions and values, and in presenting creative theological alternative to the status quo, it offers a different basis on which to understand God and value human beings.<sup>445</sup>

As Disability studies scholars, theologians engage in conversation on approaches to the theme of disability from either their own embodied experience of disability (for instance Nancy Eiesland, Deborah Creamers) or through the encounter with a person with disability (Brock, Reynolds, Yong, Matthews, Romero). For instance, in the light of a direct experience or embodied disability, Nancy Eiesland and Deborah Creamers, stress attention to a strong identification of their physical condition with the image of the suffering Christ. This calls not only for re-imagination of the condition of disability in the light of a Christlike perspective but recalls the Church to a rather radical renewal of views and attitudes towards those living with disability. Those who are not directly affected by disability themselves, but only informally or indirectly, in a certain sense, share similar views. However, despite the fact that the experience of disability is important to recognize for theology of disability, not all theology of disability, as indicated by Swinton, is contextual.<sup>446</sup> As Swinton rightly says on behalf of Hauerwas:

[...] disability theologians depart from the scope of modern ideas that as a result shape theology accordingly; or from as can be found in Hauerwas, forgotten aspects of traditional theological understandings which in turn challenge modernity.<sup>447</sup> In light of that as further indicated, Hauerwas for instance is not re-symbolizing God in response to the experience of disability. Rather he is re-symbolizing humanness in the light of what we know of God.<sup>448</sup>

Theologians provide a distinguished contribution to the investigation of traditional frameworks of disability in the thought of Augustine, (Brock, 2010) Aquinas, (Romero, 2010) Reformation and modern authors. The majority of disability theologians structure their arguments around the concept of God's revelation the world in connection to the meaning of disability, (Hauerwas, Matthews) the narrative of disability, (Brock, Yong, Reynolds), the question of language (Brock, Romero, Matthews, Swinton) image of God, (Yong), the meaning of the body (Swinton, Matthews, Brock, Reynolds) and otherness (Francis Yong, Reynolds). I do not consider the theology of disability to be contextual; neither is it completely a liberation theology. However, it is impossible to deny the fact that to some extent it indeed tends to become one particular aspect of liberation theology. I support my argument by indicating a common "struggle" of disability theologians to bring the silenced voices of people with disabilities (as an oppressed minority) back into the realm of Church practice and together with these voices reflect upon forgotten and exclusive aspect from the field of theology and Church practice in relation to people with disability. The only problem with that is that not all theology of disability engages in changing church practice or its doctrine as is the case with liberation theology. Thus, disability theology is not in an explicit way a

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<sup>445</sup> Swinton, s.v. „Disability theology“ p.141.

<sup>446</sup> See John Swinton, „Who is the God We Worship? Theologies of Disability; Challenges and New Possibilities, in *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 14, 2 (2011): p. 273-307.

<sup>447</sup> Swinton, „Who is the God We Worship? Theologies of Disability,“ p. 280.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid. p. 297

liberation theology, but certainly is one particular part of it. Although this particular aspect of disability theology as one direction of liberation theology may be a place of departure where theology of disability and disability studies interlocks, they certainly do not share the same end. The peculiarity of disability theology when it comes to the validity of experience is distinguished by the fact that not all experience of disability is projected into activism or immediate definition. Instead, they revolve around the question of what disability offers for the understanding of the meaning of being human. This in my view presents the key feature which is the peculiarity of disability theology discourses and in within it simultaneously differs from Disability studies.

My thinking on Disability theology describe it as one independent theological subject that within the academic field of theology, initiate a corrective for conceiving the proper use of meaning and experience, the reality of disability present at past and present doctrinal and practical theological discussions. Although, the contributors are academics from different theological fields, such as systematic, practical theologians, ethicists and moral theologians, the most important thing is to emphasize is that disability theology is not a practical theology,<sup>449</sup> neither it is a specific kind of moral or systematic theology or theological ethics. In my view it is an intersection of the abovementioned theological fields in correlation with the field of disability studies and social philosophy. Except as already stated by Swinton, disability theology includes insights from various disciplines and theological fields,<sup>450</sup> it also includes a dialogue with the theology of creation, pneumatology, eschatology, salvation history, Christology, Scripture.

My particular interest in engaging in conversation with theology of disability scholarship arrive from a perspective of theological ethics and anthropology, and for this reason implies specific orientation and emphasis. Not only is the meaning of disability an important focus of theological anthropology and ethics for me, but reflection upon the meaning of disability from the scope of theological anthropology is a distinct contribution to the field of theological ethics and mainstream theology.

#### **2.2.2.1. Theological themes**

In a further analysis of disability theology, it is important to notice that theologians and thinkers engaged in conversation about disability do not declare themselves as specifically disability theologians. Rather, their contribution within theology opens the particular debate on disability within the field of theology, which as earlier indicated, is called theology of disability. The view of most of the dominant voices within disability theology (Brian Brock, Deborah Creamers, Pia Matthews, Miguel Romero, John Swinton, Amos Yong, Hans Reinders, Thomas Reynolds) share the idea that disability requires a profound conceptual examination within theological discourses (Christian ethics, Moral Theology and Practical theology, respectively) and that a person with disability deserves a central place within Church practice and faith communities.

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<sup>449</sup> Swinton, „Who is the God we worship? Theologies of Disability: Challenges and New Possibilities,“ p. 307

<sup>450</sup> Swinton, „Who is the God we Worship. Theologies of Disability,“ p. 274-75.

Although a number of theologians share the same ideas on the importance of discourse on disability within the academic field of theology, each takes a specific approach and emphasis. For instance, the work of certain feminist authors such as Nancy Eiesland and Deborah Creamers, together with Sharon Betcher portray disability in relation to a framework of liberal theologies. Disability was a subject and a source of challenge for modern and late modern liberal cultural and ethical rationale, in the work of Stanley Hauerwas, Hans Reinders and, since recently Thomas Reynolds and Brian Brock. There are also those theologians who integrates both views in their approaches to theology and disability. Those authors despite sharing the view of feminist liberal theologies and demonstrating the critique towards liberal society, construct their own approach. The novelty of their approach consists in a strong tendency towards dialogue with Church tradition, Pastoral and Practical Theology discourses, Systematic theology and Christian Ethics. Such are the works of Brian Brock, John Swinton, Thomas Reynolds, Francis Young, Pia Matthews, Miguel Romero, etc. One of the recent achievements of disability theologians was the publication of a disability theology reader - *Disability in the Christian Tradition : A Reader*.<sup>451</sup> The *Reader* was a summary and collection of the ideas of most emerging themes concerning the conversation between disability and theology. This provides an additional answer to what is the theology of disability as an academic attempt to explain. Apart from the interest of disability theologians in exploring the theme of disability definition, deals with the practical and ethical questions regarding the conditions of mainstream understanding of human capacities and incapacities; and provides an existential discourse - centering the quest for personal perception and the impact disability has upon human existence.<sup>452</sup> A number of question within *A Reader* concern a historical overview of disability portrayed within church tradition, from early patristics till the contemporary age. Besides the above-mentioned, disability was debated within social, practical, and ethical discourses. The inquiries were enabled by dominance of Catholic theologians and were approached as an separate scholarly entity, apart from the *Reader*. Their discussions target the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, the notion of person and personhood within the dogmatic framework of most dominant theological texts, the political, practical and moral questions relating to the participation of disabled people within Church as a faith community. In these commentaries, I will mention the work of Pia Matthews, Miguel Romero, but also, Stanley Hauerwas, John Swinton, Jana Bennet. The above formulation outlines general research on disability within certain theological fields. Since very recently, disability has become a subject of theological anthropology, Christian and larger ethical and bioethical discourses. Within the field of theological anthropology, I will treat

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<sup>451</sup> *A Reader* or in its proper name *Disability in the Christian Tradition : A Reader* is an indispensable summary of most recent theological and ethical discourses concerning disability. The reader consist of fourteen chapters and surveys the reflections of contemporary theologians on most dominant theological figures on disability within Church tradition and modernity. This includes the voices of patristic and medieval period (early Church Fathers, Augustine, Aquinas); Reformation period (Julian Norwich, Luther and Calvin); Christianity, Disability and Modernity (Hegel, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer); Christology and disability (Barth); women, disability and concrete Christian practice towards disabled (commentaries on Nancy Eiesland, Jean Vanier and L'Arche community). Although, *the Reader*, in my opinion lacks greater perspective of Catholic theologians and contemporary feminist voices on disability, it is notwithstandingly an unique contribution to current theological, anthropological and ethical discourses on disability.

<sup>452</sup> Brian Brock, „Introduction: Disability and the Quest for the Human“, in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, eds. by Brian Brock and John Swinton, (Michigan /Cambridge, Grand Rapids, 2012):p.1-24.

the theme of the notion of the *body* and *embodiment*; *image of God*, in reference of perplexed “nature” of the concept of *vulnerability and dependency*.

The themes reflected within the larger ethical and bioethical discourses include genetic testing, prenatal diagnoses, questions on norms, the normality and abnormality dichotomy, human dignity, principles of biomedical ethics, the notion of the body, etc. Dominant themes within Christian ethical discourse important for this research, revolve around the theme of inclusion (prenatal testing and the theme of friendship), accessibility, hospitality and belonging.

In my opinion the theme, within the theological discourse on disability are relevant for the analysis of friendship and otherness and at certain reason I will pay close attention to its analysis. In a further discussion my interest is to examine the rationale and the reasoning of disability theology regarding the *definition of disability*, the *theme of disabled God*, and the concept of *the body* as a way towards the true recognition of those living with disability.

#### **2.2.2.2. Question on definition: How Disability theology define disability**

As within Disability studies, the conceptualization of the notion of disability has been of equal importance to disability theologians. Many disability theologians follow a social inclusion model in defining disability. However, contrary to disability studies scholars, theologians engaged in the conversation on disability, seek to investigate disability not merely as an anthropological reality, but as a subject of theological and moral inquiry. As indicated earlier, disability theologians do not provide a universal straightforward definition of disability, as perhaps disability studies scholars do, or as do most important international documents (e.g. WHO) dealing with disability issues. Their interest in “defining” disability, despite sharing a social model, does not provide the conceptual academic framework of disability. This means that in their attempt to define disability, before establishing the framework of disability definition, they are guided by an understanding of the person in the light of the theology of creation and peoples’ experience of living with disability. This is why there are varied understandings of disability according to the views of different theologians. The variety of disability definitions arises from the fact that the theologians have not established clear biomedical or social norms for reporting different types of disability. A few theological works address concerns over intellectual disability (Reinders, Reynolds), Downs Syndrome (Yong, Brock). Others, for instance Eiesland and Creamers, provide a robust exemplification of physical impairment based on their own experience of disability. A great number of disability theologians spontaneously reflect upon the mainstream account of disability that interchangeably includes people with intellectual, profound or severe disabilities. What meaning then, has disability for disability theologians? That the definition of disability is not a straightforward formula has been already addressed in one of John Swinton’s reflections on disability. Swinton, whose interest in the theme “disability” reaches a great number of publications, states: *“I am still not clear what the term disability actually means. Perhaps it does not mean anything, or maybe it means many different things depending on context and*

*intention.*"<sup>453</sup> For disability theologians, disability is more a reality (Brock, Reynolds), than an established definitional category, as is apparent within most international social policy documents and disability studies discussion. As a reality, disability requires a proper response, understanding and evaluation. Addressing disability as a term is non-theological and unaffected, but for Brock includes a critique of disability definition.<sup>454</sup> Disability is a political and neoliberal "creation," and as such, is problematic since it targets one group of people in need who are categorized by certain terms, such as: "limit," "sickness", "mental illness," "physical disability," "intellectual disability" or "special needs education."<sup>455</sup> If we consider its conceptual validity, disability, according to disability studies scholars, is a push factor towards inclusion, whereas for disability theologians, disability has wider implications and more profound issues, such as an appeal for change and transformation. This transformation of the heart consists in an openness to the challenge of what is different from the "norm" and letting ourselves be different. This articulation shows that within disability theology, disability is that difference that makes us look at reality differently<sup>456</sup> as the language of changing the heart is not the same as political or social language. What strongly emerges from this language (e.g. transformation of the heart) is simply this, that encountering the reality of disability means being challenged by a condition that departs from the norm, implies openness and acceptance of a different set of norms, values and attitudes. Therefore, disability is this difference that requires a different set of norms, and goes beyond normativity. Disability theology looks upon difference from a different angle, as well as looking at disability from quite a different context. As Swinton stated: *the disability that is the focus of disability studies, is not necessarily the disability that is the focus of disability theology.*<sup>457</sup> This difference that disability presents, as Reynolds once suggested, if positively considered, could create a space for change, recognition of otherness and renew our way of living interdependency.<sup>458</sup> In partial agreement with these propositions, I add that disability presents difference, but it is also an embodied difference *per se*, as every person in the light of the image of God, is before all, a different other. This means that disability understood as difference is not only a different biological interiority or sociological or political exteriority, but an ontological and phenomenological difference understood in light of 1Cor 12, 12-30 - *one body many parts*. This is, I assume, the key element of what differentiates the disability theology vocabulary of disability inclusion from inclusion within the field of disability studies. However, this does not mean that there should be a lack of academic coherence between concept and experiences, or between the definition provided by disability studies scholars

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<sup>453</sup>John Swinton, "From Inclusion to Belonging: A practical theology of Community, Disability and Humanness," *In Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* 16, 2 (2012):p.187.

<sup>454</sup> Brian Brock, *Wondrously Wounded Theology, Disability, and the Body of Christ*, (Texas, Baylor University Press, 2019): 109-143

<sup>455</sup>Brian Brock, „Introduction: Disability as a Matter of the Heart“ in *Wondrously Wounded Theology, Disability, and the Body of Christ*, (Texas, Baylor University Press, 2019): p.1-15.

<sup>456</sup>Brock, *ibid.* ; See also Thomas E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: a Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Michigan, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, 2008.)

<sup>457</sup>John Swinton, "From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability and Humanness." *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* 16, 2 (2012): p. 173.

<sup>458</sup> Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 186.

and theologians. It could rather represent an interdependent challenge to both disciplines, for a constant revision and rethinking by which, if possible, to reach its proper understanding. Eventually, after evaluation of the disability definition within disability studies and disability theology, I will propose my own thinking on a redefinition of disability. This means that my definition at some point not only integrates the views of disability studies and disability theology, but offers a more nuanced approach, one which integrates aspects of not merely the social and biomedical models but also other sub-models and views on disability, already presented within this research (see first chapter of the second part of this thesis).

Disability,<sup>459</sup> in my opinion, is first of all a human experience of the embodied condition understood as particular difference. This difference could be due to particular biological or genetical factors that later, when inserted into society cause particular social disadvantages, such as social exclusion, reduced opportunities, lack of mobility, social poverty, etc. Despite the fact that my thinking on disability sees it as integration of both biomedical and social conditions, it is not sufficient to see disability only through the lens of a biomedical or a social model. Moreover, although disability causes certain disadvantages, according to my assessment, it is not a disadvantage, but a particular difference. The difference does not merely depart from the experience of some normal, typical species condition or functioning, but this departure constitutes the difference. This means that this difference is accordingly a part of the complexity of human heterogeneity or functional variation.<sup>460</sup> In light of 1 Cor 12, 12-30, it is an important part of the body as a whole, despite living with this difference.<sup>461</sup> And this difference raises a challenge not only to thinking differently about the norm, but also about disability itself. Additionally, when I say that disability is a difference, I mean this in terms of capacities. For instance, PWD have different capacities in performing activities or engaging in daily living. (Para-Olympics for instance). Someone who is severely disabled still is eligible to connect with others, in his/her appropriate and particular way. But this connection with others may not be his/her capacity, but the gift that s/he offers to the wider community. For this reason, my thinking on difference is rather inclined towards dis-ability as a particular physical limit or dysfunction, rather than as an ontological category or disability within the disability definition. This means that disability as a condition could be a source of certain incapacities, but it could also be an opportunity for putting forward the often forgotten capacities, gifts and strengths of people with disabilities, as part of human heterogeneity. Although the notion of dis-ability may associate my thinking on disability with the medical model of impairment, what I actually mean by this notion relates to the meaning of *dis-ability*, instead of *disability*, as embodied ontology of everybody. Everyone at some point of their lives becomes disabled, without having Downs Syndrome, or Autism, but not everyone

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<sup>459</sup> For a more robust explanation of this redefinition see p. 185-187.

<sup>460</sup> For more discussion on similar themes see Lorella Terzi, "The Social Model of Disability: A Philosophical Critique" in *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 21,2 (2004): p.141-157.

<sup>461</sup> The meaning of the body in light of 1 Cor 12, 12-30 will be developed more profoundly in the section on the concept of the body.

embodies the biological condition specific to Downs Syndrome or other forms of “disability understood as difference” conditions.

### 2.2.2.3. The theme of disabled God

It is impossible to avoid theological discourse on disability without mentioning Nancy Eiesland’s model of *disabled God*. For Eiesland’s book *Disabled God* <sup>462</sup>, is one of the most cited works within major disability theology scholarship.<sup>463</sup> Although, the publication was well received, it also generated controversies. Eiesland’s direct or embodied experience of physical disability and her awareness of oppressive and sometimes exclusive attitudes towards disabled people, put her into the context of a close link between social disability activism on the one hand, and theology of liberation on the other. The main idea of Eiesland’s theological framework calls upon the Church to a critical analysis of her practices towards the disabled, in order to re-conceptualize what it means to be the body of Christ. Her main criticism is of the ecclesiastical view of disability, portrayed as negative, sinful and exclusive.<sup>464</sup> The key idea of Eiesland’s argument is the hope that experience of disability approached in the light of a Christological perspective, could result in changes of attitudes towards people with disability and ultimately lead to re-conceptualization of the image of God and Christ’s icon as disabled God. This reconceptualization suggests that Christ as an image of God is not the image of a white, triumphalist male Christ, but could be also an image of a disabled Christ. The disabled Christ here refers to the Crucified Jesus, his earthly scars and his wounds after the Resurrection. Although this reasoning is based on elements of contextualization, reconceptualization could be received positively as it suggests a renewed version of thinking about the Christ as a disabled God. Even though Eiesland’s notion of a disabled God is a theme upon which many disability theologians base their arguments, yet, as Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi showed at a Symposium on *Living Fully*, held in Rome in 2016, the theme of disabled God within theological discourse requires further examination and unpacking. One of the reasons I decided to select the theme of disabled God as a subject within this discussion, is on account of its importance in opening the door to the social inclusion of people with disabilities within the Church; and secondly, its challenge to established theological knowledge, particularly when this targets Christ’s icon as *disabled God*. In my view, the problem with Eiesland’s argumentation and identification of Christ with the image of disabled God challenges not only theological anthropology and Christology, but the definition of disability regarding the relationship between *disabled* and *dis-abled* God. In the next paragraph I will present only a few comments on this problem, (that in my opinion require attention), but will avoid a larger

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<sup>462</sup> Eiesland, Nancy L. *The Disabled God - towards a Liberatory Theology of Disability*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

<sup>463</sup> This can be found for instance in work of John Swinton; Swinton, „Who is the God we Worship. Theologies of Disability Amos Yong, *The Bible, Disability and the Church - a New Vision of the People of God* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011); Deborah B. Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009). Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 2008, etc.

<sup>464</sup> This parallels with a critique of some Disability studies scholars perspectives regarding the unjust society attitudes and practices towards disabled people



dogmatic discussion of that theme, as it not only opens further dialogues, but the larger discourse is beyond the limits of this chapter and could be reached elsewhere.

### **Theological „problem” with *disabled God***

The image of what Eiesland calls disabled God, is a liberatory representation, a way enabling the identification of disabled people with the wounded Christ, instead of being a label of either individual sin or structural exclusion due to their physical difference of earthly presence. *What does this mean?* Accordingly, the theme of disabled God not only represents a strong model for identification of the person with the wounded Christ, but is a route towards the achievement of liberation and freedom from oppression and marginalization. Eiesland presents a framework of practical theology from the perspective of a liberating critique of power, oppression and the social exclusion of people with disability within the Christian tradition. Eiesland develops a contextualized Christology<sup>465</sup> in highlighting the revelation of the Resurrected Christ's wounds as disabled God. The significance of the resurrected Christ's presenting his wounded hand and feet to his disciples, according to Eiesland, alters the re-conception of wholeness of body, the truth of incarnation and promise of resurrection. However, in my view the Christological problem of this interpretation is not only a problem of the relation Christ - Adam, but is also soteriological and eschatological in nature. Looking at Christ merely through his physical appearances (such as wounds) sees within Jesus only his human character - the anthropology of the earthly Jesus.<sup>466</sup> It is correct to think that based on Christ's wounds God shows his solidarity with all people, with all kinds of human suffering and sins (Is 53,4-5). Although disability should not be identified only with the physical suffering that creates social exclusion, according to Eiesland, it became so. For Eiesland's one-sided logic of seeing disability merely as a physical condition and identifying only a physical disability in Christ's wounds excludes those types of disability where a person lacks autonomy, mental wholeness, or is severely dependent. Moreover, it is also problematic for disability discourses (medical vs social model) that incline towards defining disability as a social construct, rather than a physical condition. This further involves discourses on the power of language and culture in constructing disability and the post-structural dichotomies of the terms disabled and dis-abled, where the first refers to the disability definition based on established knowledge (see for instance the WHO Classification), and the second signifies functional capacity.<sup>467</sup> Although Eiesland's liberatory aspect applies to social oppression of people with disabilities within the Church,<sup>468</sup> it seems that identification with Christ's wounds is only possible for those with physical impairment. Based on this identification, it is unclear where Eiesland

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<sup>465</sup>Eiesland, *Disabled God*, p. 98

<sup>466</sup>Eiesland, *Disabled God*, p.102.

<sup>467</sup>For more on such discourses, see for instance, Corker Mairian & Shakespeare Tom, eds.

*Disability/Postmodernity - Embodying Disability Theory* (London/New York: Continuum, 2002); Lennard Davis, *Bending over backwards: Disability, dismodernity and other difficult positions*, (New York, New York University Press, 2002).

<sup>468</sup> Eiesland, *Disabled God*, pp. 89-98.

situates disability: in the medical or the social model, or in some functional physical capacity/incapacity. Similarly, John Swinton in his analysis of disability theologies replies:

Recognizing disability in Jesus according to the marks of his scars seems strangely at odds with the suggestion that disability is social and shouldn't be essentialized as any particular feature. If disability is a product of social forces rather than any form of impairment, then what difference does it make that Jesus carried his scars? His scars were not the reason for his oppression or the injustices perpetrated against him.<sup>469</sup>

Theological correction of the concept disabled God means that in Jesus, God not only suffers and identifies himself with those with physical disability (contra Eiesland) but God, who suffers in Christ, suffers with all humanity in different aspects and perspectives of their earthly suffering. It follows that his wounds are not only a sign of Christ's weakness, but are the signs of recognition and redemption. It is not clear how, without the wounds, the Resurrected Christ would have been recognized by his disciples. Identification of the physical condition of disability with the Christ as image of God, ("the significance of the disabled God is not primarily maleness, but rather physicality")<sup>470</sup> is limited for the reason that a representation of the image of Christ based on physical identification does not take into account his divinity, and God's redemptive action exemplified through Christ's suffering, which was not only the remedy for human suffering, but also for human sins, as already indicated within an earlier discussion. In the New Testament it is Jesus who is the perfect image of God and the faithful are redeemed through him as the new Adam. (2 Cor, 4:4). In order to strengthen my argument, I will turn to the papal Encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (*The Redeemer of Man*), which, presenting the thinking on the mystery of redemption and drawing on the teachings of Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*, states:

Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, *fully reveals man to himself* and brings to light his most high calling". And the Council continues: "He who is the 'image of the invisible God' (Col 1:15), is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare."<sup>471</sup>

*Redemptor Hominis* is the encyclical that dates from the beginning of John Paul II's Papal Ministry in 1979. Christ, the Redeemer, as the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15) restored to the children of Adam likeness to God, which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. As the original link between God and man was broken in the man Adam, in the man Christ, it was restored (RH, 7). The encyclical distinguishes between the divine and human dimensions of the mystery of Redemption. The divine dimension of the mystery of the Redemption explains the meaning of the Cross and the death of Christ. The God of creation is revealed as the God of redemption, as the God who is "faithful to himself and faithful to his love for man and the world, which he revealed

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<sup>469</sup>See Swinton, „Who is the God we worship: Theologies of Disability: Challenges and New Possibilities,“ p. 285.

<sup>470</sup>Eiesland, *Disabled God*, p. 89-105.

<sup>471</sup>Cf. *Redemptor Hominis*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_04031979\\_redemptor-hominis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html)

on the day of creation. (RH, 9). The human dimension expresses that Christ the Redeemer "fully reveals man to himself", in such a way that man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the Redemption man becomes newly "expressed" and, in a way, is newly created (RH. 10). Following these statements, *Redemptor Hominis* is a reminder that Jesus' sacrifice and salvation through the cross was for all (the divine dimension), as well as man's identification with Jesus crucified was a possibility open for all (the human dimension). Jesus was indeed at the very moment of the Cross dis-abled, and his wounds and scars, revealed to his disciples after Resurrection, were the representation of His earthly pain, suffering and identification with every man. As stated in *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: "by his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man."<sup>472</sup> But this pain and suffering was now overcome due to God's redemptive action through Christ. Jesus indeed identifies himself with every man, and every man was identified with Christ at the very moment of the Cross. But the ultimate purpose of being disabled on the Cross has rather a redemptive character, restoring man's dignity and re-establishing the meaning of his life and the broken covenant with God. This suggests that a disabled and resurrected God is possible on account of every human condition, not merely people with physical disability. This God is a symbolic icon not only of those living with physical disability (*contra* Eiesland), but of all people who suffer physically, psychologically and spiritually. The purpose of the image of Christ as disabled God in Eiesland's account demonstrates, on the one hand, an inclusive anthropology for those with physical disability. However, on the other hand, this fails, as Eiesland does not fully grasp the whole meaning of the image of Christ as the image of the invisible God, going beyond a one-dimensional identification with physical disability and the social exclusion of some. It is fair to admit that the image of disabled God is a helpful designation of the Christ who suffers with the physically impaired and is a helpful approach to a God who is in solidarity with his people.<sup>473</sup> However, the problem of this designation is its limited image of God, who goes beyond being reduced merely by a physical impairment. Although Eiesland's approach to disabled God has been many ways influential for the theology of disability it also shows its limitation, as the whole idea of identification of physical disability with the image of disabled Christ is only metaphorical and as such incomplete.<sup>474</sup> If Eiesland would use the term *dis-abled* signifying the physical incapacity or disfunction of Christ at the very moment of the Cross, instead of *disabled* understood as an established medical and social condition, the theological dispute over this would be probably less confused. Instead, the problem of terminological ambiguity over the definition of disability within domain of Disability studies would be tackled. However, the discussion of disabled God as well as a definition of disability is not yet at an end. The inquiry and the ambiguity over different opinions on this terminology is still in process for both disability theologians and disability studies scholars. Therefore, I firstly propose an open dialogue between disability theologians and disability studies in relation to the

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<sup>472</sup> Second Vatican Council. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, 1965, no. 22: See also Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 1980, no 13.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. Yong, *The Bible, Disability and the Church - a New Vision of the People of God*, 176

<sup>474</sup> For more on metaphorical language on „disabled God“ see Burton Cooper, „The Disabled God“ in *Theology Today*, 49, 2 (1992): pp. 173-182

terminology *disabled* and *dis-abled* ; and secondly, I invite theologians to rethink divine power and abilities other than as the unlimited extension of our own human powers or abilities. This also means to “imagine” Jesus Christ as vulnerable and disabled God.

#### **2.2.2.4. The theme of body and disability**

The approach to the theme of the body within the field of Disability studies discussions noted that its main idea revolves around the concept of physical body and the related distinction of able-disabled body dualism. Perceiving the body through the experience of physical impairment (the medical model) and vice versa, fails to see beyond its mere physical appearances. Little has been said about spiritual, moral or psychosocial dimensions of the body. Disability theology on the contrary shows interest in perceiving the body as a spiritual entity and has been critical of liberal premises related to “body” discourses that reduce all of the human to material. The pitfall of the mainstream contemporary position on the body, is that body represents the totality of the human. This is particularly evident in the position of liberal practical ethicists such as J. Fletcher,<sup>475</sup> Peter Singer,<sup>476</sup> J. McMahan.<sup>477</sup> When a person is not considered in her/his bodily totality (as spiritual, relational and physical being) the anthropological gap between, for instance, disabled and non disabled, or sick and healthy, capable and incapable individuals, becomes even greater, as all that matters is a person’s physical appearance or her/his physical attributes. In a culture that so objectifies and commercializes the body, people with physical disability and particularly those with profound intellectual disabilities are under “attack.” The meaning we give to the notion of body reflects not only how we value our physical existence, but also reflects our approach to another person’s body, and ultimately social relationships, one of which is friendship. If for instance, the body is deprived of its spiritual component then friendship easily loses its spiritual value. Without its spiritual value friendship often become material or in a way even utilitarian. As the spiritual dimension matters for the body, so does it matter for relationships of friendship. The theme of the body within disability theology has a prominent place. Disability theologians, or those theologians with physical disability, center the body as the milieu of its discussions. Coming from the embodied experience of disability, Deborah Creamers for instance, in her distinguished book on embodied theology argues that to write about disability is to reconsider our understanding of human embodiment.<sup>478</sup> Likewise, Swinton addresses “body matters”<sup>479</sup>, not only for what it means to be a creature with a physical body but what it means to have a physical disability. The body puts us into relationship with others, but also reflects our image of our self and ultimately - of God. In the following paragraph I will consider three main approaches to the notion of body within Disability theology. Pia Matthews’s reflection on John Paul II’s personalism; Thomas Reynolds’s approach to the cult of normalcy and culture of the body; and Brock and Swinton’s integration of

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<sup>475</sup> Fletcher, J. *Humanhood: Essays in biomedical ethics* (Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Books, 1979).

<sup>476</sup> Singer, P., *Practical Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>477</sup> McMahan J. *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the margins of life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>478</sup> Creamers, *Disability and Christian Theology Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities*, „Introduction.“

<sup>479</sup> Swinton, “From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability and Humanness,” pp.172-190.

the body reflected within 1 Cor 12. But before I engage on this discourse I will look at a few of the main insights into the notion of body from the perspective of Biblical anthropology: the Old and New Testaments respectively. My specific interest in this investigation is to find in it a viewpoint on the experience of disability.

#### **2.2.2.5. The general insights on the body in light of a Scripture and theology**

Not only does a proper understanding of the human body depend on its anthropological foundation, but the particular type of anthropology influences comprehension of the body and hence challenges moral concerns related to the body. This can be particularly significant in regard to „disability anthropology.“ The kind of anthropology of the body we use reflects our understanding of the abled - disabled body dichotomy, or more precisely the body of a person living with physical impairment. The mainstream Christian view on the notion of body has three elements. The body is often understood as a natural/physical and sinful entity (close to the meaning of flesh, fr. *chair*); the body consecrated to/by Christ; and the body from the perspective of life everlasting (deification).<sup>480</sup> This typology of the theme of the body has been the subject of larger theological discourses: the Fathers, theological anthropology, the doctrine of Christian ethics, moral theology, dogmatics'. Nevertheless, the essence of these discourses sets out from the notion of body within a perspective of the Biblical anthropology of the Old and New Testaments. As engagement with a profound exegetical and contextual analysis is beyond the scope of this research, I will only provide a few key insights into the general understanding of the body within biblical anthropology, in order to grasp its fuller meaning from the perspective of the disabled body, and in contrast with the modern idea of the body.

The theme of the body plays an important role in the biblical anthropology of Old and New Testaments. The theme of the body in the Hebrew Bible and related literature, according to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Bible and Theology*, is rather an „anthropology“, than a specific notion. This means that the Hebrew Bible does not only distinguish between the body of God (divine) and the human body, but in considering the human body, the Hebrew Bible uses particular descriptive terminology in determining the meaning of the human body as a living organism. In the absence of a fixed terminology specific to Hebrew anthropology relating to the notion of body, the majority of Old Testament scholars agree that the term best related to the meaning of man's earthly bodily presence, understood as flesh, is the Hebrew word *basar*.<sup>481</sup> *Basar* represents something of man's earthly presence, which means that in some translations exegetes correlate its meaning with the notion of bone or womb, etc.<sup>482</sup> By using this terminology (womb, bone, kidney, heart), the Biblical author seeks to emphasize the fleshly meaning of the term *basar* and associated terminology, rather than the explicit term for the complete body of man. Since there is no explicit

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<sup>480</sup>Cf. Desmond Alexander, T. & Brian S. Rosner eds. s.v. „Corps“ *Dictionnaire de théologie biblique*, (Charols: Excelsis, 2012), p.210.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. Davidson, A. B, *The theology of the Old Testament*, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1904): p. 188.

<sup>482</sup> Cf. in Bible works 10: Ex 24:10 the King James Version; Lam 4:7; Lev 21:11; Nu 6:6,7,11; 19:11,13,16; Hag 2:13; (Dt 28:4,11,18,53; 30:9; Job 19:17 the King James Version; Ps 132:11; Mic 6:7).

word for the „body“ in the Old Testament Bible, the *Dictionary of the Bible*,<sup>483</sup> points out the intertwined usage of *basar* (physical body) and *nephesh* (representing the „living being“, with the corresponding meaning of soul in Greek). Additionally, the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, specifically states that what man is, according to Old Testament anthropology, can only be understood in a holistic way. In other words, the Old Testament shows little interest in distinguishing the body (as one part of man) from the soul (personality).<sup>484</sup> This means that according to Old Testament anthropology,

“man does not possess a soul and the body, rather he is both, soul and flesh, full of life and potential activity, while at the same time threatened by illness, transitoriness, and death.”<sup>485</sup>

However, Biblical anthropology, despite describing the body with an emphasis on the physical meaning of (hebr. *basar*; greek. *soma*, *sarx*, lat. *corpus*), also employs body with a superior and interior dignity due to Gen 1-2. This was later re-confirmed and further developed in St. Paul’s New Testament theology (1Cor, 12, 14-27). Contrary to the Old Testament holistic body terminology, the New Testament, was under the influence of a Hellenistic worldview, slightly differs. The important difference of this novelty is the distinction between body *soma*, Latin *corpus* (Mt 5:29,30; 6:22,23,25; 26:26; Jn 2:21; Acts 9:40; 1 Cor 15:35,37,38,44; Eph 1:23; 2:16; 4:4,12,16; 5:23,30) and flesh *sarx*, where flesh, used interchangeably with the body, corresponds to meaning the physical existence of human beings (1Cor 15:39; 2Cor, 7:1,) and is often in opposition to nature of God (Rom 8:3-13).<sup>486</sup>

Moreover, the distinction is not only between *soma* and *sarx*. The prevailing Hellenistic dualism of opposition between body (*soma*) and *psyche* (soul) had some influence on the New Testament and brought about various applications of the meaning of human. The body sometimes indicates the whole man (Rom 6:12; Heb 10:5), and sometimes it is considered as a morally corrupted, instrument of evil<sup>487</sup> (Rom 8:13). Even so, in the Pauline opus the same body is not only corrupt, but is also incorrupt, spiritual, resurrected; or means the body of Christ, (1 Cor 12:13) and temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16). According to the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, the “body” designates in the same way the whole man who can be raised after death (Matt 27:52; Acts 9:40; John 2:21; Rom 8:11; 1Cor 6:14); and the soul is its life-power, continually renewed by eating and drinking

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<sup>483</sup> Henry Swete Barclay, Driver, S. R, Davidson, A. B, Selbie, John A, and Hastings, James. *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents, including the Biblical Theology*. (New York, Scribner, T. & T. Clark, 1899.

<sup>484</sup> Freedman David Noel, Herion, Gary Alan, eds. *The Anchor Bible dictionary*, s.v. „Body“ (New York/London: Doubleday, 1992): p.768.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid. s.v. „Body“, p.768.

<sup>486</sup> Cf. *Dictionnaire de théologie biblique*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander & Brian S. Rosner, (Charols : Excelsis, 2012).

<sup>487</sup> After the summary of all the abovementioned references to Paul epistles, my opinion is that Paul's opus on regard of the body, when this body is particularly informed by evil or signifies the moral corruption, Paul is talking actually addressing a moral sin. He does not explicitly indicate that whole of the body in its originality is evil, undignified or corrupted, because Paul is always seeing body in light of God’s grace, which is above all the earthly creatureliness and transcends all the evil suffered.

(Matt 6:25).<sup>488</sup>The New Testament not only speaks of a distinction between body and soul, *soma* and *sarx*, but what is of more importance, the notion of the body is given a new meaning. This includes body as the temple, the body of Christ, the Eucharistic Body, the resurrection of the body, the church as the body of Christ in Colossians and Ephesians.<sup>489</sup> Moreover, New Testament anthropology relating to this approaches the idea of the body literally and metaphorically (the body as the Church), as well as theologically (Eucharistic body).<sup>490</sup> Despite, on the one hand, the distinction between spiritual body and natural body (*soma* and *sarx*) known to Paul, and on the other hand, the Old Testament body as the physical wholeness of a living organism, biblical anthropology demonstrates that body, even as a merely human (physical) natural entity, has dignity, originality, *conferred upon it by the Creator, who shaped it out of earth, and glorified it by the incarnation of Christ, the sinless One, though born of a woman.*<sup>491</sup>In the *Christendom*, the divine body besides being the totality of beautiful and beneficial forces, embodies cruelty and destruction (Jesus on the Cross) in the body of Christ. In giving his earthly body for many, Christ's body became a source of unity for all individuals, who allowed being helped, loved and approached by Jesus (Eph 2:16; 3:6; 4:4 and 1Cor 6:15). As stated earlier, the biblical anthropology look of the body was in most cases constitutive for development of theological anthropology. The work of the patristic fathers followed this approach the body as a physical entity. The peak of theological discourse in patristic era (Augustine) and late (Aquinas) medieval period on the theme of body takes a more Christocentric view. Systematic development of the notions of body and soul provided by Aquinas, influence development of later moral theology's view of the body, with certain revisions remain common in our own days. The modern period has been influenced by a scientific method and empiricism and the physical body separated from the soul, became an object of scientific research. The view of the body as spiritual entity was pushed to the margins. As a reaction to these forces which continue to influence modern thinking on body-soul dualism, the modern theological discourses became particularly interested in remedy such situation. The integral anthropology that implies view on the body as physical and spiritual whole emerged with personalism. The body within such view represent embodiment, spatial-time expression of one's self, the presence of the other's and possibility of sharing (mutual dependence), the relationship with the world and society. But also body is the limit, a sign of spatial time constraint, that implies pain, disease and death. Recent discourse within scope of theological ethics, demonstrate different approaches to the same reality of the body, aparting from a rather a univocal agreement in opinions (see for instance Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor*, *Humane vitae*, or certain theological streams such as Thomism, proportionalism). Overall, little concerns within abovementioned discourse, as we can see, has been given to the systematic approach of disabled body, physical deformity,

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<sup>488</sup> Cf. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, p. 768

<sup>489</sup> Cf. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, p. 768-771

<sup>490</sup> Balentine, Samuel Eugene, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and theology*, s.v. „Body“ (New York, Oxford University Press, 2015);pp. 89-91.

<sup>491</sup> Swete, Henry Barclay, Driver, S. R, Davidson, A. B, Selbie, John A, and Hastings, James. *A Dictionary of the Bible*; 1899.

representation of the body in the wheelchair, etc. From such reason the research within theological ethics and anthropology that includes discourse on disabled body, are demands.

#### **2.2.2.6. The notion of the Body in perspective of disability discourses**

##### **a) Pia Matthews and apparently non-acting person**

Pia Matthews in her book on profound intellectual disability in the light of Pope John Paul II's theological and ethical reflections, explores the status of people with profound disability addressed as "apparently non - acting person."<sup>492</sup> Matthews inquiry to a JP II personalism addresses the connection between the notion of body as a sacred reality and the notion of a person. These arguments contrast liberal bioethical premises that make a strong distinction between body and soul, grounded in Cartesian dualism of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Theological discourse on the proper evaluation of the body (one of which is suggested by Matthews JP II anthropology) can potentially propose for solution in overcoming Cartesian dualism, embodied in the contemporary approach to disability (for instance, the medical model, liberal bioethics). Matthews account tends to portray the problem of these dichotomies which we encounter in our cultural and social attitudes towards disabled people. The, on the one hand, strong dualism, consists of the separation between the person and his/her body. On the other hand, "Manichean myth" integrated into this mentality detaches people with disability from their bodies as their physical reality, and instead associates them with an angelic appearance. Both views are problematic as they disembodify disabled person from their full integration. This means that the encounter with a person with disability seen through the lens of embodied dualism or disembodiment, acknowledges the person's physical appearance, but a person with a fully integrated subjectivity and intrinsic dignity. When a person with profound intellectual disability comes into question, the problem is even greater. Persons with profound intellectual disability often fail to fulfill the criteria of personhood proposed by modern liberal bioethics whose values are based on cognitive capacities, communication, capacity to choose, self - determination and self - consciousness (e.g. Fletcher, Singer). Without these capacities the belief of above-mentioned ethicist is that these persons will fail to have a flourished life and due to lack of communication they will be unable to create relationships. And, in a way, they may be correct, so far as their belief is oriented to the somatic life of a person. But, as theologians we know, that not only physical is determinative for personal existence. Moreover, the materialistic qualification of a person gradually deprives her/him of the status of person and instead describes him/her with the status of the physical being (biological material) that ultimately results in a status of "apparently non-acting person." Or as otherwise addressed by Matthews:

The person with disability is often seen as a self-imprisoned individual in a broken body, or as in the case of profound intellectual disability, as merely a human body, lacking the component of "person."<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Pia Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently "Non -acting" Person*, 2013.

<sup>493</sup> Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently „Non-acting,, Person*, p. 82.



This view associates the person with disability with his/her biological life but detaches the person from biographical life.<sup>494</sup> Not only is the person reduced to materialism (perceived as flesh, physical material) and division (*res cogitans* and *res extensa*) but the historicity, dignity and narrative (biography) of a person, in this view is lost. The biographical is replaced by the biological and the biological became main orientation when discussing the status of a person. This is where Matthews turn to JP II anthropological argument regarding the distinction between acting and non-acting person. JP II warned of the danger of a system of ethical reasoning that distinguished between the person *per se* and the person's body or in other words, the reduction of the personal upon the biological. In *Person and Act*, the form of JP II anthropology elevates the human being over the person as an acting agent, indicating that no activity is prior being human. This later became integral part of *Evangelium Vitae* seeking the value of intrinsic human dignity. Accordingly, no human individual should be subordinated as a pure means or pure instrument, as merely an object of care, for each has a value each human being is a person in intersubjective communion with others and each person is an active agent, due to his/her intrinsic dignity.<sup>495</sup> Human person and human being are not separated in Cardinal Wojtyla's teaching in *Person and Act*, and the soul is the form of the body, not the other way around. Although JP II's approach with its phenomenological insights into a personal interiority, recognizes consciousness as an important part of human interior life, it (consciousness) is not the topic of Wojtyla's philosophy. According to Wojtyla, later Pope JP II, these hermeneutics only indicates that the person is not determined by activity, but is an openness towards cooperation with grace. This includes the person with profound disability perceiving his/her as an active agent with interior dignity. Matthews also points to similar ideas developed by JP II in his *Theology of the Body*. Although *Theology of the Body* was not specifically written for people with profound disability, the Pope's arguments regarding the objectification of the body speak loudly to people with disability. For, the problem of disabled people is that the disability is seen as located in their body, or people with disability are seen as imprisoned in their body. This means that they are often seen in terms of the body or their physical appearances, which is to say that being seen through the body means being seen as an object of manipulation. Within JP II theology of the body, Matthews see a corrective and hermeneutical shift from the mainstream cultural attitudes towards people with disability. Seeing the body through a sacramental perspective as in JP II's words, means that the body enters the definition of sacrament - *being a visible sign of invisible reality*. This perception not only transcends a materialistic view of the body, but reestablishes the truth of the body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 1Cor 6:19). When thinking about a person's body includes its sacramentality, his/her biographical life includes the Christocentric and eschatological vision of the body. Historicity invokes awareness of the "possession" of the body, participation and engagement with the world, with common brothers and sisters and ultimately with God. This way of communication as Matthews shows includes sensory experience, body language, which are

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<sup>494</sup> Cf. Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently „Non-acting,, Person*, p. 82.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55

profoundly human activities.<sup>496</sup> The assumptions of those bioethicists give rise to a medical model of disability that reduces persons with disability to subject of disease or physical deformity. Simultaneously, the arguments Matthews presents in her book by drawing on JPII are a valuable source for a critique of Disability studies discourses that lack an integrative picture of the person's embodiment, often reduced to physical impairment. Matthews sees within JPII theology of the body and his personalism not only a strong critique of Cartesian dichotomy inflicted upon the person, but also an argument to combat liberal premises regarding the human agency. Drawing on JPII theology of the body and his anthropology in *Person and Act*, Matthews succeed in uniting the biographical and biological within a person. Rethinking the human person in the light of his/her biological and biographical life not only underlines the person's embodiment (physical appearance) but sees the person from the perspective of his/her historicity, narrative, dignity, value and agency - where agency includes not only my conscious acts but all my activity as a human being. These thinking is a great contribution in regard to the person with profound disability or as some address, the apparently "*non-acting person*."

#### **b) Cult of normalcy and the body capital - Thomas Reynolds perspective**

Reflection on the notion of the body does not appear as merely a matter of theological anthropology or disability theology, but targets reflection on friendship with people with disabilities. The impossibility of imagining friendship with people with disability is partially based on the viewing of their cognitive capacities as insufficient (intellectual disability) or certain aspects of their physical appearance (wheelchair users, lack of mobility). Next, I will approach Thomas Reynolds's account of body capital and the cult of normalcy presented within his book *Vulnerable Communion*. What exactly Reynolds framework of the cult of normalcy and body capital means and why does it matters for discourse on the body and disability? The so called *cult of normalcy* and *body capital* according to Reynolds, represent a common denominator of perfectly shaped bodies that fit the standard social and cultural norm. Body capital according to Reynolds addresses the value of the body and its abilities as matter, how it reflects common assumptions about a community's sense of the good, how it gains legitimacy, purchases recognition, or acquires worth in the context of others. Therefore, body capital is a power value engineered by dominant social institutions governed by disciplinary technologies such as education, medicine, social policy, culture, etc.<sup>497</sup> Reynolds set out the premise that a perfectly shaped body within Western societies sets the standard values and the set of body function as a normal way of being. Bodily features such as beauty, productivity and performance highly visible, accepted and desired, distribute human ideals and norms. Considered as a normal way of being, the normalcy does not only include perfectly shaped body, but also a standardized equivalent for the criterion of reason, which is to say a desired cognitive efficiency. The universally acknowledged privileging of reason and high cognitive capacities, according to Reynolds, serves as a strategy of control and power, and has implication within a process of normalization. Anthropological presuppositions that support the

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<sup>496</sup> Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently Non-acting Person*, p. 90

<sup>497</sup> Cf. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p. 58.

aforementioned, Reynolds situates under the umbrella of the “cult of normalcy.” The cult of normalcy as socially constructed includes social control by “mainstreaming body capital and at the same time exclusion of what lacks standardized „body capital.”<sup>498</sup> What is frequently assumed as normal according to this strategy, refers to able-bodied functions. People with disabilities whose cognitive capacities or whose physical body form is often perceived as *deformed*, do not correspond to these requirements and are often at the bottom of this „body normality scale“ as do not fit into the body capital scheme. From these reasons the cult of normalcy has developed biased attitudes towards differences, especially to those living with intellectual disability. The cult of normalcy, therefore, represents an ideal and an antithesis to the abnormal, which is considered as dysfunctional. Enforcing normalcy in this way, projects the fear of differences, weakness and worthlessness. Problems arise when the cult of normalcy as a social construct represents what it means to be a person, feel good or flourish. Contrary, the encounter with differently shaped body form and function produces fear, insecurity and inconsistency. The body of such a person is considered abnormal and deformed and personal wholeness is often qualified according to his/her physical appearances. In other words, the body represents the person. By privileging certain qualities of the body, being “different“ or even looking different, is a corruption of a privation of good or departure from normalcy.<sup>499</sup> The cult of normalcy, not only represent a closed system of arbitrary and biased norms and ideals, but is unable to recognize differences as a positive qualities. The management of body capital is not only exclusive of weakness and vulnerability but alienated to disabilities. Disability is defined as an inability to perform adequately and vulnerability as an obstacle to full flourishing. Not only does this framework exclude people with disabilities, but individual distinctiveness and particularity are lost. Besides acknowledging body capital and the cult of normalcy as a contemporary problem of the denial of vulnerability as a human condition, it also makes impossible the encounter disabled person as a possible friend or different other. The Enlightenment principles that praise rational autonomy, freedom, equality and independence, according to Reynolds, not only influenced the framework of modern anthropology, but are threats for a holistic anthropology of the body. The problem with this anthropology has its consequences in the way we understand the dignity of those humans who are more vulnerable or disabled. Anthropologies that determine equality, freedom, independence and rational capacities as qualities applied to all, are exclusive towards those persons whose abilities do not reach this uniform standard. What Reynolds sees as problematic here is that if freedom, equality, independence and rational autonomy are ends and values inherent to human dignity which have to be preserved, then a life without these is not worthy of this dignity.<sup>500</sup>

To sum up, as a reaction to the cult of normalcy and body capital on the one hand, and contrary to the abovementioned Enlightenment ideas, on the other, Reynolds echoes an anthropology in which the categories of dysfunctional, disabled and vulnerable become fundamental. This anthropology includes the categories of what is considered as dysfunctional,

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<sup>498</sup> Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p.179

<sup>499</sup> Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p.183

<sup>500</sup> Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p. 80.

disabled and vulnerable being viewed as categories of the human. Anthropologically conceptualized, vulnerability signifies the aspect of weakness, relationality and dependency. Through their recognition, Reynolds contrast thought on disability and vulnerability with the able-body capital and rational autonomy; dependency and needs, contrasts the independency and self-sufficiency; his structure on relationality indicates the human need to acknowledge difference.

### c) Brian Brock's and John Swinton's reading of the body in a perspective of 1Cor 12, 12-30

Paul's text in 1Cor 12, 12-30 provides many insights on the notion of the body and also serves many purposes within theological reasoning.<sup>501</sup> Besides it employs pneumatological, eschatological, Christological and ecclesiological perspectives on the body, the text itself has been the subject of scholarly disputes and disagreements. The first section of the discourse on the body in Paul's letter employs disagreement within the body as a metaphor for the Church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12, 12-14) and the theological conception of the Eucharistic body (1Cor 11:24) in the light of Christ's Supper (Matt 26:26).<sup>502</sup> 1Cor 12, 12-14 - the image of Church as the body of Christ according to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Bible and Theology*, falls into two camps of interpreters. The first group of interpreters emphasizes the unity of the church, the diversity and interdependence of its various parts (1 Cor 12:12-30, see also Rom 12:3-8:1 and Col 2:11-13; 3:15); the second group of interpreters, despite speaking of the Church as the body of Christ, emphasizes the distinction between the body and its head (1Cor 11:3). In the first group of interpreters, the head is another member of the body.<sup>503</sup>

1 Cor 12, 12-30, according to Brock and Swinton's interpretation, which will be of my concern in a further paragraph, attempts to give a theological account of social inclusion and interdependency. It is often presented as tool for working towards social inclusion, where the body is presented as a social and spiritual reality. Additionally, besides Brock and Swinton, the interpretation of the body in 1 Cor 12, 12-30, is also much used within the reflections of other contemporary disability theologians such as already mentioned Thomas Reynolds *Vulnerable Communion* and Amos Yong in "Disability and the gift of the Spirit."<sup>504</sup>

### 1st Corinthians - a few general remarks

Before I embark upon the interpretation of the body in 1Cor 12, 12-30, using the hermeneutics of disability theologians, I will offer a few insights into its main features according to most relevant contemporary exegesis. The main commentaries on the Greek text regarding the

<sup>501</sup> See Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000); See also Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, (Louisville, KY : Westminster/John Knox Press, 2011); N.T. Wright, *Paul for everyone : 1 Corinthians*, (Louisville, KY : Westminster John Knox Pr. 2004).

<sup>502</sup> Cf. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, p. 760-770.

<sup>503</sup> See Balentine, Samuel Eugene, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and theology*, s.v. „Body,“ pp. 89-91

<sup>504</sup> Amos Yong, "Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19 (2010): pp. 76-93.

general theme of 1Cor 12, 12-30, address the members of one body as unity-with diversity and diversity in unity. Besides this, the commentary on the notion of body within 1Cor 12 provides a summary of various perspectives in reading and interpreting the notion of body. Likewise, the body is understood from the perspective of analogy or metaphor or its instrumental meaning; it also includes Christological (cf. Deluze) or Ecclesiological aspects (cf. Schrage). The arguments also are based upon the distinction between the body as political unity and the human body. N.T. Wright in his commentary on “many members, one body” points out that the significance of “member” for Paul started out as a part of a metaphor, but developed into a meaning “people who belong.”<sup>505</sup> N.T. Wright also recalls three distinct meanings of the human being and human body, not only as a random metaphor. The first image of the human being, according to N.T. Wright, is used by Paul to express the meaning of place, where those who belong to Jesus as Messiah love what they become; second, Paul is speaking of Christians as the Messiah’s body, defined over and against paganism and non-Christian Judaism. Renewal and resurrection were achieved through the Messiah’s mortal and resurrected body; and the third image, of the body as a way of talking about social, civic and political life, is also somehow applied in Paul’s thinking. For Paul is pointing out the identity of the Christians as a new and different kind of community, owing allegiance to a new and different Lord.<sup>506</sup> The experience of the Spirit (through baptism) and everyday life points to unity (Gal, 3), cutting off from divisions of social, cultural and national polarities. Together with N.T. Wright, I tend to emphasize that within 1Cor 12, 12-30 not only is the body attributed a higher meaning, but within the body, every member as an organ (metaphorically) is not separated from relationship to the body. For this reason diversity is needed not only as an end in itself but as a means to honoring the indispensable parts of the same body. Therefore, 1 Cor 12, 12-27 together with 1 Cor 3:16 offer great Christological, anthropological and Pneumatological perspectives on the body and can be a relevant source for theological anthropology on the subject of disability. In the next paragraph I will outline the main ideas regarding such observation.

### **“Body matters”**

As theologians we do reflect upon the discourse on the body within 1 Cor, 12, 12-30, but as is often the case, we do not pay adequate attention its particularity, especially when discussion involves disability, Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, or any other sort of visible physical difference. In my view, the understanding of 1Cor 12, 12-30 is of importance, as it addresses a renewed image of the human body within the body of Christ. Not only does the human body become a visible spiritual reality, but within the perspective of the body of Christ, 1 Cor offers a reconstructed pneumatology of the subject of the disabled body.<sup>507</sup> The concept of “spiritual bodies” in 1 Cor 12, 12 -30 within disability theology becomes a remarkable statement. Not just because it is a valuable source for re-imagining our bodily integrity, but for its implications in discussing

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<sup>505</sup> N.T Wright, *Paul for everyone : 1 Corinthians*, p.158.

<sup>506</sup> See N.T. Wright, *Paul for everyone : 1 Corinthians*, p.159.

<sup>507</sup>See Brian Brock, “Theologizing Inclusion: 1 Corinthians 12 and the Politics of the Body of Christ,” in *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 15:4 (2011): p.351-376.

dependency, care and difference. 1 Cor 12, 12-30, in the light of disability theologians' interpretations, sees within a body not only biological material but a spiritual dimension that exceeds merely material and physical understandings and conceptions of it. In developing a theology of the body in the perspective of 1Cor 12, 12-30 and 1Cor 3:16, Brock and Swinton engage with the experience of people whose bodies are considered genetically (Down's Syndrome people) or physically different. Their argument involves a critique of the western tradition which prioritizes the material and the intellectual over the spiritual dimension of the body. Related to these comments, on many occasions Swinton and Brock emphasize that the body matters not only as a physical entity, but moreover as spiritual. Why exactly does the body matter for Swinton and Brock?

First of all, contrary to the established view of body as a metaphor in 1Cor, for Swinton, the body of Christ is not a metaphor, it is a physical reality, whose essence is its diversity and unification in Christ.<sup>508</sup> Related to this, it matters because of our mutual interdependence as creatures. And third, it matters as an occasion for friendship, as friendship is something we do with our bodies. This inclusive approach to the body is also present within Brock's interpretation of the Body.<sup>509</sup> Speaking about the body of Christ, Swinton founds awareness upon the integrity and importance of every member, and in terms of the social perspective, he emphasizes that from the viewpoint of the Body of Christ there is no I, only we.<sup>510</sup> Second, this "I becoming we" and "we becoming part of I", show how those who are baptized into one body are interconnected. This is a strong theological statement. Swinton draws the conclusion regarding interconnectedness that because we are in Christ, we are who we are not as individuals, but as Christians,<sup>511</sup> and we are not who we may think we are, or we choose to be (individualism) but who we are in Christ. Being baptized means becoming the body of Christ, and this is the reason why belonging to the body of Christ within this sacramental perspective has many implications. This interpretation speaks loudly about persons with disabled bodies. How does the person with a disabled body matter for the community of Christians? In his emphasis on the importance of "body", John Swinton explains that body matters, based on the fact that we are all Christ's body, and for this reason our body, viewed in Christlike perspective matters more than it matters individually. This emphasizes the corporate dimension in reading 1Cor 12, 12-27, the body of Christ is a place to belong, because diversity is formed in unity with Christ, so is in unity with Christ's body. Participation *in* and belonging *to* the Body of Christ through baptism means, as already stated, we do not own our bodies, but we belong to the Body of Christ as Christians and are therefore interconnected. This means that encounter with a differently-shaped body does not matter for the Christian, as the same body participates equally, but differently, in the body of Christ. For what was, in Matthews's analysis, recognized by JPPII as the intrinsic value of a person, is by Brock recognized as an inward

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<sup>508</sup> See John Swinton, „Using our Bodies Faithfully: Christian Friendship and the Life of Worship“ in *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 19, 3 (2015): p 230.

<sup>509</sup> Swinton, „Using our Bodies Faithfully,“ p. 228.

<sup>510</sup> Swinton, „Using our Bodies Faithfully,“ p. 230.

<sup>511</sup> Swinton, „Using our Bodies Faithfully,“ p. 230-231.

reality and a work of the Spirit. Brock confronts the reality of the social world with the reality of the work of the Spirit as an stimulus to rethinking this challenging difference that disability places in front of us. And this difference is celebrated within 1 Cor 12, 12-30. Therefore, for Brock the idea is to refocus attention upon inward realities as a work of the Spirit, but also emphasize that the difference made by 1Cor is not something negative, but something extraordinary. Related to that is the assumption that a person with disability is a gift and that s/he possesses a gift to offer to humanity. This first means that a person with a disability is not deprived of the inner world, from the work of the Spirit who abides in a baptized person. A person with disability, therefore, with the help of the Holy Spirit is capable of communicating with God as his/her Creator, despite cognitive incapacities or physical deformities. God does not look on what is outside, but what is within the person. Brock's reading of 1Cor 12-27 applies his reading of it from a socio-political perspective. Brock does acknowledge the organic image of the body, but his readings implies the perceiving of the body as a metaphor. He presents 1 Cor 12, 12-13 as a theological account of Paul's critical polemic with the members of the Church in Corinth. Brock sees Paul's 1Cor 12-13 polemic on the body „as an entity, like the political community, in which discrete entities must be kept talking to one another and working to support one another.“<sup>512</sup> This further leads to his theological argument of raising awareness of the „mental bridge“ that in 1 Cor,12:13 Paul makes between the physical body and the community - the body of Christ. As he puts it:

The bodily existence of limbs and senses *per se* is not the „real“ datum on which the argument rests: Paul (by re-presenting the knowledge he imbibed from Israel as a covenant people) is striving to make the Corinthians aware of fellow Christians as parts of Christ's actual body (*hutos kai ho kristos*).<sup>513</sup>

This is where Brock emphasizes communication between the members of the body of Christ as a way towards inclusion of each and every member, important and desired by Paul for the Corinthians, and true for the Church as the body of Christ nowadays. All the body is connected as a nexus, so distancing any member does not make for completeness. Accordingly, every member is precious and indispensable for the function of the body. Drawing upon 1Cor 3:16, another reading closely related to 1Cor 12, 12-30 according to Brock's interpretation, Brock contrasts the dominant idea of body capital with spiritual gifts. This means that the person with disability is not a burden or an abnormal individual, but first of all, a gift. The parts of the body symbolize the work of the Holy Spirit and are revealed as spiritual gifts. The body is presented as a work of the Holy Spirit and the parts of the body are perceived as interdependent gifts. These gifts are not the possession or capacities of one individual alone. They are freely given, and their purpose is achieved when the common good within the body, that is the Church, is exemplified. Every person is a bearer of these spiritual gifts, whatever their visible and physical appearance. Every person is, above all, marked by purpose as the gifts have teleological implications. By emphasizing the importance of the body within 1Cor 12, 12-30 not only as a physical entity, but by recalling its spiritual and socio-relational component in line with 1Cor 3:16, Swinton and Brock counterbalance

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<sup>512</sup>See Brock, "Theologizing Inclusion: 1 Corinthians 12 and the Politics of the Body of Christ," p. 362

<sup>513</sup> Ibid, p.362

the neo-liberal premises which see disability and physical deformity as failures and tragedies. Their interpretation is also a reminder of the often-forgotten fact of the place which people with disabilities have within the Church. Prioritizing the physical component over the spiritual, is equivalent in Swinton's thought to the western tradition's prioritizing reason and intellect over community and love.<sup>514</sup> Both lead to detachment from our self and from others. This is where the distinction between matter and spirit reflects the distinction between the individual and others, the private and the common, self-sufficiency and neediness. 1 Cor 12, 12-30, concerning disability, offers a countercultural form of spiritual body, contrasted with modern social and biological body theories. Swinton is not only significant for his emphasis on the importance of the body for our physical existence in the world. The importance of the body is an important aspect of our physical interactions (interdependency) with other humans, or, in his terminology, other physical bodies. Intertwined with the idea of interdependency, the body matters not only from within the perspective of theological anthropology, but also, for Christian reflection on friendship. From the theological perspective of 1Cor 12, 12-30 bodies are not merely definable as a material form of existence. Spiritual gifts are part of the spiritual body of Christ, and in this sense a gift is received not according to attributes, capacities or achievements, but in the light of its final purpose, that is, interdependency and care for each other within the Body.

To sum up I would like to draw attention to a few aspects of the foregoing discussion. Looking at the body, and specifically at the disabled body, as God's dwelling, seems to be at odds with modern popular culture. The personal identity of a person with disability within this culture is not only perceived according to their mental and physical capacities, but the embodied physical differences are seen as undesirable, often reduced to an object of pity and charity. Often these bodies are observed from a distance, even within Christian communities. Despite the fact that in Paul's writings, in describing man's earthly existence, "flesh" is sometimes used interchangeably with "body" ( e.g. 1Cor 15:39; Gal 4:13), in other places the body is affirmed with a higher meaning such as "spiritual body" (1Cor 15:44), membership in the body of Christ (1Cor 10:16) or as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:19; 2Cor 6:16). In line with this, the above discussion pointed out the theological significance of the body, distinguishing from the misunderstandings of modern culture. In view of the threefold interpretation of the body, theologians draw attention to awareness that the personal identity of the person with disability is not necessarily linked to the possession of a body, but the human body is above all perceived from a Christological, interdependent or biographical perspective. In other words instead of a biological body and a body-soul dualism, the person is understood as biographical, that before all includes the integrity of the body (*sarx, soma*) and psyche /soul; instead of being attacked for its flaws by the notions of body capital and the cult of normalcy, a person's body is the sign of vulnerable interdependency; and as a part (member) of Christ's body that is the Church, a person with disability is an indispensable and irreplaceable member of this *belonging*. The overall critique of the liberal reduction of the body to its merely physical components has been contrasted with an emphasis upon the spiritual dimension of the

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<sup>514</sup>See Swinton, „Using our Bodies Faithfully,“ 229.



body. Dominant attitudes towards persons with disability are by this emphasis redirected from the biological towards the biographical (Matthews) or from the material towards the personal. The value which derives from this articulation within the theology of disability contrasts those values of liberal capitalist society that only see attributes, not entities. Disability within theological anthropology implies encounter with the Divine, a possibility denied within the set of neo-liberal values. Disability theologians do acknowledge an open possibility of divine encounter, but also the possibility of a human-Divine relationship. This in a nutshell separates theological anthropology from mainstream anthropological premises.

### 2.2.3. Disability theology perspectives on friendship

#### Introduction

As we could have noticed, academic discourse on disability within the academic field of Disability theology, revolves around specific theological themes but also draws into entangle its fields subjects, such as theological anthropology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, social teaching of the Catholic church etc. The specific themes considered in these discourses involves concept of disability definition, the concept of disability in relation to solidarity and social justice, the concept of imago Dei, the notion of the body, etc. Another aspect of the broader discussion on disability concerns the meaning of inclusion, relationality and belonging. In this, Disability theology discourses challenge the field of medical ethics (Brock), political and liberal disputes on categorization of disability (Hauerwas, Reynolds, Brock), as well as, the social implications for the integration of the people with disabilities into society (Swinton, Eiesland, Creamers). When the discussion concerns the inclusion of people with disability into society and Church, the most dominant theme employed is the concept of friendship. Researchers and academics in their theological work on disability reflect upon topic of friendship as one of the prevailing themes in grasping inclusion (e.g. Yong,<sup>515</sup> Reynolds,<sup>516</sup> Grieg<sup>517</sup>), but only a few works provide a robust rationale on the theme of friendship within the discourse on disability. The theological work of Hans Reinders and John Swinton, with their reference to Jean Vanier work of reflection on

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<sup>515</sup> Amos Yong addresses importance of anthropology of interrelationality and interdependence. Similarly as Reinders he addresses friendship as a form of participation. However, the aspect of relationality suggested by Yong implies strong pneumatological reasoning. Namely, as he explains, God is giving us the breath of life, which is the possibility for interpersonal and intersubjective engagements (A. Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity*, (Texas, Baylor University Press, 2007): p. 184. Now, as Amos distinguished between interpersonal (involving non-self conscious persons e.g. people with profound disabilities) and intersubjective relationships (relationships that involve self-consciously engaged persons), he implicitly suggested self identity of profoundly disabled expressed through relationships of interdependence with others and vice versa. Such understanding is problematic to me as the intrinsic dignity of one person's worth is not an interdependent attachment. We (our dignity) are not identified by relationships with other people, despite participation and quality of our relationships can impact our self - identity. Suggesting interdependent understanding of human dignity, Yong simply locates human value into human interdependency instead of human capacity for relationships.

<sup>516</sup> Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 2008.

<sup>517</sup> Grieg, *Reconsidering Intellectual Disability: L'Arche, Medical ethics and Christian Friendship*, 2015.

friendship in L'Arche, have been among those most cited works among disability theologians. The work of Hans Reinders and John Swinton will be considered within the scope of this research as my key reference in friendship analysis. The general distinction between disability studies and disability theology scholars, is that disability theologians undertake a distinctive approach to friendship: one that first, includes their address to human - Divine relationships where God is an actor within the process of friendship; and second, a person with disability within disability theology is perceived as a spiritual agent, as creature, with an internal capacity for a perpetual state of grace, which for many disability theologians, consider friendship as a possibility often applied and achievable by everyone, people with disability included. Again, the reasons may not apply to Disability studies discourses. In this chapter my key question revolves around exploring the theme of friendship in the perspective of a few works of disability theologians. In so doing, it is not only important to explore the ways in which disability theologians think about friendship, but their reasoning ask how a person with disability counts or is worthy of friendship. I choose to consider work of Hans Reinders's outstanding contribution to this topic in *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*; and John Swinton's interlocking ideas on friendship in his threefold reflection including *Resurrecting the Person*, *From Bedlam to Shalom*, and *Becoming the Friends of Time*. After the analytical part of their account of friendship, I will engage in a comparison of both (Reinders and John Swinton) on friendship. In this account due to their align in Jean Vanier and his work on friendship in L'Arche, my reflection will include a reference to Jason Grieg, who in his book on *Intellectual disability, Medical ethics and L'Arche* provides a significant account of his friendship narrative in L'Arche. His work will serve as a tool for comparing and clarification of the work of Hans Reinders and John Swinton.

#### **2.2.3.1. Hans Reinders - friendship as a gift and receiving**

In *Receiving the gift of friendship*, Hans Reinders's approach to friendship integrates theological anthropology and ethics. The general significance of Reinders's arguments on friendship address people with profound intellectual disabilities and calls to mind much of what Vanier says within the discourse. The reason, for Reinders's turn to Vanier and „his friends in L'Arche“, stems to overlap tendency between Reinders view of friendship as relationship freely given to all; and the possibility of such friendship in L'Arche - as an exemplification of such relationships. In my assessment of Reinders thinking on friendship, I will set out between occurring the elements that most strongly characterize Reinders argument. These are the themes of receiving, giving and the gift. Other elements that most vividly resonate in my readings of Reinders, include being with, not hiding in strength, and importance of one's presence. All the elements are also of relevant importance within the context of L'Arche. The dialectics of this discourse in Reinders's account, includes the perspective of a dialogue between a person with disability and God's friendship with his people.

## Receiving *contra* Sameness and Contribution

The significance of Reinders “ethics of friendship” developed within the third chapter of his book is rooted in a Christian message and shares the L’Arche testimony of a dynamic between giving and receiving. By suggesting friendship as a way towards inclusion, Reinders critique of the disability rights movement leads him to a social and ecological<sup>518</sup> approach to disability. Reinders states that understanding receiving is not only an important element of the revision of our modern idea of friendship, but also is an important concept to re-reflect friendship with God and friendship with a person with disability. These are the two types of relationship which can be grasped and possible only if we know what it means to receive. What does it mean receive the other? How can friendship be perceived as receiving and receiving as a gift? I will try to highlight the most striking elements of Reinders thinking on this. Discussing friendship, Reinders linked his conceptual argument on the ethics of friendship with the narrative of his friendship with his friend Ronald. Ronald is a man with intellectual disability whom Reinders met in a social institution in Netherlands. His friendship with Ronald after a few visits, continues and develops many interesting insights about friendship such as common activities, spending time, sharing arguments, talking, etc.<sup>519</sup> The main component of Reinders’s friendship narrative shows not only the development of his friendship with Ronald, but reveals something of the mainstream societal prejudices regarding the meaning of sameness, and societal and cultural biases in relation to difference and the otherness. Besides, Ronald is Reinders’s friend, he has intellectual disability which as we might assume in the view of mainstream society, make him look different, or act differently, maybe even speak loudly in public, or being stigmatized as living in an institution. How this man could be a someone’s friend? Or what “unusual” person would have chosen Ronald - a person with intellectual disability (probably, with a lower IQ than the standardized norm) to be his friend? Based on his a narrative, Reinders reveals three cultural biases towards friendship with people with disabilities faced within the very process of friendship. For Reinders the societal and cultural boundaries often implies: the *problem of equality and symmetry*; the *problem of importance of choice*; the *problem of benefits and contribution*. These three elements portrayed by Reinders not only make difficult for people with disabilities to build friendship, but also shape a mainstream sense of a meaning of friendship. As he puts it:

“When I tell people that I consider Ronald to be my friend, they are often surprised - even skeptical “Oh really?” they say. Their apparently Aristotelian intuition suggests to them that you cannot really be friends with someone so unlike yourself. After all, I am an academic: I am presumed to embody intellect, which is about the opposite of what Ronald is presumed to embody. This is why friendship is not the word that seems to come to mind when people see us together.”<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> In the previous chapter referring academic field of Disability studies, the ecological approach has been addressed by Rioux. The approach is close to social model of disability, but its specificity lies in enabling personal growth.

<sup>519</sup> Cf. *Receiving the Gift of Friendship: Profound disability, Theological Anthropology and Ethics*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008): pp. 354-357

<sup>520</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.355; See Hans S. Reinders, „Transforming Friendship: An Essay in

The problem of perceptions of sameness and difference (or the *problem of equality and symmetry*) according to Reinders lies in the highly Aristotelian logics of contemporary modern culture that value reciprocity or exchange of moral benefits according to similarity of character and exchange of a moral goods. Such thinking goes contrary to the moral intuition of contemporary friendship why according to Reinders there is a problem in imagining friendship between people of unequal characters or unequal intelligent quotient, social status, class or sometime even religion. The even greater problem regarding such argument arise when equality and symmetry, calculated according to the late modern understanding of rationality and intellect, often is equated to the IQ. Reinders's critiques of Aristotle's idea of friendship between equals, demonstrates not only a critique of equality that places people with disabilities at the margins of moral and social personhood, but shows Aristotelian influence on the contemporary idea of friendship. Describing, Aristotle's ideas of friendship as intellectualist and exclusive, he comments Aristotle and Aquinas address on friendship saying that not only is Aristotle's friendship intellectualist, but also is Aquinas. This further says that Reinders is critical of those aspects of Thomistic tradition within Catholic theology that focus on human person as rational and intellectual entities and forget about other aspects of human integrity, such as a person's potential for relationship.<sup>521</sup> Reinders is correct in observing that certain concepts of contemporary reasoning emphasize the criteria of reason and intellect (contra Thomism) over a person's relational capacity. He is also right to say that becoming a friend of virtuous people on account of their virtue, could be seen as consumption of others (contra Aristotle). However, his formulation is rather incomplete and requires reformulation for the reason that the notion of rationality which Reinders addresses includes only a partial reading of Aquinas with considerable emphasis on concern for rational capacity; and secondly the hermeneutics of rationality exposed by Aquinas differ from our modern understanding which has been largely formulated by Enlightenment ideas of rational autonomy. In reflecting to Aquinas its means that the problem with Aquinas regarding his concept of intellect and rationality, is not based on Aquinas, but on a post - Aquinas interpretation of his work. Additionally, not all Thomistic tradition is keen on laying on a straightforward emphasis on the intellectual capacities of a person<sup>522</sup> and forgetting the other aspect of person's personhood. Thus, in order to grasp a complete meaning of the foregoing statement I suggest we need precision in looking at different aspects of so called Thomistic tradition and interpretation of these tradition. Notwithstanding, Reinders raises important concerns that reevaluates and rethinks the traditional the theological approaches to disability inclusion within the mainstream perspective of Catholic moral theology and tradition. To remedy this situation, Reinders's address on receiving remains as a strong argument in reformulating the idea of friendship, more important that the idea of inclusion. The

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Honor of Jean Vanier.“ In *Journal of Disability & Religion* 19:4 (2015): p.343.

<sup>521</sup> Similar critique of an overemphasized concept of intellect within a personal is counterbalanced with emphasis on relationality. This was addressed in Lieven Boeve, Yves De Maeseneer, and Ellen Van Stichel, eds. “*Exploring New Questions for Theological Anthropology*” in *Questioning the Human - towards a theological Anthropology for the twenty-first century*. eds. Lieven Boeve, Yves De Maeseneer and Ellen Van Stichel, (New York, Fordham University Press, 2014).

<sup>522</sup> See for instance in a various articles published in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, eds., (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

second problem related to the notion of contemporary friendship analysis according to Reinders is the question of choice (or the *problem of the importance of choice*). The concept of choice is not only involved within the discourses on the mainstream idea of friendship but also applies the conversation regarding friendship with people with disabilities and the idea of inclusion. The mantra of many inclusion initiatives within modern democracy states that everyone should have freedom and choice. This may not be the case for many people with disabilities so often they are out of the mainstream conception of the notions of freedom and choice, or perhaps the contemporary ideas of freedom and choice became limited. It is not necessary to emphasize that choice is an important element of friendship through which people enter into friendship. We know that. However, frequently it is presupposed that choice implies a process of freely and willingly entering into friendship. If this is so, friendship, as has been indicated earlier, is not possible in a staff - resident relationships, or between care giver and care receiver due to the power balances and lack of the freedom to choose. Did Ronald - a Reinders friend, have the privilege of choosing Reinders to be his friend, or vice versa? Rights and choice, says Reinders, not make one the other's friend.<sup>523</sup>

“As he says: If friends are not chosen but found, how did I find Ronald? Well, I did not. He found me. I was visiting one institution for disabled people with my wife, when she was approached by a bold-looking young fellow. „I know you!“ he exclaimed. That fellow turned out to be Ronald. He was not just being bold, however, because what he said was true. They had lived in the same town years before that and had occasionally met. So, they had a little chat, during which Ronald and I were introduced to each other. When we were saying our good - byes, he made me promise to come back and visit him. That is how Ronald found me.”<sup>524</sup>

Choice is important but is only relevant to friendship when it communicate the aspect of love as choice is not other-dependent as love is. This, as he continues explaining, means that we can choose someone to be our friend, because we like this person as a person, but our choices do not make another person our friend.<sup>525</sup> The third question that Reinders raises and at the same time increase my interest, lies in the type of value we put on people with disabilities. This Reinders addresses as a contributory view (or the *problem of benefits and contribution*). The contributory view according to Reinders, questions if our engagement with people with disabilities is for our increased moral esteem in eyes of others (utility) or is recognized as an equal participation for both? The theme of contribution that Reinders sets before us questions the Aristotelian premises which we have already mentioned, of similarity within the model of contemporary friendship (which enables one's and another's own sake). Reinders stresses concerns on questioning the end of friendship for one's own moral good, or one's own moral benefits often conditioned by similarity, or in Reinders words - sameness. The contributory view, according to Reinders is perceived from the perspective that people with disability contribute to our moral satisfaction or

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<sup>523</sup> See Hans S. Reinders, „Spiritual Encounter: The Power of Inclusion and Friendship,“ in *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 15, 4 (2011): p. 433.

<sup>524</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.355-6.

<sup>525</sup> See Reinders, „Spiritual Encounter: The Power of Inclusion and Friendship,“ p.433.

personal growth or in other words, they contribute towards us making us better people. This Reinders describes as the contributory view of worth, meaning that people with disability are an opportunity for contributing our own good.<sup>526</sup> Looking at people with disabilities as means to our ends<sup>527</sup> according to Reinders, is morally dangerous as it not only does instrumental the value of a person on a pure of an object, but deprive friendship of its moral worth.

I think that Reinders is right in indicating upon awareness of these a problem. However, contributory worth may not always be the main problem of dyad relationships. The problem of the contemporary perception of contribution lies, I would say, in its overemphasized materialization of goods or benefits, or instrumentalization of the person as some kind of utility. To say that some importance people are friends with people with disabilities to seeking their own moral benefit or appraisal could be a puzzling statement. If human relationships are structured as other-dependent dynamic then every human relationship we are emancipating or are called to enter, means reciprocal contribution to each other's moral growth. We have always to be careful not to take advantage of such a relationship, as in return it can became a relationship of contributory worth. The greater problem of contributory worth does not invoke the problem of whereas people with disability contribute to our moral growth, but how we as self-dependent agents can contribute to theirs? Aren't we all called to contribute reciprocally to each other moral flourishing, instead of demoralizing each other's status worth and inner dignity? How finally, can people with disability be reciprocal contributors within the dynamics of friendship or vice versa? Reinders counterbalance contribution by emphasizing the importance of participation. Drawing on Vanier, he even goes further by saying that people with disabilities are our teachers.<sup>528</sup> This means that by participation, or simply being there, people with disability remind us or help us understand disability and friendship differently. This means that contribution consists in teaching each other above the importance of often forgotten realities such as touch, being there for each other, valuing the presence of each other, valuing other not as simply other, but as a gift, etc.

Or more specifically as Reinders expresses:

people with disabilities teach us a few things about ourselves that we „temporarily able-bodied, “ have a hard time understanding on our own, for example, the fact that being accepted by God does not depend on our goodness.”<sup>529</sup>

The meaning of participation in a friendship relationship with people with disabilities, according to Reinders, not only reveal the true meaning of being with and seeing oneself in the light of the Gospel message. Being with in this sense also means seeing the truth of disability differently. Person with disability is not only a giver of this a free gift or a contributor to some (moral or material) end. The person by his/her participation of a society by the means of their existence

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<sup>526</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p. 316.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid., p.315

<sup>528</sup> Ibid., p.320

<sup>529</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.320

reveals that every person and friendship are before all a received gift from the Other towards another.

### **Reciprocity understood as receiving and giving**

Reciprocity is commonly understood as the relation between giving and receiving. The value of people with disabilities in this regard consist in being reduced to some form of instrumentality perceived as a passive recipient of care, charity or almsgiving. Contemporary culture sees receiving and giving in material terms and therefore sees within it the idea of technical exchange of a certain benefits. This is the reason why reciprocity has been deprived of it's spiritual dimension of free giving and free receiving. Being reduced to the value of instrumental reciprocal exchange, often excludes people who cannot respond except by some spiritual, invisible or even free of charge exchange. By this I mean a smile, a gift of silence, an embrace, the importance of the other person's presence. Thus, people with intellectual disability are often perceived as passive agents of constant receiving. Modern culture which leads us to an opposite understanding, confuses our ability to freely give or more importantly, confuses our understanding of receiving. Friendship is not merely giving, it must be receiving and giving at the same time. The question, however, that Reinders ask in his book on friendship, and that has a strong bearing on the theme of this thesis is: how can people with disability and particularly with profound disabilities participate as reciprocal agents in human and divine's friendship? In what does their capacity of giving consist? In explaining this, Reinders suggests looking at reciprocity first in perspective through God - human friendship, and secondly, in contrast to and with reference to a commonly understood notion of giving and receiving, supplies it with a freshly renewed meaning. The meaning of giving for Reinders does not imply beneficent actions in the first place, but rather a free act of receiving the other. Concerning the capacity of people with intellectual disabilities, it is their capacity for free giving and free receiving that matter in this discussion. Receiving and giving for Reinders is not a matter of technical exchange. He situates it in the very process of friendship itself, understanding receiving and giving as something of simultaneous exchange. To understand this process, he stresses attention to the meaning of gift. The meaning of the gift according to Reinders proceeds from God's free inclination towards humanity, understood within a process of reciprocity. As gift is initiated by God as a giver, receiving and giving are perceived as free gifts from one towards the other. As he expresses it:

The gift of friendship is received as a gift for the sake of our own person, as all true friendship is. God does not love us in order to get something from us. Likewise, we do not extend friendship in order to get something from the other, because the result would not be friendship but self-love.<sup>530</sup>

According to this reasoning, people with profound disabilities are also givers, as friendship is not located into a strict reciprocal exchange, but in a free gift from one person towards the another. Following this a logic, my assumption is that Reinders tends to address that seeing friendship as a

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<sup>530</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.348.

gift of spiritual encounter, one is capable to receive the other as a gift. When person is acknowledged as a gift of reciprocal communication or exchange involving the process of giving and receiving become possible. This is where the crux of his argument at regard to people with disabilities perceived as givers is stressed. Only a person which can receive friendship, „knows “how to offer this friendship back. This is also to say, that if people with disabilities are in the eyes of the mainstream society perceived as recipient of care, that they must have learn on how to receive, and secondly, by receiving they know how to accept the giver. And once they know how to receive, they know how to give back.

This answers the above question, whereas people with disability are capable of reciprocal exchange within a relationship of friendship. This is to say that people with disabilities are not only receivers, nor are those who participate in their friendship, to be considered as givers. More concretely, one way of manifesting this a giving, Reinders, similarly like Vanier, attaches to people with disabilities the „capacity “of teaching others how to receive the gift of friendship and how to accept the other, as the giver. Suggesting the dynamic of giving and receiving Reinders contrasts the instrumental value of reciprocal exchange applied to people with disability. This is to say that friendship is understood as a free gift of Holy Spirit, that can be only received. Receiving in Reinders’s view implies a perspective of God’s free gift of Himself and his desire to abide with a common human. This means that a gift, not a quality, or achievement of certain goods can better explain the true meaning of free giving, which in our context in regard to people with profound intellectual disabilities is of particular importance.

### **Friendship vs. citizenship**

Another interesting point of Reinders’s account of friendship and disability is the contrast with the idea of civil inclusion. That is, friendship represents a type of inclusion which has greater value in bringing about inclusion than a idea of citizenship and equal distribution of rights. I agree with Reinders that rights and choices cannot bring what friendship as a free gift does for people. The former are law dependent, while the later are person dependent. In other words, rights and choices are about making other people comply with what individual desires are, or what are his/her wants without dependency on their approval, while love and friendship as other dependent embodies a different type of relationship.<sup>531</sup> This reasoning is strengthened in his article „Spiritual Encounter, “ published after *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, saying that friendship and love appears almost as synonymous. Both love and friendship have regard of being perceived as free gifts that one can only receive from the other, as being loved by the other means being one’s friend.<sup>532</sup> As being loved, so being a friend, is for Reinders an important element that implies a free gift of one person to the other, whereas in the case of distribution of rights and choice the inclusion fails to be completely fulfilled. These arguments make Reinders a strong opponent to the disability rights movement and liberal of ethics that replace love and friendship with rights and freedoms. Despite

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<sup>531</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p. 433.

<sup>532</sup> Cf. Reinders, „Spiritual Encounter: The Power of Inclusion and Friendship,“ in *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 15, 4 (2011).



my agreement with Reinders that friendship is a better way of managing inclusion as it implies belonging, I still think that friendship and citizenship must be seen from the perspective of “cooperation”, instead of distinct categories. This means that to manage a complete inclusion into human community, people with disabilities require legal and participatory acknowledgement. The first enables distribution of their rights and freedoms, but only the second enables true human flourishing. Both are nevertheless interchangeably intertwined. Friendship as a free gift, however, transcends the language of law. Going back to Reinders, it means that contrary to the idea of citizenship which achieved through social policies and legislation, friendship should not be confused as a right. It transcends the value of rights and citizenships as it is not only a free giving as Reinders suggested, but before all, a free receiving. This means that as freely given, it should be freely chosen. Besides the abovementioned framework of Reinders key idea of friendship, his ethics of friendship includes elements such as being with, not hiding in strength and living in the present moment. Although, he borrowed the terminology from L’Arche and Vanier, he independently developed his own understanding of the importance of such elements in valuing friendship. Moreover, the necessity of being with and not hiding in strength support his earlier statements on revealing something of true friendship understood as gift, giving and receiving.

### **Being with means valuing one’s presence**

Several authors who discuss friendship within disability theology in a robust or a more distinct way - Hauerwas (Hauerwas & Vanier 2008<sup>533</sup>), Swinton (Swinton, 2004), Reinders (Reinders, 2008) and most recently Grieg (Grieg, 2014) - have one common characteristic. Each from their own perspective supports their argument with examples of friendship from L’Arche. The common reference in each interpretation is an emphasis on the importance of *being with* which according to my selection of authors actualizes one’s presence, (Reinders and Grieg) reconsider the notion of time, (Swinton) prioritizes the knowing a person instead of knowing how to do things for a person (Hauerwas). For Reinders the idea of *being with* in the first place contradicts human passivity and put the value on valuing one person’s presence.

The idea of *being with* is anchored in Vanier’s life in L’Arche and explains the formulation that being with or living with is more important than doing things for the person. In other words, being is more important than doing (Vanier, 1979). The idea in this context emphasizes the importance of someone’s presence and explains caring as a way of sharing time and appreciation of one’s presence, instead of being preoccupied with doing things for. This on regard to a person with profound intellectual disabilities, or any person who is lacking verbal capacity for communication, carries a more important message than the work of active doing. In other words, sharing time *with* people with disabilities, makes one attentive to one’s true presence, not only as another subject of care, but as true person whose presence matters (e.g. Hauerwas, Swinton and Grieg). The actualization of *being with* accordingly says more about the other than actual words can do. In

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<sup>533</sup> Stanley Hauerwas & Jean Vanier, *Living Gently in a Violent World - the Prophetic Witness of Weakness*. (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 2008).

Hauerwas's interpretation, *being with* counterbalances knowing how, the leading idea within the modern cultural context. According to this logic, the „disabled“ are not only served, but so are those who serve in a spirit of mutual interdependence with their cares, as being with each other. Thinking about friendship as *being with* puts meeting into the center of the discussion. More precisely the idea of being with matters as meeting is a natural place of encounter where two people meet or where the other meet the another - face to face or side by side. Being with, strongly opposes human activity by emphasizing the value of human passivity. By this emphasis, the view that, as indicated earlier, looks upon the apparently non - acting person as a passive agent, can be replaced by the understanding that one's presence matters more than one's actions. Not only is being with important for further reasoning on friendship but it reopens the possibility for an ethical discourse that prioritizes the discourse based on respect for the disabled person's intrinsic dignity over discourses on his/her bodily condition or moral responsibility in light of caring. Being with means sharing one's life with someone.<sup>534</sup> Being with a disabled person, means not only doing things for them, but what is most important overcoming division of roles. This opens the possibility of rethinking caring in a more compassionate way so that the person realizes that her/his presence matter not only when doing things for her/him, but also that a true meaning of encounter matters by simply being with that person. This process can often initiate healing within a person and can be transformative. Referring to L'Arche, Reinders describes being with as a "hyper skill" crucial to manage self-knowledge.<sup>535</sup> Being with in this content not only applies to appreciation of one's presence, but brings us to self-knowledge, to the discovery of the truth of ourselves and our need to belong. This in the light of Reinders's idea of friendship indicates, that being with requires abandoning the presumption of doing for and putting receiving prior to giving.<sup>536</sup>

**“Not hiding in strength” underlines person's capacity in revealing a one's true self**

Another element that follows from being with, implies so called notion of *not hiding in strength*. Drawing on the idea of not hiding in strength Reinders refer to Henri Nouwen<sup>537</sup> friendship narrative with his intellectually disabled friend Adam.<sup>538</sup> Accordingly the meaning of hiding in strength, this not only means being afraid of exposing one's self as one truly is, but being preoccupied by daily routines which are in essence the source of strength and express the ordinary

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<sup>534</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.336.

<sup>535</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.338.

<sup>536</sup> Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p.340.

<sup>537</sup> I think that there is not a special need in introducing Henri Nouwen. He is wordly known as an author inspiring and influencing many academics, expecially those associated with L'Arche community, where most profound work and his writing legacy has been anchored. Nouwen was a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian. His interests were rooted primarily in psychology, pastoral ministry, spirituality, social justice and community. For several months during the 1970s, Nouwen lived and worked with the Trappist monks in the Abbey of the Genesee, and in the early 1980s he lived with the poor in Peru. In 1985 he was called to join L'Arche in Trosly, France, the first of over 150 communities founded by Jean Vanier where people with developmental disabilities live together with their care workers. A year later Nouwen came to make his home at L'Arche Daybreak near Toronto, Canada. He died suddenly on September 21st, 1996, in Holland and is buried in Richmond Hill, Ontario. For more see <https://henrinouwen.org/about/about-henri/> [accessed December 2017].

<sup>538</sup> See Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, p. 341.

way of belonging. For, looking at Nouwen's narrative, Reinders indicates that at first, Nouwen did not see Adam as a real and true person, but only as a person in need. Therefore, running to his daily tasks, after the day care program, did not allow him to see Adam's *true face*. Being confronted by the "vulnerability of his (Adam's) body" and a way of communication, pushes Nouwen back to himself.<sup>539</sup> This results in what he explains as *beginning to see* Adam's presence differently. The discovery of this transformation in Nouwen, consists in finding that he (Nouwen) belongs, not as an academic or priest, but, first of all, as a human person. The transformation from hiding in strength through the performance of daily activities, resulted in not hiding in strength, discovery (revelation) of the true self. Thus, not hiding in strength through interdependent interaction means seeing the other and one's self as a person with a true dignity and a person capable of giving, not merely doing. The result of not hiding in strength integrated into a process of receiving and giving portrays friendship with respect for another's person dignity and the true discovery of one's self instead of hiding behind performing good works or some charitable activities.

### 2.2.3.2 Friendship according to John Swinton: a few introductory remarks

The theme of friendship was not an explicit key focus of the work of the practical theologian John Swinton. However, the theme of friendship was an important subject of his study. Differently from Reinders, who examined friendship in the light of an ethical perspective, Swinton's approach to the theme of friendship was as a practical activity, important for the re-humanization of a person. Just as his definition of personhood is approached from the perspective of practical theology, so is his reflection on friendship. This at first means that friendship is primarily understood as a particular type of interpersonal relationship which has the potential to reveal *shalom* - the term specific to Swinton by which he refers to effective participation in the restoration of *imago Dei*.<sup>540</sup> Or more precisely, friendship is, so understood, an aspect of re-humanization. Thinking thus, Swinton opposes Aristotle's definition of friendship perceived as highly symmetrical and instrumental relationships, detached from a modern understanding of human interactions which thinks of them as *bonding* self-sufficient autonomous subjects. This still does not mean that Swinton's idea of friendship encompasses a robust empirical analysis of friendship dyads, such as was the case in the previous section on the scope of disability studies or within the qualitative approach in the first part of this thesis. His approach gives insights into a personal narrative (such as for instance, Elaine's quest for friendship, or Kevin's quest to truly belong),<sup>541</sup> but does not develop a structure of analysis of particular themes and concepts. For instance, Swinton does not pay much attention to the importance of elements often involved in

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<sup>539</sup> See Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, 342-343.

<sup>540</sup> John Swinton, *From Bedlam to Shalom: Towards a Practical Theology of Human Nature, Interpersonal Relationships, and Mental Health Care*, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2000): p. 77

<sup>541</sup> These stories do not reveal elements involved in friendship dyads, but are rather conceptual responses to the friendship, understood as a belonging relationship; See Swinton, *From Bedlam to Shalom: Towards a Practical Theology of Human Nature, Interpersonal Relationships, and Mental Health Care*, pp. 136-138; pp. 148-150.

friendship such as the meaning of emotional support, understanding of reciprocity, common interest, common activities, maintenance of friendship, the purpose of friendship, etc. Instead, he offers a conceptual analysis of friendship and situates it within the context of practical theology. Among his numerous references to the subject of friendship I will select three of his books where friendship is a matter of not a separate, but of a particular concern. These are: *From Bedlam to Shalom, Resurrecting the Person* and the most recent one, *Becoming the Friends of Time*.<sup>542</sup> His arguments in the above-mentioned books concern people with mental health problems, people with Schizophrenia and less robustly, but in a particular way, people with disabilities.<sup>543</sup> The common idea that connects his arguments in the selected books is in my opinion not merely the similar logic incorporated in his arguments involving his research subjects, but the structure of the theme of friendship. For, Swinton developed the theme of friendship in reference to a threefold perspective. This firstly includes the idea of common attributes attached to people with mental illness, schizophrenia and disability within a history of medical care. I will describe this as the social model aspect of friendship. Secondly, the idea of friendship is an important aspect of his idea of relationality, personhood and re-humanization. I will address this under the aspect of relationality and personhood. Thirdly, friendship is addressed from a Jesus and Christlike perspective. I will describe this aspect as his Jesus friendship rationale.

### **The aspect of friendship and the perspective of a social model**

Referring to friendship within the perspective of a social model, actually highlights the problems of lack or impossibility of friendship for people with mental health problems, as well as those which people with disabilities face within institutional medical health care. First of all, the common attribute of all relevant subjects mentioned in Swinton's work (people with disabilities, people with Schizophrenia, dementia, people with mental care problems) is the medical label they bear, and lack of social relationships due to their medical and social condition. This particularly involves a lack of social integration and poor social relationships, as well as deprivation of the "norm of normality"- a mark attached to people with Alzheimer's, dementia, mental health problems and *people with disability*. Referring to social relationships that include persons with disability and mental health problems, firstly confronts the constant problem of the lack of social interaction that deprives them of developing friendships. Setting out from the critique of mental care as highly medicalized, Swinton sets his approach in a social model. As do many other disability studies scholars, Swinton points out dehumanizing conditions, social degradation and the devaluation of people with disability and people with mental health problems within institutional care settings. Besides this, friendship within a perspective of social model indicates

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<sup>542</sup> Another two articles where Swinton more robustly reflected on disability and friendship are displayed in his two articles: John Swinton, "From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability and Humanness." in *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* 16, 2 (2012):172-190; And also John Swinton, „Using our Bodies Faithfully: Christian Friendship and the Life of Worship“ in *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 19, 3 (2015):p.228-242.

<sup>543</sup> Disabilities refer to intellectual and developmental disabilities. Little has been said about people with profound disabilities

the actual problem of a neglect that accordingly has been detected not only within the context of pastoral ministry of faith communities, but as something typical of Western culture. It is the framework Western culture grounded into high levels of standardized similarities that according to Swinton, bears responsibility for neglect of possibility of friendship for people with mental problems and people with disabilities. Based on both his previous experience as psychiatric nurse and his theological knowledge, Swinton suggested a model that can remedy such situations. This he sees in personalization of medical care. The personalization of medical care, according to this understanding entails the process of re-humanization, achievable merely through a human relationship and relationships with God.<sup>544</sup>

### **The aspect of friendship within the perspective of personhood and re-humanization**

According to a second perspective, Swinton's thinking on friendship intertwines the ideas of personhood and re-humanization. This means that friendship relationships thus understood lead towards rediscovery of often "forgotten" dimensions of a person, such as a person's capacity to relate with others. The final end of such friendship is the re-humanization of a person. Swinton's approach to friendship does not, in the first place, perceive friendship as a moral category, as it was for Aristotle. For him, it is clear that friendship is a practical category, with potential to bring the marginalized back into the center of society.<sup>545</sup> The process of bringing the marginalized back into the center, means not only social inclusion, but the acceptance that opens the door for re-humanization. The process of re-humanization entails that a person is accepted and acknowledged as a relational subject. Although Swinton's contribution to friendship has broad implications, it is often difficult to distinguish his idea of friendship from his idea of personhood, as both are interchangeably intertwined. In what way is re-humanization the result of friendship and in what way does friendship form part of the redefinition of personhood? One of the key characteristics of Swinton's approach to disability is his emphasis on the aspect of relationality. What I want to discuss here, before showing how friendship involves re-humanization, is the obvious link between relationality, re-humanization and healing. Person is for Swinton, first of all, God's creature and a relational subject (*Person in Relation*).<sup>546</sup> This means that re-humanization is achievable through relationships with God and fellow-humans. The idea of re-humanization when put into the context of mental care implies healing, because the person is first of all accepted as a person, rather than on the attributes of his/her physical condition (patient). Thus, when applied to the context of

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<sup>544</sup> Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person. Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems*, p. 4; I agree with Swinton's idea of rehumanisation through relationships with humans and with God. However, some human relationships can be harmful and instead of the process of rehumanisation, can be also a way of dehumanisation when additional harm is afflicted to a person.

<sup>545</sup> Cf. John Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person. Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems*, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2000).

<sup>546</sup> The term refers to John Macmurray's terminology in *Person in Relation*; See John Macmurray, *Person in Relation*. (London: Faber & Faber, 1961). Swinton borrowed this concept from Macmurray and further developed in relation to people with learning disabilities in John Swinton & Esther McIntosh, „Persons in Relation: The Care of Persons with Learning Disabilities“ in *Theology Today*, 57, 2, (2000):175-184.

medical health care, friendship for Swinton is a particular aspect of *relationality that can bring re-humanization*. Swinton not only aims to demonstrate an intertwined link between personhood, re-humanization and friendship, but emphasizes that a person with disability, like a person with mental health problems, is primarily a relational subject and therefore capable of friendship.<sup>547</sup> It is the relationships of friendship that reveal that the other person is a relational subject and that communication with such a person is possible. This is particularly evident in Swinton's article addressing the importance of relational interdependency. In "Person in Relation", Swinton grounds his argument on John McMurray's notion of interdependent agency. Drawing on McMurray helps Swinton to emphasize that a person with disability is a relational subject and has the capacity to relate. This claim opposes the non-personal and the personal and one person's characteristics from the characteristics of the other person. This means that within the process of re-humanization, the importance of friendship as a form of relationality influences the redefinition of personhood. As he stated:

Friendship plays a positive role in the "reconstruction" of persons after loss or change of social status, allowing them to experiment with new roles and ways of understanding self and others and to discover new ways of seeing themselves and construing their situations.<sup>548</sup>

The end of friendship in such situations involves re-humanization, understood in the form of what I will call re-personalization. Thus, re-humanization also entails a participation in relationship, of which the final end is the healing of the one who has been depersonalized. Friendship is inclined towards re-humanization of a person's status and contrasts with dehumanization. Relationships, one of which is friendship, in these circumstances can bring healing to a person who has been deprived of social integration or carries the label and stigma of mental illness. Suggesting friendship as principle of re-humanization, according to Swinton, thus entails the possibility of releasing a person from false attitudes and attaining personhood with the value of belonging as God's beloved creature. Contrary to classic theories of friendship, Swinton does not associate the purpose of friendship with achievement of a certain amount of happiness. The end or purpose in his thinking on friendship, is in liberation, re-humanization or in healing of a person. The healing component is perceived on a functional level (a type of support) and structural level (a type of social interaction) within a process of social integration, emotional and personal support, particularly in situations of increased stress, depression, and anxiety.<sup>549</sup> Notwithstanding, as for friendship, healing is part of re-humanization and is its ultimate end. However, the interchangeable use of friendship and healing, healing and re-humanization is a conspicuous aspect of Swinton's description of mental care, referring to people with mental health problems. Alternatively, the process of friendship understood as re-humanization and healing could be also of relevance within a discourse of disability inclusion. For instance, people with disability who, historically, have been

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<sup>547</sup> This correlation of themes can be noticed in already quoted: *From Bedlam to Shalom*; „Person in Relation“; Also In John Swinton, *Dementia: Living in the memories of God*, (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012)

<sup>548</sup> Swinton, *From Bedlam to Shalom*, p. 97.

<sup>549</sup> Swinton, *From Bedlam to Shalom*, p.97.

deprived of social interactions, could experience friendship as healing in terms of resocialization, not only re-humanization of personhood. By resocialization I mean re-humanization that implies the experience of liberation, acknowledged through acceptance and belonging. Understood within a process of re-humanization, resocialization is for me also an aspect of re-personalization whose emphasis is on receiving social support, embracing positive self-esteem and added personal value. Thus, re-humanization and resocialization results from relationships of friendship where friendship is above all, in Swinton's view, a dignifying process, establishing one's personal worth and reconfirming the disabled or any other person stigmatized by demeaning label or attitude, as a relational subject.

### **The Aspect of friendship seen from a Jesus or Christlike perspective**

#### **a) Shalom and radical**

Swinton's third concern in friendship involves the character of Jesus' friendship. Jesus' friendship perceived as radical and *shalomic*, is, according to Swinton, an open practice, and contrasts with the western account of friendship marked by equality (Aristotle) and hierarchy. Thus, Jesus friendship as *shalomic* and radical proposes new aspect of friendship - friendship among different people. The themes to which Swinton refers in his theological account of friendship include the interchangeable use of terms such as a Christlike friendship ("Using our Bodies Faithfully: Christian Friendship and the life of Worship", 2015) radical friendship (*Resurrecting the Person*, 2000), *shalomic* friendship (*From Bedlam to Shalom*, 2000), Jesus friendship (*Resurrecting the Person*). The most appealing aspect of Swinton's reasoning about this involves the character of Jesus' friendship. *Shalomic* friendship signifies a form of God's coming shalom<sup>550</sup> and Jesus' model of friendship with the different and the outcast is described as radical. This is particularly emphasized in *Resurrecting the person* and from *Bedlam to Shalom*. Both radical and *shalomic* are components of Jesus' and God's friendship - that is, radical and *shalomic* alike. Swinton sees the Gospel passages in Matthew 11:19, and John 15, 15, as paradigms of such a radical friendship, as they imply friendship with the rejected, marginalized and outcast.<sup>551</sup> Considering Jesus' radical friendship with outcasts, Swinton underlines difference as an important element of friendship. The condition for friendship between differences, according to Swinton, is openness and freedom.

Referring to radical and *shalomic* friendship, Swinton indicates the importance of openness and freedom present within both of these friendships. God's openness towards the other not merely overcomes social and class differences, but transcends social and cultural prejudices, labels and attitudes attached to certain groups of people. This is the reason why friendship, perceived as radical, not merely transcends anthropological impediments but heals person's broken dignity (rehumanisation) and bring him / her peace (*shalom*). As all three types (*shalomic*, radical and Christlike) of friendship transcend the principle of likeness, and instead imply openness to those who are different, there is a subtle terminological difference between those types of friendships.

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<sup>550</sup> Swinton, *From Bedlam to Shalom: Towards a Practical Theology of Human Nature, Interpersonal Relationships, and Mental Health Care*, p. 77.

<sup>551</sup> Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person*, p.9

However, it is from the perspective of *Christlike* friendship in particular that a mode of re-humanization attaches to the experience of disability.<sup>552</sup>

**b) Christlike friendship**

The idea embedded within “Christlike friendship” means, not only doing things for people but being for them; someone who accepts them and understands them as a person. This idea is based on and follows Jesus’ example of being with and for people and through this example reveals the true nature of God.<sup>553</sup> Following the same line Jesus’ friendship is also catalytic, as it enables re-humanization and brings salvation (health) to people by simply being present, or being there.<sup>554</sup> Swinton finds examples of this in the Gospel passages of Jesus meeting the Samaritan women (John 4:7), the Gerasene man (Lk 8,26) and Zacchaeus (Lk, 19:2). Although these examples reveal a catalytic dimension to friendship, the parables do not show the presence of friendship. However, the point Swinton is making here, is that the encounter with Jesus or Jesus’ friendship, brings liberation because it goes beyond the socially constructed identity of individuals and implies meeting with a person despite that person’s attributes and reputation. This is what I think Swinton means by saying Jesus’ friendship was radical and catalytic. Instead of providing evidence that the relationship of friendship is an instance of this, he supplies the reader with rather a conceptual and psychological view of the possibility of this liberation and relates it to his idea of friendship developed within the perspective of Christlike-ness. By referring to Christlike friendship that is radical as communicating with difference and openness, Swinton opposes Aristotelian friendship, characterized as symmetrical and closed. Radical friendship for him represents *transcendence of relational boundaries that are constructed by contemporary tendencies to associate with others on the basis of likeness, utility or social exchange*.<sup>555</sup> The moral significance of Swinton’s friendship situates virtue in the person of Jesus, instead of the quality of the other person. The value of this virtue, associated with the whole person of Jesus, is the capacity that friendship as a virtuous act has for bringing the marginalized back into the center, instead of reducing its effect on the development of a person’s character. Thus, friendship perceived as a *virtue* according to Swinton refers first of all to friendship with Jesus. The act of being virtuous, from this viewpoint, implies being more Christlike, which means being open to the marginalized and different. This friendship has the potential to “train” us to be fully human.<sup>556</sup> Put into the context of mental health care, it is friendship as a *virtue which enables us to care with compassion, humanity, and vision of Christ*,<sup>557</sup> only when it reflects Jesus friendship. By observing friendship with Jesus, Swinton suggested a radically new approach to friendship. The friendship: *that reaches beyond culturally*

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<sup>552</sup> Swinton, „Using our bodies Faithfully,“p. 239

<sup>553</sup> Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person*, p.143

<sup>554</sup> Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person*, p.143

<sup>555</sup> Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person*, p. 39.

<sup>556</sup> See Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person*, p. 50

<sup>557</sup> Ibid, p. 51



*constructed barriers and false understandings and seeks to “resurrect the person” - who has become engulfed by their mental health problems - is a powerful form of relationship.*<sup>558</sup>

### **Other characteristics of Swinton’s Friendship**

The general characteristic of Swinton’s approach to friendship is that it is a conceptual reflection. Hence, friendship themes and characteristics are sometimes used interchangeably or as subthemes of larger themes; for this reason, they require subtle terminological distinction. For instance, “Christlike friendship” is frequently replaced with “Jesus friendship” as both imply elements of healing and justice whose final end is in the rehumanisation of a person. Or, another example, the common characteristic of *shalomic* and radical friendships communicate openness towards the other, the difference and liberation that such openness brings. However, both are characteristic of Jesus friendship. Other characteristics of Swinton’s friendship, apart from Jesus or Christlike friendship, imply the notions of freedom, care, intimacy, difference, reciprocity, love, respect and acceptance. Acknowledging love, difference, reciprocity and acceptance as elements peculiar to friendship, still does not say much about the meaning of these elements. Swinton does not supply the reader with a definition of what, for instance, is the meaning of freedom, in what sense intimacy is applied, or how is reciprocity managed within the friendship dyads.<sup>559</sup> Listing these characteristics is part of his concept of the structure of friendship, but he does not provide a conceptual definition of each notion separately. One of the recent themes that has captured attention in relation to friendship and disability is his thinking on time full friendship presented in *Becoming the Friends of time*.<sup>560</sup> In this, he reflects on disability in the light of the perception of time, and reflects on the perception of time in relation to the disabled, and the dementia patient’s situation within modern culture. The idea of time affects understandings of disability, friendship narrative and the dynamic of love. “Full-time friends” demonstrates the nature of relationship shaped by two different ways of engaging in relationship: being led by speed and power; and being led by love and slowness. Thinking about time differently opposes western capitalist culture, based on speed and efficiency, which relegates relationships accordingly, giving them secondary status. People with disabilities, because they are slow and thus nonproductive, are placed at the margins of a high-speed society. Swinton attempts to demonstrate that the actual problem with such thinking is that people with intellectual disabilities experience time differently. This means that the first characteristic of this experience is that it draws us out of instrumentality. Being in friendly relationship with people with disability also means to inhabit time differently. This particularly means, being able to see beyond what people are capable of producing, intellectually and manually,

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid, p. 139

<sup>559</sup> See Swinton & McIntosh „Persons in Relation,“ p.183

<sup>560</sup> In John Swinton, *Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas’ Theology of Disability*, Hauerwas wrote a chapter titled „Timeful Friends: Living with the Handicapped,“ Cf. John Swinton, *Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas’ Theology of Disability*. (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2004). Later Swinton, in the light of similar reflection developed the profound meaning of time and the relation between time, disability and friendship; See in John Swinton, *Becoming Friends of Time. Disability, Timefullness, and Gentle Discipleship*, (Texas, Baylor University Press, 2016). The term “friends of time” developed within a book is important here as it carries a significant message in rethinking disability, but also is an important concept for the idea of friendship.

and instead placing emphasis on the value of one's presence, the notion of love and wisdom of heart. This emphasizes that in relationship with people with disability, living at slow speed time can still be meaningful and the relationship, such as a relationship with people with disability - which at first looks not to be very effective - can become a viable place for the possibility of transformation. The perceptions of time for the autonomous person and for the highly dependent person differ. The narratives of people with disabilities produce different kinds of time. The reflection on friends of time as a category can, within our contemporary notion of friendship, be reconsidered as beneficial for both the meaning of the human and our concept of understanding friendship.

### **2.2.3.3. Comparison between Swinton and Reinders's friendship**

Although both Swinton and Reinders see friendship as an important aspect in constructing the anthropology of relationality, their approaches to friendship differs slightly. Departing from the perspective based on the social model of disability, both Swinton and Reinders provide anthropological and theological accounts of friendship. Common characteristics of their accounts of friendship include friendship's anthropological aspect, and contrast depersonalization and instrumentalization of people with disabilities (*contra* the medical model). Grounding his arguments close to the perspective of a social model, Swinton contrasts the medical model and medical health care context, as well as, cultural attitudes towards people with disabilities, emphasizing the priority of a person's value as relational being, over a person's attributes. Likewise, with a slightly different emphasis, Reinders, in a critique of the social minority model and the disability rights movement, which both empower people via distribution of rights and equal participation, admits the value of an element of flourishing and growth. For this reason, although basing his reflection on the social model, Reinders also departs from it by aligning himself somewhat with an ecological model perspective.<sup>561</sup> Considering the anthropological perspective of their approach, the value of Swinton's treatment lies in his understanding of the human being as person in relation (cf. *Resurrecting the Person*, "Person in Relation"). Similar positions on equal participation can be found in Reinders's relational anthropology (*Receiving the gift of friendship*). For Reinders turns from a substantialist understanding of the human being in terms of capacities and contribution (Thomistic tradition, liberal bioethics) towards a relational view inclusive of people with profound intellectual disabilities. For Swinton, friendship is an open and rather practical activity whose end is re-humanization (particularly when including people with disabilities and people with mental problems). His friendship implies difference and is therefore asymmetrical, open to the possibility not only for different people to engage in friendship, but overcomes the role difference (e.g. care giver - care receiver relationship) or social, economic and class differences. With these arguments he contrasts the Aristotelian and Western forms of equality

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<sup>561</sup> In „Spiritual Encounter: The Power of Inclusion and Friendship,“ Reinders's ecological approach to inclusion addresses human growth as an important aspect of the human condition, in terms of everyone right to natural environment in which one can flourish. Cf. Hans Reinders, „Spiritual Encounter: The Power of Inclusion and Friendship“ in *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 15:431 (2011):p. 434.

and similarity involved in the idea of friendship. For Swinton, the end of friendship does not lie in achieving happiness, as it may for Reinders, but in liberation of a person's relational potential, and re-humanization as an act of doing justice. This articulation harmonizes with Jesus' radical example of being a friend with the marginalized and outcast. Swinton's idea is that through relationships which go beyond established cultural biases and embrace difference, liberation of the person is possible. Recognizing dependency and vulnerability as emerging elements when approaching people with disabilities still does not clearly show how the exposure of vulnerability occurs within dyad relationships. For Reinders, vulnerability may be thought of within his theme of "not hiding in strength." For Swinton, vulnerability is acknowledged as an element of earthly creatureliness as part of the human condition, but not as an indicator of dyad relationships. The real question that remains is whether friendship is seen as a true relationship or as a way of empowerment, both for people with disabilities and for acquiring moral transformation ("change of heart") of those without disabilities? The reason for this thinking is that disability theologians, when discussing friendship, give priority to emphasizing inclusion, through normalization and equalization, without showing how and where aspects such as vulnerability, dependency, exposure, disagreements, emerge within friendship dyads. Considering the meaning of relational interdependency involved in the discussion of friendship, has not involved further exploration of the topics arising. Interdependency sometimes described as dependency as an element of interpersonal relationship in this particular context - friendship - was recognized as important element of friendship. Yet, it was not discussed as a theme, neither was it given an explicit explanation of its meaning within friendship dyads. For instance, Reinders acknowledges the importance of dependency, but it is Swinton who provides a more robust argument of its implications. Referring to the work of John McMurray, who stresses priority of interdependence and relationality, Swinton provides a better argument about dependency and its relevance for the person as relational subject. Yet it still remains an aspect of relational personhood, but friendship in a strict sense. By referring to otherness and difference, Reinders contrasts sameness, but it is Swinton who provides a better understanding of otherness by connecting it with the notions of dependency and interdependency. Yet, otherness is nonetheless discussed within his idea of personhood even if it is unclear in what way it involves a relationship of friendship. Friendship is for them not only an anthropological category, but theological (Swinton) and ethical (Reinders). The theological value for both Swinton and Reinders, implies Jesus' friendship including justice, and, above all, a Christian understanding of human-Divine relationship. Friendship is for Reinders freely given and received and is inclined towards the happiness that is friendship with God. For Swinton, friendship brings shalom (healing and peace), re-humanization (liberation) and follows Jesus' (Christlike) example.

Another common aspect of Reinders's and Swinton's friendship is that they support their arguments using examples from L'Arche or point out the importance of particular elements integral to narratives of friendship in L'Arche. It is correctly recognized that L'Arche in here offers compelling alternatives and counter-arguments to the contemporary culture of friendships. The most classic example is the reference to Vanier's interpretation of John's Gospel, Henri Nouwen's

friendship narrative, and Vanier's and L'Arche's dialectic of being with vs. doing for. Other themes that commonly apply to Reinders and Swinton, like the examples from L'Arche, include belonging, interdependency, and, as already mentioned, the importance of one's presence. Although these themes or elements are founded on Vanier's examples in L'Arche, they represent an original reinterpretation, which is why I earlier selected these themes as an important characteristics of their friendship. However, it is the work of Jason Grieg in *Reconsidering Intellectual Disability* and "The Slow Journey Towards Beatitude" that shows understanding of the dialectic of being with vs. doing for, the importance of encounter and interdependency exemplified in L'Arche.

Grieg, by drawing on Vanier, explains that being with is a strong component of friendship, and mutuality means creating relationships of gratitude, truth and interdependence.<sup>562</sup> Constructing an authentic anthropology of Vanier, (whose central elements are recognition of vulnerability, dependency and one's presence), means that everyone is precious for who they are, not for what they do. Such statements not only oppose the utilitarian logic of self-sufficiency but suggest friendship as a covenant between two persons' real presence. This means, as Grieg continues, that being with not only reveals the real presence of the other, but centers meeting with the other not in the intellect, but in the heart.<sup>563</sup> This is where the true relational interdependency within friendship relationship becomes applied.

#### **2.2.3.4. Comparison of the fields**

In the following comparison between fields of Disability studies and Disability theology, I will distinguish between its most appearing and appealing elements and characteristics. This in my assessment first outlines each fields rationale including its anthropological aspect, and secondly, each fields characteristics and approach to friendship.

#### **The academic field of Disability studies and Disability Theology**

Disability studies as an academic field provide a robust empirical and theoretical reflection on understanding disability. Their regard on disability includes a framework of discourses of various models, formulation of a disability definition, the idea of empowerment, inclusion and citizenship within social policies discourses, the area of special education, etc. The main critique of the field concerns cultural and contextual inconsistencies and injustices of those living with disabilities (social model) and medical treatments of person with disability physical conditions (medical model) understood as impairment. One great champ of research in such regard considers human rights approach which integrates discourses on citizenship and social policies (social rights)

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<sup>562</sup> See Jason Reimer Grieg, *Reconsidering Intellectual Disability: L'Arche, Medical Ethics and Christian Friendship* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2015): p.206.

<sup>563</sup> See Jason Reimer Grieg, „The Slow Journey towards Beatitude: Disability in L'Arche and Staying Human in High-Speed Society“, In *Journal of Moral Theology.Engaging Disability*, 6,2 (2017): p.195

of people with disabilities, already indicated above. One of the contrast between approaches of study of disability and Disability studies, is that Disability studies has been a political voice of people with disabilities, in order to achieve their rights and freedoms within society. This further means, that Disability studies scholars are not only critical towards treatment of disability condition as a merely medical/tragic or individual problem, but towards the treatment of disability as an abnormal condition, disease or pathology from society towards disabled people. They are also critical towards eugenic practices within medical model and societal treatments of disabled people within society that reduces them on the object of cure and charity, or even the vilest one, prevention to live. In such perspective Disability studies in exploring the theme of charity and dependency reacted upon history of objectification of people with disability within medical and care settings, portraying charity and dependency as negative aspects of care. Through the perspective of a various models and approaches, Disability studies focuses upon the reconstruction of the cultural images of disabled identities instead of the reconstruction of disabled people personhood. They prioritize tendencies towards managing inclusion as segregated and mainstream, in terms of equal participation, distribution of rights and civil freedoms. The emphasis is also stressed upon the idea of empowerment (Paralympics, education, independent living) in promoting a person's strengths, autonomy and self - dependency with little intervention in exploring social relationships in terms of valuing one's personhood. Despite the reasoning of many Disability studies scholars implies critics towards social and medical practices of disabled, it does not exceed the concept of a modern liberal framework. This for instance means that liberal bioethical practices based on individualism and utilitarianism, that looks person merely within the perspective of body as a physical entity and as an object of legal rights, remain integrated into disability studies rationale. Such a logic often reduces person's dignity on empowerment through distribution of rights, instead of seeing it in a person's capacity for relationship. In order to transcend such reasoning, Disability theology proposes different view, one that instead of a promotion of person's dignity in terms of rights and freedoms, sees person values in its capacity for relation. This traces the distinction between Disability studies and Disability theology approaches. In other words, the key distinction in approaching disability between Disability studies and Disability theology in my opinion, is in essence anthropological, as the idea of inclusion understood as empowerment and the idea of inclusion understood in perspective of promotion of one's personhood, differ. Disability studies and disability theologians are both critical towards social constructions and attitudes within society, culture and church practices that oppress and limit equal access and participation of people with disabilities. Both disciplines also raised awareness about rethinking upon the adequate treatment and attitude towards disabled within society and Church. The difference is that disability studies scholars look upon external realities, of managing person's physical mobility, his/her access, participation, transportation, within social environment. While disability theologians look at the problem not merely from the external, but from *ad intra* realities. This means that their approach implies metaphysical knowledge of a person which transcends the visible or external appearances and approaches and define person not merely as a citizen, but as a creature and a spiritual agent.

In other words, Disability studies as a field provides the valuable data on historical treatments of disabled people identities and identification of people with disabilities with their disorders and inabilities. Likewise Disability studies, disability theology goes beyond merely disabled identity, and situate disability in relation with God's creation act and its real meaning within Christian community. The overall critique towards liberal premises of the body in putting the value upon its physical components, were contrasted by Disability theologians in emphasizing the spiritual dimension of the body. By such emphasis the dominant attitudes towards person with disabilities are redirected from biological towards biographical (Matthews) or from material towards personal (Swinton). The values which arrives from such articulation within theology of disability contrasts those values of liberal capitalist society that only looks on attributes, not entities. Thus, the disability within theological anthropology implies person's encounter with Divine, a denied possibility within a conceptual settings of liberal framework. Disability theologians do not apart from an open possibility of Divine encounter, neither from a possibility of human - Divine communication. This in a nutshell separates theological anthropology from the mainstream anthropological premises integrated into a Disability studies framework. Through the emphasis on relational aspect of person capacity, in this particular regard person with disability, reveals something of inner self knowledge and the knowledge of God and opposes one dimensional sight of a person through his/her physical embodiment. The Christ event transformed natural traditions into a linear circular. This means that natural dispositions of human body transcend the purely natural tradition of approach to the embodiment. This event not only shed the light on what has been once considered as deformed and malformed but brought to humanity the source of a more optimistic utterance. The physical body is not the end in itself. After Resurrection, its *telos* is given a linear approach persuaded with a renewed metaphysical hope.

From such reason the approach of disability theologians, on regard of the notion of for instance, vulnerability, creatureliness, dependency, charity, differ from premises of Disability studies. For instance dependency and vulnerability within Disability studies evokes different understanding than within Disability theology. Within Disability studies both concepts implies negative connotations since persons with disability during the history of disability has been stigmatized as dependent and vulnerable objects of medical care treatments, or reduced upon the object of charity of religious organization. For such a reason, dependency and vulnerability from the perspective of Disability studies became contrasted with the term autonomy and independency. Disability theology on the other hand looks on dependency and vulnerability as an important element of human creatureliness and are rather critical (or at least should be) to the modern concept that looks upon a person as a self – dependent, often within framework of invulnerable individual. Whereas disability studies emphasized self - dependency and personal autonomy as key elements towards empowerment, disability theology is rather hesitant towards such concepts seeing them as impediments of full conceptual understanding of human creatureliness, and thus the path towards creating invulnerability.

## **The comparison of academic fields' Friendship Rationale**

As within the general comparison between Disability studies and Disability theology I will interchangeably distinguish between common congruences and differences between the approaches to friendship from the perspective of Disability studies and Disability theology. Both Disability studies and Disability theology commonly indicates upon poor number of relationships for people with disability. The common congruences lists the emphasis upon the objectification of people with disabilities either by seeing them as an object of pity and shame, either avoiding the encounter with them due to attached attributes. This means that the relationships were not only few, but the conditions for encounter were minimalised or even impossible.

### **Disability studies**

For Disability studies scholars friendship is in perspective a way of managing a social inclusion, and as a stimulus towards achieving independency and well-being. In such regard as we could have notice, friendship has been discussed as a right within policy documents, or as a well being within perspectives of quality of life. Besides such interventions, the approach of disability studies scholars regarding friendship has shown great interest for the empirical instead of the conceptual meaning of friendship. Stressing the interest upon the prevalence of a qualitative research as this could have been seen within dyads relationships, disability discourses, questions not only the conceptual meaning of friendship but have shown that friendship consist of empirical elements constitutive to its full framework. Regarding the very meaning of friendship query, they questions whereas friendship with people with profound intellectual disability is possible, the very purpose of friendship, such as, whereas friendship is an additional form to stimulate or improve the person's well being, or is it a constitutive fundamental human relationship of all humans? Such question more profoundly tangles the theme of friendship formation (how people with disability choose their friends), the very process of friendship (how they act and react) the friendship maintenance and very impact friendship have at one person's self-esteem. There is distinction between caring relationship understood as formal and friendship relationship understood as informal, when such relationships includes the element of care and caring. Similarly as with caring, disability studies scholars stressed emphasis upon distinction and value of friendship formation regarding people with disabilities themselves and people with and without disabilities. This results in separate approach between those disability studies researchers that I will address as valuing symmetrical (e.g. Knox and Hickson; McVilly and all.) and others who values asymmetrical (e.g. Callus) friendships. Or on regard of care, those to whom caring is an essential part of the process of friendship, and those who detached caring from the very process of informal friendship relationship. The symmetrical friendship that includes people with disabilities themselves appears in such regard to be more inclusive, due to as disability researchers would indicate, reduced pressure regarding the power balances or often applied „normalisation“ in case between people with and without disabilities. Moreover, such scholars share opinion that the friendship relationship between people with and without disabilities promotes better inclusion as the voices of people with disability are included, recognized and heard. This means that for Disability studies scholars, friendship is in fact an

practical process and includes various socio - psychological components. Disability studies provide a detailed description on friendship development and provide a nature of a friendship formation. Friendship is a way towards achieving justice, quality of life and a well being, the way towards social inclusion. Yet, it is still highly impacted by medical and social model rationale which on the one hand pushes towards better inclusion in terms of citizenship and independence two elements that in their thinking refer to flourishing. On the other hand it deprives friendship from the framework of a spontaneous participation. The rethinking of inclusion in relation to friendship in such a way seems limited as the full recognition of person's dignity, in my opinion, goes beyond the framework of social policy and citizenship.

### **Disability theology**

Along disability studies is concerned with the relationships between persons with disabilities and their inclusion into society, the disability theology in order to manage social inclusion is rather concerned with the question of relational participation, moral agency, and a personhood, including the relationship between people with disabilities and people with and without disabilities. Regarding its discourse on friendship, Disability theologians pointed upon de-instrumentalization of friendship indicating upon distinction between activities and importance of the value of one's presence. Such logic contrasts view of seeing people with disability merely through their attributes (Swinton) and participation on civil rights (Reinders). Disability theologians or those scholars engaged into discourse of theology and disability, provided distinguished contribution to the analysis of friendship regarding people with disability, and integrates the theological, ethical and anthropological dimension of friendship relationship. The general approach of disability theologians in this particular case Swinton and Reinders towards friendship, recognizes dependency, interdependency, vulnerability, otherness, love and flourishing as distinguished and positive elements of such relationships. However, they do not provide a practical framework of its application and meaning, as Disability studies scholars do.

The element of belonging, dependency and receiving within disability theology, balances rights, freedoms and equality within disability studies discourses. Contrary to disability studies scholars, Reinders and Swinton friendship analysis is rather straightforwardly conceptual. Their framework, however, emphasizes aspect of relationality and interdependency as an important aspect of friendship. In other words, the very purpose of friendship is discovery that every person is relational subject and as such has potential to relate. Linking their arguments with the perspective of theological anthropology, their friendship permits divine element that is friendship with God. Such view is possible first of all as it is open towards the Divine, and in light of that, every person is a spiritual agent open for the friendship with God. Disability theologians offer within their perspective of interdependency, a Trinitarian and communitarian aspect of friendship that put them aside from disability studies socio - psychological perspective. Instead of assessment of power balances, the emphasis is rather put upon critique of symmetrical friendship that implies strict equality and within framework of modern liberal premises emphasizes individual rational and cognitive human functions.



Besides abovementioned, their (Swinton and Reinders) inclination towards conceptual perspective, means that although their friendship implies certain personal narratives, it does not provide significant evidence about the nature and characteristics of formation and development of friendship dyads. For instance, Reinders make room for possibility of friendship with people with profound disabilities but does not supply reader with rhetoric of its actualization. Swinton as qualified researcher, does implies personal narrative, however, he does not give much evidence about interaction and occurrence of elements within this friendship dyads in examined literature. The friendship dyads of their narratives imply friendship with people with and without disability but still does not supply reader with more robust practical possibility of it. Their friendships, in comparison to Disability studies scholars, focuses merely on friendship between people with and without disabilities them self, why this may be one of the shortcomings of their friendship analysis. Disability studies perspective regarding empirical evidence of friendship dyads, is much larger in such perspective.

To sum up, disability studies provide an empirical narrative on character and a nature of friendship formation. Their discourses are overconcerned with the meaning of independency, power balance and distribution of equal right. Their language is formal and prefer an informal interaction that will shed light in stimulating the discourses on dignity and integrity of people with disability, instead of implementing such language into a framework of rights and freedoms. Disability theology for instance, brought the spiritual element into a perspective of friendship, that allows to see a person as a spiritual agent and opens a possibility for a friendship with God. This means that such friendship framework is open towards transcending the barriers of natural and character differences and as such is more equipped to rethink interdependnecy. Being considered a spiritual agent opens a possibility for communication with God, but does not say much of how person as spiritual agent (for instance person with profound disabilities) can process communication with other „spiritual agents.“ Limited amount of empirical analysis in such regard has been evident in theological and ethical discussions of friendship.

People with disability are open towards desire of having friends. And having or desiring friends is not merely fundamental need of some, but of all people as social and spiritual agents. From such reason, I suggest we look at friendship not as a human right or a quality of life, but as reality that transcends the legal and political framework of human interconnectedness and places value upon human interdependency and encounter with Divine.

#### **2.2.3.5. Concluding remarks and a fields definition on disability and friendship**

Eventually, after presentation, comparison and critical assessment of disability and friendship within Disability studies and Disability theology, I will propose my own thinking on redefinition of disability and friendship. The overall discussions within the ongoing research in a first chapter of the second part of this research, orbits around the two crucial components: the concept of disability and the concept of friendship. Not only those concepts are among central within the ongoing research thesis, but they are of my interest as specific anthropological and

ethical components of implied in the friendship redefinition. This means that suggestion of my re-definition at some point not only integrates the Disability studies and Disability theology view, but set forward a more nuanced approach, one which integrates and apart from such aspects. The field of Disability studies and Disability theology highlights specific elements regarding the approaches to disability and friendship. It provides the summary of the ongoing discourses, but also opens a possibility for its re - definition. My attempt in re-framing the structure of disability definition and friendship based on the rationale of two academic fields, seeks to integrates the anthropological and ethical elements, and suggests the following.

### **Disability as a concept and the condition *per se*<sup>564</sup>**

Although the social model was an opposition to the highly medicalized judgment of disability, it became imprecise and deterministic by neglecting the complexity of biological and psychological conditions that follows disability. I would argue that the robust distinction between disability as medical or social condition together with negative and cultural prejudices and assumption about it should be avoided. I do not think that our physical existence is merely social, it is also biological, but biological should not be a determinant of existential. Therefore, I would agree with new disability studies approaches mentioned earlier, that disability should be regarded in a way of interpretative and conversational phenomena, which means that besides medical and sociological, it also includes other interpretations. My suggestion of disability redefinition is descriptive in a way that such re- thinking interchangeably intertwines between disability as a *concept, condition per se* and the particular *human experience* marked as *difference*. Thus, *disability in my opinion is a human experience of the embodied condition understood as a difference*.

What I mean by this is that this difference firstly emerges due to particular biological or genetical factors that later when applied into society causes particular personal disadvantages, such as social exclusion, reduced opportunities, lack of mobility, social poverty, etc. This assume that my thinking on disability integrates biomedical and social approach, however its departs from it, as it does not see sufficient to rethink disability only through the lens of biomedical or social model. Despite disability causes certain disadvantages, I would like to emphasize that it is not a disadvantage, but a particular difference. Secondly, when I say that disability is a difference I mean this also in relation to the discourse of human capacity. Namely, PWD have a different way in performing certain activities or engaging into a daily living. For instance, someone who is severely disabled still is eligible to connect with others, in his/her appropriate, particular or different way. The way how person with disability exercise his/her way of being or his agency, and how s/he connects with environment or other human fellows, may not correspond to the mainstream thinking on capacity. Rather, the capacity here can be replaced with the meaning of a gift that s/he has to offer to a wider community. This entails that a gift has particular strength that lies in its givenness, not necessarily it's performance. From such reason, my thinking on difference when it applies to people with disability, is rather inclined towards thinking about it in terms of category

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<sup>564</sup> My attempt for disability redefinition has been already initiated at p. 139 of this research thesis

*dis-ability* as particular and a temporary physical limit or dysfunction, instead as a meaning in terms of an ontological category or a concept disability within disability definition. This means that disability as a concept and a condition *per se* could be a source of certain disadvantageous, but it could also be an advantage in such that it can be a remedy for putting forward often forgotten “capacities” such as gifts or other way of existence, as a way of partaking in the human heterogeneity. In other words, my thinking on disability as condition *per se* in terms of *dis-ability* may associate with the meaning of medical model of impairment; what I actually meant by such notion, is to address depart from the meaning of a concept of an embodied ontology of everybody. It is correct to observe as T. Shakespeare suggest, that everyone at some point of their lives became disabled without having Down Syndrome, or Autism, but not everyone embodies biological condition specific to Syndrome Down or other forms of “disability understood as difference” condition. Thus the difference I have on mind, does not only apart from the experience of some normal, typical species condition or functioning, but such a *departure* actually constitutes this difference. This means that this difference is accordingly, a part of complexity of human heterogeneity or functional variation.<sup>565</sup> Or in light of the 1 Cor 12, 12-30, difference is an important part of the body as a whole, despite embodying it. Related to such thinking, this difference posits a challenge to not only thinking differently about the social norm, but also about disability itself and the difference implied within the concept of the body of Church. Following the assumption that different anthropological aspects, models and approaches to the same human reality do not explain complete phenomena in it - self (in our case disability) but help us understand, the strict division between social and medical model or robust division between different anthropological approaches (such as theological and sociological for instance) to one reality seems unfortunate to me. Disability as the condition *per se* does belong to one’s person’s experience. This entails that the impairment and disability will be always a personal experience no matter how much we want to project it on a disabling society or explain its phenomena through the lens of disability definition. Yet, when disability and impairment embedded into a one person’s experience, are perceived as personal disadvantage or considered as subject of only a medical intervention or Church charity, this indicates upon the “zeitgeist” of the society we are living in, the socio-cultural and medical practice we have. This in my opinion firstly reveals social and anthropological limitation and barriers, if accepting disability as a form of a different existence being in the world present a problem. Secondly, it indicates upon a limits of mentality comprehension in articulating the diversity, difference, equality and acceptance. Society is rather focused on fixing those parts, those bodies, those wheelchair users, instead of accepting such other way of existence as given and functional. Living with (accepting) instead of fixing it, eliminating, eradicating or changing, is in my opinion a more effective and persistent way of managing progress and development, that the other way around. This means that we can offer multiple and various disability definitions, but we can only make a change by accepting such condition as given and

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<sup>565</sup> For more discussion on human diversity model or human variation model see Lorella Terzi, „What metric of justice for disabled people? Capability and disability.“ In *Measuring Justice: Primary Goods and Capabilities*, Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010):p.150-173.

different as a part of the heterogeneity of human race and the indispensable part of the body of Christ.

### **Friendship definition - in a perspective of two academic fields**

Friendship consist of anthropological and theological elements and it implicates practical and conceptual elements of its meaning. This means that friendship is not merely a concept of rethinking the common belonging and a path towards the “moral growth” or better quality of life, but a reciprocal way of exchange of human communication and interdependency. This means that friendship is a process which includes friendly communication, interaction, an activity and achieves certain end. It implies closeness, spontaneity, mutual exchange, mutual concerns, but also demonstrate its complexity and the rupture within a process of a friendly interaction. Friendship is not only a human need, or a way towards inclusion, but inspires and enlightens one person’s existence and participation in the world.

The redefinition of friendship based on the examination of two academic fields, suggest that **friendship is a personal, informal, natural and supernatural, spontaneous, voluntarily and sometimes involuntarily participation. It is a freely given interaction and exchange between the two individuals involved. It has its moral purpose, which on the one hand is realized as the socio-psychological aspect regarding the persons self-esteem, contributing his/her social empowerment and realizing one’s personhood. On the other hand, the moral aspect of friendship is realized in firstly revealing person’s relational capacity and expressing the human need and desire for a close encounter and belonging; and secondly, it is the ultimate fulfillment of such a need and desire.**

In other words, friendship is a **freely given and freely received gift and sometimes choice**; it is a way of achieving **justice** in terms of combating social inequality between **different people**, grounded in **mutual exchange** of love giving and love receiving. From such, it is a way to **belong interdependently**. Its main purpose is not merely the way to contribute to one’s well-being, or empowerment, but is a form of **re-humanization**. In some ways, it overpasses the forms of merely natural and includes **supernatural** (asymmetrical) **communication** with Divine. In such a way friendship is **openness towards difference** in a way that friend could be someone who I may not self dependently chose, but who may be given to me in a perspective of common belonging together. In such perspective, friendship is both an **inclusion** and **participation** in terms of fulfillment of one’s desire for **love** and a **justice**.

Although the examination of two academic fields on regard of friendship, recognizes the occurrence of elements such as vulnerability, care, love and justice, it does not provide its actualization in a very process of friendship. The Disability studies and Disability theology, each in a distinct way integrates conceptual and practical elements of friendship; the friendship within such a framework still remain puzzled concept as certain anthropological elements such as vulnerability, care, dependency, love and charity does not meet complete articulation and thus require further examination and application. This means that we need to be confronted with

rethinking of such notions either as a distinct anthropological and ethical entities, or as constitutive elements to the reality of human.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter

## 2.3. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND THE REASONS FOR “THEIR” IMPOSSIBILITY OF FRIENDSHIP

### Introduction

The first part of the research project demonstrated that there is a common sense among philosophers, sociologists and theologians that, for the fully human life, one cannot live without friends. Friendship carries its universal application in a sense that it is recognized in all cultural contexts and life stages. It is not only a necessary component for one's self esteem or a proper human (sociology) and moral functioning (philosophy, ethics), but is principally an anthropological (human-human), and transcendental (human-Divine) relationship. When the friendship discourses involve people with disability the mainstream discussion on friendship became “complicated.” People with intellectual or profound intellectual disability, as we have seen in a previous chapter, frequently present a strong critique to the validity of personal relationships and mainstream system of thought, that on the one hand implies friendship, and, on the other hand, requires reconsideration of the meaning of otherness. The examination and critical evaluation of the two academic fields - Disability Studies and Disability Theology - whose primary concern orbits around the meaning and reality of disability and inclusion, evidenced people with disability lacking friendship, and the consequences this can have on one's personal development. Yet, the question and an answer to that question are not resolved within the two academic disciplines. In my opinion, it tangles a deeper social and anthropological reason for people with disability not having friends. This if put in reverse, could echo like this: if on the one hand, all people have highlight equal *anthropological* value and importance, and if, on the other hand, friendship bears universal moral application, from what consequent reason are people with disability (intellectual disability, respectively) still lacking an opportunity to have equal access to the relationship of friendship? The academic field of Disability Studies and Disability Theology regarding the impossibility for disabled people to fully participate in friendship relationships sees the problem in a view which reduces the person with disability to an object of care; or on the other hand, excludes the person from participation in friendship, neglecting his/her relational and cognitive potential to develop a meaningful relationship. The anthropological, social and ethical reasons for lack of friendship are in such regard often interchangeably intertwined. By this I mean that when we discuss the subject of exclusion it often appears as a result of cultural socio ethical upheavals. In fact it is a deeply anthropological, and vice versa, category. To achieve univocal agreement of all possible causes and results of people with disability lacking the impossibility of friendship is, thus, an uneasy task.

In such regard, the primary aim of the following chapter seeks to set forward the anthropological reasons that in my view impact the socio relational impossibility of people with disability having the opportunity for friendship. The anthropological reasons I will determine as *bio-social* stigma and related socio-cultural attitudes towards the disabled, occurring from the anthropological, I will address as *socio-relational*. This in my opinion includes the following explanation. For instance, as we could have noticed from a previous chapter, due to their so called physical appearances people with disabilities, according to the mainstream social attitudes, have been described as vulnerable, pitiable, and often non-normal.<sup>566</sup> These prejudices related to bio-social condition, label, stigmatize, isolate, dehumanize, marginalize and institutionalize people with disabilities in a particular way by depriving them of the possibility of social contacts. Although this in recent years has been changed on behalf of social activism and the civil rights movement initiatives, a complete change in social attitudes, due to the biological (physical) condition of people with disability, was not eradicated. The set of the bio-social reasons (vulnerability; non-normalcy; pity and charity) ascribed to the disabled, impacts on the emergence of socio-relational attitudes towards them. It diminishes for people with disabilities the opportunity for social interaction, communication and simultaneously lowers their sense of self-worth, self-esteem and social belonging. Thus, the impossibility of friendship, in my opinion, has been “triggered” by the intertwined interaction of the bio-social stigma (vulnerability and lack of autonomy; non-normalcy; pity and charity) that resulted in socio-relational (isolation; lack of acceptance; loneliness) attitudes. In a following chapter I will separately present each of these *bio-social causes* and resulting *socio relational attitude* towards the disabled. While the primary aim of this chapter is to set forward the system of exchanged and intertwined anthropological reasons and socio-ethical attitudes for the impossibility of friendship, its secondary aim is to bridge the gap between the first (conceptual and critical analysis) and the third chapter (empirical research) of the second part of the thesis. Namely, the conceptual impossibility of certain academic fields, here particularly Disability Studies and Disability Theology, to provide an adequate response to the lack of friendship, on the one hand, and an immediate impact on the mainstream socio-cultural mindset towards the disabled, on the other, has been actualized and exemplified in L’Arche. What I aim to say by this means that the possibility of friendship in L’Arche demonstrates that the bio-social reasons of the disabled are not impediments but could be an intriguing possibility for a “different kind of friendship.” It shows that socio biological (anthropological) barriers do not impact on the socio-relational exclusion and attitudes towards the disabled in the countercultural milieu of L’Arche. Moreover, the practical actualization for the possibility of friendship in L’Arche transcends bio-social stigma and socio-relational attitudes towards the disabled, perceiving them not as obstacles but as elements for growth forcing inclusion.

### **2.3.1 Vulnerability and lack of autonomy fosters Isolation?**

People with disability historically have been assigned with the adjective vulnerable individuals. More precisely, vulnerability and lack of autonomy were ascribed to their identities.<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> See for instance 1st chapter of the second part, pp. 76-100

<sup>567</sup> See for instance Linton, *Claiming disability: Knowledge and identity*; Davis, J. Lennard, *Disability Studies*

They remain classified as a vulnerable group of individuals within International UN documents. This particularly includes the *United Nations Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights* (art. 8);<sup>568</sup> The *Document on Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects* (CIOMS, 2010);<sup>569</sup> and the most recent one, the *Report of the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO on the Principle of Respect for Human Vulnerability and Personal Integrity* (IBC, 2013).<sup>570</sup>

The remaining problem of such categorization created a dichotomy in a mainstream mindset, thinking about people with disability as vulnerable and non-autonomous, whereas, non-disabled individuals often appear to be described as non-vulnerable and autonomous (non-dependent) individuals. The attribute *vulnerable* in the history of medical health care services has been a mark of ill, sick, disabled individuals. The autonomous on the other hand signify the self-dependent, invulnerable, healthy individual. Being vulnerable thus means being dependent, disposed to illness and care (medical model), assigning a person to a category of disadvantageous and insufficient (socio-cultural model) individuals. Being assigned with the attribute of *vulnerable*, not only diminishes a person's right to autonomy, independent living, freedom, rights and participation in society, but perpetuates oppressive conceptual misrepresentations and socio-cultural behaviors towards the disabled. Friendship, in such regard, remains a quality of those described as capable and autonomous, the concept often reluctantly applicable to the vulnerable, dependent and irrational. This further entails that friendship only functions between similar and equal such as between vulnerable or non-vulnerable but was not possible between vulnerable and non-vulnerable or rational and irrational, autonomous and non-autonomous. This in my opinion creates a deeper anthropological dichotomy in a mindset of mainstream society, as it separates humans to autonomous and invulnerable from non-autonomous and thus, vulnerable. Chappell in her analysis of reasons why people with disabilities have no or little friendships, listed lack of autonomy as one factor that limits disabled persons' capacity for self-stablishing relationships.<sup>571</sup> Other Disability Studies scholars contend that marking people with disabilities as vulnerable and threatened within societal and cultural practices, serves to repress the personal fragility, liminality and fear of dependency of the so called non-vulnerable.<sup>572</sup> Although it is beyond this section to reflect broadly upon ideas related to vulnerability in academic field of Disability Studies it is worth mentioning that vulnerability in such a domain has been reflected as a vulnerablizing condition in terms of either the phenomenological reality of living with impairment; or as disability as a

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Reader.

<sup>568</sup> Cf. United Nations, *Respect for Human Vulnerability and Personal Integrity*, (Paris, UNESCO, 2005), Article 8.

<sup>569</sup> Cf. CIOMS, *International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects*, (Geneva, WHO, 2010).

<sup>570</sup> United Nations, *Report of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) of UNESCO on the Principle of Respect for Human Vulnerability and Personal Integrity*, (Paris, UNESCO, 2013).

<sup>571</sup> Chappell, Anne L. "A question of Friendship: Community Care and the Relationships of People with Learning Difficulties," *Disability & Society* 9,4 (1994): p. 419 - 434.

<sup>572</sup> Marks, D., *Disability: Controversial debates and psychological perspectives*, (London, Routledge, 1999); See also Shildrick, M., "The disabled body, genealogy and undecidability." *Cultural Studies* 19, 6 (2005): p. 755-70.



socially constructed entity.<sup>573</sup> In such regard vulnerability presents a threat to autonomy and vulnerable persons require adequate protection.<sup>574</sup> Disability Studies scholars are correct to indicate problems of a lack of autonomy as people with disability fall under the control of others. However, the bigger problem in my opinion stems from mainstream perceptions regarding the notion of autonomy and problems associated with representation of its value; and on the other hand, a cultural failure to recognize vulnerability as something positive or as an opportunity for growth. Thus, it is exactly this, the bio-social condition of being vulnerable and non-autonomous that on the one hand creates the mainstream social behaviors of fear and prejudices, and on the other hand, fosters the isolation of disabled people from the relationship of friendship. Instead of being fully included in participation of friendship, people with disabilities have been set aside, were institutionalized or simply understood as icons of vulnerability. But aren't we all vulnerable at some point in life? Or is vulnerability only a condition of some, and not of all of persons? According to psychologists, isolation followed by loneliness can have harmful consequences,<sup>575</sup> not only for people with disability, but also for so called non-disabled persons. The Christian responsibility enfolded in the work of social justice can help in transcending the anthropological divide between vulnerable and non-vulnerable and decrease isolation by opening up towards the participation in a relationship of friendship. It can also challenge the anthropological barrier of a "mindset" often hidden beyond the caring or solidarity attitudes towards the disabled. I suggest that before common actions are taken, and the work of social justice, including equal participation in friendship, continues, the changes in a mindset in regard to the abovementioned anthropological settings attached to the disabled and detached from the non-disabled, requires reconsideration.

### **2.3.2. Label of being non-normal or different leads to non-acceptance?**

The very meaning of the concept of being different is often associated with departure from the norm or being normal. But what does the meaning of the norm imply? According to sociologists, the meaning of the norm is explained in various perspectives and approaches, whereas the meaning of being normal is often associated with a certain calculus.<sup>576</sup> Both terms bear relevance to either challenge or regulate biological, social, economic or legal order and particular lists of social behavior. Sociologists further distinguish between the norm, normal and normativity, which often means that the meaning of each term is not always used synchronically but applies certain variances. In this paragraph I aimed to portray the dynamic interaction between being

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<sup>573</sup> Madeline Burghardt, "Common frailty, constructed oppression: tensions and debates on the subject of Vulnerability," *Disability and Society*, 28,4 (2013):pp. 556-668.

<sup>574</sup> Similar assumptions were addressed among: Theologians (Reynolds); Sociologist (Shakespeare); and Philosophers (Kristeva)

<sup>575</sup> The researchers in a following article addresses negative and damaging consequences on people's self esteem while lacking friendship: See for instance: Luftig, R.L. "Assessment of the perceived school loneliness and isolation of mentally retarded and non - retarded students." *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 92, (1988): 472-475; Wilson, R.S., et all., "Loneliness and risks of Alzheimer's disease." *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 64 (2007): p.234-240.

<sup>576</sup> Robert Axelrod, "An Evolutionary Approach to Norms," *The American Political Science Review*, 80, 4 (1986), pp.1095-1111

labeled as non-normal and non-accepted in contrast to being normal and accepted. In other words, the central feature of being considered as non-normal results in the very meaning of the notion of being non-accepted. Ervin Goffman in his work on stigma and social identities explained the meaning of normalcy as established social settings by persons that are felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of this category.<sup>577</sup> Stigma, on the contrary, is an attribute ascribed to the individual who departs from established social categories, the attribute that is discrediting the person. Accordingly, being stigmatized with such discrediting attributes implies a failure, a shortcoming or handicap.<sup>578</sup> The later research on stigma in contemporary sociological research slightly differs from the Goffman definition, giving to it wider meaning. For instance, Link and Phelan, from Columbia University, depart from an individually focused definition of stigma. Their definition of stigma includes co-occurrence of its components-labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss and discrimination. Their understanding, beside individual stigma, also includes stigmatized circumstances and stigmatizing processes.<sup>579</sup> In my perception, the discrediting attitude close to the meaning of stigma, when applied to people with disabilities, corresponds to the meaning of being described with certain deviances which in this research correspond to the meaning of non - normalcy. Thus, being marked as non-normal in regard to people with disability means being discredited on the ground of two elements: their cognitive and biological differences. And the cognitive and biological differences that correspond to bio-social reasons of those with intellectual disability, correspond to the bio-social reasons impacting further socio relational non-accepting behaviors. Moreover, the cognitive and biological differences were not only perceived as difference, but also as anthropological failure. Their (people with intellectual disabilities or as addressed in the past “mental retardation”) cognitive differences refer to mental incapacities, low IQ and deviant behavior. In fact the differences in their biological structure correspond to bodily differences. Theologian Thomas Reynolds raises awareness of such problems concerning the dichotomy normal-abnormal within the framework of the body capital and a cult of normalcy. The cult of normalcy according to Reynold represents an ideal and antithesis to the abnormal, which is considered as dysfunctional. The normal implies a fit, able bodied, economically independent and autonomous individual, where able bodied functions became the main indicator of the meaning of human.<sup>580</sup> Problem arise when the cult of normalcy as a social construct represents what it means to be a person, feel good, flourish or to have worth. Having a “deformed body” or appearing as “different” is a corruption or privation of good marked with derisive socio-cultural meanings and behaviors. The meaning of normalcy is accordingly legitimated in terms of its contrast, the abnormal, which is invested with all kinds of negative connotations.<sup>581</sup> The conceptual dichotomy between normal and non-normal, beside cognitive and mental differences, has a central place in

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<sup>577</sup> Ervin Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1963): p.2

<sup>578</sup> Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 3-5

<sup>579</sup> Bruce G. Link & Jo C. Phelan, “Conceptualizing Stigma,” in *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27 (2001): p. 363.

<sup>580</sup> See Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p. 58.

<sup>581</sup> Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p.62.

the study of disability<sup>582</sup> and the academic field of Disability Studies. Within the framework of the study of disability, disability is conceived as an abnormal or unnatural condition that attaches itself to a few normal persons. In other words, disability needs prevention or cure in order to reach the commitment to normalcy: *disability matters to the study of disability because normalcy matters*.<sup>583</sup> Unlike the study of disability, Disability Studies interrogate dichotomy disability-non disability, normalcy - non-normalcy in a different way. Disability, in light of Disability Studies, is first of all considered as a disruption of normalcy, and in such perspective for the academic field of Disability Studies, became an occasion to interrogate normalcy.<sup>584</sup> This is to say that normalcy in relation to disability is in the center, and non-normalcy, as something that departs from the norm, is a marginal term. As Tanya Titchkosky and Rod Michalko in their *Introduction* wrote:

“Disability matters to disability studies in the sense that it is an integral part of the essential diversity of human life. Normalcy on the other hand imagines “sees” no other possibility of human life than itself, and thus, ironically, does not “see” itself.”<sup>585</sup>

Being discredited from the category of normal in a way in which people with disability are different, does not only exacerbate social exclusion, but limits the possibility of being accepted into a relationship of friendship. Not only that the social relationships and isolation were marks of vulnerable identity. They were a label of being non-normal, deviant and different, which led to social non acceptance of people with intellectual disability. The lack of capacity for purposive actions has been a mark of those with a cognitively inferior status, with no or little moral standing.<sup>586</sup> This means that personhood and the capacity for relationships have not been recognized and have resulted in a non-acceptance. The significance of being non-normal, abnormal, on behalf of cognitive and biological differences additionally consisted in attached terminology that surrounds such meanings. For instance, people with intellectual disabilities were entitled mentally retarded, morons, idiots, etc. Such terminology not only compromises basic human dignity, but leaves people with disability at risk of social devaluation, which according to Wolfensberger means being seen as “not like the rest of us” (or put differently, *normal*), to the extent of being socially defined and treated as less than human or even considered *inhuman*.<sup>587</sup> The cognitive (e.g. lower IQ from normal standard requirements) and biological differences (deformity, lack of mobility or slow cognitive processes) contribute to a non-acceptance as those attributes and characteristics not only depart from the standard physical and intellectual uniformity of normal, autonomous individual

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<sup>582</sup>As has been explained within a second chapter, the study of disability includes approach to disability from the perspective of medicine, rehabilitation and special education, whereas disability studies is a separate academic field that approaches disability as social construction and undertakes political action performed as inclusion and civil rights movement

<sup>583</sup> Cf. Titchkosky, T. and Michalko, R., *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, p. 4-5.

<sup>584</sup> More on this can be found in Titchkosky, T. and Michalko, R., *Rethinking Normalcy*; see also Mitchell David T., & Sharon L. Snyder, eds. *The Body and Physical Difference - Discourse of Disability*.

<sup>585</sup> Cf. Titchkosky, T. and Michalko, R., *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, p. 6-7.

<sup>586</sup> Hughes, B., „Wounded/monstrous/object: A critique of the disabled body in the socio-logical imaginary.“ *Disability & Society*, 24, 4 (2009):p. 405.

<sup>587</sup> For more on normalization principle and social services for people with disability see Wolf Wolfensberger, *The Principle of Normalization In Human Services*, (Toronto, National Institute on Mental Retardation, 1972).

but are beyond being socially attractive. Being considered non-normal, and attached with statuses such as lower-class citizens, poor, idiots, etc. on the social level additionally, not only deprives people with intellectual disability from social relationships and communication with other people, but also produces fear towards them. The presence of fear in the able bodied mindset towards disabled (stimulated with a pejorative expression such as morons, retarded, idiots) in my opinion, are the true reasons for a resulting social non-acceptance of the disabled. Or put slightly differently, the social non-acceptance of people with disability underlines for people with disability the status of being unsuitable members for a friendship relationship. Being considered as non-normal means being non-accepted.

### **2.3.3. Stigma of pity and charity in correspondence to loneliness**

The Disability Studies scholars, including disabled people's activists have been critical of the role of the charity model. Their main critique, as we have seen in the previous chapter, in such regard, says that the charity model locates disability as a problem of the individual, looking upon his/her disabled condition as pitiful and tragic.<sup>588</sup> Such attitudes force the disability activist to react. The main change emerged in the 1970s by disabled people's movements, realized through the slogan "*Rights not Charity*." Such initiative was to bring liberation to disabled people from the interventions of charity organization and the systems of healthcare who look on them as objects of pity or the subject of moral obligation of able bodied individuals to a certain amount of good-doing. Contrary to other movements, the continuous work of Disability Studies scholars in such regard aims to show that people with disabilities are not the objects of pity or tragedy, but representatives of their own life. Through social modelling and disability activism, people with disabilities manage their access to the public. Charity in Disability Studies discourses but also in religious organizations has been generated as a social institution frequently reduced to solidarity, social aid and the system of social care. Although this had many positive benefits and impacts on disabled people's lives, the disabled were approached through the framework of the object of charity and remain regarded as persons in need of care and protection. Persons with disability not only have been deprived of the means of being autonomous, and thus normal, free and independent, but were perceived as an object of care, almsgiving and pity. Though the civil rights movement brought to people with disability deliberation and played important role in increasing their part in civil inclusion, this does not mean that rights removed loneliness, which people with disability continue to experience. In other words, the rights indeed give to people with disability better participation within society and increase their socio-economic condition, but neither the charity, nor rights, brings true human flourishing. People with disability continue to experience loneliness, and the distribution of rights has not replaced the need for participation and belonging, as it fails to replace a true way of belonging, including their need for friends.<sup>589</sup> Although the charity

<sup>588</sup> Cf. the 1st chapter of the Second Part, the academic field of Disability studies, pp. 77-100.

<sup>589</sup> Cf. ; McVilly et al., „I get by with a little help from my Friends:“ Adults with Intellectual Disability Discuss Loneliness“ in *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 19 (2006): p. 191-203. See also Linda Gilmore & Monica Cuskelly, “Vulnerability to Loneliness in People with Intellectual Disability: An Explanatory

institutions have been vital for people with disabilities in the past, many modern ideas related to charity continue to be structured around delivering help and support to people with disabilities within institutional care or fund-raising donations on behalf of them.<sup>590</sup> The fund-raising donations are perceived as fulfillments of their socio-economic needs, and on the other hand moral obligations of able bodied individuals whom gratitude towards people of disabilities as their beneficiary has been highlighted,<sup>591</sup> but were deprived from forming the friendships. In a slightly different perspective, the 2014 Australian *Ted's Talk*<sup>592</sup> presented by a person with Downs Syndrome, on "objectification of disability", stimulates further discussion on that topic. In *Ted's Talk*, the person with disability, called Stella, addresses a problematic view projected at people with disabilities from mainstream society, stating that people with disability from the mainstream are often perceived as objects of pity and care, or even to some extent a type of moral inspiration for "normal" people. Using the term "inspiration porn", Stella reflects upon the terminology and images where disabled people became a source of inspiration for the able bodied individuals in performing their altruistic and charity action. Another example of such charitable (pitiful) objectification refers to the TV commercial *Children in Need* where disabled children are regarded as objects that stimulate and motivate the actions and the performance of the non-disabled children.<sup>593</sup> In a similar tone, a disabled person, Nabil Shaban, said for the BBC: "*The biggest problem that we, the disabled have, is that you, the non-disabled, are only comfortable when you see us as icons of pity.*"<sup>594</sup> All this in my interpretation evokes in people with disability an appeal for respect of their dignity and a deeper sense of belonging that overpasses the rationale of charity and rights and, instead, centers on the appeal for personal, relational, friendly communication. The good doing perceived as charitable and the distribution of rights to people with disability has not eradicated a deeper loneliness, nor has it stopped disabled people "crying" for a meaningful relationship. On the contrary, such actions even increase or produce greater loneliness, as the person is not seen beyond his/her disability. Put differently, the objectification of a person to cure, care and charity creates in a particular person a devastating feeling of rejection, isolation and loneliness. People with disabilities as we have seen from their abovementioned reasoning, (Stella, Nabil Shaban) like every "normal" or able - bodied individual, or as an image of God, want to belong not only as icons of pity and solidarity, but as human beings capable of relationship. Thus, the deepest problem of such a feeling of loneliness results not only in a lack of social relationships, such as friendship, but the objectification of a person and, related to this deprivation of their dignity, as being reduced to a means of other people's good will. In my assessment I will address

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Model" *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 11, 3 (2014): p 192-199; Chappell, Anne L. "A question of Friendship: Community Care and the Relationships of People with Learning Difficulties" *Disability & Society* 9,4 (1994):p. 419 - 434.

<sup>590</sup> Cf. Mike Oliver, *Disability, Citizenship and Empowerment*, (Milton Keynes:Open University Press, 1993).

<sup>591</sup> See <http://www.copower.org/leadership/models-of-disability> [accessed January 2017]. This has been also expressed by disabled people theorist at one of the Disability studies discussion session during my research stay at King's College in Canada in academic year 2016/17.

<sup>592</sup> See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxrS7-L\\_sMQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxrS7-L_sMQ)

<sup>593</sup> More on this videos can be foun at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78mNZeDaMtk>

<sup>594</sup> Cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zHSX6pGWus>

such attitudes as the actual reason for people with disability finding a wider inclusion into a community of friendship impossible. Being reduced to the charitable care or being seen as an object of mercy, besides bringing isolation, eclipses a person's dignity and his/her desire for relationships. The participation in friendship can not only initiate a feeling of true belonging, but can transform the social attitudes, and return disabled people to the society scale. Instead of remaining the image of a damaging stereotype who is in need of help, rights or charity, the relationship of friendship can overcome such isolation and re-open the way of social justice in terms of common belonging, instead of a distribution of rights and performance of the "incomplete" or one dimensional charity. In order to transcend such objectification, it is our test to look on different ways that promote a person's subjectivity and treat another person not as an object of cure, but as a subject of relation.

This in my view can be managed via a relationship of friendship, which is a possibility that embeds care and can govern a person with disability towards a realization of adequate justice and true happiness. Friendship is a way that reveals a person's identity, subjectivity and expresses his/her relational need for the other. Regarding the person with disability, friendship is the process where a person with disability is realized as subject, instead of an object of care, pity or some other people's moral good-doing.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter

### 2.4. PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FRIENDSHIP EXEMPLIFIED IN L'ARCHE

#### 2.4.1. Introduction: Exemplification and Illustration of Friendship Narrative

There are different approaches to the study of friendship. There are also different interpretations of friendship terminology,<sup>595</sup> ranging from individual perception to established conceptual knowledge. In the following chapter my aim is to undertake a different approach to friendship one that in contrast to a previously examined concepts perceive friendship as a real experience of real people. In order to reach such a goal, the interpretation of the twenty-two interviews between people with and without disability will be used as an *illustration*<sup>596</sup> of their friendship experience. *The main distinction from a previously used interpretations of friendships is not only in portraying the practical dimension of friendship rationale but in fulfilling the gap between often abstract conceptual ideas and the lived experience.* Thus, this approach is an attempt which tends not only interpret people's experiences but also demonstrate real story of friendship. The exemplification of friendship based on interpretation of the interviews will illustrate the experience of the phenomena itself by *listening to voices of the people* and the interpretation they ascribe to the value of such experience. I select a context of L'Arche in which such relationships are vivid (c.f. Reimer, 2009; Cushing, 2003) and in which the anthropological reasons that within society and culture often withdraw from entering into the relationship, are transcended. Besides these general insights, there are three specific reasons I aimed to illustrate the practical exemplification of this type of friendship experiences. First, I intend to understand the nature of relationships between people with and without disability by listening their voices. Second to that I tend to look at occurring elements within these friendship dyads and see whereas they differ or congruent with the previously examined features. Thirdly, my intention was to see whereas the *real experience of real people* involved in research can impacts the improvements of conceptually established definitions.

In other words, the objective of this chapter aims to explore and understand close personal relationships in the counter-cultural context of L'Arche<sup>597</sup> communities that have over the past fifty years demonstrated the credibility of asymmetrical (relationships among differences) relationships and challenged the theoretical framework of classic friendship and contemporary

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<sup>595</sup> Day, M., & Harry, B. "Best friends: The construction of a teenage friendship," *Mental Retardation*, 37, (1999): 221-231.

<sup>596</sup> The complete results of the proceeded empirical research following more robust scientific method will be published separately in edition to an article later this year. At this moment the results have purpose to exemplify the experience of friendship and from such a reason they serve only as an illustration.

<sup>597</sup> Michael V. Angrosino, "L'Arche: The Phenomenology of Christian Counterculturalism," in *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9, 6 (2003): p. 934-954

perspectives on friendship from Disability Studies and Disability Theology, respectively. In order to look at the relationships between people with and without disabilities as a hypothetical possibility, my priority is to explore the relationship process itself, by interpreting the depth of the phenomenon, identity and occurring elements, either distinguished or peculiar to the preconceived notion of friendship.

The significance in illustrating the practical dimension of friendship of the ongoing research is to: a) show in what way the close personal relationship, such as friendship, between people with different cultures, religion, social status and a world view, as well as differences in cognitive and functional capacities, exemplified between people with and without disabilities is possible, (if possible at all); and (b) find the means by which these relationships could illustrate a re-examination of a new ways in rethinking friendship. I will look on the reconstruction of friendship not merely via concepts, but the real experiences where the voices of people with and without disabilities are heard and considered, not as separate others, but as agents and participants of friendly relationship. The qualitative research based on interpretative phenomenological analysis is the method that will *illustrate* people with disability experiences and evaluate their friendship. Before pursuing exemplification and illustration of such relationship the preliminary interviews previously conducted will add to our curiosity of why pursuing the qualitative research as a counterbalance to the conceptual and preestablished knowledge on friendship is, in fact, a necessary task.

#### **2.4.1.1. Preliminary research**

In the beginning of 2015, I interviewed five former assistants who lived in a L'Arche community for a various period of time until 2014. The past assistants were people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds living in L'Arche communities in Switzerland, France and Ireland. The assistants were people whom I met during my four years' commitment in a L'Arche community and to whom the relationships with core-members in L'Arche has been meaningful and transformative, yet at the first place they may not be considered a real friendship. Thus, the primary aim of these interviews was to look upon the meaning of these assistants' experience in L'Arche and find elements which best describe their relationships with persons with disability, friendship building and the very result of their relationship. Facilitated through the relationship with persons with disabilities and active participation in L'Arche, all five participants described their experiences as delightful, nourishing, challenging and transformative. All of them witnessed the meaning and the occurrence of special types of friendships, the challenges of community life and changes in their worldview. They indicated that the most significant part of their experience in L'Arche was relationships with people with developmental disabilities, or the core-members. According to participants' descriptions, the pilot interviews reported a common characteristic of *some kind of friendship*. This has been mutuality, dependency, caring, sharing and the meaning of one's presence. More specific characteristics according to each person's experience identified the relationships in L'Arche as "*normal friendship*" the *present moment friendship*, *caring relationships*, *fraternity*, *relationships of dependency*. However, not all participants determined



the relationship with the core member only as friendship. Some of them called it a *real friendship*, or simply a *friendship*. The experience of investigated relationships and of community life resulted in changes in the assistant's attitude, life priorities, understanding and have impacted changes in their worldview upon the other.

Besides looking at elements of described relationships, the second aim of conducting the exploratory pilot research serves as a stimulus and an exemplary proof of the necessity to generate further phenomenological research, including a larger number of participants and exploring the depth of the phenomena of the experience of relationships themselves. This means that, regarding the results of the preliminary interviews, my aim was to find a more precise meaning of the given elements, concepts and understanding and to obtain a richer and more complete description of the phenomenon of close friendly relationships, besides merely a conceptual thinking on friendship and seeing beyond anthropological barriers that within a dynamic of life experience often become impediments for people's with disability impossibility of friendship.

#### **2.4.1.2. Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of the following illustration is to recognize how friendly relationship not only works for people with and without disabilities in a L'Arche community, but also to find the elements which bring a certain novelty to the preconceived knowledge on friendship and disability and enable one to rethink friendship differently. The specific interest of this research is to look upon the description, the consisting factors and the impact of such relationships on a person's moral development. In such regard, the research attempts to address the following research questions:

- 1) What is the nature and type of this relationship?
- 2) What is the meaning given to such a relationship?
- 3) What are the characteristic elements that impact the relationship formation?
- 4) What is the moral impact or the result of such a relationship on core members and the assistants?
- 5) Are there any reasons for the relationship's maintenance?
- 6) Can the relationship in L'Arche as illustrated in this research bring a specific novelty to our preconceived knowledge and understanding of friendship?

#### **2.4.1.3. Significance of the Study**

The practical description of real friendship experience is significant principally from the two aspects: a) a description of friendship from the perspective of *people with disability* and their experience of friendship, in contributing to the improvements in mainstream thinking about friendship, by hearing people's voices; b) it is a possibility for the assistants (or, in another social context, the care workers or care givers) to express their experience of managing typical friendship

relationship, including difference, surpassing the preconceived friendship classification and going beyond the formality of a caring relationship. Finally, the research could be beneficial for the policy makers and community support programs to expand the ways of social inclusion and participation of people with disability. The research contributes to renewal of Christian solidarity in suggesting the different perspective of charitable love, one that surpasses the formality of charitable activism (doing things) and instead, practices charity within a „face-to-face“ encounter (being with) as the participation in relationship.

#### **2.4.1.4. Method: Qualitative Research and Phenomenological Approach**

The illustration of practical exemplification of friendship in L'Arche employ qualitative approach based on phenomenological method. The qualitative approach applied in this research is conversational and flexible in characterizing and interpreting the data. This is the main reason I decided to undertake qualitative research: its evolving and shifting structure allows researchers to apply simply to the particular situation. Moreover, qualitative research allows respondents to express themselves more freely, providing the “insiders” perspective more robustly<sup>598</sup>. Through the use of qualitative research based on semi structured, in-depth interviews, I was in a position to listen to participants and obtain detailed information for a better understanding of their friendship. Additionally, as Creswell suggested, when little is known about a certain social phenomenon, the qualitative research design is a good way to explore the essence of the phenomenon.<sup>599</sup> Thus, one method of exploring experiences of friendship is through the phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach looks suited for the purposes of this study, whose attempt is to interpret the phenomena of the friendship relationship in terms of the meanings people bring to it. The phenomenology as a philosophical approach to the study of phenomena and human experience has been greatly initiated by Edmund Husserl. His interest in “life-word” consists in exploring the essence and the reality of the phenomena itself, without preconceived theoretical knowledge.<sup>600</sup> However, the phenomenological approach applied in this research looks specifically at social realities and a person's experiences, and in such departs from the strict notion of Husserl's “phenomenological reduction.” The experience within the phenomenological approach method is not reduced to investigation of a pure phenomenon itself, but the experience of people. This means that the aim of the phenomenological approach applied in this research aims to explore experiences and the description people give to their thoughts, feelings, interpretations of particular relationships, in order to obtain comprehensive meaning and the essence of particular

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<sup>598</sup> See Silverman, D., *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004).

<sup>599</sup> Creswell, J. W., *Qualitative Inquiry Research Design: Choosing among five Traditions*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998).

<sup>600</sup> Cf. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/>; See also Bloor, M., & Wood, F. *Keywords in qualitative methods a vocabulary of research concepts*, (London: Sage Publications, 2006).

phenomenon.<sup>601</sup> The abovementioned insights are the reason I decided to apply the combination of Creswell's<sup>602</sup> and Moustakas's<sup>603</sup> suggestion of the use of phenomenological approach method and its interpretation. I will use Creswell's suggestion for the research design framework of qualitative research.<sup>604</sup> The Creswell method will partially apply in my data analysis and representation. Moustakas's *phenomenological research methods* will be used in order to reach a more profound meaning of the phenomena. In such regard, I will look at the framework that includes face-to-face contact, focuses on description of the reality of experience, the essence of this experience, and the meaning people give to that experience.<sup>605</sup> The realm of this experience includes the manifestation of experience itself, person to person reflection on that experience, and the meaning our respondents give to their relationships. The data analysis based on Van Kaam's renewed by Moustakas's methodology<sup>606</sup> was used within a process of data analysis. Very often phenomenological qualitative research becomes confused with other qualitative research approaches such as ethnography or grounded theory. This may also apply to this illustrative study. The difference, however, between this research method and abovementioned qualitative approaches is that: a) the researcher spent in each L'Arche community (French and English context) between five and seven working days; b) the researcher's focus was upon the interview process itself, instead of focusing upon the attributes, observations and atmosphere of the living context (*contra* ethnography); c) the researcher give priority to exploring the nature and description of the meaning given to the experiences from the view of participants, not some preconceived knowledge about particular phenomenon (*contra* grounded theory). Thus, instead of a straightforward emphasis that friendship between people with and without disabilities is possible, the priority was to examine these relationships and the way in which they emerge by exploring the depth of the phenomenon, identity and distinguished relationships between people of different cognitive, social and cultural characteristics.

#### 2.4.1.5. Sample Selection

The sample size in the qualitative research is based on the type of information needed, the meaningfulness of the information obtained and the resources available to the researcher.<sup>607</sup> For a purposeful sampling strategy, the criterion sampling was according to the method used by Denzin and Lincoln.<sup>608</sup> Informants were chosen according to the following criteria: all participants were recognized members of a L'Arche community. This includes core members (people with

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<sup>601</sup> A. van Kaam, "Phenomenal analysis: Exemplified by a study of the experience of "really feeling understood."" in *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 15, 1 (1966): p. 66-72.

<sup>602</sup> Creswell, J. W., *Qualitative Inquiry Research Design: Choosing among five Traditions*, 31-55.

<sup>603</sup> Moustakas, C., *Phenomenological research methods*. (Thousand Oaks ; London [etc.]: Sage.1994).

<sup>604</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry Research Design: Choosing among five Traditions*, pp. 31-33;51-55;86;123-125.

<sup>605</sup> Moustakas, C., *Phenomenological research methods*, p. 11-21

<sup>606</sup> Moustakas, C., *Phenomenological Research Methods*, p. 120-121.

<sup>607</sup> Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative research and evaluation method* (3rd ed.), (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

<sup>608</sup> Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 2002).

disability) and assistants (care workers or volunteers) in a L'Arche community. The core members were people with developmental and intellectual disabilities who are currently living and working in a L'Arche community and who are capable of verbal communication as the interviews proceeded and were recorded.<sup>609</sup> The selection of assistants includes living assistants currently living in a L'Arche community. All participants are English- and French-speaking, although not all belong to the same cultural origin. They were female and male between age twenty-six (26) and sixty - three (63). The number of twenty-two interviews has been proceeded in the three English-speaking (Manchester, Edinburgh and Cork) and the three French-speaking (Fribourg, Trosly-Breuil, Marseille) L'Arche communities in Europe in a period between November 2015 and February 2016. The participants were people with disability (core-members) and people without disability (current assistants). Along with the key informants, my research includes an interview with L'Arche founder Jean Vanier (Appendix F).

#### **2.4.1.6. Research Process & Selection of the Participants**

The methodological requirements of the present research are developed according to Moustakas's and Creswell's phenomenological research design. This implies threefold organization: preparation of a research question, collecting data, organizing and analyzing data. The preparation phase includes the formulation of research questions, the illustration of the topic and question, and the selection of participants. The ethical guideline requirements have been attached within the first phase.

**Table 1. Preparation Phase**

Preparation of Research Questions
Ethics Approval
Organization agreement
Informing the Committee of L'Arche and Sending Request for Interview Procedure
Sending the Introduction Letter and Request for Approval to National and Community L'Arche Leaders
Receiving Response and Approval
Sending Consent Form
Interview arrangements
Arrival to Community
Procedure of Interviews

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<sup>609</sup> The reason selection includes those assistants and core members who were in position of express them self verbally is because my data collection includes recording and transcription of the recording data. It is also important to emphasize that verbal communication was supported and maintained through the help of illustrations and design images in order to stimulate the adequate and appropriate responses to the questionnaire.

**Table 2. Profile of Participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>L'Arche Community</b>	<b>Years in L'Arche</b>
Core-Member	63	Trosly-Breuill, France	41
Core-Member	38	Marseille, France	5
Core-Member	45	Edinburgh, Scotland	2
Assistant	36	Fribourg, Switzerland	5
Assistant	32	Manchester, England	2
Assistant	34	Cork, Ireland	3
Assistant	28	Cork, Ireland	2
Assistant	55	Manchester, England	13
Core-Member	26	Trosly-Breuill, France	5
Assistant	35	Manchester, England	2
Assistant	36	Marseille, France	6
Assistant	42	Edinburgh, Scotland	13
Core-Member	38	Edinburgh, Scotland	6
Core -Member	55	Fribourg, Switzerland	10
Core-Member	53	Cork, Ireland	30

#### 2.4.1.7. Data Collection

One of the methods of qualitative research in collecting data is interviewing.<sup>610</sup> In this study I selected a semi-structured in depth interview as I was interested in a subjective description of friendship generated by core members and assistants in a L'Arche community. The interview and interaction were stimulated through note taking, audio recording, use of illustrations, and face to face direct observation and conversation. Overall, interviews consisted of two parts. The first part of the interview took forty-five minutes and the second part of the interviews, whose aim was to re-confirm the previously given answers in the first part of the interview, took fifteen minutes. In the first part of the interview I selected more detailed and descriptive questions, whereas in the second part of the interview questions were rather precise and general. The time between the interview procedures was 2-3 working days. Data analysis was effected through transcription of the computer files and the validation method. Interview questions were open ended and evolving.<sup>611</sup> The central question was followed by a small number of sub-questions or, according to Stake, the topical question was followed by an issue question.<sup>612</sup> The questions presented in the interview were not over intimate and were easy to follow. As our questionnaire/interviews also involved persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, particular attention was given to

<sup>610</sup> Cf. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry Research Design: Choosing among five Traditions*, 1998; Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative research and evaluation method*, (Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2002).

<sup>611</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry Research Design: Choosing among five Traditions*, 1998., p.127.

<sup>612</sup> Stake, R. *The art of case study research*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995):p.49-68.

the design and form of questions prescribed for people with disability (Pettitpierre et al.<sup>613</sup>; Emerson et al.). In such perspective the interview included use of other media communication such as illustration, photo-images and photo-albums. The complete interview questionnaire can be found in Appendix E.

#### **2.4.1.8. Ethical Approval and Validity of the Results**

##### **Ethical Approval**

Regarding the approval of research conduct, the ethical approval was approved and signed, at the beginning of the research procedure in 2015, by prof. Thierry Collaud as thesis supervisor and Chair of the *Department of Special Moral Theology and Christian Social Ethics*. In order to conduct valuable research, we ensured that our research was ethically structured. This means that we followed ethical directives such as not to expose participants to harm (non-maleficence), not to expose them to risk, including respect and confidentiality, as well as participants' decision and ability to freely participate in research. Our selection of the participants followed consultation with the L'Arche community directives advisory board. This means that the proposal has been approved by L'Arche National coordinators and Community Leaders, (Appendix B) which is a committee whose task is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm and that they are familiar with the procedure of the research. Informed consent of participants has been provided and gained either directly from the participants, a parent, a member of staff who knew the participant well, the community member, or the L'Arche community leader (Appendix C). As the researcher was already familiar with the context of L'Arche communities as a former living assistant, it was easy for the researcher to develop a relationship of mutual trust with participants and gain respect in addressing the research questions; however, being aware of ethical requirements, the researcher remained a "researcher" and so ethically neutral.<sup>614</sup> In order to avoid misconstruction and to remain neutral, certain boundaries between the researcher and the participant during the interview protocol were maintained.

##### **The validity of the results**

The validity indicates the comparable concept and a true value of research data and findings. The validity and trustworthiness of the results associate with the credibility of the data (Tuckett and Dip, 2005). This within the perspective of this research includes investigator triangulation<sup>615</sup> and reflexivity (Denzin, 1970; Patton, 2002). The investigator triangulation

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<sup>613</sup> Petitpierre, G., Gremaud, G., Veyre, A. et Bruni., *Les apprentissages à l'âge adulte, ce qu'en disent les personnes avec une déficience intellectuelle*, (Fribourg et Lausanne: Université de Fribourg et Haute école de travail social et de la santé, 2014).

<sup>614</sup> Robyn Munford, Jackie Sanders, Brigit Mirfin Veitch & Jenny Conder, "Ethics and Research: Searching for Ethical Practice." In *Research, Ethics and Social Welfare*, 2:1, (2008): p. 50-66.

<sup>615</sup> Investigator triangulation involves using more than one observer, interviewer, coder, or data analyst in the study. Confirmation of data among investigators, without prior discussion or collaboration with one another, lends greater credibility to the observations. Cf. Denzin, N.K. *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. (Chicago: Aldine, 1970) cited in Veronica A. Thurmond, "The point of Triangulation" in

applied to this research corresponds to the review of data and finding, including observation and checking of the data without prior discussion. The other observer of data analysis in this study was my thesis supervisor, and a confirmation of data validity was followed in consultation with Professor Dr Fontana-Lana, lecturer at the *Département de Pédagogie spécialisée*, (Department of Special Education) at University of Fribourg.

#### **2.4.1.9. Data Analysis**

The data analysis of this research is based on deep observation and description of participant experiences presented in a form of interview followed by a modified Van Kaam's method.<sup>616</sup> The process of horizontalization<sup>617</sup> of data has been used for complete transcription of each research participant. After horizontalization, the statements and meaning units are listed and clustered into categories or themes. They make a textural description of the experience. Individual textural and structural description; composite textural and composite structural description, as well as, a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences of the experiences have been developed.<sup>618</sup> The basic outcome of the research was the description of the meaning and the analysis of the interpersonal experience of the meanings. In analyzing data, I first read and reread the transcripts in order to obtain a sense of the overall meaning of friendship for participants. Then I read the transcripts and underlined all statements about friendship, the common elements and characteristics that were occurring within reading each interview. I then reviewed each underlined statement and formulated the participant's experiences. This has been followed by the organization of individual themes into groups. After that, I compared and contrasted the information across the participants. The transcription and analysis of data was completed manually, without using a computer program.

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*Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33, 3 (2001): 253-258.

<sup>616</sup> This includes listing preliminary grouping; reduction and elimination; clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents; final identification. See Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, p.120-121. See also A. van Kaam, "Application of the phenomenological method" in A. van Kaam, *Existential foundations of psychology*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1966);

<sup>617</sup> Horizontalization is a method in phenomenological research applied in identifying common meanings and essences of data supplying them with equal meanings. Cf. Padilla-Díaz, "Phenomenology in Educational Qualitative Research: Philosophy as Science or Philosophical Science?" *International Journal of Educational Excellence*, (2015), 1, no. 2, p. 101-110.

<sup>618</sup> See Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, (1994):p.103-154.

### 2.4.2. THE FINDINGS

The research findings are classified into five categories. The results illustrate: a) the type and nature of relationships; b) the meaning of close relationship; c) the common features and characteristics; d) the development, formation and the common activities; e) close relationship maintenance.

**Table 3. Type of Relationship**

TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP
Friendship
Special Relationship
Different Type of Friendship
Real Friendship
Profound Friendship
Strong Friendship
Day-to-Day Routine Friendship
Workers
Best-Friend Friendship

#### 2.4.2.1. Nature and Type of Friendship

My priority in illustrating the experience of relationships in L'Arche was first to determine the type of relationships. The majority of the assistants and core members described their relationship either as a real friendship or as relationships that include a friendly elements. Two core-members described relationships with the assistants as a *working relationship*. The majority of core members, as a friend appointed a core member, rather than an assistant. Likewise, the person they showed most sympathy for (or liked the most) in L'Arche was not their immediate friend. Only after the interviewer specified the question by asking them if they have experience of friendship among the assistants, did they straightforwardly address an assistant as a friend. In all fifteen interviews, the interviewer noticed a slight difference in the precision of terminological accuracy in the use of the word friendship. According to seven interviewers the ongoing relationship was addressed as *friendship*. Three interviewers appointed relationship as a *different kind of friendship* or as a *specific type of friendship*. One core member who appointed type of relationship as friendship, also selected an assistant as their *best friend*. One core member, on the other hand, although addressing the occurrence of friendly elements, described the relationship with an assistant as the *care worker - care receiver* relationship. Three participants addressed their relationships as *real friendship*, *profound friendship* and a *special relationship*. One of the participants addressed the friendship relationship as *strong friendship*, whereas, the other determined it as a *day to day* friendship. It is worth mentioning that according to core-members'



responses, the assistant or accompanier was often not described as a friend; sometimes, neither the most preferable or most loving assistant was considered a friend, but a co-worker. For instance:

**Core-Member Trosly :** *Aimez-vous les gens dans votre maison ? Qui aimez-vous le plus ? J'aime tout le monde. Il y a une personne accueillie comme moi que j'aime beaucoup. Moi, j'aime Y parce que j'ai confiance en lui, il est avec moi au foyer depuis plusieurs années. Pouvez-vous me décrire votre assistant(e) préféré(e) ? Qui est- il / elle pour vous ? C'est XY, parce qu'il écoute, il connaît les souffrances de chaque personne, il sait ce dont nous avons besoin. Il y a confiance... Il sait quand nous ne sommes pas bien. Oui, je suis heureux qu'il est là. Il est spécial pour moi, parce qu'il est responsable pour la maison.*

**Avez-vous des amis dans l'Arche ?** *Oui. Moi j'ai XY elle est ma marraine, elle est religieuse, elle habite en Belgique. Je la visite parce qu'elle m'invite. Elle était en chemin avec moi dans l'expérience, dans la prière, pour connaître Dieu elle m'a beaucoup porté. Avez-vous un(e) assistant(e) comme ami ?* *Oui. Je connais une qui s'appelle XXX et elle est religieuse aussi. Elle habite au foyer Rameaux...*

On the contrary, for the assistants, the core member was immediately the person who they appointed as their actual friend and with whom they have been experiencing a meaningful friendship relationship.

**Assistant Ireland 2:** *...because in one way I was with Jim but I was referencing him so it was my job to be a reference person to Jim. I think I accepted him as a person and he accept me as a person and now when I working in another house I always talk to Jim, asking him how he is doing.... yes I think we stay friends.*

Indicating the notion of a *different type of friendship* was another interrelated characteristic of this friendship. The description of „different” within *different type of friendship* can be extricated from the answer below.

**Assistants Cork 2:** *It's a different relationship than with other people or with other friends because you are always aware of that this person doesn't understand a lot of things, but in another way is more simple because, I mean you accept him, he except you it's simple in the way that you are more relaxed.... It's kind of ...well I would call this friendship but it's hard to say that this is friendship because in one way I was with Jim but I was referencing him so it was my job to be a reference person to Jim.*

#### **2.4.2.2. Meaning of Friendship**

After comparison of the types and nature of friendship, the second objective of this research was to establish the meaning of friendship based on expressions core members and assistants give to such experience. The category identifies themes that emerged from their close or friendship relationships integrated into a personal experience, detected within the analysis of the interview

process. In all fifteen interviews, common themes specific to the meaning of friendship appeared. This has been: *recognition, dependency, responsiveness, affectionate relationship, belonging, reciprocity, helping/caring, emphatic knowledge, the notion of gift.*

**Table 4. Meaning of Friendship**

MEANING OF FRIENDSHIP
Recognition
Dependency
Responsiveness
Affectionate Relationship
Belonging
Reciprocity
Helping / Caring
Emphatic Knowledge
The notion of gift

## Recognition

The theme of recognition was a significant theme in all friendships highlighted by almost all participants. The meaning of recognition has been described in relation to acknowledging another person's existence, the appreciation of the other person, despite differences between them. Although recognition resulted in a positive outcome, it is necessary to indicate that acceptance and recognition were followed through the exposure of vulnerability<sup>619</sup> which initiated disclosure of oneself and enables the mutual recognition and the acceptance between core member and the assistant. The recognition means that the other's identity is „acknowledged“ in interactions with the another, a person often different from oneself. This means that the value of recognition is in noticing that the other has the same worth and dignity as I do as a person, and therefore the existence of the other person is respected in the same way as I would like to be respected. For instance, such experience can be captured within an interview:

**Assistant Manchester:** *...The friendship relationship with person with learning disability has been for what I needed, and he needed. This friendship felt like being at home, place of belonging and acceptance where I can be myself with my friend and my friend too can be who he really is... .*

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<sup>619</sup> As the notion of vulnerability is an important element of friendship relationship in our interviews, I will return to this in a following section in identification of the friendship elements.

## Dependency

Dependency was the result of *interpersonal* relationships in the interviews. Dependency includes the element of caring, which ascribes to it a twofold meaning. Firstly, as a concept it refers to a real process of friendship, including the reciprocal caring, in terms of a physical and emotional reliance on the other person, the need for support or need for the other person's presence. In such a perspective as for assistants, so for core-members dependency addresses the state of emotional belonging; relying on the other person; or expressing the particular need. However, the experience of a core member slightly differs from the experience of assistants. Through the majority of core members were autonomous, they were reflecting dependency in terms of a need for help/aid on a daily basis. This includes physical care, the management of making decisions, organization of a daily routine and, above all, the assistants *standing for* the person with disabilities when they were less able to perform autonomously for themselves.

**Assistant Manchester 2:** *So when XX needed, when she was in bad place I was someone she was go to, and when I was in a bad place, she was one I was go to. We really, really cooperate, because she sometimes get very angry and I was someone who could cope with angry nursery board and also sometimes get angry and it was of course sometimes some problems between us but it was I think important for friendship.*

**Core Member Ireland:** *Helping me out, giving me small surprises, take me out for a dinner sometimes, I can talk to her. ... She's a nice person. She give me a small surprises. She's a very good friend. She supports my family. I can talk to her.*

**Core Member Edinburgh:** *It's very good. We have a very good friendship. She's my companioner. We spent holidays together, we go for pictures and have a chat sometimes.*

The second meaning employed in understanding dependency involves the process of maintaining the friendship after L'Arche. This means that the continuation of the relationships (especially with a non-verbal friend) proves that there was an occurrence of a true friendship, as dependency expressed as a deeper belonging implies a person's need and willingness in meaning the contact. To maintain the contact after L'Arche also implies another person's assistance and his/her good will in supporting the maintenance of the friendship relationship.

**Assistant Cork 1:** *Yes, she came to visit me. But obviously this visit need support of another assistants in L'Arche. This is subsumed this problem and need a company's so she did not came to visit me alone. She need the company she cannot do things alone, so this is a problem that, if she want to maintain a relationship with myself, she need a company, she need another person, she needed support. So only if somebody, and obviously that was possible, could accompany her. She could come to visit me.*

**Assistant Manchester 2:** *Very interesting, because you know that was the time before internet and before all this telephone communications connections on that way. I wrote her a couple of letters*

*and I have to rely on assistance who need to read to her.*

It appears that dependency did not obscure the value of friendship. Or put differently, being dependent did not separate caring from the relationship of friendship. One could be dependent, caring and a friend at the same time. As a shortcoming, there was also an aspect of emotional dependency which in my opinion could be a shadow sight of friendship relationships, inflicted as a negative emotion.

## **Responsiveness**

Being drawn into assistant - core-member relationships requires responsiveness. The concept of responsiveness in our interviews intertwines a certain aspect of reciprocity, care, support and accompaniment, and the shared life.

The data analysis reported responsiveness in the form of another's perception and response to another person's needs. Moreover, responsiveness in the interviews has been a dynamic process of interpersonal relationships in relation to care, the need for support, spending time together. It was associated with the meaning of understanding and the emphatic knowledge of the person. The responsiveness has been expressed verbally, as an emotion, and as a face expression, or as an emphatic knowledge (understanding) of the other. Notably, as an element of close relationships responsiveness in the interviews includes the circuit of mutual compassion, care and understanding. It also involves emotional perception of a person (emphatic knowledge). In regard to the relation between compassion and responsiveness, it is worth emphasizing their distinct meaning.<sup>620</sup> Although it includes support and accompaniment, it cannot be identified with a social support in a full sense of its meaning. In the interviews the response to responsiveness begins with a particular need, not directly associated with a type of emotional satisfaction, but with a type of response given to that need. The need often reveals the request for a close relationship, the need for the presence of another person, the need for a friend, the acknowledgement, and finally the communication. The concept has been associated with the meaning which began with a *need* that requires *response*, and has been further identified as acceptance, understanding, recognition of one's self-worth, the necessity for relationships and recognition of one's true value and identity. For instance:

***Assistant Manchester 2:*** *She couldn't walk, so very clearly she have profound disability but she was somebody who's friendship, respect and endorsement she needed and I needed ....For instance*

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<sup>620</sup> Although they are related, compassionate goals and responsiveness to others are theoretically distinct.

Compassionate goals are selfguides; they serve as a compass pointing the self in the direction of being constructive and caring toward others. When people have compassionate goals, they ask themselves, "how can I be constructive?" Responsiveness, in contrast, involves tuning into and acting in response to *others'* states (i.e., their feelings, desires, and needs). That is, when people are responsive, they direct their attention toward others' needs at that moment. Typically, compassionate goals and responsiveness work together; having compassionate goals leads people to be responsive. For longer explanation see various authors in Shinobu Kitayama, Kerry Kawakami, and M. Lynne Cooper, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2010, July 99 (1): 77-106. [assessed July 2016]

*Edith reveal to me that I am precious and self-worth. So there is genius reciprocity – that other person reveal to me my true value.*

**Core-Member Trosly:** *Elle m'aide bien. Elle sait ce dont j'ai besoin. Il y a confiance. Elle sait ce qu'est la souffrance. Elle sait que j'aime les sœurs. Elle m'écoute. Elle prie pour moi.*

### **Belonging**

The analysis of the interviews reveals belonging as a connecting factor between friends and an important “communicating” element within the context of the L'Arche community. Belonging has been facilitated by intimacy of contacts, self-disclosure and affinity. Regarding the context of the L'Arche community, belonging was identified with a meaning of sharing similar vision, values and spirituality. The sense of belonging was expressed explicitly by assistants and implicitly by the core-members. However, for both, belonging has been important part of a close relationship. It has been described as an experience of being accepted among people who share a similar interest and values. As a factor of close friendship relationships, belonging strongly evokes the value of a person's presence and another person's need to be part of one's person life or expressing the need of being accepted. The “sense” of belonging was described as an emotion of feeling important to the other, to affiliate with the other, to be acknowledged and cared for, as a human person. This has been further stimulated through simply valuing one's presence, sharing common activities and enjoying the community support.

**Assistant Marseille:** *C'est l'amitié ou je pense que vous ne pouvez pas faire de grandes phrases d'amitié, vous partagez les chose dans le cœur, pas spécialement de grandes choses c'est la difficulté de dire que c'est pas pareil, oui c'est pareil comme l'amitié entre gens « normaux » .*

*... On a partagé beaucoup de joie, on a ri ensemble, fait de petites choses ensemble.*

*... Nous devrions créer ensemble une relation très forte. Nous avons passé des moments de mon travail, on allait au cinéma ensemble, on partage de morceaux de simples chose.*

**Assistant Manchester:** *I was friend with people with learning disabilities and also with assistants. I have some very profound friendship with some of assistants. L'Arche is a place of being at home, place of belonging and acceptance where I can be my - self.*

*For the core-members the sense of belonging has been more associated with belonging to L'Arche, to people in L'Arche, to sharing it's vision or feeling as a place of home and safety.*

### **Belonging as togetherness**

The interviews have shown that the meaning of belonging was closely related to the meaning of togetherness. This is the reason I extricate its meaning under the special category. This does not say that belonging was identified with the very meaning of togetherness or vice versa. It rather says that the meaning of belonging expressed as togetherness refers to the pleasant feeling of being united with other people in sharing in the friendship as the common understanding. Togetherness was described as a state and a quality of being together realized in the presence and companionship with others. The meaning highlighted by assistants and core members also indicated closeness and

includes the conjunction in common activities such as doing things together, being close to the other person, sharing the moment or a time with another person or community.

**Assistant Cork 2:** *We did things together XY was happy to have me to support him and to do things together and for me I was just happy to have somebody who maybe doesn't talk too much, but just doing things... So, we were just being together and important part of this relationship were being together and doing things together.*

**Core Member Marseille:** *On a fait beaucoup d'activités ensemble. Je faire beaucoup d'activités avec les assistants, on fait la cuisine ensemble. .... On fait des activités ensemble. Nous sommes copains.*

### **Affectionate loving relationship**

Friendship as an affectionate relationship was identified through interaction and communication, expressing the emotional concern for the other's welfare that is close to the meaning of unencumbered emotional valuing of the other. Moreover, an affectionate relationship friendship implies joy, touching of one's heart, feeling good in the other's presence, liking each other, peace, security, serenity. The friendship as affectionate relationship includes love. The term love as an affectionate expression has been associated with emotions and has been expressed through the feelings of liking, joy and happiness. Frequently the term was described in connection with the *heart*, or with feelings associated with the heart such as *touching one's heart or feeling peace in one's heart* or bringing joy and happiness to each other. For the core-members the term love and heart as expressions of affection, have been used more frequently than for assistants when expressing their feelings about other friends. For assistants the term love was not only associated with the emotions, but was rather described as a *commitment*. It was difficult to distinguish between loving and liking as both terms have been closely related and interchangeably used.

**Core-member Edinburgh:** *Interviewer:* Can you choose one picture that will best describe your friendship with XX? *Interviewee:* The Heart. This means love, friendship and relationship. *Interviewer:* What is important for friendship? *Interviewee:* You should be there for each other. Friends can bring joy to each other. They can give love to each other and receive love back.

### **Affection expressed through the "heart to heart" communication**

Affection implies not only the feelings and emotions. Friendship as affection implies the notion of the heart, or more precisely "heart to heart" communication. By implication of the heart, the friendship relationships affect a person's depths and expresses an inner position from the one towards another person, it implies the inner condition of a person and one's disposition towards the other. Besides the abovementioned example, there are a few examples where core member and assistants describe the friendship relationship, using the concept of heart.

**Core Member Fribourg:** *Comment décris-tu ta relation avec XY?*

*Je l'aime beaucoup, parfois nous sommes allés à la messe. Ça fait du bien dans mon cœur. Je l'aime beaucoup.... Qu'est-ce que tu aimais particulièrement dans cette amitié avec XY? Ça fait*

*du bien dans mon cœur.*

**Core Member Marseille:** *Vous êtes-vous déjà disputés avec votre ami ? Je suis triste. Comment avez-vous résolu cette situation ? Je sentais la paix dans mon cœur. C'est comme l'amour, la paix.*

**Assistant Marseille:** *C'est l'amitié ou je pense que vous ne pouvez faire de grandes phrases d'amitié, vous partagez les choses dans le cœur.*

**Assistant Cork 1:** *It's kind of spiritual way because she is in my heart and every time I go back to Italy I see her.*

### **Affection manifested through the positive and negative emotions**

The analysis has shown the occurrence of positive and negative emotions. The positive emotions include joy, happiness, peacefulness, kind-heartedness, pleasure, delight. Negative emotions involve sadness, sorrow, anger. For the core-members, emotions were expressed through the combination of illustration interchangeably between sad face/happy face; heart/broken heart; sunshine/stormy weather; flowers/undergrowth, etc. The participants expressed the meaning of friendship through a combination of different emotions, which gives a certain stability to the relationship of friendship.

**Assistant Trosly :** *Chouchou c'est ehm : « Ah, c'est mon petit chouchou à moi », souvent on dit, on a tous un petit chouchou, qqn qu'on préfère. En fait c'est qqn avec qui je me sens vraiment bien, qui m'apaise, tu sais.*

**Q:** XY ?

**Assistant Trosly :** *XY, oui. En tout cas c'était le premier avec qui j'ai vraiment eu le sentiment, en tout cas à Trosly-Breuil, où je suis arrivé, il m'a accueilli déjà. Je pense que c'est important, souvent les personnes qui nous accueillent dans les foyers, on s'en souvient, je pense, tous les assistants peuvent te dire quelle est la première personne qui les a accueillis.*

**Interviewer :** *Comment décririez-vous l'expérience de cette relation ? Qu'est-ce qui vous plait dans cette relation ?*

**Core member:** *C'est que... En fait il y a qqc de sécurisant, tu vois. Quand je vais pas bien, on a des périodes, moi je me rattache à ça. Avec XX aussi, je me sens très bien. Elle a un rire communicatif qui fait que ce sont des relations privilégiées avec lesquelles on se sent à l'aise, et qui sont sécurisantes, apaisantes, c'est une petite bulle quelquefois dans la difficulté de tous les jours. C'est ça ce que XY me procurait. Peu importe, quand j'allais le voir, déjà je me sentais utile.*

### **Reciprocity**

Reciprocity was part of the experience of each relationship. Both the core-members and assistants underline this notion as an important part of relationships. The notion of reciprocity in the present interviews implies mutuality, expressed through mutual need, mutual support, mutual belonging. It also implies mutual love, liking and caring. Reciprocity is also revealed as an element of

common activities, spending time together and in willingness to maintain the friendship after L'Arche. We could notice that the value of the other person is much more important than the differences between them; therefore the element of reciprocity is a common part of this relationship. For instance, asking the assistant how he would describe the experience of his/her relationship with a person with disabilities, he answers:

**Assistant Manchester 2:** „One of discovering mutual need, mutual support, mutual need of love and respect.“

**Core-member Edinburgh:** *What is important for friendship? You should be there for each other. Friends can bring joy to each other. They can give love to each other and receive love back.*

**Core-member Trosly:** *Elle m'aide bien. Elle sait ce qu'est la souffrance. Elle sait que j'aime les sœurs. Elle m'écoute. Elle prie pour moi. Et moi, je prie aussi pour elle.*

**Assistant Fribourg:** *C'est difficile à répondre parce que je pourrais parler de réciprocité mais que c'est, je ne sais pas du faite d'une part cette personne est non verbale donc il y a forcément un moment où la réciprocité est limitée, disons c'est pas : je donne à une, si je peux donner quelque chose et elle me le rend ou elle me donne autre chose.*

*.... J'ai pu donner des choses concrètes en accompagnement concret j'ai pu aussi donner a une personne et je pense que j'ai aussi reçu. et si c'est ça la réciprocité alors oui il y a réciprocité. Qu'avez-vous reçu de cette relation? De la joie.*

**Interviewer:** *Is there a reciprocity between you and Amy? Interviewee: Yes. I think she it's not just me thinking that she's my friend. I think she also thinks I am her friend as well. So there is reciprocity it's not the just I'm thinking she's my friend. I think she also think I'm her friend. So there is reciprocity.*

## **Helping /Caring**

In our analysis, caring was identified as an important element of the friendship relationships. The great part of caring entails the provision of physical care to the core-members. However, the care also surpasses such meaning, as many assistants in interview indicated that being a reference (assistant) person to a core member was rather an opportunity because caring for them meant building a close relationship with a core-member.

**Interviewer:** *Does the care relationships and friendship relationship imply care? Are they separate forms of relationship? Does the relationships which implies care, are not necessary friendships? Or other way around?*

**Assistant Edinburgh:** *Well, there is a difference so that you have been given to take care of person with disability but what makes me remember for instance Rosemary is that is that she was my friend and not someone I was taking care of.*

*In other examples care was identified as taking responsibility for the other; care was also identified as helping, accompaniment and commitment. But it does not remain on this one - directional aspect: the caring was also reciprocal, as sometimes the core members were taking*



*care of assistants in terms of “their spontaneous provision” of a particular emotional responsiveness, attachment, and reliability towards assistants.*

**Core Members Edinburgh:** Can you describe me your friendship with XX? It's very good. We have a very good friendship. She is my *accompagnier*.

**Assistant Fribourg:** J'ai pu donner des choses concrètes en *accompagnement* concret j'ai pu aussi donner qch a des personnes et je pense que j'ai aussi reçu.

Thus, the relationship of caring and building the friendship are somehow intertwined and perplexed at the same time, as they imply a personal attachment, reliability and responsiveness. This also implies the freedom of both assistant and core member, who within the process of care, slowly develop a relationship of friendship. Thus, the process of caring implies an element of responsibility, but responsibility did not refer to a duty or obligation in a strong sense of its meaning. It was rather a friendly care provision understood in a sense that “*friends care for each other*” within the process of building the relationship.

### **Trustworthiness**

The importance of trust, sincerity and honesty, together with authenticity, was another theme in the meaning of friendship from the perspective of the participants. Trustworthiness has been described as a quality that carries essential and a real value, that matters as true, original and actual. Experience of trust indicates originality and the essence of what the friendship is or is reputed to be. More than acting morally with the confidence - communicating the truth with and about the other - the trust in these interviews expresses the lack of control over the other, by simply trusting the other person. For both assistants and core members all three categories (sincerity, honesty and confidence) are interconnected and pervasive in a process of friendship building. It has been noticed that trustworthiness implies acceptance and discretion where one can verbally and non-verbally (body language, face expressions) express thoughts, feelings and opinions without being afraid of rejection. In L'Arche people could not relate only by the objective reasons who to trust and under which circumstances. Rather, the foundation for trust has been characterized through the reliance on another person whose outcome was the stability and authenticity of the specific relationships.

**Core-member Edinburgh:** ...*I can talk to her, because I feel confidence with her.*

**Assistants Trosly :** *En fait il y qqc de sécurisant, tu vois. Quand je vais pas bien, on a des périodes, moi je me rattache à ça. Avec XY aussi, je me sens très bien. Elle a un rire communicatif qui fait que ce sont des relations privilégiées avec lesquelles on se sent à l'aise, et qui sont c'est sécurisantes, apaisantes, c'est une petite bulle quelquefois dans la difficulté de tous les jours.*

This in other words means that the experience of trust points to present friendship relationships not being based on a false personal appearance or the artificial or derivative attitudes. The trustworthiness with this relationships signals honesty, not only in speaking the truth, but going

deeper in pointing to sincerity and freedom in expressing one's own needs, feelings and weaknesses, disclosure and revelation of the true self without pretending, humility in asking for help, for prayer or support. This is to say that trustworthiness was associated with the meaning of acting in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in a way that is consistent with the inner thoughts and feelings.

**Assistant Marseille: Interviewer:** *Qu'est-ce qui vous plaît dans cette relation ? Interview:* *L'authenticité. Il y pas de masque, c'est honnête tout de suite nous savons si c'est ça va ou ça va pas.*

### **The emphatic knowledge**

To identify the meaning of friendship as emphatic knowledge best corresponds to the intertwined meaning of understanding and knowing. Yet, the meaning of the term knowledge and understanding does not mean collecting the data and the information of another person, or some conceptual knowledge of the other. The meaning of understanding and knowing include the notion of the heart. In a daily life experience we often hear that sometimes people need a „heart“ which will understand them. Our analysis has shown that understanding includes the knowledge of the heart, integrated in this friendship experience. This means that the notion has been peculiar and oriented towards aspects of emotional recognition and knowledge, instead of a merely comprehensive knowledge or a context of a person's situation. The meaning of the heart in such regard implies feelings, concerns and kindness, and in a particular way for the core-members, it has been explained through the implication of the emotions, sensitivity and kind-heartedness.

**Assistants Cork 2:** *I know he likes to have a chat with me and we have similar sense of humor and the way he was really laughing when I was teasing and talking with other assistants in the house so I can say that we understand each other. I think it's important for friendship to have this sense that you understand each other.*

**Core-Member Ireland:** *Because she is a part of L'Arche and she help me out. And I feel she like me to. I can talk to her.*

The concept of knowing as an element close to the meaning of understanding is interpreted as an attachment to the person. *Knowing* occurs as a concept closely related in understanding the other person's narrative, attitude, mood, reactions, feelings, uncertainties or fears. Friendship as knowing and understanding resulted from a communication process and disclosure in a relationship process between core members and their assistants. The analysis of the interviews has shown that the concept was expressed more frequently by core-members than by assistants. This illustrates that for the core members the depth of knowing has been associated with the meaning of knowing one's heart. The meaning of knowing was also associated with knowing of one's family history or a particular person's story. Knowing a person for longer time period in does not only invoke in core-members the feeling of being understood, but also implies a greater amount of trust and confidence.

**Core-Member Ireland:** *She's Mary's Holland sister and she knows me. She knows my family for a long time.*

*Assistant Edinburgh: I think the experience of this relationship was more as when you leave in L'Arche you get to know other person quite well and quickly, you are sharing a lot together you are spending time together, especially with the core members so you also share private details. Each relationship was different. Each personal development is different. It's a lot of what we have done or what we do with people, so it's always open communication kind of like, it's hard how to describe it, but yes, you can't hide yourself.*

### **The gift**

The value of friendship in L'Arche is often challenged by questions of free choice. This particularly includes assistants who, due to the provision of care as caregivers, are often placed in a situation without having the choice to freely choose a friend. Yet, not having a choice for many of the assistants interviewed was not considered as something negative, like for instance, being drawn out of one's freedom to choose freely one's friend.<sup>621</sup> Assistants coming to L'Arche made a voluntary "pre – choice" in accepting the conditions according to the L'Arche missions and statements. However, when asking about whether friendship was a choice the answers were various. One of the assistants within a discussion of friendship remarked that friendship is a gift, not a choice.

*Assistants Fribourg: Est-ce-que on peut dire que l'amitié est un choix?*

*C'est donné, c'est pas un choix. Il y a quelque chose qui se passe à l'intérieur. Il y a plein d'antennes qui s'ouvrent et je sens qu'il y a une ouverture il y a ce que la personne ne dit pas aussi son langage non verbal il y a presque.*

#### **2.4.2.3. Common features and characteristics of friendship**

The category of findings related to characteristics of friendship intends to address the elements central to the idea of friendship. I was searching to understand the essence and the centrality (*philia*) of the meaning of friendship. The five common themes appointed by core-members and assistants will be presented in turn.

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<sup>621</sup> Let keep on mind that assistants came in L'Arche to be volunteers. So already there we see their free choice to come to L'Arche voluntarily and to accept conditions they previously accord.

**Table 6. Features and the characteristics of friendship development**

<b>FRIENDSHIP CHARACTERISTICS</b>
Communication
Challenge and Effort
Simplicity
Vulnerability
Forgiveness

### **The Communication**

The importance of **communication** was a significant element in all the interviews. Communication was particularly interesting for those relationships that include one person with non-verbal communication. Such type of communication as described by assistants includes body language, facial expressions, gestures and the involvement of emotions. The use of body language in the present interviews also involves *heart - to heart* communication, the expressions of emotions and the use of intuition. Communication has been of significant importance because communication with a non-verbal person was not an impediment for the assistant to enter into relationships with a non-verbal core-member, even though their communication was only possible via body language, including gestures and facial expressions. Yet, it was a profound and nourishing process.

*Assistant Cork: She doesn't talk, but we communicate in a special way. I like the way we communicate...it's not the friendship that you can call and talk with your friend, but it's friendship because she is my friend...We communicate by body language and by eye to eye contact...it's kind of spiritual way of communication because she is in my heart...*

*Assistant Manchester 2: What did you like about this relationship with that person? The fact that it was obvious that she couldn't speak. She couldn't walk, so very clearly she have profound disability but she was somebody who's friendship, respect and endorsement she needed and I needed.*

### **The challenge and the effort**

The friendship relationship described in the interview was not a constant rose garden, especially when placed into community life. This could have been noticed in describing its process as an affectionate relationship implying positive and negative emotions. But besides including positive and negative emotions, this friendship implies an element of effort and was at a certain time a challenge for both the assistants and a core-member.

The friendship relationship was particularly on display after the assistants left L'Arche, but,

nevertheless during the community life. Yet it was not only perceived as a disruption requiring a particular investment, but as the mutual effort between parties involved.

**Assistant Manchester:** *That was friendship which was challenging... and friendship was very poor in a way of verbal communication, not easy but, yes it was friendship.*

*.... It's very hard to get to X in the way that he call back or to visit. He often ignores you.*

**Assistant Cork:** *...sometimes because when we lived together we were fighting, because we both are strong personalities and characters. [...]*

*.... She need the company she cannot do things alone, so this is a problem that, if she want to maintain a relationship with myself, she need a company, she need another person, she needed support. So only if somebody, and obviously that was possible, could accompany her. She could come to visit me.*

### **The Simplicity**

One aspect of the friendship relationships identified by both the core members and assistants, has been the element of simplicity. Simplicity was described as a simple action and an activity in creating a dialogue between the two persons involved. It was also described as a feeling of being nice, kind, and sincere or simply not being at ease in complicating the things, making clear statements on complicated issues, managing discussions and making the decisions. The art of not complicating things, in regard to simplicity means doing ordinary thing with great love and was the element that put emphasis on valuing the other person's presence, instead of being preoccupied with perfecting the activities, planning and certain agendas for that person.

**Assistant Marseille:** *C'est une relation simple. C'est l'amitié ou je pense que vous ne pouvez pas faire de grandes phrases d'amitié, vous partagez les choses dans le cœur, pas spécialement de grandes choses c'est la difficulté de dire c'est pas pareil, oui c'est pareil comme l'amitié entre gens « normaux ».*

**Assistant Cork 2:** *Simple relationship. We both were getting something from that relationship. He can be really funny, we were laughing a lot we went to concert together, and I think it's was really something important. Sometimes we both were enjoying silence, being quite, not being in a room with lots of loud people and he likes sometimes to be on his own as me as well. We were going to Dublin and we were sitting in the train and didn't talk, we did not talk to much we were in silence. So, we were just being together and important part of this relationship were being together and doing things together.*

In these relationships one can notice that simplicity was a positive feeling of being simple or being content with a presence of the other person who did not expect from the other to do great things together, but simply being present or *being there*. This means enjoying each other's presence and doing things that both (assistants and core members) had in common. This means that in performing a simple activity and valuing the other person's presence, friends were bonded to each other for a long time. As mentioned above, it implies being open, comfortable with each other, expressing one-self without pretending, being fearful of disliking a person.

## The Vulnerability

The following category of findings identifies the occurrence of the element of vulnerability within friendship relationships. This primarily requires distinction between the *elements that cause the appearance of vulnerability and the recognition of vulnerability itself*. Firstly, the elements which caused the rupture of vulnerability imply shocking moments, difficult passages, darkness's of the soul, etc. The risk of confronting these moments and passages leads towards the discovery of a personal vulnerability. If a person was open towards taking a risk and showing his/her vulnerability, the outcome was in *liberation* from the *false-self* into the acceptance of *the true self*. On the contrary, if a person remains closed towards taking a risk, nothing has changed. Which elements indicate the recognition of personal weakness and vulnerability in interviews? Our findings reveal that this has been the *fight, difficult moments, crying, tears and anger*.

Anger as an emotion and the fights reveal something of a person that will otherwise not be revealed. It enables disclosure of a suppressed part of a personal existence perceived as weakness and vulnerability. The fights have been the provocation and the confrontation with a hidden truth about oneself, the dislikes or aversions of the inner self, once exposed at the surface. There was a choice either to accept such a true self or deny it. In our interviews the acceptance implies the recognition of one's vulnerability. This process brings persons to a reality and discovery of the true self and either opens the possibility of deepening the relationship or reopens the possibility for the discovery of something new.

**Assistant Manchester:** *Interestingly enough, I like seeing the moments of fight with people because that's sign for me that this people are friends. So trust and feel to be loved without any kind of pretending not trying to be somebody just be myself.... For me my academic accreditations have been very important to me and I came in L'Arche and than most important thing was to me a cup of tea, it's this kind of friendship where you are invited to be but if you choose to be part of that friendship and you still love that, than, I think there is something. So I think that in this true friendship what I have describe, vulnerability plays important role. I think people knowing true story about other person (doesn't need to be my family history or my childhood history) but real questions story of who I am... and there you cannot pretend and you can feel your true self. And the part of the true self is also personal vulnerability.*

Secondly, the category of vulnerability underlines an important element of a person's experiences, described with the term *weakness, imperfection, fragility, suffering*. This also includes *not showing masks, not pretending*, but rather being who one is in his/her own true existence.

**Assistant Cork:** *To be yourself without mask is to show others true you, while also your weaknesses to be open because sometimes, if you look perfect, the other will just look at you as a perfect person. I think it sometimes it is connection, but connection is in your imperfection. If I saw someone my fragility, some can find something to connect with me because other person have this fragility as well and this is, this is also a central to friendship if another person realize, recognizes as imperfection, or weakness, or fragility, and myself. This is where person can connect with me because this is something that other person's have as well.*

## The Forgiveness

In all the interviews the meaning of a friendship reckons the exchange of conflict and forgiveness. This said that assistants and core-members did not deny the emergence of conflicts which impacted on the communication with other core members and assistants. Nevertheless, they were open towards managing the conflict and offering a solution. The factor that initiated their desire for the renewal and continuation of relationships was actualized in openness to forgiveness. Thus, the conflict as already indicated, was not tragic; it was followed by the desire to forgive. The concept of forgiveness has been further characterized by the responsibility of reciprocal caring which signals the importance and appreciation for the value of a particular relationship. The notion of forgiveness has been accompanied by the act of apologizing, saying sorry, and explaining the misunderstanding. The process of forgiveness described by participants implies the process and a period of silence, “coming down” (reducing tension) and frequently required being modest and humble. The humble attitude was for some assistants a very difficult time of self-reflection, but apparently it resulted in a freedom from one self’s “being in the right” or “having power over the other” personal dispositions. The act of forgiveness brought into relationships an appreciation of another person alterity (understood as difference) and deepened the sense of one’s self-understanding.

**Core-member Marseille:** Interviewer: Vous êtes-vous déjà disputé avec votre ami? Interviewée : Oui, après je suis triste. Interviewer : Comment avez-vous résolu cette situation ? Interviewée : J’ai senti la paix dans mon cœur...c’est comme l’amour, la paix.

**Assistant Fribourg :** *Ça c’est résolu par des mots, pour expliquer, dire avec mes mots je n’ai pas compris avec des mots qui disent « pardon », « je n’ai pas compris ». Par plusieurs reprises, mais pas dans l’intention qu’elle comprenne parce que ça venait du cœur de demander pardon de t’avoir fait peur pour t’avoir blessé antérieurement, et aussi par des gestes qui montrent qu’il n’y a pas de cassure que je suis toujours là pour toi. Cette amitié existe toujours malgré le malentendu ou le désaccord. et même et peut-être de nouveau je sais pas sa compréhension des mots etc.*

The emergence of conflict and forgiveness also described in interviews is part of interpersonal relationships. However, the interviews pointed to a distinction and relation between forgiveness, pardon, and reconciliation which, in regard to one person’s experience seems related, whereas in the experience of the other, appears a distinct concept.

### 2.4.2.4. The formation of friendship through common activities

The friendship relationships have been developed through performance of common activities. The core members and assistants not only indicated the importance of common activities, but also emphasized that the very process of friendship development, including common activities, was followed by the involvement of emotions. The analysis has shown that common activities for the core-members and assistants includes: talking, spending time together, preparing and sharing meals, celebrating birthdays, visiting, doing things together or partaking in common activities. Common activities were described as going to the cinema, going for a coffee or a drink,

praying, going shopping, listening, dancing, going bowling, traveling, staying in silence, watching TV, walking, playing cards, etc.

**Table 7. Common Activities**

COMMON ACTIVITIES
Talking
Spending time together
Preparing and sharing meals
Birthday Celebration
Common visits
Going to cinema
Going for a coffee/drink
Praying together
Shopping together
Listening each other, listening to music
Dancing, doing sports together, traveling
Sitting in silence, enjoying silent moments
Watching TV, playing social games

The common activities were also „accompanied “by exposure of emotions, feelings and sentiments. It nevertheless includes positive and negative emotions that within common activities include fights, forgiveness, suffering, joy, happiness, crying and sometimes even *tiredness*.

**Interviewer:** *What have been characteristics of this friendship? Can you describe it?*

**Assistant Edinburgh:** *I think being happy with each other, telling each other when we are going away, celebrate birthdays together, going for a coffee, doing ordinary things together, watching TV, having a common TV program ...*

**Interviewer:** *Pourquoi les gens sont tes amis?*

**Core member Fribourg :** *Ensemble on a fait des activités, on a pris un verre...*

**Interviewer:** *Qu'est-ce que tu aimais particulièrement dans cette amitié avec XY?*

**Core member Fribourg:** *Ça fait du bien dans mon cœur. J'ai partagé des repas, j'aime fait des prières avec lui.*

#### **2.4.2.5. The result of friendship**

The category of findings referring to the results of friendship intends to investigate the very end of this friendship relationship. As this has been the case in a previous discussion regarding the conceptual friendship analysis, every friendship implies certain teleology, which is to say that the



very end of friendship brings to a person or people involved in a relationship of friendship some moral or personal good. This, according to the interview description, resulted in happiness, positive self-esteem, change of regard, change of attitude; friendship could bring to a person some inner serenity, peace or the feeling of belonging together. I was looking at all possible answers and dimensions that peoples give to the finality of their friendship. From the analyzed interviews, the selection of common features resulted in the occurrence of happiness and particular aspects of (moral) transformation, that include a change in attitude, worldview and regard.

### **The concept of Happiness**

The experience of friendship relationships resulted in the occurrence of happiness, which was also previously identified as a common feature of friendship. Happiness was mostly a measure of how well one feels in company with others.

For the core-members, happiness was identified more frequently as an emotional expression of satisfaction in combination with *joy*. When the core members and assistants were asked to describe their friendship experience, they choose *smiling faces* or *flowers*, interpreting them as *being happy*, *feeling the beauty*, and not *being alone*. When, in comparison, they were asked how they feel without friends, they picked up illustrations showing the *sad face*, describing it as *sadness*, *feeling sad* or *being lonely*.

**Core-member Manchester:** *She is nice she's my best friend. I am so happy for her being in L'Arche but she also don't leave in the house. She come, she come regularly in L'Arche.....* **Interviewer:** *Can you choose one picture which I will show you which will best describe your friendship relationship with Nia? Smiling face because she make me happy and heart , because I love her very much.*

**Assistant Edinburgh:** *I think it's just having somebody who makes you feel happy even in time when it's difficult but in overall it somebody who makes you happy when you see them. And just to like to see them change and grow. I think it's just makes me happy.*

As a result of common activity and a process of friendship relationship, happiness was interpreted as *kindness*, *life meaning* and *fulfilment*. The happiness as a result of a mutual relationship also implies *hope*, the valuing of a *present moment* and in a certain *feeling of personal integrity*. Happiness as an end of friendship was not described as a predominance of something positive over the negative. Neither was it a hedonic state of subjective well-being, satisfaction or an often materialized economic pleasure. Happiness in our interview is described as rather a positive emotion, close to one's inner dispositions, valuing the other person's presence, reinforcing the other person's happiness, or simply finding happiness in caring for another.

**Assistant Fribourg:** *Alors si on parle de moi cette amitié est donc dans l'amitié il y a... il y a l'amour aussi... il y a l'amour, il y a la joie, il y a la volonté de faire que cette personne soit bien.*

**Core-member Fribourg:** *J'étais heureuse quand il était à la maison. Ça fait du bien dans mon cœur. Je l'aime beaucoup. J'aime l'ambiance quand il est à côté.*

## The Transformation

Based on the responses and descriptions of the friendship relationships, the acceptance of oneself and the transformation were aspects which resulted after a period of inner confrontation with personal imperfection, limits, weaknesses and fragility. Thus, the acceptance of vulnerability underpins the acceptance of a true - self, which is the reason that the notion of vulnerability has an important role in understanding the process of transformation. In other words, as often described in the interviews, the acceptance of vulnerability caused by the “exterior” factors created the possibility for transformation. The question of flourishing related to the relationship between people with and without disabilities presents a practical and theoretical challenge to contemporary discussions on friendship, because its main focus often transcends the quest of happiness in terms of economic prosperity and social status, stressing the importance of the recognition of a valuable and true relationship between people of different capacities, class, religion and culture. The perspective of this interview outlines the aspects of flourishing differently than otherwise imagined. The end of friendship resulted in changes in a person’s behavior and consequently caused inner transformation. As with the category of vulnerability, the findings are distinguished into two separate categories. This includes interior and exterior manifestation. The interior factors are changes inside the person itself (personal dimension). The exterior factors include changes in regard to other people, life circumstances, the worldview, and the people’s mindset (social dimension). Different elements of listed characteristics emerged for the core members and the assistants. The most common element which describes *interior* personal transformation in assistants is the *acceptance of a true-self* and a *better knowledge of the self*. This also includes *being real*, *self-love* and *being oneself*. Accepting weaknesses and imperfections, in a way not as something one should be ashamed of, facilitates openness and the meeting with the other. Also, the elements such as love and appreciation of one person’s presence were described with the meaning of “*just being there*,” “*being patient*” or “*living in a present moment*.” These elements have been identified as factors of personal change, identified by assistants as the element to flourish. The transformation as an aspect to flourish was described as an attitude of a receptive, non-judgmental regard for both, oneself and the other. It is often a process of reciprocal relationship. The transformation is described with the acceptance of one person’s physical presence, the acceptance of a person’s attitude, values and differences.

**Assistant Fribourg:** *elle m'a changé c'est ça aussi que j'ai reçu. Sa simple présence m'a transformé. Et de quelle manière? Une façon d'être en relation en tout cas avec elle c'est plus simple, plus vrai. Pour l'instant j'y arrive pas tellement mais j'espère que le temps fera son affaire que je peux aussi appliquer à des personnes appliquées comme j'ai appliqué c'est que mon état intérieur m'a fait ma propre façon d'être, que je peux être comme moi-même avec des personnes qui sont pas comme moi, ses faiblesses qui me permettent d'être, plus en vérité en relation avec les autres.*

**Assistant Manchester 1:** *I was a friend with person with disabilities. This relationships was for what I needed and he needed...That was a friendship which was **challenging** and it was very*

*insightful* so I realize true things about myself....I felt acceptance and because of the acceptance I felt very healing this friendship relationships...so in this true friendship which I have describe, I asked my self real life questions, I couldn't pretend and must feel my true-self...It also change my way of accepting people who are different...so in L'Arche I learn how to relate to people who are potentially very different to me...

**Assistant Cork:** ...They help me to accept my self, not pretend to be something I was not. They were absolutely welcomed. ...and this relationship change me a lot...inside me and outside as well. For instance it was difficult for me to accept my physical appearance. I did not like it. I wanted to change so much. But then people with disability they told me, "you are beautiful as you are" you do not need to change. So they help me to accept my self and this acceptance change something within me, my view on life and other people....

**Assistant Manchester2:** This friendship brought me to see to except to love things I do to love my self with weaknesses as well, and to be happy with this. This helps me this friendship - to accept myself as I am.

**Assistant Marseille :** Le regard que je porte sur moi-même peut-être que ça m'a permis de comprendre qqc chose et me connaître moi-même.

**Ireland -core member:** They help me out and I feel thy like me too. I change, before I was more angry and violent but now I come down. I am more in peace and I like people in L'Arche, because they like me to...

The *exterior* factors manifested the changes regarding the context of social reality, the other person and the perspective of the relationships. This particularly includes appreciation of *honesty* and *non-pretense* within relationships; *openness* for, and the *recognition of a value within a person who is different*; the value of relationships and the process of friendship- building instead of a common interest. For most assistants, a common characteristic has been the complete change of vision and orientation towards the other person, including the component of „*heart seeing*“ instead of „*categorization*“ of a person according to a person's attributes and achievements.

**Assistant Manchester 2:** Before I could not understand that vulnerability in friendship because friendship was about mutual interest, mutual strength. And so to discover that people could be my friend for reasons that were not that, have nothing to do with my interest. And what I'm doing that included weaknesses and bad things I'm doing to. This friendship brought me to see to except to love things I do.

**Assistant Cork 2:** I think in the beginning when I just came it was difficult for me, but I learn that I was judging people on their first physical appearance. In L'Arche, after I get to know person with Down Syndrome with who I had good relationship, I than realized that things are not like that. You cannot judge people on their physical appearance. I saw it was wrong with my way of thinking about people, I was judging on the first appearance and afterwards this has change in me...now I don't judge people on the first appearance and people who knows me they told me that I have changed.

*Assistant Edinburgh 1: It change my way of thinking about friendship in a different way. It is different what I was thinking about friendship before L'Arche and what I'm thinking now, and it also helps me to be myself, to help me to accept myself and enjoy moments with people with disabilities*

#### **2.4.2.6. The maintenance of relationship**

The overall result of friendship relationship, besides its end, implies friendship maintenance. The participants in the study provide several suggestions when they were asked about willingness and types of friendship maintenance. The concept of maintenance was not a typical way of friendship maintenance. It includes the will for the *maintenance, commitment* and *faithfulness* to the person. Many of the participants express the awareness of a slight difficulty in maintaining the friendship after L'Arche due to the reduced intensity of daily contacts, different living contexts, locations, etc. Yet, none of them considers it impossible to maintain friendship after the L'Arche. On the contrary, all the participants expressed a strong desire and willingness to maintain the friendship with the particular friend in L'Arche, because of the commitment and appreciation of the person with whom they were friends. Likewise, they see the possibility of maintaining the friendship after L'Arche as a realistic and a possible way of continuity.

*Assistant Manchester: ...It's very hard to get to X in the way that he call back or to visit. He often ignores you. When they were telling him that I am coming for the visit, he gets very excited, but when he saw me, he ignored me. So, at that first step he ignores you. But, yes, I used to go back and to see him. And very regularly we see each other on Skype.*

We could already notice that the continuation of friendship after the assistant's departure from L'Arche depends on the help of other people or assistants. This has been particularly common in the experience of friendship with a non-verbal person, and sometimes included an effort and other assistants' engagement in a process.

*Assistant Cork: ...sometimes because when we lived together we were fighting, because we both are strong personalities and characters. [...] .... She need the company she cannot do things alone, so this is a problem that, if she want to maintain a relationship with myself, she need a company, she need another person, she needed support. So only if somebody, and obviously that was possible, could accompany her. She could come to visit me.*

#### **2.4.3. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

The aim of exemplified illustration of the experience of friendship was first to learn about friendship experiences between people with and without disabilities in a L'Arche community. Second related to the first, was to search the meaning this experience implies to the particular person and the participant involved in the interviews. After the discussion and the shortcomings of the results, I will provide a field definition and conclude with the correlation to the previous results and field definitions, including the academic field of Disability Studies and Disability Theology.

#### 2.4.3.1. Nature, Meaning and Formation of Friendship Relationships

The exemplification of the friendship experience in L'Arche provided information regarding the *nature*, *meaning* and *character* of friendship. The common characteristics, elements and results of friendship associate with friendship formation and its development. The relationship of friendship within interviews has been associated with the meaning of recognition, dependency, responsiveness, affectionate relationship, belonging, reciprocity, helping/care, emphatic knowledge and the meaning of gift. The concepts themselves are interconnected and correspond to the established definitions of the terms<sup>622</sup>. Likewise, the elements such as reciprocity, affection, mutual helping and trust also overlap with the results identified by Disability Studies scholars, in the first (cf. empirical research) chapter of the second part. However, in more than one example we could notice that the explanations of the given concepts slightly expanded the meaning of the postulated conceptual knowledge of an applied terminology, supplying it with a deeper understanding. Likewise, the emerging elements of these friendships have been the concept of *vulnerability* and the concept of *transformation*. The concept of vulnerability has been related to the meaning, such as weakness, imperfection, fragility, suffering, not showing masks, not pretending, being real, being yourself. The meanings related to the concept of transformation implies acceptance of true-self, better knowledge of oneself, just being there and being patient. Considering the very meanings of friendship, we could have seen that certain expressions overlap with preconceived theoretical knowledge, but also add to or surpass such meanings.

For instance, in *Psychology of the Other*, Marie T. Hoffman described **recognition** with three interrelated understandings: a) acknowledging the existence of someone (identification); b) acknowledging the differentiated status of someone who has rights (surrender); c) acknowledging this differentiated status of someone through expression of appreciation (gratitude).<sup>623</sup> The concept of recognition within the interviews involves a similar meaning, including the sense of acceptance, acknowledges one's value and has an important place in managing the belonging. The additional novelty to understand recognition was the emergence of a notion of vulnerability within the very concept of recognition, described within interviews as a crucial factor in „causing“ the disclosure of the opening of oneself and initiating the process of acceptance.

Additionally, the *APA Dictionary of Psychology* defines **dependency** as a state in which assistance from another is intuitively expected or actively sought for emotional or financial support, protection, security or daily care.<sup>624</sup> Dependency, within the interviews, has been described as a state close to emotional belonging or reliance in terms of others' accompaniment. Within the context of L'Arche, dependency includes spontaneous benevolence and a „feeling“ of

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<sup>622</sup> Cf. for instance Lopez, Shane J.; Snyder, C. R. *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Second Edition., (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>623</sup> Marie T. Hoffman, *Towards Mutual Recognition. Relational Psychoanalysis and the Christian Narrative*, (New York, Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group, 2011): 25-37.

<sup>624</sup> See Vandenbos, Gary R, eds. *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, (American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, 2007): p.269.

belonging, incorporated within the present moment and included in a process of friendship maintenance after L'Arche.

The scholarly literature defines **responsiveness** as a feature of a close relationship and as a sign of the quality of relationships. As an interpersonal process it refers to any action a person takes with the goal of promoting a partner's welfare.<sup>625</sup> Within a process of friendship relationships, responsiveness has been described with a meaning of close (interpersonal) relationship as an emotional attachment (understood as emphatic knowledge of one's needs), that includes mutual compassion and support.

Generally speaking, **belonging** is the sign of close or intimate relationships and a sign of acceptance.<sup>626</sup> As a factor of human interdependency, belonging within interviews was described with a meaning of acceptance, showing the similar interest and valuing of one's presence. It adds to its very meaning the implication of "feeling" understood as the emotional attachment to another person. It also expands its meaning by adding to this the importance of togetherness, understood as simply being together. Togetherness in such regard matters, as it emphasizes the aspect of inclusion within belonging pointing to common activities and mutuality.

Though friendship is in socio-psychological literature described with a meaning of reciprocal emotional support, liking, caring and loving<sup>627</sup> for the participants in our study, friendship as an **affectionate relationship** includes: positive and negative emotions; heart to heart communication (inner dispositions from one towards the another); feelings such as "touching one's heart"; "feeling peace in one's heart"; bringing joy and happiness to each other.

The Latin word reciprocate means returning the same way as the process of giving and receiving the objects or services which establishes particular kinds of relationships and obligation between people. (See Douglas J. Davis). Within mainstream friendship discourses, the concept of **reciprocity** occurs very frequently. It is often understood as the notion of a cooperative, beneficent response to the goodwill and helpfulness of others. In the *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, **reciprocity** is defined as the quality of an act, process or relation in which one person receives benefits from the other and, in return, provides the "giver" with an equivalent benefit. Reciprocity within the perspective of our findings was acknowledged not merely as a reciprocal exchange, but was also described with a meaning of mutual support, mutual belonging and a mutual need of each

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<sup>625</sup> See Judson Mills Margaret S., Clark Thomas E. Ford, Melanie Johnson, "Measurement of communal strength" in *Personal Relationship*, 11, 2 (2004): 213-230

<sup>626</sup> Vandebos, Gary R, eds. *APA dictionary of Psychology*, p.113

<sup>627</sup> Cf. Baumeister, Roy, F. "Effects of Social Exclusion and Interpersonal Rejection: An Overview with Implications for Human Disability," in *The Paradox of Disability: Responses to Jean Vanier and L'Arche communities from Theology and the Sciences*. ed. Reinders S. Hans, (Michigan/Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010): p.51-58; See also Knox M. & Hickson Fay, "The Meanings of Close Friendship: the Views of Four People with Intellectual Disabilities," in *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 14, (2001): p. 276 - 291.

other, despite a person's differences. Thus, it was a typical reciprocal exchange, closer to the meaning of mutuality.

A mutual **care** and value of another person make people responsive to another's person difficulties and suffering." In the *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, care is described as a virtue where one person is inclined to pay close and respectful attention and offer thoughtful service to the other (e.g. a person with disability and vice versa).<sup>628</sup> Types of caring and help within the findings of our interviews varied and its meaning intertwines interchangeably. Participants described caring distinguishing between its practical and personal aspect. Caring and helping implies physical (practical aspect) distribution of care, but it does not stay on that. It was enlarged with a meaning of taking responsibility, implying the mutual commitment, emotional responsiveness and reliability (personal aspect).

Besides keeping secrets, **trust** in the interviews was described with sincerity, honesty and confidence. Moreover, the meaning of trust was described as verbal and non-verbal expression of thoughts and opinions without feelings of rejection and judgement. Trustworthiness was more about reliance and acceptance. It was characteristic of not having a false personal appearance or sharing in some artificial or derivative attitudes.

**Emphatic knowledge** was also a component ascribed to the meaning of friendship. According to the *Cambridge Online Dictionary*, the meaning of understanding implies a positive relationship between two people or groups in which they feel sympathy for each other or have the ability to know how the other person is feeling about somebody or something.<sup>629</sup> Within the interviews, the understanding has been described similarly to that definition. It pointed to an informal or unspoken „agreement“ between two persons and their sympathetic awareness of the other's person situation, feelings, thinking or behavior.

Finally, friendship was not described with a meaning of choice, but in a very sense of its meaning it implies the meaning of a **gift**. Thus, the friendship was a gift. This, as expressed within the interviews, otherwise means that the other person was before all perceived as a gift, not a choice or the object of reciprocal caring or reciprocal exchange.

#### **2.4.3.2. The common elements, the result of friendship and its significance for relationship of friendship**

Besides a common element listed in a mainstream account of friendship literature and also noticed in (e.g. reciprocity, well-wishing, intimacy, sympathy, common activities, similar interest, communication, etc.) the findings based on a participant's description extricates a common element. This, besides a common activity (cf. Table 7,) includes communication, challenge and

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<sup>628</sup> James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, eds. *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, (London: SCM Press 1986): p. 259

<sup>629</sup> See <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/understanding> [accessed August 2016]

effort, simplicity, vulnerability and forgiveness. As a result of their experience of friendship, findings indicated the emergence of the notion of happiness and transformation, described with the meaning flourishing.

The element of non-verbal **communication** is interesting as it adds a novelty to a standard way of understanding communication. This includes nonverbal communication, body language, facial expressions, emotion and heart-to-heart communication. The element of **challenge and effort** indicates difficult moments, negative emotions (anger) and a challenging experience. The difficult moments and effort as elements of friendship require forgiveness, that within our interviews was also identified as one of the findings. The **forgiveness** was exercised through the desire for conflict resolution and a desire for reconciliation. The element of forgiveness within interviews addresses openness towards forgiveness and also the desire for the renewal of communication.

The element of **simplicity** according to participants' description emphasizes the beauty of friendship which, despite effort and challenge, consists in forgiveness and not complicating things. Simplicity as an art of managing communication and common activities pointed to the art of doing a simple thing with great love, where the one's presence matters more than the one's doing, and a shared emphatic knowledge speaks more about the person than the word communication. The experience of friendship relationships among other elements demonstrated the emergence of **vulnerability** and **transformation** as essential aspects of friendship relationships. Perceived as something of a real value and as part of a personal existence, vulnerability within the interviews was described as a connecting element of interpersonal interactions. This means that, besides vulnerability being an "unpleasant" element in a process of a self-discovery, described as the confronting factor of discovery of one true self, it did not remain there. Instead, it leads toward the transformation, resulting in changes in one's worldview or one's self-regard, towards the point where the acceptance of difference became a leading factor towards the living „togetherness“ in a community of friendship. The concepts related to vulnerability have been described with the words such as weakness, imperfection, fragility, suffering, not showing masks, not pretending, being real, being yourself. The concepts related to transformation imply acceptance of a true-self, better knowledge of oneself, just being there, and being patient. This in a nutshell means that the experience of friendship between core-members and assistants has shown vulnerability as an essential part of these relationships. The openness and risk towards encountering vulnerability impacts certain changes in a person's character. From such a reason I decided to look at vulnerability and transformation in relation to each other, rather than as separated concepts.

#### **2.4.3.3. Shortcomings, limitations and further implication of the study**

The first limitation of this research is being attached merely to the context of the L'Arche community. By this I mostly mean that selecting a context of L'Arche as the point of departure of this research, the research did not take into consideration other communities and support centers of reversal inclusion, where people with disability and without disability live together, such as for instance Camphill community. The second limitation is related to the first one. Namely, in my



research, the context of the L'Arche community is focused merely on French and English-speaking communities, instead of including other cultural and language context and L'Arche locations. The third limitation of conducted studies refers to a group of participants. Namely, due to the limited timing (approx. six months) of the empirical research, the process itself lacks participation of people with profound and severe intellectual disability as well as core-members who do not communicate verbally. The fourth limitation indicates the occurrence of elements which slightly perplexed the friendship relationships and the involvement of care. It was often the case that assistants became a friend to a person they assisted, but the friendship relationship they were introducing addresses limitations, as a great number of assistants indicate the perplexity between a friendship and caring. However, the limit and lack of free choice did not affect the development and a positive outcome of these relationships. As one assistant indicated:

***Assistant Manchester:** I feel like in L'Arche friendships get to the heart, the friendship so is more about „I don't choose who I live with I just have to be in L'Arche but I don't choose who to leave with” - so you have to relate to people who are potentially very different from me/you. Part of that is learning how to relate to people who are potentially very different to me and sometimes friendship with people with disabilities is very unguarded it's also means that you cannot be friends with all people with learning disabilities. But important is the honesty of this relationships. This is important factor of this friendship's - honesty. I think that the key question about friendship in L'Arche's is **would you be my friend?**; and then second one is: **were you stay?***

*Assistant Cork 2: ... it's different because when you are leaving in community, especially when you are leaving in-house, of course, is different because it's small world. You are 24 /seven here with the people... we shared the same routine... life ...work. It's community of course its different. We are close to each other every day. **And what about real or close friendship?** It's not so intense and second, you can choose between your own things in life. You can call other person, you choose your own life and another person his life too.....so you are close but you don't leave together. You can choose. In L'Arche you cannot choose.*

The shortcoming of the illustration proceeded, navigates the implication for future research. In order to add to and expand the view of this friendship, I suggest the expansion of further research to other L'Arche contexts and communities, including a larger number of participants, particularly persons with non-verbal communication.

The overall purpose of this research is to integrate both the empirical and conceptual analysis and to provide an overall definition not only of rethinking friendship, but also of the meaning of otherness and disability, as the study of friendship, that includes people with disability, cannot be detached from rethinking otherness and disability.

#### **2.4.4. FIELD DEFINITION**

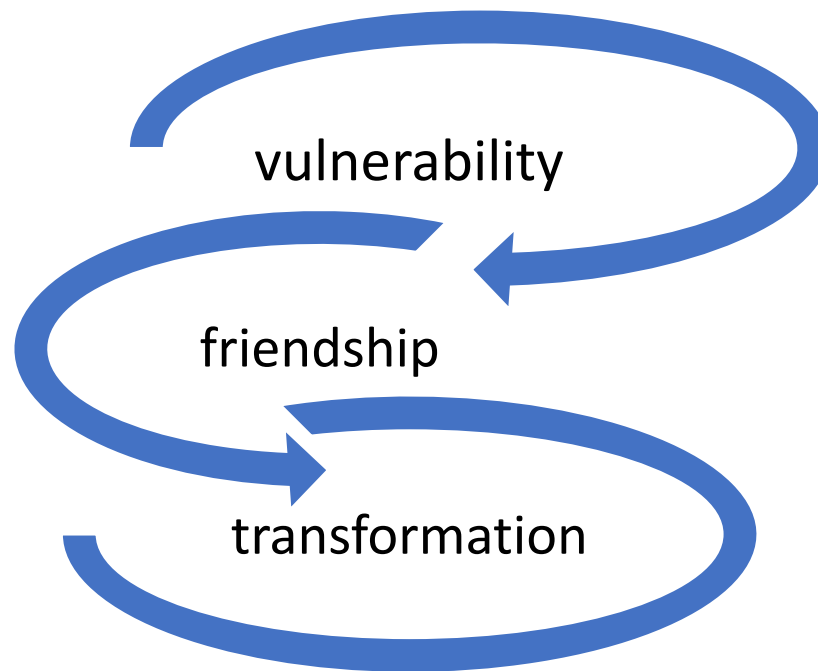
The structure of a particular field definition - the practice of friendship exemplified in L'Arche - points to its value slightly differently from the previously examined concepts and fields. This entails that the exemplification of the friendship relationships, instead of being based on a

rational conceptual analysis, before all displays concrete reality of friendship elements such as accepting, listening, compromising, sharing emphatic knowledge and recognition of the other person's weaknesses and uniqueness. The occurrence of the element of vulnerability and transformation implying changes in personal character and behavior, as well as changes in a person's worldview, culture and society, speaks loudly to the overall understanding of friendship.

Thus, the undertaken illustration of a practical dimension of friendship reformulation in L'Arche includes asymmetry, and addresses friendship as a **relationship of acceptance and interdependent belonging between the two different persons who are willing to give and receive, who are responsive to each other and are *willing* to communicate, despite their cognitive, social, economic, cultural and religious differences. The very process of friendship includes care, vulnerability, common activities, rupture, affection and emphatic knowledge. This resulted in transformation or a change of a character, not in terms of becoming more virtuous but becoming more human.**

Thus, it seems that the flourishing element understood as the end of friendship does not lie in an outward material happiness, but in inner serenity that comes out of acceptance of who one truly is. The change in a person's character is envisioned through openness towards acceptance of imperfection that resulted in a change of one's regard towards one self and the other. The summary of addressed friendship processes brings into consideration the peculiarity of the notion of difference, and the two interconnected elements of a person's interaction: vulnerability and transformation. This can be visualized in the graph below pointing to the interdependent correlation not only between the notion of vulnerability and transformation, but also in the very process of friendship that includes vulnerability and results in transformation.

**Graph 1.** The correlation of friendship relationship in L'Arche circuit between the notion of vulnerability and transformation



#### **2.4.5. Concluding Remarks**

*What does the practical examination of friendship bring to the overall conceptual thinking on friendship and vice versa?* We could have seen that the overall analysis of friendship has shown certain particularities, but it did not straightforwardly depart from the classic or mainstream thinking on friendship. By this I mean that the examination of the three different approaches to friendship includes a common **structure** that is **formation, development, a process** and the **end** of friendship. Moreover, despite offering a different conceptual framework, the classic, sociological, philosophical and theological thinking on friendship in the first part, together with the examination of the two academic fields - Disability Studies and Disability Theology - in the second, and the very process of the practice of friendship in the third chapter, include common elements such as **mutual good wishing**, the **common activities**, and importance of friendship for the **personal growth**. The practical analysis of friendship exemplification bring a particular “flavor” to the conceptual and field definition of friendship. From such a reason, I think the practical approach to friendship redefinition - that includes real story of friendship - is the key in improving the complete understanding of the conceptual understanding of friendship, but could be used vice versa.

The difference between the three approaches examined in this part of the thesis addresses different **reasoning**, the very **form** of friendship and the emphasis on a distinct **elements**. Such a framework, besides initiating distinction in regard to an approach to friendship rationale and the field definition, in fact reveals the implication of a slightly different ethical and anthropological emphasis. If we look at the aspects of friendship “definitions” examined and presented within a scope of the **first** part - the classic examination of friendship, including the academic field of philosophy, theology and sociology - we will see that the same elements such as friendship formation, the process, the meaning and its development, are included in each approach. Friendship in such regard appears as a “conceptually grounded framework” and an important moral and ethical subject of discussion, instead of being an exemplified relational anthropology. Friendship was reflected and observed as an idea that requires universal application, it was an important moral category and a subject of particular hermeneutics between those who see its value in relation to virtue, emotion, community, personal development, self-esteem and well-being. Friendship in such regard integrates horizontal, vertical and virtual perspectives as a result of the involvements of its Scriptural, academic or Facebook - friendship orientations. The correlation of friendship elements includes thinking about its nature, virtue, emotion, well-being, personal development, reciprocity, wishing good, intimacy, discourse on love as *agape* vs. love as *philia* and particular friendship teleology. Yet, besides a detailed conceptual analysis of the meaning and purpose of friendship, besides Biblical scholarship and Aquinas, it remains a complex and slightly “incomplete” relationship, not only in missing its true embodiment referring practice, but failing to escape the gap of a symmetrical - asymmetrical friendship division.

Similarly, a slightly distinct framework in terms of its form, reasoning and elements can be noticed in the academic field of Disability Studies and Disability Theology. However, the academic field of Disability Studies and Disability Theology - because of the application of empirical research (Disability Studies) and specific friendship narrative (Disability Theology) - addresses its slight departure from the friendship review in the first part of the thesis. The friendship in its form implies discourse on justice, love, well-being, social inclusion, gift, community life, caring, dependency, flourishing. The elements specific to such changes stress attention on its value in a reciprocal giving and receiving, love, communication and personal growth. The overall meaning of friendship addresses friendship with a particular complexity, the notion of a need, rehumanisation, interdependency, inclusion and participation. Yet, it seems that, for Disability Studies, friendship is a relationship of empowerment; whereas for Disability Theology friendship is in one way or another the confirmation of personhood. Likewise, friendship varies between those who stress the importance of the symmetrical and those who see value in asymmetrical friendship. Despite both fields acknowledging a critique towards a classic (e.g. Aristotle and Aquinas) hierarchy of friendship, and regard for the notion of love and justice as constitutive elements in their friendship rationale, they do not show how this love and justice can be differently integrated and conceptualized in friendship, besides as a means of a social inclusion and participation. Such reasoning when put into a relation to the very meaning of charity, in my suggestion requires further reflection: its departure from a model of charity; and its relation and

divergence from a classic (e.g. Aquinas) view of thinking about love as charity and charity as man's friendship for God.

The illustration of the phenomenological analysis also adds something new in rethinking the friendship definition and in such a way enlarges a previously established understanding. The following empirical research in a very process of friendship emphasizes the emphatic knowledge, the acceptance, the element of caring, the non-verbal communication, the rupture, the vulnerability, and changes in a person's character (conversion of one's humanity) understood as transformation - the central elements of the meaning of friendship. These elements in my opinion bring a certain novelty in thinking about friendship and distinguish such a friendship framework from the previously understood friendship rationale. As a real friendship exemplified in L'Arche it "gives" particular credibility, to the already re-defined thinking on friendship, but remains an open friendship inquiry that requires further examination. Additionally, the elements were simultaneously acknowledged both by people with and without disabilities, so in my opinion the rethinking of friendship in its practical perspective, invokes strongly and offers a more inclusive solution in managing inclusion and participation. The voices of people with disabilities as the first-line participants are not only "subjects of research" in order to conceptualize inclusion but have been evaluated as true voices of real people participating in friendship. In more than one example we can see that the illustration of the given concepts in practice of friendship in L'Arche slightly expand the meaning of the terms supplying them with a deeper understanding. Likewise, we have seen that to understand friendship with the implication of vulnerability, care, dependency, and a non-verbal communication, as something either undesirable, unpleasant or marginal, in a practical examination of friendship relationship became an actual possibility. This means that the confrontation, recognition and acceptance of such elements is not an anthropological barrier or a disabling obstacle of some people, but a leading factor towards the occurrence of something new, the sharing in a common humanity and a particular way to flourish. This novelty has been exemplified as a positive reception of the changes in assistants and in core-members that have strengthened the friendships' love, the communication and have stimulated a common belonging. The practice of friendship illustrated in the third chapter of this second part demonstrated that the anthropological impediments to socio-relational biases toward the impossibility of friendship for people with disability have been overcome. This was indeed possible due to the context of L'Arche, which stimulates such encounters and sees a person, instead of a person's disability. The asymmetrical gap between disabled and non-disabled, including differences in character, social status and cognitive capacities, did not stop the socio-relational possibility of its realization. Instead it became its stimulus, challenge and opportunity in living the relationship of friendship.

The conceptual definitions are richer as they imply a very detailed and precise determination of the meaning of friendship. Yet they are not complete without its practical part. The very "body" of friendship actualized within a process of living friendship, transcends the established symmetry and enables the overcoming of those barriers that are impossible to be conceptually overcome. The practical exemplification, together with the conceptual framework,

demonstrate that conceptual and practical approaches to friendship requires closer attachment in order to reconfirms friendship as a natural human activity which should be achievable by all people. It is not merely a way towards inclusion, nor towards participation, but a freely given interaction and interdependent communication between different persons who are willing to give and receive; who are responsive to each other; and who value each other's presence, more than one's reason for entering into a relationship of friendship. Such a framework is necessary and possible in order to overcome the cognitive, socio-economic and religious barriers that prevent friendship from its full potential. They are often impossible to overcome by means of our human logic but are enabled by God and through the means of the very lived experience of friendship.

### **Part Three**

## **FROM COGNITIVE TO RELATIONAL PERSONALISM: THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL QUEST OF BEING THE OTHER AND A FRIEND IN LIGHT OF AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF VULNERABILITY AND INTERDEPENDENCY**

## 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter

### 3.1. Introduction: Brief Remarks and the State of the Problem

The central problem in discussing disability and friendship, already indicated in a previous chapter, is in fact anthropological. When I say anthropological, I do not only mean looking at the facets of human nature, human person and human being, although these are primary concerns for the study of anthropology. What I mean in fact implies an exploratory character of anthropological and theological systems that, in my opinion, requires reevaluation for two reasons: first, our thinking on “disabled person identity,” and second, the impact modernity has upon disabled and disability terminology. This, in my opinion, requires not merely a renewal of the thinking about certain anthropological categories regarding the human person, but a search for a deeper understanding of humanity, not apart from, but with and in light of the presence of disability. Once such an anthropology is established, we will be in a position to reply to utilitarian and liberal assumptions that regard a human person first as a dual entity (body and soul), and second as an end in itself. What it means to be a human person in high-speed modern society involves various strands of our modern notion of morality, friendship and the idea of the other. Modernity underlies not only the context of moral reasoning, but is related to the way we think, argue, reason and question the personal and friendship identity. The biggest influence within this framework, as Charles Taylor points out, are modern moral intuitions about the meaning of human life, a person’s dignity and respect, concerns about human welfare, power and suffering.<sup>630</sup> Modernity not only changes the conception of morality, but also, as a result, the perception of the other. For this reason, forming a proper understanding of friendship, in my opinion, first requires proper knowledge of the other. Or slightly differently, the way we think about the other often impacts our reflection on friendship, whereas the thinking on friendship often reveals our perception of other. Looking with more detail, the anthropology constitutive of our perception of the meaning of the human person impacts our knowledge of the meaning of the other. This means that the other is not merely conceptualized according to the forms of participation within society, such as being a citizen, neighbor, or friend. The other is always constitutive of something. The pitfalls of modernity impact the development of the anthropology of the other and friendship. When such concepts are grounded into utilitarian logic they frequently prioritize autonomy, self-sufficiency and invulnerability, over vulnerability, dependency, human pain and suffering. This reveals another problem in the scope of contemporary mainstream morality: A person’s value is assessed according to his/her attributes and appearances, instead of the person’s intrinsic worth. Not only is the value of the other as a human person placed outside the person (external attributes and achievements), but the notion of friendship is largely governed by utilitarian logic. The validation of such an assumption becomes particularly complex when the meaning of otherness and friendship refer to a person with intellectual or profound intellectual disability.

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<sup>630</sup> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self, The making of the Modern Identity*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) p: 10-18.



The work I will undertake in this part attempts a retrieval of a contemporary theological and anthropological approaches in reconsidering the meaning of the other and a friendship rationale. Central to such retrieval is the element of respect for a person's integrity based on recognition of the person's uniqueness, dignity and vulnerability. I suggest an approach that is not only inclusive, but also participatory for every person. Such an approach suggests a more detailed anthropological examination concerning the meaning of the other and the concept of friendship. My aim is to propose an anthropology in which the person with disability and friendship with a person with disability as separate entities, become inherent to our theo-anthropological system of knowledge, in order to supply this system with the potential to be "inclusive and relational" instead of merely conceptual in its knowledge. This is to say that the key elements integrated into theological anthropologies and related disability anthropologies, should be inclusive of an indispensable respect of *human dignity* and the *person's vulnerability* as a criterion and condition of rethinking such anthropologies. This means that when such anthropologies refer to a person with disability, the person will be first regarded as bearing the image of God, capable of knowing God (*capax Dei*); and as a subject with a capacity for relation, which means being capable of human friendship. As a result, such an anthropology will consequently revalue the premises for an ethics of being, instead of chasing the utilitarian aspects of an ethics of doing. In order to challenge the utilitarian morality, the retrieval of suggested anthropology must integrate elements of dependency, vulnerability, respect, uniqueness and the person's value. Only through rethinking such notions, will we be able to rethink the human being as a human person, and the human person as a being with the capacity for relation. In other words, the theological anthropology that integrates the idea of human being and human person as relational, offers a possibility of inclusion, but also challenges the liberal and utilitarian moral and conceptual system often biased towards the experience of human disability.

Before I undertake the rethinking of the anthropology of friendship, I will outline a proper anthropology regarding the meaning of the other. My proposal for the meaning of the other includes the notion of a *person as a different and unique interdependent subject*. This entails the investigation of a twofold approach: simultaneously dependent, and specific. The approach offers a holistic and integral understanding of a human person as a unity (body and soul) and supplies a person with the meaning of inner dignity and respect as unique and a different other. This anthropology will not only grasp the meaning of the other as a different and the unique but will rethink the other as a person with a capacity for relationship, despite being vulnerable and dependent. The depths of such anthropology open the possibility to understand friendship differently, beyond being guided by principles of mere contingency, similarity, equality and utility. I will support my arguments looking at theo-anthropological thought of John Paul II, integrated in his encyclical letters *Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris*, including his references to people with disability in his annual speeches and messages. For a more complete understanding of his personalistic vision of a human person, I will briefly add a few insights of his (as cardinal Karol Wojtyla) knowledge of a person revealed in *The acting Person* and *Person and Community*.<sup>631</sup> My

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<sup>631</sup>For a later and detailed research on John Paul II philosophy and his personalism see for instance: Andrew Woznicki, *A Christian Humanism: Karol Wojtyla's Existential Personalism*, (New Britain: Mariel Publication, 1980); Joan Modras, "The Moral Philosophy of Pope John Paul II," In *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): p.683-97;

second reference in constructing the meaning of the other is Jean Vanier's personalist anthropology exemplified in the community of L'Arche. Not only does Vanier's approach to the human person reveal the practical knowledge of a person, but the expanded theory, including practical insights on a person, makes a great contribution to the retrieval of theological anthropology and Christian ethics. Interestingly, these two anthropologies share both aspects of Thomas Aquinas's notion of the person (unity of body and soul, cf. *ST* I, q.76); and a *distinguished personalist* view of the person. Before I continue structuring a basis of an anthropology grounded in the above-mentioned premises, I will address a few contemporary moral challenges which demonstrate why the construction of an anthropology of human interdependency and vulnerability is a necessary condition for the moral retrieval of friendship and otherness, and the other way around.

### 3.1.1. The utilitarian Ethics and its challenges for the Christian Ethics

The UK biologist Richard Dawkins, in one of his tweets, sparked moral outrage concerning the Down syndrome issue. In advising a woman who faced the ethical dilemma of whether to give birth to a baby with Down syndrome, he answered: "*Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring into the world if you have the choice.*"<sup>632</sup> Although Dawkins later apologized for such an answer, an article in the *Catholic Herald* claimed that a similar position on Down Syndrome, is shared among millions of Britons.<sup>633</sup> Similar reasoning one can find in Peter Singer's<sup>634</sup> *Practical Ethics*, where Singer makes some interesting and challenging claims regarding the moral value of a newborn infants, specifically those with a mental disorders or profound disability. The intriguing statement in this book concerning his ethical reasoning is: "*Killing a defective infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Very often it is not wrong at all.*"<sup>635</sup> A similar argument has been made in one of his articles, *Speciesism and Moral Status*, where Singer, expands his argument about the unequal value of all human life.<sup>636</sup> In it, he addresses the philosophical and anthropological issues of human equality and the alleged superiority of humans to non-human animals. In other words, it is within the scope of this article that Singer addresses his dispute on speciesism, non - speciesism and the notion of moral personhood.

In the *Practical Ethics* Singer distinguishes four elements that mark the status of a person. These are: a) rationality and self - consciousness; b) the demand of being desiring desired; c) the person's desires to continue living; d) request for a person's autonomy. The moral status of "mentally disabled", or people with a lower cognitive abilities, according to such a thinking, is outside the

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Ronald D. Lawler, *The Christian Personalism of Pope John Paul II*, Chicago (Franciscan Herald Press, 1982). John, F. Crosby, "Persona Est Sio Iuris: Reflections on the Foundations of Karol Wojtyla's Philosophy of the Person." in *Karol Wojtyla: Filosofo, Teologi, Poeta*, (Vatican City State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984): 25-37; Schmitz K., *At the center of the human drama: The philosophical anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II*. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), etc.

<sup>632</sup> [https://twitter.com/RichardDawkins/status/502106262088466432?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweet&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FRicharddawkins%2Fstatus%2F502106262088466432](https://twitter.com/RichardDawkins/status/502106262088466432?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweet&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FRicharddawkins%2Fstatus%2F502106262088466432)

<sup>633</sup> Cf. <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2014/09/04/dawkins-cant-see-my-sisters-humanity/>

<sup>634</sup> Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1997). Besides *Practical Ethics* similar arguments can be found in reference to his earlier work. See for instance Singer, P. and H. Kuhse, *Should the Baby Live? The Problem of Handicapped Infants Studies in Bioethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>635</sup> Cf. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, "What's wrong with killing," pp.71-93.

<sup>636</sup> Cf. Peter Singer, "Speciesism and moral status" *Metaphilosophy*, 40, 3-4, (2009): p.571-574.

scope in fulfilling the above-mentioned conditions; therefore, according to Singer, they are considered unworthy to attain the equal moral value with other members of *homo sapiens*.<sup>637</sup> In fact, Singer argues that the value of member of a certain species (alien and non-human animals such as chimpanzees) lies not in *homo sapiens* heritage, but in a capacity for moral reasoning based on cognitive abilities.<sup>638</sup> The basis of such cognitive abilities, according to my reading of Singer, is Kant's idea of human dignity, which mostly accentuates the value of the person's autonomy and self-consciousness. People with profound disabilities are incapable of such capacities, therefore they are unworthy of equal moral worth and dignity as others.<sup>639</sup> His reasoning regarding the condition of personhood mentioned above was among the most challenging ideas also within recent discussions in a field of Disability Studies, moral philosophy and bioethics, and raises many controversies and disagreements among scholars. The argument which addresses - the mentally disabled incapable to fulfill the condition of *homo sapiens* - commanded public attention, particularly in the area of Disability Studies. In 2008 at a conference<sup>640</sup> at Stony Brook University, which gathers philosophers, ethicist, physicians and Disability Studies scholars, Singer claims<sup>641</sup> addressed above made in *Metaphilosophy*, were contested by Disability Studies scholars for three reasons. Firstly, Singer knowledge on cognitive disability does not met proper understanding of cognitive disability;<sup>642</sup> secondly, he is constructing an ethics of exclusion and supporting policies such as those of the Nazi regime in which physicians exterminated "life not worthy of living" in the name of racial hygiene;<sup>643</sup> and thirdly, and most importantly, speaking from a personal experience and as a philosopher, Eva Feder Kittay empathetically responded, that *moral status should not be based on the possession of some given property or properties, and that species membership itself should be sufficient (if not necessary) for equal moral standing*.<sup>644</sup>

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<sup>637</sup> See Singer, "Speciesism and moral status" *Metaphilosophy*, p. 571-574

<sup>638</sup> Singer, "Speciesism and moral status" *Metaphilosophy*, p. 579

<sup>639</sup> Cf. Singer, "Speciesism and moral status" *Metaphilosophy*, p. 574. Additionally, in this article Singer object Thesis of JPII and Roman Catholic concerns about intrinsic dignity of human person and develop his thesis on value of human person. Accordingly, he argues that the value of human person should be independent from principles of a religious ethics.

<sup>640</sup> Cf. [www.stonybrook.edu/cdconference](http://www.stonybrook.edu/cdconference). <https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/cdconference/podcasts.shtml>

<sup>641</sup> Instead of embarking into a full examination of their argument, as is beyond this thesis, my aim here is just to indicate that besides Singer, the bioethicist Jeff McMahan argument at the very same conference were also, a subject of objection by Disability studies scholars. Namely, McMahan similarly as Singer argues that those with a severe cognitive disability fall below the threshold of capacities needed for personhood and are thus subjects of justice. According to McMahan for the fully acceptable personhood it is requested to obtain a continuity between previous selves and a future self. The continuity is based on a set of psychological capacities, rationality and other higher order cognitive capacities. Cf. Jeff McMahan, "Cognitive Disability and Cognitive Enhancement," in *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, Eva Feder Kittay, Licia Carlson (eds.), (Sussex, Wiley- Blackwell, 2009): pp. 345-369.

<sup>642</sup> Licia Carlson, "Philosophers of Intellectual Disability: A Taxonomy," in *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge To Moral Philosophy*, Eva Feder Kittay, Licia Carlson, eds., (Sussex, Wiley- Blackwell, 2009): pp. 315-330.

<sup>643</sup> Anna Stubblefield, "The Entanglement of Race and Cognitive Dis/ability," in Eva Feder Kittay, Licia Carlson (eds.), *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, (Sussex, Wiley- Blackwell, 2009): pp. 293-315.

<sup>644</sup> Eva F. Kittay, "The Personal Is Philosophical Is Political: A Philosopher and Mother of a Cognitively Disabled," In *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, Eva Feder Kittay, Licia Carlson (eds.), (Sussex, Wiley- Blackwell, 2009): pp. 393-414.

### 3.1.2. The challenges for bioethics

In addition to the controversies that the arguments made by Richard Dawkins and Peter Singer raised within a field of Disability Studies, they also presented a challenge to bioethics, and particularly the academic field of Christian Ethics. For many Christian philosophers, ethicists and theologians, including Pope John Paul II, the emergence of bioethics as discipline in the 1960s was a sign of hope and a “welcome development in the secular academy”<sup>645</sup> particularly regarding the protection of human dignity and protection of the value of human life. Related to this, the *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights*<sup>646</sup> addresses concern regarding the protection of human dignity and the value of person as the key ethical principle for bioethicists. Singer’s thinking, together with other modern bioethicist such as Fletcher,<sup>647</sup> Engelhardt,<sup>648</sup> McMahan,<sup>649</sup> challenges the above-mentioned perceptions. Their common argument makes a distinction between the human being and the human person, so influencing not merely the sense of contemporary morality, but also the scope of liberal bioethics, that over time they became the dominant principles of contemporary ethical reasoning. Such influence has been particularly visible in the discourse on disability within legal policies and contemporary medicine. Despite its holistic tendencies, most modern medical research concentrates on the physical, within the structures of a body. In this regard, when the conceptual difference between the human person and the human body within medical context involves discussion of disability, it is clear that the medical research and the medical ethics often sees only the physical body of a human, instead of the integral picture of the human person. Although the socio-biological determinism integrated into the above-mentioned arguments, (e.g. Singer, Dawkins, McMahan and Fletcher) undermines the religious-ethical reasoning on the human person and human dignity, their arguments concerning this topic remain incomplete. In my view their perspective is problematic, not only because it is based on utilitarian principles (following Mill)<sup>650</sup> that reduces morality to means to an end, but also that such a moral view reduces the person to a solely biological entity, integrating Descartes’s idea of the distinction between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. The emphasis on the biology of a person is not only excessively materialistic but destroys the historical and transcendental value of what is personal and transcendental within a person, which according to the Christian view is an intrinsic component of the meaning of being human. Put more clearly, such an ethical view is not only problematic when it concerns people with profound and intellectual disabilities, but in my opinion is a separationist and reductionist view from the perspective of the mainstream moral anthropological view in three ways: first it is a complex ethical view reducing person on its contingency; secondly, such a view separates the metaphysical and the historical from the biological notion of the person; and thirdly, based on this separation it creates a divide between

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<sup>645</sup> Cf. Matthews, Pia, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently “non-acting” Person*, (Leominster, Gracewing, 2013), p. 5

<sup>646</sup> United Nations, *Respect for Human Vulnerability and Personal Integrity*, (Paris, UNESCO, 2005), article 8.

<sup>647</sup> Joseph F. Fletcher, *Humanhood: Essays in biomedical ethics*, (Buffalo New York, Prometheus Books, 1979).

<sup>648</sup> H. T. Engelhardt, “Infanticide in a post-Christian age,” In *Euthanasia and the Newborn*, R. McMillan, H.T. Engelhardt & S. Spicker (eds.), (Boston, D. Reidel, 1987).

<sup>649</sup> Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of the Life* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>650</sup> Cf. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, eds. by Mark Philp & Frederick Rasen, (Oxford, Oxford, University Press, 2008).

the human being and the human person, that further widens the ethical divide (rational morality vs. practical anthropology) concerning relational capacities within a human, one of which is a person's capacity for friendship. My concerns with Singer's theory, and other arguments made by people such as Dawkins or McMahan, are both anthropological and ethical. Namely, the distinction between speciesism and personhood that their value system makes requires an anthropological project to reconsidering the criteria for humanity. In other words, the dichotomy between the human being and the human person that such value system imposes questions the principles of the notion of otherness. This means that their ethical view is in fact highly utilitarian in the sense that the moral status of the other as an end in itself, is governed by efficiency and the person's (the other) cognitive abilities. The moral intuitions of such a view creates an anthropological segregation between humans in the form of a disembodied moral ethos where the relational components of practical anthropology are replaced with a rational morality of self-centeredness and individualism. The principal value of the human is thus formed through a system of selected human properties such as rationality, choice, liberty and flourishing (positive) as the key moral demands of normal human functioning. Human suffering, pain, disability and vulnerability, when applied to a human,<sup>651</sup> are less desirable within this value system because they can disqualify a person from human flourishing. This is the reason disability and various form of "vulnerable" human conditions are perceived as negative and undesirable. Accordingly, the logic of Singer and others suggests that it is ethically desirable, in order to cause less moral damage to human society, if such conditions will be eliminated. I do not consider that Singer's ethics and those with a similar view to be entirely diabolic. I think that their ethical value system is limited and unsustainable in capturing the whole meaning of being human, and at the same time is *disabled* as it fails to integrate a broader picture of human morality. Despite the moral deliberation such a value system apparently puts on display, it also does not make human life any safer.

My thesis in the following chapter suggests that the human being and the human person cannot be a separated entities. This applies to every human person, disabled and non-disabled. Related to this, the ethics that is not relational and practical, but highly intellectualist, cannot fully grasp the meaning of the other as a complete moral subject, and I am afraid that such ethical frameworks will fail to fully capture my meaning, due to the missing practical insights in their arguments. Related to this, the knowledge of the other is incomplete when it fails to integrate and recognize the value of human autonomy and human suffering as integral to the species *homo sapiens*. As an opponent of religious ethics, Singer may not be interested in my refutation of his ethical framework. But I am afraid that when his ethics addresses the questions of - who counts as a person and who does not, his ethical reasoning is incomplete and therefore provides only partial answers. In other words, the question of who counts as a person and who does not, is a question that concerns the whole of humanity, including "rational morality and practical anthropology" and cannot be separated into religious and non-religious categories. The best answer to this question (who counts as a person and who does not) must, in my opinion, come neither from religious or

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<sup>651</sup> Let's just be reminded that Singer prescribe capacity to suffer to the notion of being, which in his ethical reasoning includes non - human animals and human animals. So, the value of suffering and pain is the criterion shared among species, both animals and humans.

from non-religious scholars, but from the people whose dignity and moral value we are questioning. But if “we do not allow them to live,” would we ever find the answer?

### 3.1.3. Why the selection of this authors?

As indicated already in introduction, I will follow my suggestion that search for the recovery of a more balanced theological anthropology, that integrates vulnerability and autonomy, love and suffering, dependency and uniqueness, in the understanding of the meaning of being human. Only through the retrieval of the anthropology that includes human vulnerability will it be possible to refute any ethical reasoning based on utilitarian principles (cognitive abilities and denial of the value of suffering). This ethical system that opens the possibility for a historical and transcendental view of a person, will than allow a renewal and reconstruction of the meaning of friendship, reopening the possibility for those who, because of their greater vulnerability or condition of disability, are conceptually deprived of the capacity for relationship. The humanist's and biologist's view of a mainstream contemporary disability, prenatal diagnosis and, specifically, Down Syndrome discourses, differ from the view of contemporary humanitarians and philanthropists such as JP II and Jean Vanier. More precisely, JP II and Jean Vanier's anthropological system rooted in a Christian perspective opposes such thinking. Starting with the content of *Dignitas Personae*<sup>652</sup> on a certain bioethical questions their anthropologies clearly address the indispensable dignity of a person which must be recognized in every human being from conception to natural death. This fundamental principle expresses a great “yes” to human life, and places ethical reflection at the center of biomedical research, which has an ever-greater importance in today's world. Such anthropologies are of special importance when emerging moral questions concern the lives of disabled and suffering persons, prenatal testing technologies, the flourishing and most importantly human belonging.

## 3.2. POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II: DISCOURSE ON DISABILITY, SUFFERING AND HUMAN PERSON

My attempt in the next paragraph is to first trace the foundation of JP II's anthropology that I will refer to as an anthropology of human interdependency. The focal point of this anthropology reconsiders human suffering as an object of compassion. I will look at the three aspects integrated into his theology as a Pope JP II. Firstly, I will examine his Papal messages and appeals in referring disability, and search for similar content within his social encyclicals, *Evangelium Vitae*, *Salvifici Doloris* and *Redemptor Hominis*. Secondly, I will look at his *Theology of the Body*,<sup>653</sup> particularly regarding his attached understanding of *communio personarum*. Finally, I will consider his proposal on intersubjective participation considering his *Lublin lectures* and in relation to that, his *Person and Act*. Most of my inquiry will, however, consider his papacy

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<sup>652</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20081212\\_sintesi-dignitas-personae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081212_sintesi-dignitas-personae_en.html) [accessed 5 August, 2018]

<sup>653</sup> In reference to *Theology of the Body* I will use Croatian translation, Cf. Ivan Pavao II, *Muško i žensko stvori ih. Kateheze o ljudskoj ljubavi. Cjelovita Teologija Tijela*, (Split, Verbum, 2012); for english translation see Pope John Paul II, *Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books, 1997).

and from there construct an anthropology that, on the one hand is inclusive for people with disability, and on the other hand relates to Jean Vanier personalist anthropology.

### 3.2.1. “Disabled as humanity’s privileged witnesses”: Disability in the perspective of JPII theology

Pope John Paul II on many occasions demonstrated particular concerns for people with disability. This has been evident as a content of his messages, speeches, and conferences during his pastoral visits, and was also in the content of his Papal encyclicals. The corpus of teaching explicitly dedicated to such matters includes his messages and letters on the *Jubilee of the Disabled*, *World day of the Sick*, and the *International Symposium on the Dignity of the Mentally Disabled Persons*. Whilst *Evangelium Vitae*, *Salvifici Doloris* and *Redemptor Hominis* do not single out concerns for people with disabilities, they do in, a slightly indirect manner, follow a similar line. The Pope’s concerns for the disabled, the suffering and the ill has been particularly exposed after he was diagnosed with a form of Parkinson’s disease that in complicated his health condition.<sup>654</sup> Since that moment, his concern for the suffering was not merely apparent in the form of written texts, but was embodied in his own experience. Thus, his messages not only revealed his shared experience with all of those who suffer in a body and soul, but resonated the experience of a life witness who connected his suffering with the suffering of Christ Himself as crucified and resurrected God.<sup>655</sup> In his message in 2004 on the occasion of the *International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled*, the Pope indicated that his thought on disability is rooted into fundamental convictions of Christian anthropology, and that a disabled person, as every other person, is fully a human being,<sup>656</sup> as well as, disabled people are humanity’s privileged witnesses.<sup>657</sup> They can teach everyone about the love that saves us; they can become heralds of a new world, no longer dominated by force, violence and aggression, but by love, solidarity and acceptance.<sup>658</sup> For the Pope, disability is not only a need, but also, and above all, a stimulus and a plea. This means that as stimulus, disability is first of all a challenge to individual and collective selfishness and a plea for generosity and compassion, respect and attentiveness, protection and social integration to societal, political and ecclesial communities.<sup>659</sup> Recognizing the person’s integrity, as he says in his *Jubilee* message, recognizes person with disability not only as a unique and unrepeatable person in his equal and inviolable dignity, but reveals also every person’s needs, people with disability included, for not only care, but also their search for love revealed through recognition, respect and integration.<sup>660</sup> Considering the dignity of the person, the Pope’s message stressed the sacredness of every human creature as reflected in *Genesis* 1 and 2, where he offered evidence about notion of a person being an image of God. Additionally, as his message continued, the Pope went beyond acknowledging merely the spiritual potential of the person, adding that each and every person possesses physical and psychological potential.<sup>661</sup> The integration of physical,

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<sup>654</sup> Cf. George Weigel, *Witness to Hope; The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, (New York: Cliff Street Books, 2001).

<sup>655</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Message for the II World Day of the Sick*, (8 December 1993).

<sup>656</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Message on the Occasion for the International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled Person*, (5 January 2004), 2.

<sup>657</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Disabled* (3 December 2000), 6.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>661</sup> Such insights were initiated as part of his Lublin Lectures and became a part of his reflection in *Person and Act*

psychological and spiritual potential of a person also involves an emotional and sexual dimension for every other human being, the person with disability included.<sup>662</sup> This, in regard to people with disabilities, has been often denied and disregarded, which deprives them of seeking interpersonal and authentic relationships in which they can find appreciation and recognition as persons.<sup>663</sup> The above-mentioned, in my opinion, distinguish two central components present in the Pope's reflection on disability. When the Pope addresses a person with disability, he first looks at that person's metaphysical nature crucial in understanding the person's dignity. Secondly, he points to ethical (deontological) components, appealing to the preservation of the person's dignity within socio-cultural structures. Both components condemn a cultural dichotomy regarding the body and soul (*res extensa* and *res cogitans*) and point to the problem of the "objectification" of the person. In the following section I will look at these two aspects, metaphysical and deontological, as constitutive of the anthropological system of JPII. Through the thinking presented in *Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris* and the *Theology of the Body*, including his "Lublin lectures,"<sup>664</sup> I will also outline his reflection on disability, placing it in the context of disability discourses, and more precisely within the social model of disability. This will allow me to trace the foundation of what I will later determine to be JP II's anthropology of interdependence. The Pope's messages share similar ideas with disability inclusion proponents, particularly in regard to fostering equal participation, recognition of rights, access to equal education and protection of the weak and those in need.<sup>665</sup> However, at certain points he also distinguishes from such thinking. My next attempt is to illuminate such distinction through following discourses. Namely, Pope's thinking on issues related to disability has been addressed within his corpus of a social teaching and his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. The social encyclicals, such as *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, not only express his socio-ethical concerns for the options of the poor, economic need, and injustice, but mirrors a particular type of applied Christian anthropology. Although JPII, in these encyclicals, may not address the explicit concerns for people with disabilities, the anthropology expressed within such framework demonstrates concern for the human person in his/her fragility, sickness and suffering. For the Pope, as we noted earlier, the disabled are not different from other people, which is why, in recognizing and promoting their dignity and rights, according to Pope, we recognize and reflect our own dignity and rights. This is to say that the disabled require the same respect as non-disabled, but they are not anthropologically different than the rest of humanity.

From the perspective of the social model, such an argument sounds contradictory, as it may appear that the disabled people, by the existence of their situation and condition, *serve* to improve the lives of non-disabled people, or to raise about moral, ethical and economic issues of society. What is however, in my opinion, the actual messages in this argument is JPII disagreement with the system of cultural attitudes that pushes concern for the disabled to the margins, and is also, the Pope's plea for respect of every person's dignity, despite the person's condition. This means that,

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<sup>662</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Message on the Occasion for the International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled Person*, 5.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

<sup>664</sup> In this research *Lublin Lectures* refer to selected essays of Karol Wojtyla, in Karol Wojtyla, (transl. Theresa Sandok, OSM), *Catholic Thought from Lublin*, vol. IV *Person and Community*, (New York, Peter Lang, 1993).

<sup>665</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *The message of John Paul II on the occasion of the International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled Person*, 2,3.



for instance, when referring disability, Pope does not only indicate the very biological condition of disability, but emphasizes that the disabled person is the witness capable in removing the barriers of mainstream socio-cultural predictions about disability. From a theological perspective, such a message clearly presents an appeal to the social and ecclesial communities to be open towards the disabled and to put disability into the perspective of scholarly discourses. JP II shares with the social model the respect for human dignity, and a critique of systems of power and objectification of disabled person, as well as injustices and cultural biases regarding the human. However, he does not stop at calling for a system of distribution of rights and equal participation, as the social model of disability does, but goes further by stressing: a) the indispensable value of human dignity and sacredness of each person life; and b) a critique to those ethical systems that consider human person as a means to an end. This has been the content of his *Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris*, that will be discussed in detail in the following section.

### **3.2.2. Objectification and instrumentalization of the person vs the Person's value: Disability and its appeal for social justice**

In his message for the *Jubilee of the Disabled*, JP II states that disability is a stimulus, a plea and challenge; a request for help; but even before that it is a challenge to individual and collective selfishness; it is an invitation to ever new forms of brotherhood. People with disability by their situation, call into question those conceptions of life that are solely concerned with satisfaction, appearances, speed and efficiency.<sup>666</sup> Additionally, the pope's messages and speeches concerning disability and disabled people's emancipation within society and the Church, and the encyclical letters *Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris*, address the problem of the devaluation of the person and a use of the person as a means to achieve a certain end. I will rely merely on these two arguments in developing my thought in the next section. It would be unfortunate not to acknowledge great moral sensitivity of contemporary culture for dealing with suffering and caring for those in need. This in theory is, indeed, a great achievement of our modern culture. However, when this comes to practice, refusal to accept suffering, the people in need of social welfare, or people born with disability or genetic disorders, becomes problematic. The reasons, as stated earlier, in my opinion, departs from the primary objective of utilitarian ethics making human life depend on economic prospects. According to JP II, a difficult human situations and conditions of suffering often represent a threat to socio-economic welfare. By recalling the respect of human dignity, the Pope is critiquing those social and cultural structures of power that are indifferent towards the human need of equal respect, participation and social inclusion.<sup>667</sup> More precisely, Pope is critical towards utilitarianism. Thus, the correspondence of *EV* with the Pope's Jubilee message for the disabled fosters a view within which a person with disability, as does every other human being, possess sacred and inalienable rights and value.<sup>668</sup> Following a similar line in *Gratissimam Sane* - a letter to the family - the Pope comments upon the problem of utilitarianism saying that:

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<sup>666</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Disabled* (3 December 2000), 5.

<sup>667</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 8.

<sup>668</sup> Pope John Paul II, *The message of John Paul II on the occasion of the International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled Person*, 2.

“Utilitarianism is a civilization of production and of use, a civilization of "things" and not of "persons", a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used. In the context of a civilization of use, woman can become an object for man, children a hindrance to parents, the family an institution obstructing the freedom of its members.<sup>669</sup>

Although the statement above does not make an explicit reference to people with disabilities, JP II's critique of utilitarian practice, does involves similar assumptions. In the prevailing context of a civilization of use, people with (intellectual and profound) disabilities, without being considered full human persons, easily not only become a target of a socio-biological systems such as a prenatal testing, subjects of human rights or civic freedoms, but often they are considered to be an instrument of other people's altruistic concerns or object of charitable activity. Thus, one of the key elements of *Evangelium Vitae*, besides the concerns for the preservation of human life,<sup>670</sup> is to condemn a culture that denies the integral unity of the human being as a body and a soul in relationships with God and the others.<sup>671</sup> This in my reading of his critique, means that every person, those with disability included, should be considered not merely an object of altruistic practice and care, but a gift to others, realized in the mutual and reciprocal capability of self-giving. Such emphasis not only speaks loudly to the mainstream utilitarian tendencies, but indicates the problems of charitable activities that objectify charity and reduce it to material provision, rather than true Christian love. The rethinking of Christian love and solidarity is not excluded from such a reconsideration either, particularly, when fails in temptation to become over-objectified. Christian love cannot be objectified; if so, it will not be any different that the utilitarian approach to love. This further means, in line with the Pope's consideration of the problem of social justice, that besides being a person in a need of respect, every person, people with intellectual disability as well, is a social being and therefore capable of love and social relationships. From this point of view, the role of the love as charity is not only in response of service but participating in love with other through reciprocal giving and receiving. This means that charity requires relational, instead of material end. Or in other words, instead of responding to the poor merely through the means of almsgiving, charity including its aspect of serving, must be reconsidered as a form of relational participation, and the leading force to rethink a Christian love.

### 3.2.3. What meaning the link between disability, suffering and sickness exactly implies for Pope?

What is often implied in JP II's discourse on disability and, in my view challenging, is the terminology<sup>672</sup> the Pope uses in addressing disabled people and the interconnectedness between

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<sup>669</sup> Pope John Paul II, Letter to Families, *Gratissimam Sane*, 13. See also quoted in Michael M. Schumacher, The human and legal base for protection and support of the family. In Working Papers on *promoting human rights and freedoms by upholding legal and social protection for the traditional family*. On the Occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations International Year of the Family and the 30th Anniversary of the Holy See's Charter of the Rights of the Family Geneva: Caritas in Veritate Foundation, 2013.

<sup>670</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 2.

<sup>671</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 23.

<sup>672</sup> The use of a particular terminology regarding disability for JPII and Catholic authors vary. For instance from his letter to handicapped and disabled persons during his pastoral visit to Canada in 1984, until his message regarding the dignity and rights of the mentally disabled persons in 2004, the disability terminology changes. This actually demonstrate how academic knowledge and a cultural adaptation of disability terminology has been shifted and integrated within Christian terminology regarding disability, but in a few occasions departed from the established academic definitions

the disability and suffering. In the present section I will interchangeably discuss these two aspects. The Pope's reflection on human disability and his regard for the disabled condition in many ways complements, but also strongly departs from, Disability Studies' social model discourse. One such divergence considers the use of proper terminology. Namely, the Pope on many occasions addresses people with disability as suffering<sup>673</sup> and sick;<sup>674</sup> or people in particular need.<sup>675</sup> Concerns about human suffering, and particularly the suffering of those with a permanent disability, except in the above-mentioned sources, has been reflected within *Evangelium Vitae*, and his Apostolic letter *Salvifici Doloris*. Referring to disability with terms such as handicapped, suffering, or sick, may be rather unfortunate, as it departs from the vocabulary Disability Studies scholars suggest. The disagreement with such terminology coming from Disability Studies, in my opinion, is for two main reasons. The first, anthropological in nature reason, indicates that such thinking not only perceives persons with disability as abnormal, but reduces people with disability to being tragic and needy (medical and charity model). The second reason that stems from such terminological considerations is ethical in nature. Namely, frequently, when the Pope considers people with disability, his view on disability implies moral standing in a way that people with disabilities, sick, or suffering have a particular message for us "able bodied" or "normal" people. This, from the perspective of a Disability Studies scholar, could be misunderstood to take an inspiration or contributory approach to the able-bodied towards disabled, where the second one is perceived as inspiring, impacting able-bodied people's moral sensitivity towards the promotion of altruism or the moral growth of the non-disabled people.<sup>676</sup> Regarding the relation between disability and suffering, it is often a sort of bias to observe disability as a form of suffering or detach suffering from disability. Although various models of disability support such forthright distinction, the individual personal experience often defies this straightforward distinction. As Tom Shakespeare addresses, people with disability do suffer from chronic pain, or some sort of physical or mobility limitations.<sup>677</sup> Disability, in one way or another, implies experience of an actual impairment, and cannot be only perceived as a societal problem, which is to say that physical pain (or to say "physical suffering") is a part of such condition. It is difficult to detach impairment from disability, or in the words of Pia Matthews, suffering from impairment, as suffering often accompanies impairment.<sup>678</sup> To link suffering and sickness with disability as we could find in Papal documents is in my opinion a categorical and terminological problem. Keeping in mind that pain cannot be detached from impairment and impairment cannot be apart from disability, it is accurate to argue that suffering often accompanies impairment. On the other hand, my objection to Pope as JP II, disability cannot be equated with the category of sickness or total suffering, neither with merely a vulnerable condition. Disability integrates social and biomedical components, which is to say it could be viewed from the perspective of a biomedical and social model. But, disability

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<sup>673</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, *The message on the occasion of the International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled Person*, 2004.

<sup>674</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Message of the Holy Father for the first World Day of the Sick*, 1992.

<sup>675</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Disabled*, 2000.

<sup>676</sup> I already referred to a similar rationale across the second chapter. See for instance, the commercial for the *Sick Kids Video*, II. part, pp.79-92.

<sup>677</sup> Tom Shakespeare & Nicholas Watson, "The social model of disability: an outdated ideology?," In *Research in Social Science and Disability*, 2 (2002): p. 9-28.

<sup>678</sup> Pia Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently 'Non-acting' Person*, p.138.

is not a deficit, a medical problem, or a cluster of bodily pain. It is part of one's identity, which requires acceptance, rather than pity or fixing, despite physical differences.

The Pope may disappoint some of the Disability Studies thinkers by associating disability with a sick, needy or suffering condition, (*contra* social model). However, the lack of terminological correctness in the Pope's thought in my opinion outlines the problem of an inconsistency of the models of disability themselves in how they attach to disability with a universal code of recognition. This is to say that due to frequent fluctuations in disability's definition, disability could be many things at the same time (as indicated by John Swinton earlier) but simultaneously none of the things we attach to person with disability may meet a strict *WHO* definition of disability. It is, however, exactly this - the uniqueness of every person's value and distinguished approach to human suffering - that differentiates JPII from Disability Studies discourses.

### **3.2.4. What suffering implies, and how it is distinct, but at the same time constitutive of the experience of disability?**

Human suffering, when applied to a cultural climate supportive of an ethics of the strong, acquires negative connotations, being perceived as a burden to human freedom and happiness. People with disabilities, the elderly, and newborns are under particular attack within this social climate, not only by means of their condition, but due to their dependency on others. They are not only presenting a socio-economic burden to democratic welfare, but are the subjects of additional bio-social exploitations. From this perspective, it will be wrong if we say that suffering is something entirely good. But it will be equally incorrect to consider suffering to be something entirely tragic, evil or avoidable. To answer this question, I will distinguish between two elements in the Pope's reflection on disability. The first is the meaning the Pope ascribes to the mystery of suffering; and the second is the idea that suffering does not deprive the sufferer of his or her dignity as a human being.<sup>679</sup> The Pope explains the theme of suffering in an original way, not as something that will appear as good in itself, or as complete evil, or something that needs to be glorified, but as something mysterious and at the same time existential.<sup>680</sup> This first means, as outlined in *Evangelium Vitae and Salvifici Doloris* that to resolve the problem of suffering does not mean to eliminate it. The notion of suffering, as essential to man's earthly existence, is as "deep as man himself," precisely because it manifests in its own way that depth which is proper to man, and in its own way surpasses it.<sup>681</sup> The theme of suffering according to JPII is not only varied and multi-dimensional, but suffering is wider than sickness, more complex and at the same time still more deeply rooted in humanity itself.<sup>682</sup> In light of that, and grounded into a concept of unity between body and soul, the Pope distinguishes suffering from pain, as well as physical (pain in the body) from moral suffering (pain of the soul). Through such distinction he raises awareness that not all of the suffering can be reduced to the physical. He adds another dimension of into "suffering framework". This is the pain of the soul, which he denotes with the character of a spiritual

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<sup>679</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, 23.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid*, 2, 3.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

suffering. One type of this inner suffering is the human need for the other, that, in light of *Genesis* 1, 27, Pope explicitly addressed in his *Theology of the Body*.<sup>683</sup> The need for the other, according to the Pope, recalls the condition of human loneliness. Disability Studies scholars, particularly those who make a strict distinction between the social and medical components of disability, often, despite acknowledging it, deny the spiritual depths or the source of loneliness associated with the lack of friendship and social contact. The major arguments when considering pain and suffering in this regard, depart from reference to physical suffering or a social injustice, including chronic pain or mobility restrictions. Such reasoning also presents a frequent conceptual problem, when disability is associated with merely physical suffering or a bodily pain. However, as the Pope recalls, not all suffering, particularly when it concerns the physical dimension of the man such as in case of impairment, is definitive to the existence of man, neither can physical suffering can be a destructive to a complete picture of man. Why then is disability still placed in the same category with other aspects of human suffering? When disability is seen from the perspective of suffering, we must be careful, on the one hand, not to associate it entirely with the view that sees disability merely as suffering. On the other hand, it seems to be impossible to detach disability entirely from the aspect of physical suffering or as a human condition detach it from other aspects specific to human physical suffering. People with disabilities as indicated previously, do experience physical difficulties, chronic pain and lack of mobility. But this does not mean that their physical condition must be reduced to the suffering condition. To answer the question above, (regarding the connection between disability and human suffering) the Pope's answer is that the refereeing "suffering condition" pay attention to the analogy of their (people affected) dispersive situation. Specifically, as the Pope indicated, people who suffer become similar to one another through the analogy of their situation, the trial of their destiny, or through their need for understanding and care, and perhaps above all through the persistent question of the meaning of suffering. Thus, although the world of suffering exists "in dispersion", at the same time it contains within itself a singular challenge to communion and solidarity. Although JP II categorically locates disability within a framework of suffering and sickness and frequently refers to persons with disability as suffering or wounded, he never distinguishes between dignity of disabled and non-disabled, neither does he completely reduce disability to the suffering condition. Firstly, for the Pope it is always the dignity of the person that requires equal respect, recognition and protection. Secondly, the Pope does not reduce the disabled to a tragic condition of suffering, as he does not consider the suffering as merely a tragedy. Suffering is a burden, but it is also a human reality. Just as we cannot avoid or deny human desire, it is impossible to deny human suffering, as both elements are fundamental to human existence. From this perspective, suffering, when perceived positively, is a factor of possible personal growth. The real task that the Pope undertakes in his Papal documents regarding the theme of disability and suffering, in my opinion, is a challenging in such that human suffering is not all of what person is or what the person has. In such a regard, it will be wrong to say that only a disabled person suffers. But it will be also unfortunate to conclude that suffering is meaningless and non-existential, and as such not a part of the conditions of disability (*contra* social model). Suffering, for the Pope, is not meaningless, it is rather transformative. From this perspective, he points to a need to see every person, and every suffering person in particular, as a

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<sup>683</sup> My reference to *Theology of the Body* will be exemplified robustly in a next section

person with inner dignity, and as a subject capable of interpersonal relation. The transformative character of suffering lies in that suffering unleashes hope and love<sup>684</sup> knowing that it will never deprive an individual of his dignity as a human being.<sup>685</sup> Even when the condition of a person with profound disabilities or person with great physical suffering is such that the person is almost incapable of living and acting, this person is still not deprived of spiritual maturity. As JP II says, all the more, in such circumstance, do interior maturity and spiritual greatness become evident, constituting a touching lesson to those who are healthy and normal. It is exactly this, the transformative character of suffering and transcendental vision of man that are both integrated in the Pope's constructive contribution to the understanding of human pain and suffering<sup>686</sup> and that distinguishes his approach to suffering from Singer's utilitarian premises on equal value of suffering in *Practical Ethics*, and negative attitudes noticed among Disability studies scholars.

### 3.2.5. Human dignity applied into an anthropology of human interdependency

JP II as a Pope, on many occasions, particularly in his encyclicals *Evangelium Vitae* and *Veritatis Splendor* emphasized the true and personal value of every conceived person, including those with psychosomatic disintegration. Based on such arguments, every person possesses inner dignity,<sup>687</sup> and no person should be used as a means to an end. The formulation for JP II's straightforward convictions that every person integrates innate dignity and inner value stems from his theological formulation that every person is an *image of God* and each person's body is the temple of Holy Spirit. It is exactly these, the notions of the image of God and the meaning of the body as a Temple of the Holy Spirit, that in my reading of JP II are the focal points of his reflection of person's dignity. In the following analysis my concentration includes reflection on exactly these two elements, not only as constituents of human dignity, but also as significant in an anthropology of interdependence.

In his message to the "mentally ill," Pope John Paul II, highlights the importance of human dignity founded on tenets central to Christian tradition that human being is an image of God and that human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>688</sup> Although JP II in this particular document addresses mentally ill persons, the anthropological foundation of such reflection can be equally applied to any other human being. This means that the "disabled" is the *other* for whom I am responsible, but who like me shares the same transcendental, ontological and anthropological basis. He is an image of God, a gift for others, and his body is, as the body of every other person, the temple of Holy Spirit. The standing of such an anthropology goes beyond the mentality that forms dichotomies in regard to the person and the person's body, integrated into a socio-cultural and sometimes even

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<sup>684</sup> See for instance Pascal Ide, « La 'Meditation sur le theme du don desinteressé' de Jean-Paul II. Un presentation,» *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* 134 (2012):p. 201-14.

<sup>685</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, 23.

<sup>686</sup> Pope attach to reflection on suffering a redemptive character; See also Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 1979.

<sup>687</sup> For more on that particular reference see Pope address to the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (October, 2, 1979), in U.N. Gaor 34th Sess. Cf. [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1979/october/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19791002\\_general-assembly-onu.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1979/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19791002_general-assembly-onu.html)

<sup>688</sup> John Paul II, "Mentally Ill are also made in God's Image," *Message at the International Conference for Health Care workers on Illnesses of the Human Mind*, November, 30, 1996; (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 11 1996), 9.

ecclesial systems. Insisting on the premise of the innate dignity of every human person, the Pope recalls that each person, despite physical deformity, intellectual incapacity, apart from being perceived as God's creation (image of God), is also an embodied reality capable of interpersonal relations. The person with disability is no less an image of God, and his /her body is of no less importance as a temple of the Holy Spirit. What I am trying to indicate here with such a statement is that, besides the intrinsic dignity of a person grounded into an image of God, the image of the person's dignity is incomplete without reference to the body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit and vice versa. Stating that every person is the unique other despite his/her physical condition and mental capacity, does not separate the person's body from his/her spirit, as man's dignity is constitutive of both. In other words, the notion of dignity for JP II integrates the spiritual (the image of God) and the physical (body) dimension. But what exactly the meaning of the image of God and the Body as a Temple of the Holy Spirit in thoughts of JP II includes?

My attempt in the following discussion is to demonstrate that the image of God and the body as the Temple of Holy Spirit are integrated and indispensable of a dignity of human person.

#### **a) Image of God**

There are many interpretations of what the image of God is, depending on the culture, religious tradition and context. Despite this, one of the common interpretations of *imago Dei* among different Christian traditions<sup>689</sup> and various interpretations<sup>690</sup> is that being created in image of God is first of all a sign that a man (here signifying the condition of a man and women) is a historical creature with given dignity, that by being an image of God man is marked by an identity that distinguishes him (a man) from other creatures. As an image of God, man is capable of entering into dialogue with his Creator and other creatures different from himself. This means that man is directed towards encounters with others, and towards the dialogue with his Creator. Despite the spiritual dimension of human person is the profound characteristics of man, including man's rationality, consciousness and use of free will, we should not forget, that man is also a relational being, capable of entering into communication with others.<sup>691</sup> JP II, in his discourse on *imago Dei*, grounds his premises in Aquinas's theology, but shares with the tradition of Second Vatican, the social (communal) dimension of *imago Dei*, inclined towards a Christocentric perspective. This enables him to emphasize the personal element integrated into *imago Dei*, which says that every person is an image of God and every image of God is a person. In other words, being an image of God means being a person - a statement peculiar to JP II anthropology. The Catechisms of Catholic

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<sup>689</sup> See for instance Ray S. Anderson, "Being human - in the image of God" in Ray S. Anderson, *On Being Human-essays in Theological Anthropology*, (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1982): p. 66-89.

<sup>690</sup> See Mark J. Cherry, "Created in the Image of God: Bioethical Implications of the *Imago Dei*" in *Christian Bioethics*, 23(3), 219-233 2017.

<sup>691</sup> There is distinction between scholars who are more inclined towards relational aspects of *imago Dei*, and those who are more keen towards emphasizing the intellectual capacities of a man himself, which does not say that a man is not relational, but that man as *imago Dei* cannot be defined only by straightforward relationality. More on variety of such discourses see Gilles Emery; International Theological Commission *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, 2002.; See also Lieven Boeve, Yves De Maeseneer and Ellen Van Stichel, eds. *Questioning the Human - towards a theological Anthropology for the twenty-first century*, (New York, Fordham University Press, 2014).

Church (CCC, no. 357; no. 1701), integrated also in thought of JP II, defines man as the image of God in light of section CCC, no. 1, 26-27. This means that *being created in the image of God*, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but *someone*. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of a freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. He is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.<sup>692</sup> Similarly, in light of Holy Scripture, *Gaudium et Spes* no. 12.3 addresses that a man created in the image of God is capable of knowing (*cognoscendi*) and loving (*amandi*) his Creator.<sup>693</sup> Thus, reconfirmed through the Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes* 12.22, and 12.24, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (no.1702), the Pope's notion of the image of God is that *the divine image is present in every man. It shines forth in the communion of persons, in the likeness of the unity of the divine persons among themselves (cf. chapter two)*. By this not only does JP II oppose the utilitarian logic (contra Singer), but he underscores the notion that man's dignity also consists in not only being a spiritual soul, but participating in divine image, which means being relational. No other creature besides man reveals such a privileged affiliation with God.<sup>694</sup> As he further addresses:

“It should be made clear however that the whole man, not just his spiritual soul, including his intelligence and free will, but also his body shares in the dignity of “the image of God.”<sup>695</sup>

In addition to the above-mentioned documents (the Second Vatican tradition), for a more robust and complete understanding of JP II's anthropology of human dignity, theologian Pia Matthews indicates on necessity in taking into account his encyclical letter *Redemptor Hominis*, (1979), *Dives in Misericordia* (1980) and *Dominum et Vivicantem* (1986),<sup>696</sup> as well as, his philosophical heritage as cardinal Karol Wojtyla presented in an edition of his Lublin lectures. Although the examination of all these references to JP II's anthropology is beyond the scope of this research, in a nutshell, his perception of human dignity as integration of the body in light of being the Temple of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1Cor, 6,19) and being created in the image of God (Gen, 1,2) challenges the framework of philosophical heritage that reduces all of the image of God to rational capacities (Kant) or all of the body to an object of physical appearances (Descartes).<sup>697</sup> Pope's recall for a more profound theological understanding of “being made in the image of God”, includes not merely his reference to *imago Dei* explored in Genesis 1 and 2 - a concept particularly developed in context of his theology of the body. The complete understanding of Genesis 1-2 in such aspect highlights his reference to the meaning of body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6,19). To explore this is my next step in the following paragraph.

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<sup>692</sup> Cf. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/pls2c1p6.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/pls2c1p6.htm)

<sup>693</sup> Second Vatican Council. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 7 December 1965, no.12.

<sup>694</sup> Ibid.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> Pia Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently Non-acting Person*, p.62.

<sup>697</sup> For more on that see the Summary in David K. Clark, and Robert V. Rakestraw, *Readings in Christian Ethics, volume II: Issues and Applications*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 1994).



## **b) The body as a Temple of the Holy Spirit in perspective of the “theology of the body”**

It is known, that most of the content of JP II's theology of the body in its context refers to the marital relationship, and communion between husband and wife.<sup>698</sup> However, although such relationships includes reciprocity, self-knowledge, self-determination, freedom and choice (often a challenging concept in regard to people with intellectual and profound disability) in my reading of the theology of the body, such concepts are not exclusive of people with disability. My reading of JP II's *Theology of the Body* will be used as foundation for a more complete understanding of the person's dignity, not his/her actions at the first place. This is to say that I will not initially look at how self-determination, freedom and choice determine human actions, and how much they determine person's relationships with others, although this is an important moral topic. My focus here will be on looking at why every person deserves to be treated adequately, as a fully integrated and relational person. This, in regard to people with disability, means that they cannot be perceived only as people with diminished mental capacities or deformed bodies, but as a man or women embeds spiritual completeness. JP II's *Theology of the Body*, in this regard, reveals exactly this: that every person, people with disabilities included, must be perceived as a subject in his/her historicity and eschatological determination. Being a person and having a body not only mean being the other, but being a unique other (in its historical and eschatological) determination. This is to say that despite a person's circumstances, a person can be never diminished to an object, or under the dominance of the other, but will always be an authentic and personal subject capable and called to intersubjective/interpersonal communion with others.<sup>699</sup> The notion of the body integrated into JP II's concept of human dignity not only includes being a temple of the Holy Spirit, but the body symbolizes the physical reality of human existence. Although, as indicated above, JP II's *Theology of the Body* is primarily a reference for the spousal meaning of the body, I think it is not limited to the retrieval of an anthropology of interdependence, as such an anthropology is not only inclusive to disability, but most strongly speaks about the meaning of interpersonal dependence. This further means that although JP II's *Theology of the Body* offers an understanding of a person with disability as an intersubjective and interpersonal dynamic, I will describe it as a *means* that transcends objectifying and utilitarian moral tendencies that in regard to a person with disability fail to be sustainable. In my assessment of this, the body actually demonstrates that the other in connection to body, besides being an image of God, is also a gift realized through the presence of his /her body. The importance of the body lies in the subjects people are expressing to each other through the presence of their bodies. Not only is a body the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor, 6,19), but as the Pope goes further in explaining, the body is a reality that puts persons close to other persons. Why the reading of the *Theology of the Body* in my opinion is a crucial aspect of JP II's anthropology in discussing disability and interdependency, is that it brings us back to reality, or, as has been already said by Swinton, to the premise that “body matters.” As Wojtyla in *Person and Act* says, “*the human experience that involves a body as the integration of human biology and physiology, not only matters, but bring us to reality of the concrete human subject, different from*

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<sup>698</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Theology of the Body*, transl. Ivan Pavao II, *Muško i žensko stvori ih: Cjelovita teologija tijela*, p.103-142.

<sup>699</sup> Karol Wojtyla, *The Family as a Community of Persons*, in “Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community,” (New York, Peter Lang, 1993): p. 315-327.

*idealistic and objectifying contemporary projections and bodily imaginations.*”<sup>700</sup> Only from such a perspective are we enabled to understand the experience of disability embodied in one person’s body. Not through the work of charity or object of preferential option of the poor, but in encounter with a real person (most preferably, with the person’s body). Why *Theology of the Body* is helpful in such a reflection is that it raises awareness that the possibility of being a gift to each other and giving one-self to another, do not consist in disabled person being a gift to non-disabled or vice versa. It actually indicates that the true giving and receiving is primarily possible due to the presence of the person’s body as a body of a *man or women*, not disabled or non-disabled persons. Thus, the importance of the meaning of the body JP gave within his catechesis in *Theology of the Body*, matters as such teaching presents the bodily dimension of human personhood in light of theology of creation and revelation. As the body applies to marriage it also matters in discourse of disability. For this reason, in my opinion, the catechesis on human love, in one aspect, can be equally important for the retrieval of an anthropology that includes human disability, as well as, the understanding of the marital relationships. This is mainly for the reason that every man, every human being, is created as a person with the inner dignity and is called to the *communio personarum*.<sup>701</sup> Moreover, the reflection on the body in JPII’s *Theology of the Body* in relation to disability, matters not merely because the body is perceived as a temple of the Holy Spirit, and as an aspect of a person’s earthly existence, but, as Pia Matthews says, it extends its meaning to the point that people with disability, like every other human being, are constituted by a certain biology, which nevertheless implies human sexuality.<sup>702</sup> Put slightly differently, as every person, persons with disability (profound intellectual disability) included, is a biological and spiritual (metaphysical) entity, equally being a biological and spiritual, due to the person’s bodily presence. Such a body has a sexual component, and also a component of being a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

### 3.2.6. The framework of JPII anthropology of interdependency

After the examination of components constituent of JPII understanding of a human dignity the following attempt is set forward the very construction of JPII anthropology of interdependency. What has been earlier stated in the analysis of *Evangelium Vitae, Salvifici Doloris*, the Pope’s messages for the *World Day of the Sick* and his letters to *Sick and Disabled*, as well as his reflection within *Theology of the Body*, will be used here as the foundation for what I will call JPII’s anthropology of interdependence. The foundation of what I will address as anthropology of interdependence, in my view, includes the integration of the theological and philosophical aspects of the human person, both reflected in thought of JPII.<sup>703</sup> The strength of his anthropology is a success of his theological reflections as Pope JPII, which nevertheless reflects his philosophical insights exposed within his *Lublin lectures* as cardinal Wojtyla. This means that the construction of an anthropology of interdependence will thus consist of a rather modest revision of his overall

<sup>700</sup>Cf. Karol Wojtyla, *The Person: Subject and Community*, in “Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community,” p. 220-261.

<sup>701</sup> Cf. Ivan Pavao II, *Muško i žensko stvori ih: Cjelovita teologija tijela*, p. 247

<sup>702</sup> Pia Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently Non -acting Person*, p.77

<sup>703</sup> Just as reminder of the precisions, his theological insights relate to the vision of the Second Vatican Council, and followed the Christocentric approach to the character of imago Dei, best described in *Theology of the Body*. His philosophical insights stem from his philosophical anthropology developed in his thesis in *Acting Person and Person and Community*.

reflection on person and being in *Acting Person* and *Person and Community*, and his theological reflection on the human person in *Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris*. Central to such anthropology is the unfolding of the dynamic of ontologically personal sharing that consists in giving oneself to the other through/by love. Apart from the philosophical insights of this anthropology, that will merely reflect the notion of the other, regarding the theological aspects of such anthropology, it is important to point out that the foundation of such anthropology is ethical. What I mean by this is that this anthropology at first reflects the dialectics between the ethics of the weak vs. the ethics of the strong, particularly exposed within content of *Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris*. The prevailing concepts of such ethics underlines the marginalized human situation dominated by forces of power and injustice. The second (ethical) criteria for the foundation of such anthropology is to place the fragile, marginal and sick at the center of his reflection. This is to say that by the reality of their situation, the marginal, fragile, disabled or sick person is primarily the other with inner dignity, capable of interpersonal communication. In the following section I will develop the arguments for such a position.

### **3.2.6.1. Ethics of the weak vs the ethics of the strong and its implication for the anthropology of Interdependency**

The two key elements of JP II's anthropology of interdependence are his understanding of a person in light of his/her metaphysical ontological identity, and interpersonal communication. Such premises allow JP II to see a suffering person and in this particular case, a person with intellectual disability or profound intellectual disability, as self-giving subject. In this regard it is his ethics of weak vs. strong where my argument of his anthropology of interdependence will begin. JP II, in his letters, makes clear his concern for the weak, defenseless, sick, disabled, suffering and vulnerable. Yet, contrary to Jeffrey Tranzillo,<sup>704</sup> this anthropology does not explicitly correspond to an anthropology of vulnerability. Namely, JP II does not explore vulnerability as something essential to humans, neither does he recognize vulnerability as a universal concept peculiar to all humans. His assessment of human vulnerability addresses the suffering of the disabled and sick, and follows the distinction between the vulnerable *them* and invulnerable *us*. This anthropology (anthropology of human vulnerability), as we will see later, in my assessment originates with Jean Vanier, not JP II, as addressed by Tranzillo. However, JP II emphasizes a notion of suffering inseparable from the respect of man's dignity, addressing a man as an interpersonal subject. As inseparable from each other, human dignity and suffering are existential and essential components of the human person. Suffering cannot devalue the dignity of a person, nor can dignity be diminished due to the degree of suffering. With the supremacy of the strong over the weak addressed in *Evangelium Vitae*, the Pope recalls that we are not only in danger of failing to respond morally to the needs of sick, disabled and suffering, but, to deny the fulness of life that goes beyond earthly existence.<sup>705</sup> Additionally, if sharing in the ethics of strong, we are not only in danger to reduce all of human to material existence, but to detach suffering from its

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<sup>704</sup> In his distinguished book *John Paul II on the Vulnerable*, Jeffrey Tranzillo highlights Papal writings and lifelong defense of the dignity and rights of vulnerable human beings. In such a perspective, he addresses JP anthropology as the anthropology of the vulnerable. See Jeffrey Tranzillo, *John Paul II on the Vulnerable*, (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

<sup>705</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 2.

transformative dimension. This, regarding the JP II's anthropology of interdependence, looks on suffering without separating it from the recognition of person's dignity. What I mean by the ethics of strong is the prevailing systems of utilitarianism and nihilism discussed by JP II in *Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris*. Accordingly, the systems addressed, reduce the human body to the pure materialist element, separating the body from the person. It is exactly this system that understands suffering as burden or a pure tragedy. When the human body is reduced to pure materiality, suffering becomes an instrumental, not an existential, concept. Thus, every human condition which departs from the "normal functioning" and involves pain is perceived as evil, or is attached by the notion of tragic. And the problem upon which, in my opinion, JP II most strongly focuses in his analysis is not the denial of suffering as painful, but the problem of denial of the "personal" within the suffering human being. As he addresses:

The criterion of personal dignity-which demands respect, generosity and service-is replaced by the criterion of efficiency, functionality and usefulness: others are considered not for what they "are", but for what they "have, do and produce." This is the supremacy of the strong over the weak.<sup>706</sup>

*Evangelium Vitae* and *Salvifici Doloris* from this point of view provide an anthropological basis for understanding suffering human conditions, not as tragic, but as situations of unleashed love. It is JP II's compassion for the weak that forms the foundation for the anthropology of interdependence.

### **3.2.6.2. The further development of JP II anthropology of interdependence**

Although much of JP II's anthropology integrates Aquinas<sup>707</sup> structure of being, his emphasis on the interpersonal aspect of a man marks something original in his development of the person's relational principle. Grounding his notion of humanity in Aquinas's system of unity of the body and soul, JP II adds to this understanding his own notion of the person developed in *Person and Act*, which makes his approach to human dignity in this particular aspect different than Aquinas's. The metaphysical foundation of the human person as body and soul that JP II takes from Aquinas, and the possibility of being incorporated into intra-Trinitarian communion with Father in Christ through the Holy Spirit as an image of God, allows him to perceive every human person as a gift to the other through the interpersonal communication of love. The integration of his phenomenological perception of a person as a somatic dynamism and psychic emotivity<sup>708</sup> with metaphysical aspect, introduces his own philosophical anthropology, integrated into his theological anthropology. This phenomenological insight points to the human person as a complete and unimpaired entity. Additionally, addressing the integration of the meaning of psychosomatic unity and person's complexity in *Person and Act* is primarily used in explains the meaning of human action. However, the reason I choose to emphasize here, congruent with the assumption that human person is a complex and psychomatic unity and as such integrates the person's

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<sup>706</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>707</sup> Cf. Jaroslaw Kupczak, O.P., „Was John Paul II a Thomist? A comparative analysis of the theology of „imago Dei,“ in: *The Thomistic legacy in Blessed John Paul II and his refunding of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Proceedings of the XII Plenary Session 29 June - 1 July 2012, Vatican City*, (2013): p. 118-132.

<sup>708</sup> Cf. Jaroslaw Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty. The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II*, (Washington, D.C. 2000): p. 140

innerness and outerness. Bearing this on mind became crucial in understanding the condition of person with intellectual or severe disability. Thus, the combination of phenomenological insights and metaphysics central to JP II's understanding of the human person, not only contrasts dualistic and idealistic perspectives on the human person. His anthropology, which I call anthropology of interdependence, is important for bringing back the indispensable account of the reality of human experience that integrates the reality of lived experience, emphasizing the importance of a human body and the communication with others, in grasping the complete reality of a person. This personalist element of the experience of the person not only takes into account the person's psychosomatic complexity and reality of everyday experience, but presents an element that somehow adds to the merely hylomorphic<sup>709</sup> regard of a person. This is to say that grounded in Aquinas's metaphysics of the human person, JP II's anthropology of interdependence is in character ontologically personal.<sup>710</sup> Such anthropology supports the view that a person by all his/her lived experience is an integration of corporeal and spiritual being, and is not detached from inner reality of his/herself or reduced to its mental states (*contra* reductionism).<sup>711</sup> Accordingly, human person is someone that has its beginning<sup>712</sup> historicity; that is partaking in lived experience; and that is made of particular human nature (human biology). Such anthropology creates the possibility to rethink dependency and difference, not only in regard to marital relationship, but for every human person who as a lived subject with a real experiences manifests his/her universal need of dependency and interpersonal communication.

In this regard, the anthropology of interdependence refers to and includes people with intellectual disability as every person despite his psychosomatic condition or activity limitations, participates in the interpersonal dynamic of self-giving and receiving. This dynamic of personal exchange is, according to JP II, constitutive of the communion of persons. Although he does not truly explain how this works for a person with intellectual disability or person with profound disability, he does acknowledge personal integrity and interpersonal communication not merely on basis of a person's metaphysical ontological identity, but also through an intrinsic dynamism. The notion of intrinsic dynamism includes communication with God and other persons. The possibility and capability of interpersonal dynamic for JP II stems from the assumption that every person is a spiritual agent. As created in God's image and likeness every person reflects God's love into the World. Thus, as

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<sup>709</sup> The hylomorphic regard on human person often includes reference to s. Thomas Aquinas *ST I*, q. 75 & 76, aa. 4-7, in which Aquinas defends anthropology based on substantial union between soul and body, but also in a certain aspect distinguishes his approach from Aristotle. The terminology itself and the discourses addressing Aquinas notion of the man as a composite of soul and the body raises concerns of the past and contemporary authors. For further reading on such a matter see for instance: Gilles Emery, OP, "The unity of Man, Body and Soul, in St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples, Fla: Sapientia Press, 2007). See also Anton Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto: St. Michael's College, 1934); Also, Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Michael Waldstein, transl. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

<sup>710</sup> This can be evidenced from "The Moral Theology of Karol Wojtyla" in Thomas Petri, OP, *Aquinas and the Theology of the Body: The Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II's Anthropology*, (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2016): p. 92-126.

<sup>711</sup> Karol Wojtyla, "The Human Person and Natural Law" in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, p. 182-185.

<sup>712</sup> K. Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, p.187-197.

in analogy with Trinity, it is an imperative for us that in light of interdependent anthropology, every person is recognized and understood as a subject, capable of relationship (interpersonal communication).<sup>713</sup>

### 3.2.7. The notion of the Other

The key question in understanding the notion of interdependence is the meaning of the other. Who is the other? The question is complicated when it concerns the other (e.g. person with intellectual or profound intellectual disability) that straightforwardly does not correspond to our established notion of the mainstream perception of otherness. To understand the essence of who the other is, however, does not consist in only understanding the meaning of the other as a neighbor or a brother, although they may be important. In my reading of JP II anthropology, the importance of his dialectics in referring the notion of other, consist in his meaning that the other participates in the humanity of another human being, not only as human being to human being, but as person to a person.<sup>714</sup> Accordingly, being an image of God and having a body, are foundational concepts that constitute the other's dignity. However, as he suggested, to realize that the other is a human being and a person, one must realize that the other is in a position of an actual potentiality to become an interpersonal subject, not merely as a brother and a neighbor,<sup>715</sup> but that the other is a giving subject, with the potentiality of self-giving and other-receiving. This is an important element I would further develop within the scope of this section. *The other's potentiality for being an interpersonal subject enabled by the means of self-giving and other-receiving is a foundation of JP II's notion of anthropology of interdependence.* This is to say that the meaning JP II gives to the other must be seen within interpersonal relationship exchange. According to JP II theological anthropology as a Pope, and his philosophical anthropology set forward in his Lublin lectures addressed the other as someone who lives alongside me and who is both another and one of the others who exist and acts commonly with me.<sup>716</sup> This is to say that the other is not only a concept limited to its being or existence, but is also determined or defined by the context of lived experience. Thus, according to JP II, the other is different from me by means of its consciousness (another), but also by the means of this other's relation to me (one of the other).<sup>717</sup> This lived experience, according to JP II, puts us in the perspective of the other. Although the conceptualization of the other for JP II implies the other person's acts and consciousness, it also implies the other person's interaction with others. Although JP II stresses concern for consciousness, as consciousness<sup>718</sup> determine actions, he also departs from it, saying that

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<sup>713</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i čin*, p. 52.

<sup>714</sup> Karol Wojtyła, "The Person: Subject and Community," in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 33, 2 (1979): p. 288

<sup>715</sup> See Karol Wojtyła, "Participation or Alienation?" in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, 199-206.

<sup>716</sup> Karol Wojtyła, "Participation or Alienation?" in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, p.198.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid.

<sup>718</sup> For more on consciousness from the perspective of neuroscience and philosophy, see in recent research of Antonio Damasio in "Descartes Error." Why I suggest Damasio is from the reason that Damasio, by integrating His thesis on Descartes error indirectly support a thesis of Aquinas and JP II notion of the meaning of person. From such reason Damasio's empirical analysis of consciousness implicates some interesting philosophical reflection that may be from a valuable contribution in study of relation of self and the action of the self, regarding the person with profound intellectual disability. Cf. Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' error: emotion, reason, and the human brain* (New York, Quill, 2000).

consciousness does not produce actions, it is a will.<sup>719</sup> Here he puts himself close to Aquinas, but also departs from him, noting concern for lived experience and the other person's interpersonal potentiality. The personalistic norm allows JP II to say that the other not only relates to my own I, but that the other is always another I. This means that in existing and acting with the other person's person do not lose its subjectivity and actualization (no matter how tiny is) but remain "myself" as another.<sup>720</sup> Participating together with other not only raises my awareness of the other person's existence as an I, or another I, but puts me into the realm of being human. The reality of the other is not merely the result of categorical and conceptual knowledge of what a human being is or how he/she participates in relationships, although this is also important. It is nevertheless clear that the concepts of human being and lived experience within are constitutive of the process of participation. However, as Wojtyla says, the concept itself does not create relationship.<sup>721</sup> What matters in this regard is the context of lived experience that brings one close to the other who before everything is a person. Wojtyla's emphasis of the relational aspect of the human being goes beyond its conceptual meaning, but does not signify that he would reduce all of humanity to the relational. What is important here is the emphasis that this relational aspect established through participation brings one closer to participation in other persons' humanity. The participation as the actualization of relational potential in a person brings one close to the other. The central point I want to underline in JP II's understanding of participation, which is particularly important when it concerns person with disability, is that participation signifies a basic personalization of the relationship of the human being to another. The lived experience and the process of the I-other relationship raises awareness of the humanity of the other. And this is most important when concerning the people with disability. Such reflection is the foundation for an anthropology where the other is not object of care or charity, but is first and before all the another I, in whose humanity, if related, I, as the other, participate and vice versa. Without this actualization of the relationship with the other, one is limited in experiencing the other I as a person. Or in other words as Wojtyla states: "*When I experience another as a person, I come as close as I can to what determines the other's I as the unique and unrepeatable reality of that human being.*"<sup>722</sup>

Another is a human being who is in *hic et nunc* given to me and assigned to me, but not as object of charity, so the awareness of another human being as a person, according to JP II, is of ethical significance. This means that being aware of the humanity of the other as a person does not only have ethical significance in terms of the other is my moral obligation, but derives from principle of givenness. The other is given to me as another person, and I am given to the other also as the another. Through such participation in each other's humanity we are aware of each other as persons.

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<sup>719</sup> Karol Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation?" in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, 199.

<sup>720</sup> This is a similar statement as in Paul's Ricœur in *One self as Another*, which will be of our detailed concerns in a next section of this part of research thesis.

<sup>721</sup> Karol Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation?" in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, 201.

<sup>722</sup> Karol Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation?" in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, p. 202.

### 3.2.7.1. The other as a gift and self - giving

Instead of providing a straightforward definition of the other, JP II in a rather descriptive way, suggests that the other should be seen from the perspective of a particular relationship. The other who participates in interpersonal relationships is a giving subject with the potentiality of giving and receiving. Earlier in this section we noted how JP II's *Theology of the Body* brought into reflection the possibility of being a gift to each other and giving one-self to the another. This is particularly important in regard to disability, as a person, despite his bodily dysfunction, is before all else perceived as a participatory body in receiving and giving, and before all the presence of their body is their earthly existence. But can our Christian understanding allows us to perceive "disabled" as a gift aligned with a potential for relationship? What we have learned from JP II's reflection on the other, says that the other is capable of interpersonal communication and is therefore an interdependent other. Indicating that a human person is relational not only means that a human person can communicate, but that a human person is a transcendental and integrated entity, capable of self-giving. As addressed in JP II reference to *Gaudium et Spes*:

"When God turns his gaze on man, the first thing he sees and loves in him is not the deeds he succeeds in doing, but his own image, an image that confers on man the ability to know and love his own Creator, to rule over all earthly creatures and to use them for God's glory."<sup>723</sup>

*Such thinking suggests that man is not only what he does by his actions, but also what he is in his dignity.* The other as a human person is described not as a subject of rights and freedoms (*contra* individualism), but as an image of God and subject of mutual interdependency. Such thinking enables others to be perceived not only as subject of mutual relationship, but as gifts, and also capable of self-giving. Being a gift and capable of self-giving contrasts sharply with the utilitarian view of the person and leads to de-instrumentalization of a human person. This creates the possibility to consider the person with severe or profound disability, or who is sick and suffering, as integral, relational, and capable of self - giving. The self-giving is something intrinsic and is enabled by the first ontologically personal sharing inspired by love to give oneself to the other and, as mentioned above, the spiritual agency of a person. This spiritual agency of the human soul is a moving force inspired by the grace of Holy Spirit to give one's self to the other. This is a natural giving of the human soul, and every human being possesses this capacity according to JP II. The hidden love of the Trinitarian God reflected a priori into the human spirit directs each person implicitly to another person. Through the exchange of the dynamic of this inner principle of love given a priori (that stems from God) one being communicates love to another being, producing its effect in another.<sup>724</sup> In his article "The Family as a Community of Persons" as cardinal Karol Wojtyla, JP II develops the thesis that giving oneself to another person is a natural process. This natural tendency of a self-giving is rooted in the person's existence, in the personal within the human being.<sup>725</sup> This is to say that every person, whatever his mental capacity or social status, is capable of giving himself to another. The other, before all else in the thought of JP II, is a gift of one to another. Such giving not only mirrors Martin Buber's notion of *I-Thou* relationships, but

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<sup>723</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, no.12.

<sup>724</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*, (Boston, Pauline Books, 1997): p.273.

<sup>725</sup> Karol Wojtyla, "The Family as a Community of Persons" in *Catholic Thought from Lublin, Vol. IV Person and Community*, p. 202.



moreover God's plan for humanity. Being a gift to another not only correlates with manifesting oneself in acting, but is imprinted in human existence itself,<sup>726</sup> which is to say that as women and men live and exist together with each other and with others, the giving oneself to another is an actual trait of men's existence. How is this self-giving or a man being a gift to another manifested? In reflecting upon givenness, JP II develops his relational principle pointing to the relational aspect of human beings. Living "together with others"<sup>727</sup> includes participation, and participation manifests through the process in living with others. However, such a dynamic of "together with others" cannot be realized without knowing the meaning of givenness. The foundational basis for the explanation JP II gives comes from the theology of creation. The theological basis of such meaning of givenness lies in not only people giving themselves to each other, but includes God who gives them to one another (Gen, 1, 26-28).<sup>728</sup> Although, this often correlates with the mutual gift of the spouses, in my interpretation, such correlation is not reduced to merely such an understanding. The mutual giving, or men as a mutual gifts to each other, means that people are given to each other as brothers and sisters, friends, neighbors, etc. Following such a process of giving, a person with disability, or a vulnerable person, is not exempt from such a process of giving. Namely, not every self-gift between persons is specific to marriage. Persons with severe disability or, as previously stated, a person in a vegetative state, is also a subject of such self-giving. Now, how can a person with severe disability or in a vegetative state be a gift to others?

The answer to that question requires insights from *Person and Act*, particularly the chapter on intersubjectivity and participation. The intersubjective relationship's central formula is the dynamic of gift. The notion of gift as explained by JP II not only represent his anthropology of the other, but his anthropology in this sense is somehow inseparable from his ethics. The notions of gift, self-giving and givenness are an integral part of JP II's encyclicals, particularly those that concerns the status of human dignity. Addressing the importance of gift and givenness, and particularly the *disinterested* aspect of the integrity of gift and love, JP II points to relationships which consist in radical acceptance of otherness of the other. In light of GS 24, a man cannot find himself except through the sincere giving of himself to another. The importance of a gift is central to JP II's anthropology and ethics. The gift for JP II is a relationship that joins the receiver, the giver and the gift.<sup>729</sup> The actualization of this gift is possible through the trust. And the meaning of trust, according to JP II, not only consists in God's giving a woman to the man and vice versa (Gen, 28), but in my interpretation rather means that all people are entrusted to each other through the gift of mutual trust and interdependency. Trust, as he putted, means that "*God believes in you, trusts that you are capable of receiving the gift, that you are capable of embracing it with your heart, that you have the capacity to respond to it with a gift of yourself.*"<sup>730</sup> As this may be possible for every

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<sup>726</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i čin*, p.262.

<sup>727</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i čin*, p. 262.

<sup>728</sup> John Paul II, "A Meditation on Givenness" in *Communio* 41 (2014): p. 872, available from <https://www.communio-icr.com/articles/view/a-meditation-on-givenness>, [accessed January 2016]

<sup>729</sup> I was also consulting at the beginning of the research the French translation of "A Meditation on Givenness." Cf. Pascal Ide, « 'La Méditation sur le thème du don désintéressé' de Jean -Paul II. Une présentation, » *Nouvelle revue Théologique* 134, 2, (2012): p: 206.

<sup>730</sup> John Paul II, "A Meditation on Givenness" in *Communio* 41 (2014): p.874-5.

woman and man, so is the actualization of this possibility, in my interpretation also for the person with intellectual or profound intellectual disability.

### **3.3. JEAN VANIER AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF HUMAN VULNERABILITY**

#### **3.3.1. Vanier's quest and proposal**

JPII's anthropology on many occasions has been described as an anthropology of vulnerability, but in my assessment, it is Jean Vanier who traces the foundation of such an anthropology. However, the anthropological systems of JPII examined in this research would be incomplete without practical knowledge steaming from Jean Vanier and the communities of L'Arche. In other words, the anthropology of interdependence will be missing its flavor without reference to anthropological system that imply vulnerability. Not only are interdependence and vulnerability closely related, but the authors examined, as I will show, share a similar knowledge regarding the reality of a person, including a slight distinction.

The anthropological system of JPII and JV, described as an anthropology of interdependence and vulnerability, besides sharing the baseline on similar ethical reasoning, matters for the reason, that it shows the possibility of understanding human disability and vulnerability as conditions specific to humans. This anthropological system is a point of departure for what I previously called an ethics of the weak (grounded in the compassion and an encounter), and challenges the ethics of strong (grounded into utilitarian calculations of self-sufficiency and the capacity of intellect). The foundation of an anthropology of vulnerability, and anthropology of interdependence, are together a challenge and the response to the utilitarian ethics based on principles of rational autonomy and self-sufficiency. Their ethical system could serve as the way to social inclusion, and the possibility to create friendship between different people, such as for instance people of different cognitive capacities. The anthropology of vulnerability, specifically, reopens the access towards considering the other as both vulnerable and capable of friendship, not as a one way contradiction, but as conviction. In order to set forward the framework of an anthropology of vulnerability, my aim in the following section is first to present the meaning Vanier ascribes to the notion of disability in the context of L'Arche, from where his practical knowledge crucial for this discussion of the anthropology of vulnerability starts. My particular interest in this regard is twofold: I will look at the relation between his thinking and the mainstream discourses on disability, as well as the correlation of his thinking with the experience of L'Arche. My second interest is to separately look at his thinking regarding vulnerability and his approach to the meaning of the other.

#### **3.3.2. Vanier, the context of L'Arche and the meaning of disability**

In the following section I will divide my approach between presenting the key elements of Vanier's biography relevant to the foundation of L'Arche; and secondly, I will briefly present a few insights important to understand the context of L'Arche, where the practical knowledge of his

meaning of vulnerability has been actualized. Thirdly, I will look at his approach to and thinking about disability.

### 3.3.2.1. Vanier - a few biographical insights

The practical knowledge on vulnerability, meaning of the other and disability in Vanier's thinking, were not only formed through his experience in the context of L'Arche, but also depend on his previous academic experience, including his work on Aristotle's notion of happiness, and the influence of Dominican father Thomas Phillipe, his spiritual director. Vanier, known worldwide as founder of the international network of L'Arche community started living together, by sharing a home and daily life activities, with a two other man from a nearest mental hospital in northern France. The novelty of such a shared life, was in Vanier's recognition of this two man as *persons*, instead of *patients*, whom soon became *friends*. The categorical distinction between normal or non-normal, disabled and non-disabled, was absent from such relationships. What was most important was living together as persons who share in the same humanity.<sup>731</sup> Such daily, friendly interactions were the beginning of what would later be called the L'Arche community. Today there are about more than 153 communities in nearly 39 countries. Vanier saw the gospel passage Matthew 5:1-12 as the driving force and meaning behind L'Arche. In this gospel spirit, people with developmental and learning disabilities in L'Arche are all equal in dignity and value. Their coexistence with other members of the community is based upon the ideals of mutual respect and reciprocal help, and has greatly contributed to a personal growth and the true self-knowledge. In L'Arche, living together with different people in spite of their diverse intellectual, religious, and cultural backgrounds is in itself a recognition and a testimony to God's presence among humans. These characteristics are the keys to building peace and contribute to each person's own flourishing. There are, however, challenges and risks involved in this coexistence, which sometimes require honesty in facing the truth about one's identity. After more than fifty years of sharing his life with people with learning and developmental disabilities, writing a significant opus of spiritual books, helping in building peace among different people and cultures, and promoting social justice and inter-religious dialogue, Vanier was awarded the Templeton Prize in 2015 for his spiritual and humanitarian contribution to the world. Pope Francis' particular interest and theological-pastoral work is thematically very similar to that of Vanier as well as, the communities of L'Arche. Hence, in 2014 he met with Vanier and L'Arche community members at the Vatican. Moreover, as part of his monthly visits during the *Year of Mercy*, the Pope visited the L'Arche community in Rome, Italy and spent an afternoon with the members sharing a "snack."<sup>732</sup> It is worth noting that there are many links between the concept of relationship living in L'Arche and the Christian vocation of service and acceptance of others, regardless of class, race, religious and ethnic background, upon which the Pope himself constantly speaks. What I wanted to emphasize

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<sup>731</sup> See for instance Kathryn Spink, *The Miracle, the Message, the Story: Jean Vanier and L'Arche*. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2006).

<sup>732</sup> Cf. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-visits-home-for-disabled-persons-for-the-jubilee-of-mercy-41671>, [accessed 15 June 2016]

with these brief biographical insights, including Pope Francis, consist in the encounter between Vanier and Pope Francis before the *Year of Mercy*, that was a *kairos* moment and also a call to live out joy and hope in fulfilling practical Christian living. At this meeting, I see the possibility and a place where the theology from above and theology from below can truly meet as the two dimensions of one reality, not only through dialogue, but rather through the encounter.<sup>733</sup> It is a difficult task sometimes to separate Vanier from L'Arche and vice versa. This is particularly an uneasy task when the discourse implies discourse on disability, vulnerability, friendship, and common belonging. Most frequently Vanier's thinking was formed by experiences with his friends in L'Arche.<sup>734</sup> However, there is also something very specific to Vanier's vision about human person, disability, community and otherness, that together with his knowledge and experience in L'Arche integrates his theological and philosophical knowledge. The spiritual insights together with his theological knowledge and experience in L'Arche are foundation for the particular anthropology specific to Vanier. This anthropology that I will call anthropology of vulnerability, outlines a renewed approach to human person and human activity. The foundation of such anthropology integrates human experience and spirituality that corresponds to the term that I will define as his practical knowledge. This practical knowledge entails the demand for love and friendship, but could equally signify the demand for acceptance, that Vanier heard in the cry from his first companions in L'Arche. This demand in my assumptions is actually an ethical demand brought by society and unjust practices that afflict not only people with disability, but every suffering, abandoned person, especially more than a vulnerable person, who commonly experience such injustices. This demand I consider to be an appeal from an interior (anthropological) change "ad intra" (in a person), projected as an ethical demand "ad extra" (outside person) together inclined towards the changes within society.

### 3.3.2.2. Vanier and the context of L'Arche

It is obvious that not only has Vanier lived with people with disability, but the context of L'Arche has particular influence on his thinking. In the next section I will briefly address a key element of L'Arche philosophy, not only as reversal<sup>735</sup> type of inclusion, but also as a counterculture and covenant. Since its inception in France on 1964, the network of L'Arche communities spread around the world. Today there are more than hundred and fifty communities in all five continents. Before I continue, it is important to address few insights into L'Arche identity, mission and aims. According to official *L'Arche International website*,<sup>736</sup> its identity includes people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities which belong

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<sup>733</sup> The full reading of such an insights and Vanier's biography can be found in my interview with Vanier published in *Pastoral Review*. Cf. Martina Vuk, "Interview with Jean Vanier" in *Pastoral Review*, January 2017. See also Kathryn Spink, *The Miracle, the Message, the Story: Jean Vanier and L'Arche* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2006).

<sup>734</sup> See Stanley Hauerwas reference to Vanier and L'Arche often undergoes expressions such as Vanier and "his friends" in L'Arche. See for instance Stanley Hauerwas and Jean Vanier, *"Living gently in a Violent world: The Prophetic Witness of Weakness"* (Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 2008).

<sup>735</sup> The reversal type of inclusion is an inclusion where the settings are made for disabled people, but can be equally adopted also by a non-disabled people

<sup>736</sup> Cf. <https://www.larche.org/en/what-we-do>, accessed [28 Mai 2017].

to an *International Federation*. The mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of members of L'Arche's journey together, celebrating the unique value of every person and recognizing the need of one another; its missions has three main focuses. The first is to make known the gifts of people who have intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships; the second is to foster an environment in the community that responds to the changing needs of its members, while being faithful to the core values of their founding story; and third, to engage in their diverse cultures, working together toward a more humane society. Finally, the aim of L'Arche is to create communities that welcome people who have intellectual disabilities. This means that L'Arche seeks to respond to the distress of those who are too often rejected, and to give them a valid place in society. L'Arche seeks to reveal the particular gifts of people who have intellectual disabilities, who belong at the very heart of their communities, and who call others to share their lives. L'Arche seeks to offer not a solution to disability, but a sign that society, to be truly humane, must be found in welcome and respect of the weak and the downtrodden. In a divided world, L'Arche wants to be a sign of hope. Thus, the communities, founded on covenant relationships between people of differing intellectual capacity, social origin, religion and culture, seek to be signs of unity, faithfulness and reconciliation. My aim in writing the above passage was to pierce through caveats and repeated misinterpretations that often surrounds L'Arche, associating it with a community for disabled people and vulnerable assistants who are doing humanitarian work. L'Arche is more than that, and it will be rather unfortunate if our interpretations fail to follow such understanding. Vanier's vision was an amplification of L'Arche's mission, identity and aims. Its statement simply indicates that L'Arche is not another do-gooding organization, or charitable institution. It is a home of welcome, a sign not the solution, a community of people living together and sharing daily life despite its differences and tensions. L'Arche embodies this tension between exchange of care and friendship, suffering and celebration, unity and diversity, community and institution, Catholicism and ecumenism.<sup>737</sup>

Despite all the above mentioned characteristics, which I truly acknowledge, L'Arche, in my opinion, best adapts the view of a counterculture and a covenantal relationship. The aspects of counterculture and covenant not only are, in my opinion, the essence of what L'Arche is, but reveal most clearly Vanier's vision of the human person, community, and disability in relation to the particular anthropology founded in the context of L'Arche. From this stance, I will define L'Arche as a *countercultural and covenantal relationship embodied in the experience of an encounter, maintained through the exchange of caring and friendship*. In a following discussion, I will closely look at these two constitutive elements.

### **3.3.2.2.1. L'Arche as a covenantal counterculture**

As already said, L'Arche, in my opinion, is not an institution, neither is it a community for disabled people who are cared by extraordinary people. It is an experience, a covenant and a counterculture, where different people come together to share a daily life. But what is the meaning of covenantal counterculture in this particular regard? My idea in addressing L'Arche as a covenantal counterculture does not imply an anthropological study of L'Arche as a countercultural

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<sup>737</sup> See Jean Vanier, *Befriending the Stranger* (New York, Paulist Press, 2005): p. 115.

phenomenon. Rather, I take my ideas from Michael Angrosino<sup>738</sup> and Christian Salenson<sup>739</sup> evidence to specificity of a chosen terminology. Besides seeing L'Arche as Christian counterculturalism and a covenant I will additionally describe L'Arche as a *disability inclusion* type of covenantal counterculturalism. Looking at L'Arche as a Christian counterculturalism first means that L'Arche, despite sharing in the Roman Catholic tradition, is not reduced straightforwardly to it. This means that what is more important for L'Arche as a religious counterculture is to emphasize that its spirituality partaking from Noah's covenant and is grounded in a form of Gospel values, and its radicalism is most profoundly grounded in John 15:15 and Mt 5:1-12. Looking at L'Arche as a disability inclusion type of counter culturalism, my point is to address L'Arche in light of its academic correctness within disability discourses. In this regard, L'Arche is viewed as a type of inclusive community, a type of a communitarian model, or as a reverse type of inclusion.

Although the above-mentioned identifications are correct, the approach and meaning L'Arche prescribe to disabled persons differs from the cultural and religious norm, disability discourse, and its definitions in three ways. These are also the reasons why L'Arche is in fact perceived as a countercultural witness and why, in the following assessment, I will look upon integration of all three elements. First L'Arche's mission is to be a sign of hope in a sense of creating a hospitable environment, not only to persons with disability, but to those who were rejected from a mainstream culture. *What matters is a person, not person's disability.*

Second, L'Arche acknowledges the reality of disability as a condition, but it does not identify the person according to his/her disability. In L'Arche, disability is not seen as a problem that needs to be resolved (medical model), or as an object of charitable or a one-way care intervention (charity model), or as social activism (social minority model). It does not provide solutions to disability by offering a conceptual understanding of models and theories about various disabilities, but by acceptance of such conditions, not separately, but together with a value of complete person.

Third, employing the dynamic of care and friendship, L'Arche is not a typical caring institution. It is a lived and voluntary experience with a commitment to solidarity and compassion. Its mission is to do things for people but in a dynamic of care and friendship. Although L'Arche shares much with a social inclusion model, it is not a typical to it as it is not merely a place for people with disability (core members), but also their assistants. This means that L'Arche is not a blueprint for therapy or a cure of disability. As embedded in shared experience, the goal or mission of L'Arche is spiritual, psychological and medical improvements of all working together, not the progress of a merely one individual. L'Arche as a disability inclusion type of counterculturalism is committed not to healing within the community (although this element is addressed as transformation in L'Arche), but towards demonstrating the possibility of living together despite cultural, physical and religious differences or differences that disability poses in front of us.

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<sup>738</sup> Michael V. Angrosino, "L'Arche: The Phenomenology of Christian Counter-culturalism" in *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9, 6 (2003): p. 934-954.

<sup>739</sup> Christian Salenson, *L'Arche: A Unique and Multiple Spirituality*, (Paris, L'Arche en France, 2009).

### 3.3.3. Vanier's reference to disability

As stated above, it is difficult to separate Vanier's thinking about disability from his experience with disability in L'Arche. A number of references across academic field of theology (e.g. Hauerwas, Reinders) underpin such thinking. What particularly interests me here is to look at a specific idea and terminology Vanier's ascribes to disability, according to not only his experience with disability in L'Arche, but also his conceptual thinking referring his written opus. When I asked Vanier in an interview in 2016 what he means by disability, he answered:

There is a disability compared to the vision of what human being should be. It is more defined by logos and by capacity to do or to think and grow through the thinking. So, somebody who has disability and so cannot perform is considered disabled. And the same thing is with people with Alzheimer. All of these people with disabilities have lost something, they have lost this capability to do things, so the handicap is the physical reality where people are unable to accomplish what we think a human being should be or should be capable to do.<sup>740</sup>

Besides the *anthropologically* and descriptively shaped thinking of disability in a above citation, Vanier's terminology on disability, reveals other various expressions. The various expressions are interchangeably used between his reference to intellectual disabilities, mostly used in *Becoming Human*, and developmental and several disabilities, mental handicap, etc. Additionally, Vanier in his references to disability interchangeably uses terms such as "people with disability" or people with "intellectual" or "developmental" disability, and in *Man and Woman God made Them*, Vanier's reference to the use of a proper language for disability is the politically correct phrase "people with learning disability" instead of people with intellectual disability.<sup>741</sup> Despite the field of Disability Studies critiques to Vanier's terminology referring disability,<sup>742</sup> Vanier is rather keen to emphasize that despite certain terminology or different expressions for disabilities (as a results of a cultural and linguistic inconsistencies), what is of more importance in this regard is that people with learning disabilities are before all *persons*. His reference to people with disabilities is always a reference to them as persons, including their (people's) abilities and disabilities together with their capacity to grow as people.<sup>743</sup> Besides his reference to disability terminology, another aspect of Vanier's work worth mentioning is his approach to disability in reference to models of disability. Vanier's thinking on disability distinguish from the medical model, which as we could have noticed from earlier examination understands disability as a disorder or a personal tragedy (see second part) that needs to be eliminated. He also distinguishes from attitudes present in a modern contemporary culture towards disabled followed by the assumption that disabled are either the subjects of charitable organizations or being angelic.<sup>744</sup> Vanier's approach towards disability

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<sup>740</sup> This was unpublished content of an interview with Jean in a *Pastoral Review*, also indicated within Introduction of this research.

<sup>741</sup> See for instance Jean Vanier, *Man and Woman God made Them*, (London, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2007).

<sup>742</sup> See for instance Madeline Burghardt, "Brokenness / Transformation: Reflections on Academic Critiques of L'Arche" in *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 36,1 (2016), available from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3734/4214>, [accessed 23 October 2017].

<sup>743</sup> See Vanier, *Man and Woman God made Them*, p. 3.

<sup>744</sup> Pia Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently 'Non-acting' Person*, p. 88-90; 97-108; 113-126.

integrates an attitude that focuses on competences, abilities and gifts of people with disability (often noticed within special education); and the communitarian attitude which in his thinking includes the discovery that people with disability can lead me to discovery of something new. Camphill<sup>745</sup> communities and L'Arche communities would be examples of this approach towards disability. In such Vanier's approach to disability will somehow integrate the positive aspects of the third and fourth attitudes, which is to say that people with disabilities are considered as gifts; they can be our teachers; and they lead the mainstream towards the discovery of something new. He would add that people with disability can not only be leaders towards a new path of humanity (transformation) but could be also a path towards discovery of God. As he said:

Disabled people lead us on a path, which is the Christian path, which teaches us to love with tenderness, listening and openness. This is very different from our individualistic society today. So being with them, they are teaching us something which we should all know but which we don't. Disabled people are not in a separate category from rest of us. Obviously, we are all human, however deep the disability is, but in some mysterious way being with them, they are leading us on the path of what it means to be Christian, what it means to be spiritual.<sup>746</sup>

For Vanier, the competences and communitarian attitude evokes strongly his unique approach to disability. The standpoint of this approach including communitarian and anthropological view on disability also integrates the perspective of the *Second Vatican Council*, particularly *Gaudium et Spes* no.22; no. 24 and *Lumen Gentium* no.16, and brought Vanier close to social justice and the Christian solidarity discourses, instead of social model of disability. That people with disability as "people of God" (*LG*, no.16) are our teachers and as such they can lead us towards God, is something original in Vanier's own thinking on disability. What most strongly resonates within such thinking is his emphasis on a way of living interdependency and appeal to social justice. This put him close to Christian solidarity and at the same time distinguished him from the system of charity portrayed as duty. Namely, Vanier grounds his model of solidarity into an interplay of head and heart, service and being together. In this regard, he departs from a social model and social justice perspective in a way that he does not remain exclusively attached to the social justice idea of inclusion via civil rights. For Vanier, solidarity in combination with the notion of care (the often-invisible component of solidarity) does not resonate with a sense of a duty. Rather, solidarity and care are intertwined in helping the other and are animated through the love and a sense of a common belonging. Such approach that set forward the integration of love and helping, the solidarity and care, arrives from the very foundation and exemplification in L'Arche. Namely, in the 1964, when Vanier started L'Arche he was terrified by the institutional model and medicalization employed towards people with disabilities. A number of references, noted,

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<sup>745</sup> Camphill communities arrived from Camphill Movement founded in 1939 near Aberdeen. The initiative is to impact a social change based on the principles of anthroposophy. In such a perspective they differ from philosophy of L'Arche. Camphill communities are similar to L'Arche as they are the type of reversal inclusion (residential communities) providing the support for the education, employment, and daily lives of adults and children with developmental disabilities, mental health problems, or other special needs

<sup>746</sup> Roy McCloughry, *The enabled life: Christianity in a disabling world*, (London, SPCK, 2013): p.109



demonstrate the isolation and degradation of people with disabilities living in such institutions. The institution, grounded in the medical model of disability, perceived person with disability as tragic and abnormal. Thus, the inner conditions not only increase people's suffering, but denied their dignity. This was a strong starting point for Vanier's reflections and his appeal towards solidarity and social justice. As he wrote:

I had met them both in a rather dismal institution: eighty men, more or less profoundly handicapped, living together, no work, locked doors, two big dormitories, a world of sadness, fear and despair. Both Raphael and Phillippe had suffered from sickness during the early years of their lives which causes some brain damage and physical disability. Both were without families: both were then particularly vulnerable, helpless, and at the mercy of administration, who could push them and move them around.<sup>747</sup>

Contrary to such conditions, the "service" and a common life with Raphael Simi and Phillippe, in L'Arche, was not one of charity, based on a "master-slave" caring relationship, where one is a subject of giving and another is the object of receiving. This service was a response to the cry for love,<sup>748</sup> but also the response to a request for the social justice. Vanier takes into account persons' mental and disabled condition, but never saw their disabled condition as something prior to the person, or as a failure that prevented the person's from their growth. Neither did he perceive the disabled person as an object of charity care or as pitiful. Sharing everyday life with Phillippe and Raphael Simi, a life that had a dynamic of sharing and caring retrieved of original understanding of Christian service and Christian charity. The dynamic of friendship in the caring exchange challenges the traditional way of Christian charity and contrasts with forms of institutionalized Christian solidarity. It also distinguishes Vanier's approach to disability from the medical and charity models, which sees persons merely as objects, or the receivers of care, instead of as subjects capable of giving. Vanier opposes such view by seeing in a person with disability an active agent who is not only capable of growth, but is capable giving to and leading others towards discovery of themselves, or as a way towards God. This, in a nutshell, marks his unique approach to the human person, disability, and Christian solidarity, emphasizing the importance of an encounter, and the implication human vulnerability has for the meaning of humanity.

### **3.3.3.1. Vanier on distinction between disability and vulnerability**

Before I move towards examination of Vanier's notion of vulnerability as constitutive for his anthropology, I would like to outline a few insights of his distinction between vulnerability and disability. As we noted in the first part of the previous chapter (Disability Studies discourses), vulnerability was perceived a negative label of disabled identity in two ways. It was a sign and a cause of social marginalization, and a factor crucial in decreasing disabled people's independence and autonomy. Vanier, as noted earlier, had very specific views on the human person, community and disability. Although his approach to vulnerability stems from the experience of disability in the L'Arche community, he never really explicitly connects vulnerability with disability and vice

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<sup>747</sup> Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, (London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989): p.52.

<sup>748</sup> See David Ford, *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

versa. However, often the interpretation of his thinking, reduces vulnerability to the meaning of disability, and vice versa, and mark people with disability with the label of vulnerable individuals. This is where the main critique from Disability Studies discourses is targeted. Namely, many Disability Studies scholars according to Burghardt<sup>749</sup> analysis, are uneasy with the language and philosophy Vanier employs on the meaning of disability. Not only does this language include reference to vulnerability and brokenness, but often appears as discomfort, particularly to those Disability Studies scholars engaged into disability activism as it challenges their struggles for disabled people's rights, autonomy and empowerment.<sup>750</sup> Despite these critiques, there is something that deserves attention regarding Vanier's notion of vulnerability and related disability. According to Vanier, the encounter with a disabled person or person with visible impairment is always an encounter with the person whose existence is visibly fragile, and we could assume, vulnerable. However, the revelation of vulnerability we discover in person with disability, is a condition of every human person (*Templeton Prize 2015*), not merely a disabled person. Although based on such an argument, Vanier labels people with disabilities as vulnerable, he does not identify disability with vulnerability. Disability is only one place where physical (bodily) vulnerability is manifested. Another aspect of this manifestation is social vulnerability. The social dimension of vulnerability is caused by rejection, isolation and marginalization. Besides being a mark of disabled people's lives, (due to historical impact, rejection and stigma), social vulnerability is also a condition of every human person as part of lived experience. What is important for now to emphasize is that no categorical distinct between disability and vulnerability, found in Vanier.<sup>751</sup> In a nutshell, what is important to underline here is that both disability and vulnerability are human realities, not a category that distinguishes people as disabled and non-disabled, vulnerable and non-vulnerable. This entails that the straightforward distinction between *us* and *them* as could be found in anthropology of JPII does not surface in his understanding of the distinction between disability and vulnerability. All this suggests that for Vanier vulnerability is distinct from disability and is *not* merely a characteristic of disabled people. It is something organic, something that carries ontological importance. Such thinking put him close to disability scholars Tollifston<sup>752</sup> and Finkelstein<sup>753</sup> who draw attention to the universality of vulnerability embodied in human existence, instead of seeing it as an outcome of impairment or social exclusion of disabled people, as this has been often emphasized by certain Disability Studies discussions.

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<sup>749</sup> M. Burghardt, "Brokenness /Transformation: Reflections on Academic Critiques of L'Arche", in *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 2016. Available from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3734/4214>

<sup>750</sup> See for instance Mike Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement: A sociological Approach*, (London, The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1990); Tanya Titchkosky, "Disability Studies: The Old and the New" in *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, Titchkosky, T. and Michalko, R., eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars/Women's Press, 2009): p. 38-63.

<sup>751</sup> See for instance Roy McCloughry, *The enabled life: Christianity in a disabling world*, p.109.

<sup>752</sup> Cf. J. Tollifston, "Imperfection is a beautiful thing: on disability and meditation," in K. Freis & Staring Back (eds.), *The Disability Experience from Inside Out* (New York: Plume, 1997): p.105-112

<sup>753</sup> Cf. Finkelstein V., "Emancipating disability studies," in T. Shakespeare (ed.), *The Disability Studies Reader*. (London: Cassell, 1998): p. 28.

Through the constant insistence on seeing vulnerability as the experience of all people, not only the persons with disability who galvanized his thinking and lead it towards recognition of common humanity and ultimately towards peace building. The recognition of the vulnerability and weaknesses within oneself and the other not only place particular persons close to the other, but increase human solidarity, because being vulnerable is not a characteristic of some, but of all humans.

### 3.3.4. Vanier's discourse on vulnerability: the meaning and the context

The discourse on the notion of vulnerability is not merely an anthropological issue, it is a moral and ethical subject. It permeates lived experience and is a subject of various academic disciplines. However, because everybody has experienced it, vulnerability seems to be a self-evident phenomenon, that is until we are asked to define it. Therefore, it is not always clear whether we are talking about the same thing, when we are talking about vulnerability.<sup>754</sup>

My next step in a further discussion is to move towards examination of vulnerability according to Vanier's understanding: What specific meaning vulnerability has for Vanier, and why does vulnerability matter in his anthropology? I will attempt to examine Vanier's understanding of the meaning of vulnerability and its implication in an anthropology which objects depersonalization. Vanier's concerns give a largely anthropological perspective to vulnerability. In this regard I will distinguish between three aspects, including threefold manifestation, the meaning and specific terminology of his reference to the notion vulnerability. The three key aspects of vulnerability are socio-relational, spiritual and socio ethical. Regarding the socio-relational aspect I will distinguish between its manifestation (bodily, psychological and relational); the approach - context of a narrative; and implication of the specific terminology. The spiritual aspect rely on biblical narrative including the selection of three stories: *Samaritan women* (Jn, 4: 1-42); the *Good*

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<sup>754</sup> The theme of vulnerability within this research has been addressed already as a subject of academic discourses. Here I just would like to recall upon the few elements important for a further discussion on vulnerability in constructing the later anthropology of vulnerability specific to Jean Vanier. The recent academic discourses within the field of biomedicine, social justice and care ethics, moral philosophy and theology have shown particular interest for the notion of vulnerability. The approaches and discourses vary from prescribing vulnerability as experience of a bodily pain, superogation (biomedicine), exploitation, social exclusion, emotional pain, deprivation, exposure (social justice, care ethics, moral philosophy), creatureliness, brokenness, fragility, limitless, suffering, existential condition (theology, moral philosophy). This entails that despite the endeavor within academia in providing the proper understanding on the notion of vulnerability, there is also a problem of etymology of the word vulnerability and various meaning different academic disciplines prescribe to vulnerability. Although the most relevant dictionaries will describe vulnerability with the meaning of the capacity to be wounded, its meaning surpasses such comprehension. In my opinion vulnerability is not merely the capacity to be wounded, weak, and fragile, neither is it a tragic condition of illness and suffering. It is a complex and controversial term which in my suggestions require proper clarification. Despite number of most recent dictionaries prescribe vulnerability with the meaning of being wounded, the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique D'Ethique Chretienne* according to my assessment, provide most relevant definition of vulnerability. It defines vulnerability as a form or mode of human existence embedded in vitality, sensitivity and sociability. The present dictionary also acknowledges vulnerability as a phenomenon that manifests itself through sad emotions (anxieties, despair and dislike) in periods of insecurity, violence, or death. For more on the etymology of the word "vulnerability" see Laurent, Lemoine, Gaziaux Eric, Müller Denis. *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique D'Ethique Chretienne*. s.v. "Vulnérabilité." (Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 2013).

*Samaritan* (Lk, 10:25-37); and *feet washing* (Jn, 13:1-17). The socio-ethical aspect in my assessment includes the perspective of the social model, solidarity and social justice discourses.

#### **3.3.4.1. Socio - relational aspect of vulnerability: From the story to the concept**

On many occasions that when Jean Vanier referred to the meaning of “human,” his answers showed the relationship to vulnerability. During his speech at the *Templeton Prize* nomination in 2015 this notion clearly culminates in his meaning of the human person who is vulnerable: “Being human means to be vulnerable.”<sup>755</sup> Vanier’s writing on vulnerability was the source of reference for many academics, particularly in the field of Disability Theology and Christian Ethics.<sup>756</sup> Moreover, the reference reaches the context of public debates including a number of conference, speeches, and presentations.<sup>757</sup> Starting from the perspective of a person’s story, Vanier does not use a detailed explanation of the meaning of vulnerability as a category and concept. The notion of vulnerability appears as an umbrella term, terminologically, linked to the meaning of brokenness, weakness and woundedness. Using such terminology firstly indicates a different application of vulnerability; and secondly signifies its manifestation as an anthropological (socio-relational) of vulnerability. It is embedded into the experience, as an element revealed within the narrative of a person’s story. Thus, indicating upon vulnerability through the person’s story as something of existential importance, Vanier has methodologically distinguished vision from other approaches to vulnerability such as biomedical, care ethics and social philosophy approach. The peculiarity of Vanier’s approach highlights the description of vulnerability embedded in living experience which then facilitates the development of the concept. This is to say that the notion of vulnerability is interwoven in the lived experience. The vulnerability, primarily revealed in a person’s story, is then later developed into a concept. Integrated in a lived experience, it inevitably reveals its complexity, meaning and application. This means that, as it is often the case, Vanier uses different terms to describe the very same meaning of its application and manifestation. In order to understand this, we need a few insights into his terminology regarding the notion vulnerability. Despite worldwide interest for Vanier’s use of the term, I am convinced that the articulation of Vanier’s usage of the term vulnerability allude upon ambiguity in grasping its full meaning. The perception of such ambiguity in my opinion first includes distinction between vulnerability being a subject of theoretical interpretations and an element embodied into a lived experience; second ambiguity in interpretation indicates distinction between Vanier’s use of the term vulnerability as either a characteristic of merely disabled people or as an essential element of the mainstream account of human existence.<sup>758</sup> Moreover, Vanier’s inconsistent use of the terminology such as fragility, weakness, brokenness, often associated with the meaning

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<sup>755</sup> See *Templeton Prize* speech in 2015, available from <https://www.jean-vanier.org/en/press/templeton-prize-2015> [accessed 21 Mai 2017]

<sup>756</sup> This in my assessment includes theologians already mentioned within the scope of this thesis: e.g. Thomas Reynolds, Brian Brock, Hans Reinders, Pia Matthews

<sup>757</sup> Among others I will select two most visited conferences where Vanier was speaking about fragility and brokenness. These includes his speech delivered at Harvard Divinity School, in 1999 - full text available at <https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2019/05/07/vanier-broken-and-oppressed#>; and a conference in France in 2011, Cf. *Colloque Fragilités interdites*, “All Vulnerable, All Human!”, Lyon, France, 2011.

<sup>758</sup> More on similar discourse see in different authors *Tous fragiles, tous humaines*, (Paris, Albin Michel, 2011).

vulnerability, additionally complicates his very meaning of vulnerability. Despite the above-mentioned, there is something particular with the Vanier's use of the notion of vulnerability, why I think it deserves attention. It lies in its application regarding the meaning of otherness and the construction of a *realistic* ethics grounded in human experience. The beginning of such (realistic) "ethics grounded into human experience" in my opinion centers on an encounter with a person's story and from such reason distinguish from the meaning of the concept.<sup>759</sup>

### 3.3.4.2. Terminology and the meaning

Regarding the use of the term vulnerability, different expressions are applied. Vanier's description of vulnerability attached to the person's story terminologically varies, which could often result in confusion of its meaning. For instance, the term vulnerability is frequently surrounded by the meaning of brokenness, fragility, weakness and woundedness. All these terms etymologically indicate something of an unpleasant, undesirable or limited human condition. This could cause confusion, as Vanier, in addressing human fragility, weakness or vulnerability, often points to similar situations, yet for the each "situation" uses a different meaning.

Sometimes the concepts are used as synonymous; sometimes they diverge from each other.<sup>760</sup> Additionally, it is often difficult to determine clear lines and distinctions between the meaning and usage of the certain terms. However, the terms fragility and vulnerability are among the most common, whereas the terms such as brokenness, weakness and a woundedness imply the meaning of vulnerability and fragility.

Thus, we can say that eventually Vanier, when grounding aspects of vulnerability within the person's story, used it as an umbrella term, besides use of a various terms includes, also a various meanings. This, for instance, entails sociological, psychological and theological meanings. Moreover, it is difficult to separate one particular type or manifestation of vulnerability without referring to the other term. For instance, when Vanier is referring to a socio-relational aspect of vulnerability, it often integrates bodily, psychological, relational manifestation and meaning.

Besides different terms attached to the meaning vulnerability, I will look at distinctions between three different *manifestations* or locations of the anthropological (emphasizing the socio-relational) meaning of vulnerability referred to within the scope of Vanier's narrative. These includes: bodily, psychological and socio relational aspect of anthropological, socio-relational *manifestations* of vulnerability.

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<sup>759</sup> In such regard my thinking refer to Robert Goodin *Protecting the Vulnerable: A Reanalysis of Our Social Responsibilities*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Martha C. Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness – Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1986); Nathalie Millard, *La vulnérabilité, une nouvelle catégorie morale?* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2011.);

<sup>760</sup> For instance the concentration of the use of *brokenness* has been on display in *The Broken Body - Journey to wholeness* (1988); the term *weakness* prevails in *Community and Growth* (2006); the *wound* is explained in *Man and Women God Made Them* (2007); while the terms vulnerability and fragility are most apparent in, *Becoming Human* (1999), *Signs of the Time* (2013) and the *Gospel of John - Gospel of Relationship* (2016). It is not always an easy task to determine the implication and manifestation of such terms applied in Vanier's work, but these terminology has been based on my assessment and books selection

## **Bodily vulnerability**

Bodily vulnerability signify Vanier's reference to the concept of body pointing upon its fragility, susceptibility and weakness. The most important characteristic of this type of vulnerability, according to Vanier, is that it denotes the reality of the physical body. Thus I will define it as bodily vulnerability, following the terminology suggested by scope of medical ethics. Some aspects of bodily vulnerability are the dependent stages of human life, such as infancy and aging, terms often included in Vanier's reference to vulnerability. Others, considering bodily or corporeal vulnerability, are displaced by the notion of fragility.

## **Psychological manifestation of vulnerability**

Another perspective on Vanier's approach to vulnerability is psychological manifestation, typically in the establishment of an inner self. I called it psychological as vulnerability is realized after the encounter with people with disability whose "fragile" or "disabled" condition brings other's people hidden wounds to the surface. This dimension of vulnerability has a deeper meaning as it portrays vulnerability as an important aspect of being human. To denote the vulnerability of each person at the level of the heart and in the search for relationship is specific to Vanier's contribution to the term in *Man and Woman God Made Them*. The meaning of vulnerability and fragility in this context is terminologically intertwined with the meaning of woundedness. Vanier distinguishes between the threefold manifestation of inner wounds. The manifestation implies social, psychological and spiritual wounds, which according to Vanier, corresponds to its threefold projection of such wounds being received from interaction with society, culture and Church; or specifically human interpersonal relationships.

In such regard, his reflection in *Man and Woman God Made Them* underpins Julia Kristeva's<sup>761</sup> specific psychoanalytical knowledge. Coming from a different profession, both Kristeva, as a humanist, (an atheist), and a psychoanalyst, and Vanier as a Roman Catholic, philosopher, spiritual writer and humanitarian, nonetheless have a similar understanding of the relationship between vulnerability and disability, expressed in a common conclusion: that vulnerability is often hidden within ourselves and marked as an essential element of being human. The hidden inner wounds (as marked in their discussion) are often provoked and exposed through the process of confrontation with the fragility of other people or through life-threatening situations.

Their discussion in *Leurs regards perce nos ombres*<sup>762</sup> indicates the specific impact that a confrontation with a person who is visibly fragile - such as a person with disability - has upon

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<sup>761</sup> Julia Kristeva is the French-Bulgarian a seminal figure in modern psychoanalytic, linguistic, and feminist criticism. Kristeva's subsequent writings have explored a variety of topics, including the experience of difference, the nature of religious belief and the nature of female genius. In 2004, she was the first recipient of the *Norway's Prix Holberg* in recognition of her "innovative explorations of questions on the intersection of language, culture and literature which inspired research across the humanities and the social sciences throughout the world and have also had a significant impact on feminist theory. For more see <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0063.xml>

<sup>762</sup> Julia Kristeva & Jean Vanier, *Leurs regards perce nos ombres* (Paris, Fayard, 2011).

others. As explained further, the challenge of meeting a person who is fragile puts non-disabled persons in direct confrontation with hidden personal wounds and fragilities in themselves, calling for recognition (Kristeva) or healing (Vanier). This means that vulnerability is inherent and essential in being human. Only through confrontation and acceptance of personal vulnerability, according to such a view, can overcome the prejudices people keep towards disability and the differences found in others, can be overcome. A person with disability, in this setting, calls into question the foundations of the ideology of normality, and reveal dimensions of ourselves that one would rather not address, such as human dependence and vulnerability.

### **Socio - relational manifestation of vulnerability**

The culmination of Vanier's understanding of vulnerability is the socio-relational aspect of vulnerability. Not only does it integrate the bodily and psychological aspects of vulnerability, but it speaks profoundly about the notion of the human. In my assessment, the major significance of Vanier's meaning of vulnerability is in its socio-relational implications including its interdependent character. The vulnerability discovered in a person is not of a matter of contradiction, but, to the contrary, it might become a common ground between two persons who enter into communion. Starting the community, Vanier was deeply touched by the brokenness of Raphael and Philippe. This brokenness Kathryn Spink, in her biography of L'Arche, interpreted as their cry for love and desire to be appreciated as valuable human beings: "*Their cry for love flows also from their deep loneliness and their lack of self - esteem. They have called me to listen and to respond to their cry with competence, to welcome their vulnerability with tenderness, and then to be in communion with them.*"<sup>763</sup> Through the encounters with their poverty and cry for love, but also their capacity to break down the barriers in others, Vanier recognizes hidden wisdom that awakens the vulnerability of others and manifests itself in openness, towards acceptance and transformation.<sup>764</sup> In other words, this entails that Vanier's "argument" on vulnerability, which arises from the story (lived experience) rather than the concept, is a socio-relational manifestation of the anthropological, socio relational aspect of vulnerability. When talking about relationships Jean Vanier emphasizes that vulnerability, fragility and weakness play an important role in human life as a constitutive element of human relationships. This indicates an aspect of the socio-relational *type* of vulnerability. Unlike certain feminist care ethicist, such as Kittay, within the scope of feminist care ethics and social philosophy, Vanier's use of the expression of interdependency indicates a mutual recognition and acceptance of vulnerability as a way to flourish, instead of meaning that interdependency creates or enhances vulnerabilities (*contra* Kittay, in *Love's Labor*).<sup>765</sup> Although Kittay may be correct that vulnerability is a threat in certain occasions, Vanier may be correct as well in pointing to vulnerability as sign of transformation. This particularly signals that vulnerability is a gift that binds people to each other. This can be

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<sup>763</sup> Spink, *The Miracle, the Message, the Story: Jean Vanier and L'Arche*, p. 53.

<sup>764</sup> Cf. David Ford, *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love*, p.22.

<sup>765</sup> Cf. Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency*, (London, Routledge, 1999): p. 51-73.

fundamentally communicated through the correlation of the love which welcomes another into a space of mutual vulnerability.

In my opinion, however, a complete understanding of vulnerability integrates both the concept and a narrative. Departing from the person's story, as a peculiarity of Vanier's approach, vulnerability cannot be detached from the living experience of the person. On the contrary, the complete meaning of vulnerability cannot be grasped if it remains trapped within a story. The concept cannot be understood without the framework of the story, neither can the story be captured without the meaning of the concept, as it may lose its wider significance and implication regarding the complete meaning of the human.

### 3.3.4.3. Vulnerability - a sign of transformation or manipulation

In a recent academic discourses vulnerability was defined not merely as a threat or an element of exposure,<sup>766</sup> but also as a sign of transformation and contradiction.. Similarly, Maillard, in her discourse on vulnerability, distinguish between vulnerability as a sign of manipulation or transformation.<sup>767</sup> Besides my assessment in acknowledging vulnerability as an anthropological category manifested in its threefold aspect (bodily, psychological and socio-relational) Vanier, ascribed to vulnerability the meaning of a sign that leads towards transformation. Accordingly, the transformation is often a result of socio-relational aspect of vulnerability. To be realistic, it is nevertheless correct to understand vulnerability with a meaning of the painful, harmful and unpleasant emotions, or as a source of a tragedy, close to suffering situations. For such reason, vulnerability is indeed something that needs to be avoided. However, Vanier looks on vulnerability from the perspective of encounter, not as a concept. The practical element involved in such encounter requires communication with another human being. The process of encounter, according to Vanier, is often a mystery, and the vulnerability, on the one hand, could manifest as difficult and unpleasant exposure, or on the other hand, as a source or a seed of a something positive. The transformative part of vulnerability, when placed within human relationships, as Vanier would say, is the discovery of something new that lead towards the *liberation of human heart*. Thus, vulnerability is before all a sign of hope<sup>768</sup> and transformation.<sup>769</sup> Besides Vanier, many assistants

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<sup>766</sup> See for instance Eva Feder Kittay, in Eva F. Kittay, *Love's Labour: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency*, (London, Routledge, 1999): p. 51-73.

<sup>767</sup> Similarly this has been indicated by Maillard. Cf. Maillard, N. (2014, April). Le concept de vulnérabilité, de l'anthropologie à l'éthique. Paper presented at the L'éthique de la vulnérabilité Conference at University of Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France. [http://ed.theologie.unistra.fr/fileadmin/upload/edtsr/Documents/programme\\_doctoral/2013-2014/programmes/JD6\\_programme.pdf](http://ed.theologie.unistra.fr/fileadmin/upload/edtsr/Documents/programme_doctoral/2013-2014/programmes/JD6_programme.pdf)

<sup>768</sup> That vulnerability is a sign of hope has been also indicated by Belgian philosopher and physicist Dominique Lambert. Lambert from his scientific knowledge come to conclusion that vulnerability despite being a sign of risk, can be also a sign of hope. Cf. D. Lambert, "Risques et espoirs d'un discours sur la vulnérabilité humaine" in *Fragilité, dis-nous ta grandeur* (Paris, Cerf, 2013): pp. 13-30 (Proceedings of the conférence : Sense or nonsense of "Human Fragility" in contemporary European society (European Parliament, Friday 21st of October 2011

<sup>769</sup> See, Timothy Kearney, "The Transforming Power of Vulnerability," in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 78, (2013):



in L'Arche share similar experience. For instance, Tim Kearney in his reviewed article addresses, vulnerability is a key element that fosters communication between the assistant and the core member and is a sign of transformation in the life of humanity.<sup>770</sup> In line with the psychological aspect of the anthropological socio-relational manifestation of vulnerability, Vanier, on many occasions, reveals that the encounter with persons with disabilities evokes insights into personal vulnerability, and as such entails the transformation of one person's attitude. Although both Vanier, and Kearney, depart from living experience indicated by the socio-relational type of vulnerability, they do not remain merely on this. The capacity to accept vulnerability is congruent with the ability to accept personal poverty and one's limits. In this regard, vulnerability has universal application. Vanier describes vulnerability as a way towards transformation of humanness. In other words, vulnerability is a risk that can be undertaken as a way towards openness to new possibilities, and as one particular means of personal "transformation". With the reference to the meaning of vulnerability as transformative, Vanier's meaning of vulnerability is equally applied to all humans, not merely those with disabilities or his friends in L'Arche. This denotes vulnerability as an anthropological reality that does not distinguish between vulnerable and invulnerable subjects, but is one category fundamental to all. It is a cultural challenge and it is never easy task to speak about transformation through vulnerability and weakness, especially when the power and knowledge as major civilizational values dominate our thinking on humanity. The power of vulnerability as a sign of transformation, for Vanier, implies something tremendously important about vulnerability that is the *confrontation with the truth of one's limitations*.

It follows that vulnerability is not only fundamental to the experience of being human, and a power that leads towards transformation and change.<sup>771</sup> Instead, it is, as Vanier perceives it, the crucial element of growth in humanity. As a point of conclusion, in a nutshell, I would like to highlight a few lines crucial for Vanier's understanding of vulnerability as a sign of transformation. Vanier suggests that people who are considered to be marginalized and excluded from society can teach others to acknowledge and accept personal vulnerability by moving away from false security and self-image. Likewise, the meaning of individual experiences of weakness and vulnerability, together with the capacity for relationship and creativity, opens the possibility for the discovery of hope. That indicates that vulnerability dwells where a person cannot do much by his/her self, but

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<sup>770</sup> Kearney, "The Transforming Power of Vulnerability," p. 25.

<sup>771</sup> Similar conclusions can be noticed by geologist Xavier La Pichon. Drawing from his scientific experience as geologist, Pichon indicates upon the importance of the elements of fragility and vulnerability in the evolution of nature and in development of human species. Accordingly, he claims: "As I know from my own scientific experience, weaknesses, imperfections and faults sparks the evolution of a system. Contrary to what is often assumed, the weak and imperfect parts of a system are often those that allow evolution to occur without a major revolution. A system that is too perfect is also too rigid because it does not need to evolve; a perfect, smoothly running system, without any defects, can evolve only after a major upheaval - evolution occurs through revolution." Cf. Le Pichon, Xavier. "Ecce Homo : Behind Humanity." On being" with Krista Tippett Blog, August 16, 2012. Available from <http://www.onbeing.org/program/fragility-and-evolution-our-humanity/feature/ecce-homo- behold-humanity/1561> [accessed March 15 2015].

only with the help of the other, which can bring people to a discovery of the truth about themselves and others. Asserting that vulnerability is a source of transformation, Vanier does not discard human flourishing. Contrary to utilitarian thinkers he associates flourishing with another perspective, which consist in a feeling of a common belonging. This concept not only reflects his meaning of humanity, but clearly addresses an emergence of particular type of anthropology. This is not only an anthropology of L'Arche, but *Vanier's anthropology of vulnerability developed within L'Arche*.

#### **3.3.4.4. Spiritual aspect of vulnerability**

In addition to the threefold types of the anthropological manifestation of vulnerability and the meaning of vulnerability as a sign of transformation, Vanier's understanding includes the certain biblical texts that impacts his understanding of vulnerability. Namely, through the application of a scriptural texts where there is a possibility for encounter with vulnerability, Vanier's conceptual reflection on vulnerability receives its full meaning. Among others, I will select the stories of the Samaritan woman as told in John 4:1-42 reflected in *Becoming Human*; the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-37 reflected in *The broken body: Journey to Wholeness*; and Jesus washing the feet to His disciples in John 13:1-17 in *Drawn Into the Mystery of Jesus Through the Gospel of John*. The hidden vulnerability of the Samaritan women in her encounter with Jesus shows the woundedness and brokenness of a woman manifested in her need for recognition and love. Jesus, as Vanier asserted, relates to the woman not as a superior, (as this is often the case of those following Aristotle's logic), but as a one in need of a drink of water. The encounter between the divine and human implies recognition of hidden aspects of the woman's nature which ends in the healing of the woman's wounds, understood as existential change of her character. Through the implication of such scriptural narrative, we can notice vulnerability as part of the existential condition, terminologically closer to the meaning of woundedness, manifested as psychological and socio-relational.

The second story represents the nature of encounter between a Jew and a Samaritan whose body has been wounded and is in particular need of a cure. The encounter reveals bodily vulnerability, but also the risk of socio-relational encounter between the Jew and the good Samaritan. What happens if we knew the end of the story? Would the Jew and the Samaritan be transformed in an encounter with each other's vulnerability?

The third Scripture narrative refers to Jesus washing the feet to his disciples illustrated in John's 13. The meaning of such a paradigm is not only exemplified in L'Arche, but according to Vanier's interpretation in his *Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus Through the Gospel of John*,<sup>772</sup> symbolizes descending element of God's presence linked with the humble image of Jesus. The washing of feet is not merely a gesture, it is a meeting between master and disciple (taking the role

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<sup>772</sup> Cf. Jean Vanier, *Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus Through the Gospel of John*. See also Jean Vanier, *The Gospel of John, the Gospel of Relationship*, p. 223-273.

of a servant) as a movement of transition from control to vulnerability and intimacy - *the sign of exchange and contradiction of roles (e.g. master-slave dichotomy), leading toward the beginning of something new*. The act of washing the feet, according to Vanier, represents an image of washing each other's wounds, and marks the descending character of one person towards the other. It is a challenging task to detect what type of vulnerability it reveals as the gesture has deep meaning in the story of Jesus as God's Servant. In my observation the gesture itself implies the totality of human vulnerability manifested in its existential and anthropological aspect, but it reveals as a socio relational aspect of vulnerability. Vulnerability is understood as a wound that needs healing at the level of body, spirit and psyche. It symbolizes God's paradoxical humble descending to encounter the human in his/her creatureliness through offering the gift of freedom and the fullness of life.

### 3.3.4.5. Socio-ethical aspect of vulnerability

In the volume *Living Gently in a Violent World*, Stanley Hauerwas, John Swinton and Jean Vanier outlined contours of L'Arche communities as a movement of peace.<sup>773</sup> The authors agree that the key idea of L'Arche's message to the world embodies a different idea of being in the world, one where the image of the broken, wounded and weak not only counterbalances the standard image of the ideal human as capable and powerful, but witnesses the new order marked by forms of gentleness and faithfulness. The key of such a message I would address as particular *reverse* in reference to the meaning of contemporary notion of being human. This reversal consists in - what Hauerwas in *Paradox of Disability*, additionally observes, - the fear of violence, but not in the first instance the fear of an enemy, but rather the fear that makes us unwilling to acknowledge the wounded character of our lives.<sup>774</sup> After outlining the vulnerability as anthropological, central to human existence, I will turn to its socio-ethical implication. This is to say that, according to my assessment of Vanier's thinking, vulnerability is not only a matter of human anthropology, but he is pointing to its socio-ethical character. In other words, I will describe Vanier's concept of vulnerability as an inner (*ad intra*) and outward (*ad extra*) manifestation. The inner implication of vulnerability, in my opinion, refers to vulnerability as an anthropologically manifested condition. The outwards implication points to the outside person (outwards) manifestation. In this section I will look at this *ad extra* or the outside effect pointing to its socio-ethical meaning. Contrary to some other aspects of vulnerability where Vanier ascribes to vulnerability an existential or socio relational meaning (*Becoming Human* or *Man and Woman God Made them*), in *Sings of the Time*, Vanier's notion of vulnerability adopts more profoundly a socio-ethical perspective. As the socio-ethical component, vulnerability appeals to the demands of social justice. In what do these demands consist, and how are they exactly manifested? The denial of vulnerability as an existential notion, according to Vanier, displays within society a rejection of the fragile, broken and weak. In

<sup>773</sup> See Stanley Hauerwas and Jean Vanier, "*Living gently in a Violent world: The Prophetic Witness of Weakness*", p. 43-59.

<sup>774</sup> Cf. Reinders S. Hans, eds. *The Paradox of Disability: Responses to Jean Vanier and L'Arche communities from Theology and the Sciences*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan): p. 115.

other words, the denial of vulnerability as embodied experience within oneself causes the fear and marginalization of sick,<sup>775</sup> disabled, people with Alzheimer,<sup>776</sup> and the mentally ill<sup>777</sup> within the context of society. This within the context of lived experience causes social, economic and cultural division between the powerful and the powerless, capable and incapable, vulnerable and invulnerable. Moreover, the socio-cultural upheavals, according to Vanier, reflect anthropological biases, and vice versa. The anthropological distinction between vulnerable and the non-vulnerable creates a discrepancy between the weak and the strong within a socio-ethical context.<sup>778</sup> Due to the denial of vulnerability as an anthropological condition, manifested, for instance, as difference and sickness, Vanier realizes that the lives of all afflicted persons are additionally framed by social, ethical and legal apparatus. Sometimes the greatest pain, according to Vanier, comes from social, relational and economic rejection, of vulnerability as a condition of the human. The rejection manifests in form of isolation, marginalization, loneliness and material poverty. As Vanier says:

For many years now I have had the privilege of living with men and women with disabilities. I have discovered that even though a person may have severe brain damage, that is not the source of his or her greatest pain. The greatest pain is rejection, the feeling that nobody really wants you like that. The feeling that you are seen as ugly, dirty, a burden, of no value. That is the pain I have discovered in the hearts of our people.<sup>779</sup>

The above paragraph is an impetus for looking vulnerability as a socio-ethical phenomenon, including outward afflictions and exposures of an already embodied vulnerability. The idea of rejecting vulnerability on the one hand, means also rejecting the vulnerable and fragile within society. Differently, such rejection is clearly the projection of societal tendencies towards creating a societal value system based on *invulnerabilities*. The denial of embedded vulnerability is often the result of a rejection within the social context. Thus, the anthropological distinction between abnormal and normal, weak and strong, rich and poor, is not only an ethical and moral problem but an appeal for social justice and solidarity. The socio-ethical meaning of vulnerability consists, therefore, in pointing to malicious practices that degrade people with disability, and every vulnerable person's condition.

### **3.3.4.6. Socio-ethical manifestation of vulnerability in the perspective of the social model, social justice and solidarity discourses**

Vanier's reference to social vulnerability and its socio-ethical implication shares with the social model of disability the critique of exclusion, with the JPPII, the critiques of socio-biological

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<sup>775</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris*, 11 February 1984.

<sup>776</sup> E.g. Thierry Collaud, Véronique Gay-Crosier Lemaire, Magdalena Burlacu, eds. *Alzheimer, une personne quoi qu'il arrive*, (Fribourg, Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 2013).

<sup>777</sup> See also John Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person. Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems*, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2000).

<sup>778</sup> See Vanier, *Becoming Human*, 1999.

<sup>779</sup> Vanier, *From Brokenness to Community*, p.13.

structures of power and the vision of Christian solidarity; and with social justice discourses, the implication of social aspect of vulnerability.

#### **a) Social model**

After Vanier started his life in L'Arche with two disabled people, he was shocked by the institutional conditions these people were living in. Additionally, during his journey with disabled persons in L'Arche, he visited many asylums and institutions around the world witnessing similar conditions. Although Vanier would depart from a social model in attaching to people with disability the condition of vulnerability (objection), he shares with the social model in focusing upon social (external) factors such as exclusion, harm, isolation, and power that increase the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities or their dignity and social status. Additionally, his concerns for the socio-ethical aspect of vulnerability share with the social model the critique of medical and institutional conditions including, the critique of social and environmental isolation and the abuse within institutions inflicted upon disabled people. The tyranny of normality, as Vanier discusses in *Signs of the Times*,<sup>780</sup> or simply the criteria of normality within the mainstream contemporary world, is not only a hierarchy of social status, but of success, strength, beauty, self-reliance, able-bodies, intelligence, etc. These, as a cultural norms, often dominate within the context of contemporary society. Following such cultural trends, there is often little space to address complexity or value in a person that departs from such descriptions. Vanier challenges those societal structures that increases exclusion, injustices poverty, and isolation of persons. His reasoning regarding the socio-ethical manifestation of vulnerability puts Vanier close to the social model, but he also departs from this notion by underlying the importance of the encounter. Indeed, his discussion on vulnerability as socio-ethical aspect raises awareness about respect, recognition and affirmation of the rights of people with disabilities, and those who are living with great vulnerabilities. However, the crucial aspect of this socio-ethical dimension of vulnerability is an appeal to encounter, not the distribution of rights and freedoms. In this stance, although Vanier shares much with the social model and disability discourses, he also departs from it by his insistence on appealing to the value of encounter.

#### **b) Solidarity, JPPII and Vanier**

Vanier's, by placing the poor and marginalized at the center of his socio-ethical concerns and his appeal to structures of power within society and the Church could appear to some type of liberation theologian. This is correct in that Vanier raises awareness and concerns about the despised and disvalued within society, and challenges certain social and ecclesial structures. However, I would rather describe Vanier's view of the theology of liberation as being closer to that of JPPII and his idea of solidarity.<sup>781</sup> Namely, Vanier's critique of structures of power and

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<sup>780</sup> Jean Vanier, *Signs of the Time: Seven Paths of Hope for a Troubled World*, (London, Darton, Longman& Todd Ltd, 2013).

<sup>781</sup> In such regard, I consider JPPII definition of solidarity developed and presented during the lectures of Thierry

injustices does not focus much on material poverty, but raises concerns about moral and socio-relational poverty. Thus, the focus of Vanier's orientation is liberation of the heart, and a critique targeted towards the liberal practices of denial of human dignity and vulnerability. Opposing the ideology of the strong and powerful puts Vanier closer to JP II's dichotomy between the ethics of strong and the ethics of weak, instead of his critique of material poverty within the theology of liberation. The socio-ethical concerns regarding injustice, for Vanier, do not merely refer the material poverty. His socio-ethical dimension of vulnerability manifested as injustice focuses on the moral poverty of a person. This includes the person's inwardness, and shares with much more JP II's anthropology of interdependence, instead of liberation theology. Moreover, as JP II who in *Evangelium Vitae*, his social encyclicals, and *Salvifici Doloris*, criticizes the utilitarian calculations regarding human dignity and structures of socio-biological powers which deny suffering, Jean Vanier, by expressing his concerns for vulnerable within socio-cultural systems, opposes liberal tendencies towards the rejection or denial of fragility and human vulnerability. The difference is that Vanier starts from the explicit practical experience of disability in L'Arche by living with more than vulnerable, and JP II, from his rather conceptual mainstream attitude towards suffering humans. Similarly, as JP II expressed his concerns for the denial of human suffering and dignity, Vanier expressed his concerns for the denial of vulnerability. When such discourses includes people with disabilities then the danger of it is that it tolerates only the "normal", and targets the "abnormal". If, as Vanier said, with the progress in genetic testing and developments in biomedical informatics, the disabled will be changed, and the rest of the "normal" will not be changed, then this creates a huge ethical concern for the meaning of the human. The denial of difference (disabled-non disabled; vulnerable-non-vulnerable) leads towards dichotomy between "normal" people's yearning for power and success, and the person with disability yearning for love and compassion.<sup>782</sup> For Vanier as well as for JP II, a person is never a means to an end. And within the socio-ethical dimension of vulnerability people with disability were often the means to the end of some more powerful people or structures. The anthropology based on recognition of vulnerability and respect of human dignity is in a position to combat such socio-ethical practices employed towards the *disabled*.

### c) The social justice discourses

Although acknowledging its inner aspect, Vanier in many occasions pointed to external factors that reject innate vulnerabilities. Here he is speaking about social justice as it is related to vulnerability. The socio-ethical manifestation within the context of social justice in my opinion

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Collaud, at the Department of Social Christian Ethics, University of Fribourg. Collaud referring to JP II highlights that solidarity implies interdependency which means seeing other not as instrument or rivalry, but as a helper and one that is in need of help. Likewise, the other is not seen only as a subject of rights and freedoms, but as an image of living God. Solidarity implies responsibility for the other and environment, it is a path towards peace and development. It is obligation and a Christian virtue in such as it includes dimension of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. Cf. Thierry Collaud, « La solidarité et la subsidiarité, des principes-clé de l'éthique sociale chrétienne », Cours complémentaire de théologie morale spéciale, Fribourg, Spring, 2019.

<sup>782</sup> McCloughry, *The Enabled life: Christianity in a disabling world*, p. 107-118.

implies modern legal and ethical discourses oriented towards the denial of vulnerability. On the other hand, such a polemic implies socio-economic injustices towards vulnerable people, and increases their already embodied vulnerabilities. Vanier's approach to vulnerability as a socio-ethical dimension has been formed in reference to liberal policies related to power and social justice. The rejection of the vulnerable and the fragile according to Vanier points not only to the problem of contemporary structures of power and systems of socio-economic injustices, but to the problem of the contemporary view of humanity, indicating a rejection and separation of some for the sake of others.

When addressing the social dimension of vulnerability, I will address Vanier's approach as one that arrives close to the social philosophy and social justice contemporary discourses. For instance, social philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum and Ruth Macklin, similarly to Vanier, point to unjust practice, which increases people's embodied vulnerabilities. When this refers to people with disabilities, who are already more than vulnerable, the "silent versions" of injustices implemented in biomedical practices, such as prenatal diagnosis and family planning; or socio-legal injustices such as exclusion, marginalization or isolation, not only can afflict people with disability, but increases their already embodied vulnerabilities. Additionally, another example of socio-cultural maleficent practices inflicted upon persons includes living in slums and shanties (social poverty), abandoned children, women (emotional vulnerabilities due to isolation), women and men living in prisons (legal injustices).<sup>783</sup> All this points to social vulnerabilities that resulted in an increase of a personal vulnerabilities. Pointing out that the resistance of vulnerability within socio-ethical context resulted in isolation and exclusion, Vanier demonstrated that vulnerability can be threatened and that specific social factors such as isolation, exclusion, poverty, rejection or simply a hostility towards vulnerability and disability, can increase the vulnerability of a certain individuals. This is the reason why his socio-ethical aspect of vulnerability not only reveals what vulnerability as socio-ethical dimension is, but moreover, indicates that vulnerable subjects need adequate protection. The process of counterbalance between weakness and strength, in my opinion, demonstrates Vanier's appeal to a system of social justice, but also challenges the system of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church to rethink its view concerning not only the "vulnerable", but also the meaning of power and strengths. Strength in Vanier's perspective does not have an entirely negative meaning, but represents a failure when the prevailing injustice of dominant socio-bio-economic systems creates vulnerability, marginalizes the poor and needy, or exaggerates weaknesses and vulnerabilities of more than vulnerable members. In such instances strength has a negative meaning. However, in order to grasp the full meaning of the strength as dominant force within particular socio-cultural systems, we must always reconsider it in a parallel with weakness. Strength, often perceived as a dominant socio-cultural factor, results in an underestimation of a system of weakness, fragility and human vulnerability.

As a point of conclusion on this discussion, we could say that the confrontation with the human fragility and vulnerability, or with fragile and vulnerable people, questions the contemporary

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<sup>783</sup> Vanier, *Signs of the Times*, p.72

ethical vision of the human person and the types of a liberal bioethics in understanding the meaning of being human. The solution to the socio-ethical demands outlined above, in my opinion, lies in the acceptance of embodied vulnerability and the decrease of a socio-economic “vulnerabilities” as a possible tool in combating the forces of power and creating alternative ways towards peace and compassion. As Vanier in conversation with Roy McCloughry, said:

I see army officers who are living the army and are now wanting training in heading up homes for elderly people. There is a movement which is growing because this need for power has gone too far. Some are beginning to sense that there must be another road and for some that will be a Christian road. But essentially it is a realization that to be human we have to accept our vulnerability and the vulnerabilities of others.<sup>784</sup>

### **3.3.5. The meaning of the other**

The anthropology of vulnerability would be incomplete without additional reference to Vanier’s understanding of the other. As with the notion of vulnerability, Vanier does not provide a systematic conceptual presentation of the other. My purpose, however, is to construct a presentation of Vanier’s understanding of the other, mostly based on the integration of the narrative applied in L’Arche, and the meaning of the other in reference to his written opus. Here specifically I will separately look at elements constituent of Vanier’s understanding of the other and the structure of the other revealed within the process of mutual dependency.

#### **3.3.5.1. The other: a person with unique (sacred) dignity and a quality of heart**

It is important to know how we as humans belong to each other, but it is even more important to know what our thinking about the other, implies. According to Vanier, his most distinguished thinking on the other implies meaning that the other is a different person composed of a quality of the heart and a particular uniqueness. Vanier, in his construction of the notion of the other, similarly as JP II, starts from a Scriptural and Roman Catholic tradition, as envisioned by the *Second Vatican Council*. This congruence within *Gaudium et Spes* no. 16; no. 25 includes sharing the image of God and ascribing to every person a sacred dignity. Although they share a personalistic vision of the other, JP II and JV also slightly differ in their understanding of the other. Contrary to JP II, who looks upon the other through the perspective of an image of God and other’s body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, Vanier’s approach to the notion of the other is from the concrete experience of disability, and the meaning of the encounter. The other does not only indicate the form of participation (brother, friend or a spouse). The other in the thoughts of Jean Vanier is an interplay of being vulnerable and unique. In other words, it corresponds to his vision of the meaning of the human. The personalistic aspect extended within this thinking explicitly says that everyone born of a man and woman is a person, even if their deepest identity remains concealed beneath serious disturbance and depravity.<sup>785</sup> The universality of such thinking points

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<sup>784</sup> McCloughry, *The enabled life: Christianity in a disabling world*, p. 118

<sup>785</sup> Jean Vanier, *Made for Happiness: Discovering the Meaning of Life with Aristotle* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Publisher, 2001): p. 182



to every person as a sacred request to be respected;<sup>786</sup> every person possesses the *capacity* for relationship, and besides this, bears a unique value and dignity. This thinking contrasts with the logic of the ancient Greeks in their distinction between human superiority and inferiority and is a strong critique of the contemporary neoliberal bioethics directed by premises of who counts and who does not count as a person. And most importantly, such logic even extends the meaning of the personal within its personalistic view. The importance of the encounter in such a perspective not only reveals the personhood of the person, his/her identity and dignity, but it places the person before person's attributes. This is particularly important to keep on mind when such encounter meets a person with disability. In other words, as it is often the case within our contemporary context, when encountering a person with disability we see her/his disability, deformed body or lack of linguistic capacity before the meeting the actual person. This firstly reveals that despite the socio-economic progress and intellectual achievements the late modern cultural context became extensively governed by the attributes and categories of a person before the person's true identity and his/her value. Secondly, the encounter with the person with disability places in front of us a different set of values that depart from a normal system of beliefs. Such a "liberal" thinking Vanier contrast with a following remarks. The encounter with a person with disability is before all, according to Vanier, an anthropological ground for revealing the other in his/her structure of being vulnerable. For instance, the encounter with the disabled who present a different other at first is an encounter between two persons where one is capable of hiding and another cannot hide his physical vulnerability, pain or brokenness. The disabled other in this encounter is at first a stranger to a non-disabled and vice versa. The presence of someone who is vulnerable or fragile triggers the other person's selfhood to open up or close down the self. The presence of the other's body, such as person with disability, according to Vanier, projects the inner scream for acceptance (in case of a person with disability) and as such, in reverse reveals one's inner, hidden scream for love, acceptance and belonging. The important aspect of this is that I am not only what I achieve intellectually and physically, but I am more than that. I am the person, a subject, a vulnerable other. The openness towards communication with disabled person not only challenges my inner self, but also reveals to me something essential about myself.<sup>787</sup> Another characteristic of Vanier's meaning of that I will highlight here as other the person's sacredness. In fact, it is the person's sacredness that corresponds to the person's dignity and vice versa. In other words, the other person is a person with unique dignity and a sacred history. The sacred history of the person, or a person's sacredness, signifies the person's dignity, based on the fact of being an image of God. The knowledge of being an image of God is placed into the heart<sup>788</sup> of each person (cf. GS, no.16). The quality of the heart,

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<sup>786</sup> Vanier, *Made for Happiness*, p. 180

<sup>787</sup> This has been highlighted in Vanier, *From Brokenness to Community*;

<sup>788</sup> The heart has been one of the important themes in biblical and theological literature. The book of Wisdom was particularly concerned by the meaning of the notion of heart. The heart was the source of Wisdom. Scripture, particularly the Biblical anthropology of Old Testament, describes heart as a center of a man. (find the expression in dictionary of biblical anthropology). The New testament literature adds to this understanding as *cor unum et anima una* (Acts, 4, 2). The patristic era formulation of the heart has been influenced by the dispute between Eastern and Western thought. This created two different views on the meaning of the heart. One meaning was under the influence of Platonism and intellectualism, and another implies mystical and emotional

according to Vanier, is a source of this knowledge and represents a unique sacredness as an unprecedented knowledge about the person, known only to God and to that particular person. *Gaudium et Spes* no.16, in addressing the indispensable dignity and a value of the other person, instead of being situated in a person's consciousness, according to Vanier is revealed in the person's heart, as an inner source of communication with God.<sup>789</sup> Vanier's reference to the notion of the heart follows Scriptural logic in such that the heart is the core of a person's being, where a person is put into the presence of his/her God and is capable hearing God's voice in the sacredness of his/her heart. Following such logic, the person with disability is also a person and from this perspective is capable of hearing the voice of God. As he said:

Yet, it is the heart which is the core of the person and the place of true encounter. And our attraction to the good and towards a life of truth finds its source in the heart, which has been awakened through the infant's communion with the mother.<sup>790</sup>

From this perspective, the heart is an affective dimension, but most of the time it is referred to as a true source of wisdom. The novelty added to Vanier's understanding of a human person is not only the notion of heart as an essence of human, but his emphasis that people with disability have a strong ability to develop *heart to heart* communication. In L'Arche the encounter with a person with disability reveals this perspective of *heart to heart* communication understood as the union in the "meetings of the hearts." The human nature, the moral capacities for action, and the socio-psychological nature of people with disability were questioned throughout history. The contemporary concerns about the lives of disabled people questions their genetics and their human wholeness, as well as their moral capacities. Vanier's insistence on the knowledge of the heart and the *heart to heart* communication, objects not merely to the reductionist view of the person, but moreover, objects To Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* postulate applied within such view. The importance of Vanier's perspective on meaning of the heart, not only contrasts such view, but, on the one hand it brings humanity to the core of its being, while on the other hand, it promotes tolerance towards difference, resolving the ambiguity in regard to disabled people's identities. Vanier tends to remediate social injustices inflicted upon disabled and more than vulnerable people by bringing people back to the realization of the capacity of heart as a source of true humanness. The capacity of a disabled person to flourish despite a lower level of intellectual capacities is due to their great capacity to relate, not on the level of intellect, but on the level of heart and the importance of one's presence. The practical insights brought into discourse and revealed through the encounter with a disabled person confirmed heart as the basic and deepest level of a person's existence.

In a nutshell, when Vanier, is turning towards elevating the priority of the heart, he is not denying intellectual knowledge and prioritizing the meaning of the heart, but addressing the

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connotations.

<sup>789</sup> For instance, in *Signs of the Times*, Vanier had made a robust link between the meaning of the heart and consciousness presented in *Gaudium et Spes* no.16; Cf. Vanier, *Signs of the Times*, p. 52-72

<sup>790</sup> Cf. Vanier, *Signs of the Times*, p.58

problem which denial of the quality or wisdom of the heart can cause. This means that the value of human dignity is inscribed in the person's heart (quality of the heart), whose value revealed through the encounter entails person's relational capacity. As he wrote:

We tend to reduce being human to acquiring knowledge, power, and social status. We have disregarded the heart, seeing it only as a symbol of weakness, the center of sentimentality and emotion, instead of as a powerhouse of love that can reorient us from our self-centeredness, revealing to us and to others the basic beauty of humanity, empowering us to grow.<sup>791</sup>

### 3.3.5.2. The meaning of the other revealed through the mutual interdependency

Theologically speaking, interdependence is twofold: first it implies our bodily, social and cultural interdependence with other humans, and, secondly, the Christological interdependence that connects us with Christ and with those who are baptized and belong to the one body of Christ. The indispensable value of human dignity according to Vanier lies in the core of a person's consciousness, which implies the quality of the heart. However, the emphasis on seeing the other through the perspective of the quality of the heart, without implication of its socio-relational element would be rather incomplete and static. The socio-relational aspect constitutive of the meaning of the human, according to Vanier, addresses mutual dependence, reflected in GS no. 16 and GS no.25. Both the person's sacredness (quality of heart) and his/her dependency oriented capacity (relational capacity) are in Vanier's understanding related, and as such constitutive for the meaning of the other. In other words, a mutual dependence in the thinking of Vanier orbits around the meaning of the notion of mutuality and dependence. Central to the meaning of the notion of mutual dependency is one's uniqueness and recognition of personal weakness, that according to my reading of Vanier completes his understanding of human as the other and the other as a human person. My aim in the next section will be to look at the meaning of mutual dependency central to Vanier's thinking for the meaning of the other.

The most important characteristic of Vanier's thinking of mutual dependency is that it is a personal notion and it emphasizes the value of a person's presence. This means that mutuality is not only about doing things for people, but "being with people." Key to understanding this mutual dependence is that both people *feel* that it is mutual (or moving in that direction) and both feel that they are growing through it. For instance, mutual dependence in L'Arche is perhaps never fully realized or balanced, and the nature of what each person gives can vary greatly. According to Vanier in *Becoming Human*, mutual dependence before all underline humans' need for being together. Thus, mutual dependency for Vanier is before all an interpersonal term. It follows that such relationships are not instrumental (despite professional ethics involved), but rather personal. Although the interplay between caregiving and friendship that we could find in L'Arche may posit a conceptual and practical problem of Disability Studies or professional care ethics, the mutual dependence in L'Arche, as Cushing in her doctoral dissertation asserts, is *promoted as a general way to approach all relationships (including caregiving) in a spirit of openness and respect*,

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<sup>791</sup> Vanier, *Becoming Human*, p.78.

*especially in regards to reaching across difference and inequality.*<sup>792</sup> When Vanier is speaking about dependency in relation to mutuality he centers the person's presence in the milieu of interpersonal communication. Mutual dependence starts from a strict sense of reciprocal exchange, although it is not entirely deprived of giving and receiving. Including the meaning of an element of "personal" into a discourse on reciprocity, mutual dependency is not only a technical or reciprocal exchange of activities, but is before all an exchange between the two person's. The notion of personal exchange in this regard implies the other person's presence. That means that reciprocal exchange is not only governed by doing things for each other, but being there for each other, sharing the day to day experience and growing together. This entails that mutual dependency includes subjective shift of learning. This means that it is sometimes free from expecting the reciprocal return reciprocity, or the giving is understood without asking why. Besides this, the result of mutual dependence is not an end in itself, it is oriented towards doing things together. Mutual dependence for Vanier is inherently asymmetrical. This means that mutual dependence never fully departs from the process of giving and receiving, but is placed into being, into becoming aware of one's presence. As a person is always a key actor of such reciprocal, mutual exchanges, it is rather a process of choosing the other and receiving the other, instead of merely giving and receiving. The tension of mutual dependency is that it takes time and patience, consisting in not only doing things, but accepting the other and oneself as dependent. Thus, it is always the other who choose and re-confirms one's presence and recalls the fundamental human dependency. In such a way mutual dependence when it centers on one person's presence is not expressible through deeds or values, but through the acceptance of one's presence. Additionally, according to Vanier, the person's weakness and uniqueness point to essential elements of his understanding of dependency and in such distinguishes his approach from the mainstream idea of depersonalization. For instance, disability activists who have promoted a social model of disability assert that the language of dependency is oppressive and objectifying when applied to the disabled person. This is because dependency, in their estimation, has negative connotations, since persons with disability have been stigmatized in the past as dependent objects of treatment within medical care, or the objects of charity of religious organizations. For this reason, dependency is a contested term and the notion of dependence is contrasted with the term independence in the context of Disability Studies and the independent living strategy. In care ethics, the concept of dependency is one way to rethink the moral personhood of those who receive care, and the moral responsibility of care givers. It first cites dependency as a core feature of what human beings are existentially. Secondly, dependency as a concept is asserted to be central to human relations, having ramifications on how one understands the moral obligations of persons to one another, and what place the repercussions of these moral obligation have in political and social organizations regarding the care of people with disability.

This is to say that interdependency and dependency within care ethics reveals an existential category, and also reveals a key feature to the relationship between the care providers and the

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<sup>792</sup> Pamela J. Cushing, "Shaping the Moral Imagination of Caregivers: Disability, Difference & Inequality in L'Arche" (PhD DISS., McMaster University, 2003): p.258.

recipients of care, who are in a certain way in interdependent and dependent relationship with each other. Perceived in such a manner, care ethics always demands that the responsibility of the care giver is to respond to the needs of those receiving care, as one way of doing justice.

What exactly do one's uniqueness and weakness within a perspective of a mutual dependency, according to Vanier, implies?

**a) weakness**

Weakness, as understood in L'Arche, and referred to in Vanier's thinking, is the humanizing force which requires one to be open to communion, sharing and acceptance. However, accepting weakness does not mean to identify with it. In L'Arche, those who matter the least are, according to Vanier, recognized as teachers since they have something to offer, something essential that the mainstream population is not capable of having. This insight specifies recognition and encounter with each other's weakness, hence perceived as a sign of contradiction and richness, but nevertheless the necessary human condition. This also draw upon evidence that human nature is relational and that humans are by nature vulnerable - in need of each other - but necessarily enamored with each other.

**b) unique value**

In L'Arche a valuable corrective to mainstream society is the emphasis on individual uniqueness. Such thinking is contained in Vanier's idea of a person as a dependent other. Thus, the value is received from the other persons, but the task of seeing, welcoming and acknowledging others' uniqueness involves difficult and ongoing efforts. For instance, assistants reveal the unique value of core members, and other times the core members reveal the assistant's own value. This is to say that the one who on the surface has little to offer may in fact be the one who offers the most. Such hermeneutics can sometimes be a challenge, but it is also the path towards peace building. Within the context of L'Arche, this is to say that the person is only himself through the co-authorship of another and his narrative is shared with the one for whom he cares. Such a process of mutual dependency in L'Arche goes beyond responding merely to the needs of the other or caring for the other, as is the case in care ethics. The caring in L'Arche in a certain sense carries existential and moral connotations. The process of caring is not limited to performing daily tasks, but has its realization in becoming more human, existentially (leaving the false self, becoming the person, I am called to be: dependent and vulnerable) and morally speaking (becoming a better person), that implies development of one's moral character as true other, brother and friend - or more Christlike.

**Concluding remarks**

The anthropology which I ascribed as anthropology of vulnerability and human interdependency demonstrated a few notable elements. First of all, it is an anthropology which objects liberal ethical praxis and principle discussed at the beginning of this chapter (cf. Singer, McMahan, Dawkins) Secondly it is an anthropology which set forward the practical anthropological and ethical settlements regarding the human person and human relationship,

different from a modern liberal anthropology. The concept of such anthropology which I addressed as anthropology of human vulnerability and interdependency binds together the epistemological heritage of JPPII personalism and practical knowledge of JV. In other words, my point was to address that the conceptual knowledge of the person in thought of JPPII and JV's practical insights overlap at a certain point. The correspondence of their conceptual and practical insights set forward a demand towards a more practical orientation within field of Christian ethics. Without such consideration the Christian ethics, lacking the practical insights, in my opinion, could arrive a danger becoming the matter of merely intellectual discourses. The anthropology of JPPII and JV addresses common features and a slight divergence. Their common point of departure stems from a very different perspective, whereas the hermeneutics of their approach and the epistemology regarding the human person integrated into such approach reach the same end. In such it consists that such anthropology is not only an objection to Singer, Dawkins, etc. In fact it is the specific anthropology including a personalistic view that on the one hand slightly depart from a speculative principles of hylomorphic anthropology; yet, it does not depart from Aquinas perspectives either, as being deeply grounded in a Scripture and the teachings of the Second Vatican. Their anthropology shares with academic field of Disability studies and Disability theology a common seeking for the social justice, by prioritizing participation instead of citizenship. Their use of political correctness on regard of disability terminology fails to congruent with a proposition of Disability studies; whereas their interpretation of disability is descriptive.

Vanier's practical knowledge of person stemming from L'Arche - that people with disabilities are capable of living social and spiritual lives- and JPPII focus on subjectivity of a person and his/her capacity of interpersonal relationships addresses the thinking which sees in a person an image of God, recognizes his/her intrinsic dignity, its sacred value and sees within a person's body an image of the temple of the Holy spirit. They both emphasizes the context of lived experience as significant element of recognition of other's value. For JPPII the meaning of human being is congruent with the meaning of the person and vice versa. According to both, the other is recognized as a true gift which for JPPII embeds the capacity of "acting" as an interpersonal subject enriched through the means of self-giving and other receiving; whereas slightly differently, for Vanier, the other is always a human person, who is at the same time vulnerable and unique, prescribed with a quality of the heart and one's sacred dignity. Although JPPII and JV anthropologies may also appear as one-dimensional in a sense that they set forward the protection of weak and suffering: their anthropologies in my opinion rather select such notions portraying them as a common attribute and characteristics of human, not the definitive determination of human person. The human lives in their vision includes transcendental end. In such regard, the weakness and suffering are not the end of human person, they are distinguishably human characteristics. In other words, the anthropologies of JPPII and JV in my opinion do not enslave man into his existential battle with weakness and suffering but liberate man recalling him/her in confronting the truth about the self. Sharing a similar ethical reasoning, they oppose an ethics of strong (Singer, Dawkins, Fletcher) and distinct them from the major contemporary ethical premises of human. The modern liberal anthropologies with the strong tendency towards releasing a person from his/her suffering and

pain, and seeking the happy end, as a result, impacts separation between person's body and a person's soul; and determine the very purpose of the personal in consumption or material pleasure.

In such regard the anthropology of vulnerability and interdependency is before all a relational anthropology: it is inclusive in a way that offers a rather complete and whole picture of human person which integrates theological, sociological, psychological and anthropological perspectives on regard of a person. This means that a person is not only considered in its speculative or intellectualist capacities, but practical and relational qualities. Therefore such anthropology provides a valuable ground for constructing the rethinking of friendship redefinition, which will be my task to examine in the next chapter.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter**

### **3.4. RECONSIDERATION AND THE RETHINKING OF THE FRIENDSHIP**

#### **3.4.1. A few introductory insights**

The reconsideration of friendship in ongoing thesis consist of a threefold reference. Besides reevaluation of classic, modern and contemporary approaches to friendship, the project includes a reference to the notion of disability and the meaning of otherness. In other words, the reference to disability and otherness within scope of this thesis, is a constitutive in rethinking friendship, not as a partial and merely a conceptual morality (exclusive to people with intellectual and profound intellectual disability), but as the universal and impartial concept, inclusive to all people, people with and without disability, respectively. This is to say that besides the implication of its theoretical perspective, friendship's redefinition in this project evaluates its practical perspective. The result of a friendship definitions suggested in a first and a second part of this research thesis demonstrated friendship not only as a rational process of conceptual thinking, but relational and frequently affective movement from one person towards the other. Based on such exploration, the image of friendship I invest to suggest through the systematic analysis and a critical evaluation of different approaches, in my view do not only demonstrate that friendship is a conceptual and practical activity, but that the practical and conceptual understanding of friendship requires integration. The very nature of friendship in such sense - as integration of lived experience and a theoretical concept – also demonstrated friendship's complexity and its trustworthiness. Regarding the reference to disability and otherness, included into the foundation of rethinking friendship contain in rethinking the friendship's impartiality and as such suggest the framework for the friendship among differences. In other words, the implication of the voices of people with disabilities stressed attention upon the notion of difference which resulted in rethinking the otherness. The difference was in such regard, observed as one particular value of friendships' interdependency, who's purpose was directed towards the recognition of the other as a different and unique. This means that contrary to the friendship grounded in a high appreciation of similarity, the difference and uniqueness embodied into researchers' analysis evokes friendship and otherness in its metaphysical and ontological perspective.

##### **3.4.1.1. Who is the friend: the meaning and the type of a friend?**

What have been a key remarks this project eventually brings in understanding the meaning and type of a friend? The question of who is the friend in my view implies additional question of who is the other. The brief commentary on types of friendship within a present research has shown a distinction between simple and complex relationship, formal and informal, impersonal and personal types of friendship (cf. Second part of the research). Friend was the one partaking within a complex, informal, personal relationship, whereas formal and impersonal relationship such as caring relationship unlikely appoint a caregiver as a friend. The type of a friend in such regard



corresponds to a care giver, associate, kin, neighbor, etc. Regarding the relationship of friendship and its complexity, informality and a personal element involved, friend, within a scope of empirical research considering the field of Disability studies, was addressed as helpmate, confidant, comforter, soulmate, special kind of friend, best friend. Friendship as a personal relationship was also addressed with a meaning of true friendship, special kind of friendship and a different type of friendship in process of friendship relationship in L'Arche; whereas, the discourses including the type of virtue friendship, asymmetrical friendship, symmetrical friendship, has been addressed within field of philosophy and theology. The book of Ecclesiasticus provides valuable statements regarding the nature and a character of a faithful friend. The friend is a *support* and a *protection in life*; a *faithful* friend is a *sure shelter*; whoever finds one has found a *rare treasure*; a friend is something beyond price; there is no measuring of his *worth*. A *faithful* friend is the elixir of life, and those who fear the Lord will find one. Whoever fears the Lord directs his friendship in such a way that as he himself is, so his friend become (cf. Ecclesiasticus 6:14-17). In my understanding of friendship redefinition, the meaning of a friend is of significant importance, not because of the importance of who is the actual friend and what are his or her characteristics. The friend implies and addresses the meaning of the other. In other words, the way we perceive a friend, in my view, often reveals our perception of the other and eventually, a self. To look upon the other only from the perspective of a derivative or utility friendship, relates to a rather vicious attitude where the other is perceived only as a commodity and the object, instead a being seen in one's full potential of earthly existence. This is to say that the friendship is in "crisis" not merely because the other became the object of various intervention and manipulation perplexed with a mixture of misguided principles of love and charity, but because the meaning of the other is reduced to a split between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, why is the reason the differentiation on regard of the other dominates over one's unity and integration. Moreover, the ultimate end of flourishing is in achieving a satisfaction or a pleasure realized in pursue of some kind of material happiness. All this in my opinion eclipsed the true value of the perception of the other and related to that a friend. By looking at John Paul and Jean Vanier anthropology of vulnerability and interdependency explored previously, and Paul Ricoeur's understanding of concern as solicitude as a part of a further discussion, I will set forward the ground for understanding the other as a friend and a friend as the other. Such anthropological basis will firstly challenge the conceptual (utilitarian and intellectualist) ambiguity in determining who counts as a friend, and secondly, the interdependent character of friendship. Differently, without such a reconsideration, the final result in determining friendship will be the conceptual ambiguity in addressing it as relationship of vulnerable interdependency and mutual concern; but also the ambiguity in determining someone as capable of friendship and someone else as incapable. *Because of that, in my view, friendship must be the process of becoming more of one self, without remaining the same, and becoming the other without losing a personal identity.* Friend does not eliminate the difference in the other but elevates it into a level of where the one became more of who the one supposed to be. *Thus, friendship is besides a community of relational interdependency and vulnerable solidarity, through the implication of*

*vulnerability and the concern for the other, within a dynamic of friendship rationale - friendship is a dialectics of discovery of one true self.*

#### **3.4.1.2. A few insights into rethinking of a friendship redefinition: What actually is a friendship?**

To define friendship is an uneasy and a complex task, so is the notion of friendship in its very structure. The particular elements integrated into a practical and conceptual analysis of friendship enables the rethinking of a reformulation of friendship. The scope of this research implied three different approaches to friendship that gradually displays a threefold vision of friendship. In a first part friendship was considered important moral and ethical subject, discussed among philosophers, theologians and sociologists. It includes horizontal, vertical and virtual perspectives. Important for one's personal development and one's moral growth. Incomplete in such as it lacking a true embodiment and the overcoming of symmetrical and asymmetrical division. The academic field of Disability studies and Disability theology in first chapter of the second part, provide a view grounded in a comparative assessment of friendship. Their thinking on friendship implies empirical (Disability studies) and theoretical (Disability theology) approaches. The common elements of their thinking on friendship perceive friendship as a personal relationship; as the way towards inclusion and de-instrumentalization, in terms of participation and re-humanization. Friendship contrasts objectification, the fear and biased attitudes towards disabled. The field of Disability studies address the preferences towards distinction between symmetrical (people with disabilities) and asymmetrical (people with and without disabilities) forms of friendship; whereas Disability theologians equally reckon for both forms of friendship formation as symmetrical. Their friendship redefinition integrates psychological (DS), anthropological, theological and ethical aspects (DT). This is to say that friendship is not only a necessary factor of empowerment but brings to development of personhood through the participation and belonging. The third chapter of second part, suggested field redefinition of friendship based on a result of empirical research. In such perspective, friendship was considered relationship of acceptance and interdependent belonging between the two different persons, including care, vulnerability, common activities, rupture, pain and complexity. It overcomes the hierarchical asymmetry of relationship. The moral end of friendship implies the transformation and a change inside the person, encouraging the "conversion of person's humanness."

The decomposition of a friendship redefinition according to my assessment, includes rethinking of friendship as **relational anthropology of interdependent participation. It is a process of dynamic participation through which the intrinsic potentiality of every person *per se* to relate with others became a possible realization. The constitutive elements of such friendship redefinition imply the aspect of vulnerability and solicitude.** The vulnerability and the solicitude understood as concern for the other, I prescribed as *disinterested givenness* incorporated into a friendship rationale. The focal point of this elements, as often neglected within a composition of the other and the structure of relationship of friendship, is to reaffirm the stability of friendship from being reduced to the desire of utilitarian consumeristic morality, materialized

pleasure, or intellectual property. The element of vulnerability and the concern understood as solicitude is a way which direct friendship towards authentic relationship, instead of “mirroring” its false friendly representation. My idea of such redefinition suggest that friendship is before all a relational anthropology and an interdependent participation that includes the other, acknowledged as a creature, constitutive of the intrinsic dignity and capacity for relation. This also means that the redefinition I am proposing here does not deny its rational form, (conceptualization) and is not reduced upon merely practical experience. The redefinition of friendship is here seen as relational dynamism including openness towards the other. The rethinking of friendship definition is in dialogue with the voices of people with disabilities, not without them (according to disability rights slogan: “*Nothing about us, without us*”). This is to say that researcher intends to portray friendship as highly inclusive relationship, where inclusion congruent the view that friendship is the universal category applicable to all. Differently, if friendship is exclusive of certain categories of people such as, people of different social class, nation, and intellectual or cognitive capacities, it fails to be universal, and so to speak impartial, and remains closed in a framework of partial intellectualist morality. The element of vulnerability and solicitude integrative of my proposal, are not a specificity of disabled people friendships. In my consideration, they are constitutive elements of every friendship, people without disabilities, included. This entails, that the friendship that includes people with disability does not require a completely new *philia*. It requires *redefined* notion of *philia* one’s that includes something of equal value shared and constitutive of all humans. This does not mean that people with disability or intellectual disability are a cause of such change. They are reminders that the mainstream understanding of friendship is over-conceptualized, and intellectualist rational comprehension cannot be fitting with a framework of contemporary morality, neither the redefined notion of friendship can completely be deprived from its traditional sight. I suggest that with an alternative anthropology that is relational anthropology of interdependency (JP II) and vulnerability (JV), inclusive to the notion of vulnerability and solicitude, we rethink friendship firstly as participation in relationship, and secondly as a moral category.

My aim in the next chapter is to explain and suggest why vulnerability and solicitude in my assessment of friendship are necessary element for the reconsideration of friendship definition. I will first look on the notion of vulnerability in perspective of renewal of an ethics of friendship interdependnecy and the true otherness. After this I will look at solicitude understood as concern and responsiveness and its implication to rethink friendship.

### **3.4.2. Vulnerability as a proposal for a renewal of an ethics of friendship and the true otherness**

After a few insights concerning vulnerability in a previous chapter (referring JV and JP II reflection) and a short indication noticed in a discourse of Disability studies and Disability theology, including the practical insights of its application imbedded in the experience of friendship, the notion of vulnerability in my opinion still remain, either the *terminus technicus* of vulnerable individuals, or a puzzled and ambiguous term of scholarly discourses. Moreover, in

some context it is described either with a negative, whereas in the other with a positive meaning. This ambiguity matters as it leads towards a further query regarding its implication for the relationship of friendship. From such a reason and looking at the purpose of this research, I intend to firstly address and clarify its proper meaning and implication referring the context of this research and a larger context of academia. Related to that, and before continuing a further discussion on vulnerability I will also outline a few aspects of what vulnerability is not and present a brief distinction between its positive and negative aspects. The first section of this chapter I will divide between, first highlighting its structure and context in scope of academia and practice, and secondly, I will suggest vulnerability as an element crucial of rethinking the definition of friendship. My intention regarding the structure and context of vulnerability in scope of academia, will be stressed upon the anthropological meaning and application. From there I will emphasize the notion of vulnerability in light of its anthropological perspective crucial for one's self disclosure and self „discovery“ within the relationship of friendship. The anthropological perspective will be a basis for the reconsidering the relationships of friendship in its ethical perspective.

#### **3.4.2.1. Vulnerability in a context of this research**

The findings within the third chapter of the second part of this thesis identified vulnerability as an occurring element of friendly relationships (cf. pp. 219) Their explanation of the vulnerability has been assigned with the positive meaning, interpreted as a sign of not having a mask, not to pretend, but instead, showing others who one really is, without pretending, though this may include a rupture in the form of a difficult moment that produces anxiety, sometimes even a fight and disappointment. However, the exposure of vulnerability explained in such a context was not the end in itself, it leads towards a profound sense of understanding the one self and the other. The academic context of Disability studies was rather ambivalent in describing vulnerability with the positive meaning. Though discourses have been marked by tensions in opinions, the mainstream negative approach towards vulnerability has been impacted with the history of disability: people with disability were described as vulnerable and dependent and vulnerability was a negative mark of their identity (c.f. pp. 190-193). The scholarly discussion regarding disability in my assessment indirectly identified vulnerability as the phenomenological reality of living with impairment (c.f. Shakespeare, 2014) or as disability activist address, vulnerability as disability, was considered a socially constructed entity (c.f. Mike Oliver, 1990; Roulstone, Thomas & Balderston, 2011). The field of Disability theology acknowledges vulnerability with a meaning close to embodied element of human condition and creatureliness (cf. Swinton, Matthews, Brock, Reynolds, pp.); or a limited bodily function (cf. Creamers, Eiesland, Reynolds). Additionally, Brock's account adds an ethical assessment on dialectics between vulnerability and invulnerability within the context of prenatal testing and as a component of corporeal and social context created vulnerability.<sup>793</sup> Reynolds

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<sup>793</sup> Cf. Brian Brock, "Supererogation and the Riskiness of Human Vulnerability" in *Paradox of Disability*, 2010: pp.127-140; Also, for a more specific and detailed approach see Brock's newly published book; Brian Brock, *Wondrously Wounded. Theology, Disability, and the Body of Christ*, (Texas, Baylor University Press, 2019): pp. 201-225

suggests vulnerability should be perceived as something existentially human, rather than the indicator of some non - normal human functioning.<sup>794</sup> Concerning the assessment of friendship relationship, within the second part, in both academic context's vulnerability was not recognized as a resulting component of a friendship relationship. In the third part, the anthropology of interdependency and vulnerability of JP II and JV perceived vulnerability as a part of human existence. The meaning of vulnerability in their account associates with reflections upon the suffering condition (cf. JP II); or as the universal element embodied into a human condition (cf. JV). However, though they emphasize vulnerability as an embodied element of being human, their thinking on vulnerability goes hand in hand, with valuing a person's dignity and a person's sacredness, that together with the notion of vulnerability compose the structure of a person.

#### 3.4.2.1.1. Vulnerability in a context of academic discourses

We might have noticed that the meaning of vulnerability across different academic fields, and by reference to number of scholars discussed in this research, has been addressed as a moral category characteristic to the human. Though the majority of authors discussed within a scope of a research thesis, shows inclination towards valuing of the positive meaning, the broad discourses on vulnerability within academia are rather divided between those scholars who consider it as something positive and those who see vulnerability as a negative notion or as a threat. From such reason, vulnerability fails to be applied universally, as a concept, which is the reason that continuous conceptual division in opinion in practice results in creating an anthropological gap between vulnerable and non - vulnerable persons.<sup>795</sup> Despite ambivalent and puzzled reasoning concerning the notion of vulnerability within academia, from a socio-cultural aspect, the *Templeton Foundation* acknowledged Jean Vanier as winner of a 2015 *Templeton Prize* for his contribution to the growth of humanity. Why Vanier to whom vulnerability matters among other concepts (e.g. belonging, relationship, celebration) would have been selected as a *Templeton Prize* winner, if vulnerability within such recognition would not be of a significant importance for the growth of humanity? It is this that I will select to be regarded with more attention: the real recognition of Vanier's work in my opinion does not consist only in his insistence on creating homes for disabled people, (L'Arche community), but in his vision of humanity: *being human, to Vanier, means to be vulnerable*.<sup>796</sup> What does such address bring to the scope of academia and consequently human experience? In my view, this means that despite inconsistency in conceptual agreements regarding the notion of vulnerability within academia, there is still an obvious contemporary „push“ expressed in a human need for recognition of vulnerability as a living reality.

<sup>794</sup> Cf. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Community*, p. 136-143;159-168;

<sup>795</sup> This can be evident in United Nations, *Respect for Human Vulnerability and Personal Integrity*, (Paris, UNESCO, 2005), Article 8., See also CIOMS, *International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects*, (Geneva, WHO, 2010); United Nations, *Report of the International Bioethics Committee of Unesco of the Principle of Respect for Human Vulnerability and Personal Integrity*, (Paris, UNESCO, 2013).

<sup>796</sup> See Templeton Prize speech 2015 available at <https://www.jean-vanier.org/en/press/templeton-prize-2015> [accessed March 2016]

In such sense it requires proper evaluation and an adequate answer in both academia and practice. The actual awareness of the *occurrence of vulnerability* within the daily living, and the interest in exploring its meaning in the scope of academia, emerge in early 1980.<sup>797</sup> Not only was 1980 marked by a strong initiative towards de-institutionalization, (that apparently impacts the thinking of a mainstream mentality). It was the period followed by a number of small revolutions that recalls upon reconsideration of daily living. The implication of the meaning of vulnerability, from being a subject of marginal academic interest, has moved to center stage of anthropology, moral philosophy, sociology, feminist and care ethics, as well as theology. Since each of these disciplines operates differently, the notion of vulnerability has been conceptualized in various ways and approaches, as within both, academia and practice vulnerability imply a particular ambiguity in interpretation. In my next section, I will present a few more robust examples of such various interpretations in a scope of academia. For instance, coming from the context of social and moral philosophy, Eva Feder Kittay in response<sup>798</sup> to Robert Goodin's in *Protecting the Vulnerable*,<sup>799</sup> indicated that the moral obligation to respond to vulnerability must be governed by proportional justice, not the moral obligation. This means that if the needs and actions of vulnerability of the care receiver increase the vulnerability of the care giver, the care receiver is not obliged to answer to the demands of the care receiver. Goodin, on the contrary, considers that in each situation persons are obliged to respond to the vulnerability of the other, whether voluntary or involuntary, regardless of the degree of the person's vulnerability. Moreover, according to Goodin, if our actions cause higher vulnerability, our responsibility is even greater.<sup>800</sup> Referring to the context of social care ethics, Kittay criticizes Goodin's approach, arguing that vulnerability of dependence cannot legitimate a dependency worker to respond to his/her vulnerability in every situation. Rather, the response should imply certain elements of justice and a free choice in order to bear moral recognition. That means that response cannot be obliged nor coerced but nevertheless depends on the degree of vulnerability of the charge, the inflicted vulnerability, the sort of relationships, different situations, contexts, etc. In such regard, Kittay suggests that in order to

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<sup>797</sup> Cf. Steve Matthews & Bernadette Tobin, "Human vulnerability in medical contexts" in *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 37 (1):1-7 (2016); Cf. also Nathalie Maillard, *Vulnerabilit   un categorie morale?* pp.161-228. There are also those academics who consider differently. For instance Miguel Romero addresses that there is nothing innovative or original about Christian theologians reflection on the ordinary vulnerability of the human body. Cf. Miguel Romero, "To think Theologically About Disability: The Contemporary Challenge and a Proposal, in *Culture e Fede*, (Pontificium Consilium de Cultura, Vatican City, 2016):p.204. However, Romero, later published article in explaining his view on vulnerability in light of Aquinas reflection of innate vulnerability and the goodness and fittingness of our human body. Cf Miguel Romero, "Aquinas on the corporis infirmatis: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace"; in Miguel Romero and Mary Jo Iozzio eds., in "Engaging Disability" *Journal of Moral Theology*, 6, 2 (2017): pp.206-253. I do not agree with Romero's statement that there is nothing new in reflecting the meaning of vulnerability, but I do agree with his reflection on vulnerability in the former article that our innate corporeal vulnerability cannot damage God's goodness in creating human body as a matter and principle of human existence. Vulnerability in my opinion implies various dimensions and has been examined within academic context of sociology, psychology, moral philosophy, medical ethics and from such a reason it requires a robust theological reflection.

<sup>798</sup> Eva F. Kittay, *Love's Labor*, p.57.

<sup>799</sup> Robert Goodin, *Protecting the Vulnerable, Reanalysis of Our Social Responsibilities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985): p.112.

<sup>800</sup> Cf. Goodin, "Vulnerabilities and Responsibilities", in *Protecting the the Vulnerable*, p.201-204.

respond by taking responsibility for a particular vulnerability of another person, “we have to consider that many of the most binding relations and responsibilities arise out of a confluence of different practices and different obliging conditions.”<sup>801</sup> Another example relates to a context of so-called exposed vulnerabilities. Ruth Macklin,<sup>802</sup> and a number of Disability studies scholars, as presented earlier, had indicated negative impacts that vulnerability had within lives of so called “vulnerable subjects”. They also urge the exposure of the vulnerabilities of vulnerable groups, indicating the problem of unjust power balances (e.g. the person who is in a position of power by exercising the power over vulnerable individuals inflicts the exposure of an already present vulnerability). N. Maillard, C. Pelluchon and P. Ricour undertake rather a balanced approach. Maillard distinguishes between the meaning of vulnerability as a source of manipulation and transformation.<sup>803</sup> Ricœur’s concerns on vulnerability emphasize dialectics between the notion of vulnerability and autonomy, or in other words the vulnerability must be in counterbalance with the meaning of the autonomy. Corine Pelluchon<sup>804</sup> addresses that vulnerability despite being associated with the meaning of being wounded, cannot be completely reduced to the meaning of physical or psychological fragility. Vulnerability relates to the meaning of fragility, but at the same time it is a force because it designs the capacity to be touched by the presence of the other person. Other authors such as A. MacIntyre,<sup>805</sup> M. Hryniuk,<sup>806</sup> X. Le Pichon,<sup>807</sup> D. Lambert,<sup>808</sup> and already cited T. Reynolds, describe vulnerability with the positive meaning: vulnerability is according to them a moving element important for the process of hominization and humanization.

Vulnerability, in my assumption, could be a source of pain, but it could be also a life-giving experience. Sometimes it could be both at the same time. I am aware that presenting vulnerability merely as something positive could be limited. Vulnerability indeed implies pain, suffering and brokenness - the existential components which humans would like to avoid or be detached from. But at the same time, its meaning also departs from being reduced merely to suffering and pain. Thus, I propose that before going into a more straightforward discussion on that subject, we should distinguish between the meaning of vulnerability as something of existential and ontologically permanent; and the notion of suffering and pain, as existential, but a rather a temporary condition.

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<sup>801</sup> Cf. Kittay, *Love’s Labour*, 57.

<sup>802</sup> See Ruth Macklin, „Bioethics, vulnerability and protection.“ in *Bioethics*, 17, 5-6 (2003): 475-477.

<sup>803</sup> Cf. Maillard, N. (2014, April). *Le concept de vulnérabilité, de l’anthropologie à l’éthique*. Paper presented at the L’éthique de la vulnérabilité Conference at University of Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France. [http://ed.theologie.unistra.fr/fileadmin/upload/edtsr/Documents/programme\\_doctoral/2013-2014/programmes/JD6\\_programme.pdf](http://ed.theologie.unistra.fr/fileadmin/upload/edtsr/Documents/programme_doctoral/2013-2014/programmes/JD6_programme.pdf)

<sup>804</sup> Cf. Corine Pelluchon, (transl. Robert Howse), *Leo Strauss and the Crisis of Rationalism. Another Reason, Another Enlightenment*, (New York, SunyPress, 2014).

<sup>805</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues.*, London: Gerald Duckworth & Co.Ltd., 1999.

<sup>806</sup> Hryniuk, M. *Theology, disability, and spiritual transformation: Learning from the communities of L’Arche*, (Toronto, Cambria Press, 2010).

<sup>807</sup> Xavier Le Pichon, “Ecce Homo : Behind Humanity.” *Krista Tippett Blog*, August 16, 2012.

<sup>808</sup> D. LAMBERT, “Risques et espoirs d’un discours sur la vulnérabilité humaine” in *Fragilité, dis-nous ta grandeur* (Paris, Cerf, 2013): pp. 13-30.

#### 3.4.2.1.2. Reaching the proper meaning of vulnerability: the positive and negative aspects

In a further discourse on vulnerability, it is also important to clarify which approach to vulnerability we are undertaking. In such a regard I would straightforwardly distinguish between sentimental or instrumental views on vulnerability. I would be hesitant if our approach or view on vulnerability is guided by some form of sentimental emotions in such a way that we begin to romanticize vulnerability as a category of humanity, or even glorify it. This is not what I mean by vulnerability as an element of recognition of true otherness. In speaking about vulnerability, one must be careful not to either romanticize it, nor to sentimentalize it. This means that vulnerability cannot be understood as sentiment or its meaning cannot be reduced on merely psychological fluency of negative or positive emotions. Within such a perspective vulnerability would be either cheap or could fail apart from its conceptual meaning that I am aiming to apply within the scope of an anthropology of friendship. Instrumentalizing vulnerability, instead of approaching it from the perspective of morality, would be close to using its meaning for manipulation or unethical purposes. For instance, our inclination towards vulnerability or our anthropological state of being vulnerable cannot be an excuse to justify our unethical or immoral behaviors and attitudes in such a way that it would be misunderstood or confused with the meaning of moral failure, (e.g. violence, crimes against humanity), unethical treatment of others, or the conception of sin (e.g. certain aspects of homosexuality). When vulnerability is considered as a socio relational category, it at the same time implies positive and negative connotations. In other words, the challenge of an encounter with the other is always twofold. It reveals not only the „vulnerable face“ of the other human being, or his/her exposure of and towards vulnerability, but also the other person's uniqueness. Thus, the positive and negative outcomes of vulnerability interchangeably intertwine risk and openness.<sup>809</sup> As a risk it presupposes openness that culminates in embracing the vulnerability of one self and the other. This underpins a positive meaning as a way towards strengthening the relationship. The risk however, can presuppose a closure, which is associated with a negative meaning. This means that in such regard risk underpins protection or a fear of being exposed towards vulnerability of the other or showing one's own vulnerability. In the approach I am presenting, I want to stress attention upon the power of vulnerability in such a way that it could be something that eventually bears a positive outcome. Instead of being a source of pain and limitation, vulnerability, if approached correctly, could be a source of flourishing and a capacity for growth. In underlining the expression „approached correctly“ I mean that vulnerability unfolds acceptance, openness and is a source of recognition. I determine the notion of vulnerability as an important relational element that bears recognition of the true self within the reciprocal dynamic of friendship. The relationship of friendship in such a regard is not a moral obligation of one towards the other, but rather a dynamic moral exchange between two subjects who are becoming more similar to each other through the discovery of their human vulnerability that is

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<sup>809</sup> Similar approach has been addressed by Thierry Collaud. “La vulnérabilité nécessaire au bien commun,” (paper presented at *Colloque International Personne vulnérable et société de performance*, Institut Interdisciplinaire d’Ethique et des Droits de l’Homme, Université de Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland, April 2 2014).



their uniqueness and peculiarity. If the friendship relationships include the reciprocal exchange of giving and receiving than the exposure of vulnerability in the very same relationship at some stage of the relationship process includes the exposure of vulnerability. Such thinking of vulnerability within the dynamics of friendship outlines its positive character as it is a way of true discovery of one self and the other. Besides the abovementioned implication of vulnerability in light of its anthropological formulation, vulnerability in my view requires anthropological and theological categorization that, in essence, points to something of the creaturely nature of man and his being in the world. In the next paragraph I will present my short assessment of vulnerability as a theological-anthropological category, distinguishing between its theological and socio-relational aspect.

### 3.4.3. Vulnerability as a theological - anthropological category

When mainstream cultural or scholarly discussion (theology and moral philosophy included) questions the notion of vulnerability, particularly regarding its anthropological, embodied in human nature experience, the answers remains confused. The problem does not only stay there. The discourses on vulnerability are even more perplexed when applied in a different linguistic and cultural context. For instance, there is an obvious distinction between Anglo-Saxon and francophone approaches to vulnerability: the major discourses within an anglophone context reduce vulnerability to a state of psychological or medical condition or attaches to it a marginal assumptions.<sup>810</sup> The francophone context discusses vulnerability as an anthropological entity, but the mainstream academic approaches remain divided between those who see it as something positive and those who see it as a negative human condition. From there stems an overall response regarding vulnerability as either a self - evident phenomenon that does not require much consideration, or as a threat to our established self - autonomous being. This underpins what MacIntyre in *Dependent Rational animals*, regarding the distinction between human dependency and vulnerability, accentuates: “*What difference would it make for a moral philosophy if the facts of human vulnerability, affliction and dependency were treated as central to the human condition?*”<sup>811</sup> What difference, in my words, would it make for theology and anthropology if vulnerability and dependency were among crucial concepts in rethinking the meaning of human and Divine? My assessment of vulnerability interchangeably intertwines its theological and anthropological aspects. In other words, vulnerability in my assumption, is described as a theo - anthropological category. In the subsequent examination I will distinguish between its three

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<sup>810</sup> See for instance perspectives on vulnerability in a context of medical ethics and social philosophy approaches such as Anderson J. and Honneth A. "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice". In *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalis*. (eds.) Anderson J. and Christman J., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); See also DeBruin, A. Debra. "Looking Beyond the Limitations of Vulnerability: Reforming Safeguards in Research," In *The American Journal of Bioethics* 4, 3 (2004):p.76-78; Ruth Macklin, "Bioethics, vulnerability and protection," In *Bioethics* 17, 5-6 (2003):p. 472-486; Burggraave, Roger. "Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and Our Responsibility," in *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 30, 1 (1999):p.29-45.

<sup>811</sup> Cf. MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, p.4

aspects. My point of departure on vulnerability will be from the theology of creation and the mainstream account of the doctrine of Roman Catholic teaching. I will additionally present my own assessment on the meaning of *kenosis*, associating it with the virtue of humility in relation to the Christ as an icon of a vulnerable God. Related to innate vulnerability, I will look upon a socio-relational aspect of vulnerability. This, I will describe with a concept that implies man's natural tendency for relational interdependency and underpins Maillard's conceptualization of the socio-relational type of vulnerability presented in *La Vulnérabilité*.<sup>812</sup>

### 3.4.3.1. Vulnerability as an aspect of man's creaturely nature

Embarking on research on vulnerability by looking at its close relation with the theology of creation, first requires a clarification on whether vulnerability is something that belongs to man from the beginning of creation or whether vulnerability is the consequence of man's fallen nature. In other words, is the vulnerability something that belongs to a man ontologically as a *being per se* (a bodily creature), or is the vulnerability the actual consequence of being *wounded* by sin? My straightforward answer to this question would be that vulnerability is, before all, a unique human condition, pointing upon man's creaturely given nature, not as a direct consequence of the sin. Yet, the wound, that has been „attached“ to man's creaturely given nature, caused by sin, is rather accidental in regard to a man's creaturely given nature. In other words, the wound afflicted by sin was not a direct cause of man's vulnerable nature but added to man's created nature, the potential to experience and realize this nature as ontologically painful, limited and broken, in need of redemption. The „accidental“ here indicates degrees of vulnerability manifested within the existence of humans. In both cases, it is important to emphasize that a man is not deprived of a reception of grace and his nature is directed towards reaching its soteriological end (Cf. CCC, n. 359). When God the Creator created man (Gen 1:26-27) as the image and likeness of the Triune God, he formed man from the *dust of ground* (Gen 2:7), breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living *being* (Cf. Gen 1:26-27; CCC, n. 355 and n.360; See also GS, n.14). Additionally, the Catechism of the Catholic Church concerning man's nature addresses that in explaining equality and differences among man (CCC, n.1934) as created in the image of God and equally endowed with a rational soul, *all men have the same nature and the same origin*. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity. The man being formed from the *dust of ground* (my emphasis) gathers in himself the elements of the material word (GS, n. 14) that, in my opinion, highlight the baseline of distinction between a man as a creature and a God as his Creator. The *dust* signifies an element that addresses man's earthly limitation and his bodily creatureliness. Despite man being made from a different (material) nature from God, within the order of creation, the composition of his nature was, in fact, something good. (cf. Gen, 1:31). Looking at Thomas Aquinas's interpretation of the nature of man in *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.91, a.3, we might have noticed that Aquinas emphasizes that God fashioned the human body in that disposition which was best befitting the soul and its

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<sup>812</sup> Cf. Maillard, *La vulnérabilité*, p. 161-228

operations. This adopted through the teaching of the Vatican Second, *Gaudium et Spes* n. 14, expressed slightly differently, reconfirms that a man, since he is created out of love and goodness of his Creator, is not allowed to despise his bodily life. Instead, he is obliged to regard his body as *good* and *honorable* since God has created it and promises to raise it up on the last day. Nevertheless, wounded by sin, man experiences rebellious *stirrings* in his body (GS, n. 14). The Catholic doctrine presented in the above paragraph expresses a distinctively Christian understanding of human nature and its origin that, in my understanding, underpins the affirmation of congenital (innate) vulnerability, comprised within a statement *man being formed from the dust of ground*. (Gen, 2:7). Now, the implication of wounds of the sin and stirrings in his body, as indicated by GS n.14, requires further examination in searching the ground for considering vulnerability as the consequence of man's fallen nature. I would be hesitant in determining man's accidental vulnerability as the straightforward or direct consequence of sin. My suggestion, as may be noticed earlier, perceives vulnerability as some indirect consequences of man's fallen nature, "added" to man's already created nature, but not as a straightforward and direct consequence of sin. Why in my thinking this is so is due to the implication of a particular element included within the ongoing discourses. This implies discussion on the *matter* of the sin. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (CCC, n.1849) that adopts St. Augustine's and St. Thomas Aquinas's thinking, the sin is defined as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law; it is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; a failure in genuine love for God and one's neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. In the CCC, n. 1850 the *Catechism* continues, that sin is *disobedience*, a revolt against God through the will to become "like gods" knowing and determining good and evil. The CCC, n. 1707-9, as well as, GS 13, add to this definition that man, being enticed by the Evil One, abused his freedom, and became *divided* in himself. Though, he still desires the good, his nature bears the wound of original sin (CCC, n. 1707). As a result of man's division in himself caused by sin, (GS, n.13, 2), the whole life of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness. Though sin ruptured man's original state, the *Catechism* relying on GS, n.13, 2 in CCC n. 1708 indicates salvific action of Christ through his Passions and His redemption from sin, pointing to the restoration of grace. The man, despite being wounded by sin, did not lose the grace which was given to him. What I aim to emphasize through the embarking in the abovementioned statement, is to say that the first man did not fail because of his *created from a dust* vulnerable nature, but because of *disobedience* to God. This means that the sin indeed affects the damage to man's original nature, whose effect implies a *consequence* within such a nature, but did not completely destroy it. Due to God's redeeming grace that was immediately given to man - *gratia supponit naturam* - man was in "position" to recover. *The sin is, thus, a moral failure; the vulnerability is the distinctively natural creaturely given human entity: both are redeemed by Christ's Passion*. The sin, however, as a moral failure of man, wounded and injured man's nature, which is why there is a continuous struggle in man's heart and a lack of a proper understanding and a harmony in man himself, as well as between him and other creatures. The "additional"

vulnerability as the result of sin has been “added” to the already formed man’s nature, out of man’s desire, and outside the desire of God. This in my opinion points to accidentality in regard to man’s ontologically vulnerable nature and suggests careful assessment in determining vulnerability as the direct consequence of sin. In other words, the wounds caused by sin, endowed human nature with accidental vulnerability. The human vulnerability as man’s natural condition did not emerge outside creation, but it became existentially *vulnerablizing* because of a moral failure that is sin. Because of his fallen nature after sin, man, on the one hand, became aware of his innate vulnerability (creaturely nature); on the other hand, he, out of such perspective and in some degree, anthropologically manifested, became aware of his *vulnerable* condition. This ultimately stimulates his need for redemption and his need for the other human person. Relevant to this, but in a slightly different vocabulary, Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* I. q. 91a.3 presented his argument on integrity and fittingness of our corporeal vulnerability. It is beyond the scope of this research to provide a complete and detailed Aquinas treatise on human nature here, as the q.91 requires reference with the other question, including his *treatise on human being* (*ST*, I, qq. 75-102, particularly q. 76). My aim, however, within this brief presentation, is to indicate Aquinas’s indication regarding the importance of the creaturely goodness of the human body as a matter of man, despite its corruption, defect, limitation or simply vulnerability to impairment, illness and injury. In *ST*, I, q.91 Aquinas not only stressed his reflection upon the connection between the Creator as an artist in appealing to the goodness of His divine art; the moral formation; and a Christian account of human dignity but had addressed his concerns for the goodness and fittingness of our human body ordained by the *Artist*. As stated:

[...] All natural things were produced by the Divine art, and so may be called God's works of art. Now every artist intends to give to his work the best disposition; not absolutely the best, but the best as regards the proposed end; and even if this entails some defect, the artist cares not.

[...] therefore, God gave to each natural being the best disposition; not absolutely so, but in the view of its proper end.

[...] I say, therefore, that God fashioned the human body in that disposition which was best, as most suited to such a form and to such operations. If defect exists in the disposition of the human body, it is well to observe that such defect arises as a necessary result of the matter, from the conditions required in the body, in order to make it suitably proportioned to the soul and its operations [...].<sup>813</sup>

In light of Ecclesiasticus 17:1 (God created man out of the earth) and Eccl 7:30 (God made man right) linked with the article 2 and article 3 in q. 91., Aquinas pointed to innate vulnerability and dependencies of the human body (corporeal vulnerability) and its goodness, which despite the defects, as an art of the Artist, remain good. In other words, Aquinas’s remarks in q.91 state that despite the corporeal vulnerability of the body to, for instance impairment, illness and injury, or any corruptible aspect of human being, God did not make a mistake by giving us the bodies that are vulnerable, neither are *such bodies* diminished of human dignity or disqualified as a person’s

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<sup>813</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, I., q. 91.,a.3

from God's providential intent and plan, as well as his ultimate Goodness and Truth (ST I., q.91; ST I., q.39.).<sup>814</sup> Instead, as Miguel Romero in his article on *Goodness and Beauty of our Fragile Flesh* addresses, Aquinas in question 91, when reconsidering a defect of the human body, *challenges Christians to attend to and appropriate the practical insights and intent of the architect of Creation, the Master Artisan.*<sup>815</sup>

### 3.4.3.2. The socio relational aspect of vulnerability within theology of creation

The previously discussed aspect of human vulnerability will not be complete without present insights into its socio-relational establishment. This is to say that the theo - anthropological concerns on vulnerability include its socio-relational aspect. Indicating vulnerability in its theological - anthropological perspective includes, as already presented, an ontological aspect (creaturely vulnerability), and a socio-relational aspect, because man is not only vulnerable by its ontological nature, but, due to such nature, s/he is wounded by its, ontologically established, need for the other. Thus, in my opinion, the vulnerability within socio - relational perspective points to man's need for the other human being, in terms of being vulnerable by that need for the other. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in CCC, nn. 1934 - 1939 by pointing to a socio - communitarian dimension of a man's earthly life, addresses concerns of social equality and difference between people. The link between CCC, nn.1934 and 1936 indicates on what I will determine as a socio relational aspect of human vulnerability. Indicating the equal dignity, and the shared uniqueness of man's nature and origin, (CCC, n.1934), the CCC, n. 1936 stressed attention upon the "need for others":

[...] on coming into the world, man is not equipped with everything he needs for developing his bodily and spiritual life. He needs others. Differences appear tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth. The "talents" are not distributed equally (contra Aristotle order of natural equality).<sup>816</sup>

Regarding the importance of respect for the intrinsic dignity of the human person, the *Catechism* in CCC, n. 1944, points to respect for the other as "another self." The respect for the other as another self here, and particularly in connection with the CCC, n. 1939 in the context of human solidarity, indicates friendship that, besides social charity, is perceived as the locus of solidarity. The socio relational aspect of vulnerability rooted in human ontological nature, expressed through the lived experience, in terms of human relationship, has been exemplified within the context of brotherhood, family ties, kin relationship, caring relationships and friendship. Though much research has been spread around the implication of the socio relational aspect of vulnerability

<sup>814</sup> Additionally, for more on this reflection can be found in a recent discourse on similar subject published by Francois-Xavier Putallaz, „Pourquoi un corps si humain?“, in *Nova et Vetera*, vol 93 (2018): p.87-99.

<sup>815</sup> Cf. Miguel Romero, „The Goodness and Beauty of Our Fragile Flesh: Moral Theologians and Our Engagements with „Disability““ in „*Engaging Disability*“ *Journal of Moral Theology*, p.239.; See also Miguel Romero, „Aquinas on the corporis infirmatis, Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace“ in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, eds. Brian Brock and John Swinton, p: 101-151.

<sup>816</sup> See [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c2a3.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c2a3.htm); Also Cf. Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:27

within the context of care and nursing ethics, as well as the relationship between a receiver of care and his/her personal assistant, little has been said about the place vulnerability as a socio - relational aspect holds within the context of the relationship of friendship. This will be of particular interest in my next paragraph, where I will articulate my thesis regarding the importance of vulnerability for the relationship of friendship. But, before this, my aim is to indicate a few insights concerning Christ's vulnerability and its importance in applying it into the context of Christian morality.

### **3.4.3.3. Vulnerability as a component of Christ's humanity?**

By drawing on vulnerability as a theological - anthropological category, I will further strengthen my argument by looking upon vulnerability in light of its Christological perspective and a value of its moral importance. It is till now clear that God the Father as the Creator of human beings (metaphysical and ontological order of things) cannot be vulnerable. But what about the second person of the Trinity, the Son, who by becoming flesh, becoming a man in the person of Jesus Christ could be vulnerable? My straightforward answer to this question will be affirmative: the Second Divine Person, a man, Jesus Christ, did not only descend for the redemption of human sin, but to show God's love and compassion to humanity, by sharing in human's vulnerable nature, he became one of the vulnerable. But, in order to understand this, we need to reflect upon the concept of *kenosis* that, in my opinion, in such a perspective is of crucial importance to understanding the meaning of Jesus's condition as the vulnerable God.

To achieve this, I will present a few remarks following Scripture and tradition in such a theme. As stated in *Dei Verbum*, God in his goodness and wisdom chose to reveal Himself and to make known to his people the hidden purpose of His will (c.f. Eph 1:9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (c.f. Eph 2:18; 2Peter 1:4). Through revelation, the invisible God (c.f. Col 1:15; 1Tim 1:17) out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends (cf. Ex 33:11; John, 15:14-15) and lives among them, so that He may invite and take them into a fellowship with Himself (*Dei Verbum*, 2). The image of God in the Old Testament pointed to God's presence and nearness to his people.<sup>817</sup> The New Testament narrative informs us that God's presence entering a dialogue with his people was fulfilled in Christ, who within the horizon of history became incarnate God, or, in other words, "He became flesh" (John 1:14). Elsewhere in the New Testament we can find expressions of Christ descending into the reality of human existence (Gal 4:4; Rom, 8:38; 1Tim 3:16; Jn 3:16), but it is exactly the *Phil 2:7* in such perspective that echoes something profoundly unique. The *Phil 2:7* also in my view expresses not only that Christ took upon himself the human condition, but he emptied himself (obedience and humility) from his equality with God, by accepting such a human condition. This in my opinion means that the *kenosis* Christologically and theologically speaking is particularly linked with the meaning of accepting the condition of

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<sup>817</sup> See for instance Eph 1:3; 1Pet, 1:20;

vulnerability. Or in other words, the *kenosis* of Christ is the most adequate *locus* for a theological - anthropological discourse on vulnerability within the perspective of the New Testament. The discourse demonstrates the implication of dialogue between the Theology of the Triune God, the Christology, Soteriology and anthropology. More precisely, the verse Phil 2:7 addresses the importance of interrelatedness between Christology and anthropology in the perspective of biblical typology Adam - Christ (1Cor 15.21; Rom 5:12-19), where accordingly the first Adam symbolizes our human condition and the second and last Adam symbolizes the Christ.<sup>818</sup>

Regarding the contemporary theological scholarship on the concept, the *International Theological Commission* in documents on “Selected questions on Christology”<sup>819</sup> in 1979, among selected themes in modern Christology, also stressed importance to the theme of Christ’s *kenosis*. The *Commission* reconfirmed a classic theological understanding regarding *kenosis*<sup>820</sup> (greek. *heauton exenosen*) as a key step on the way *from the Father through the Christ towards humanity and vice versa* and is the soteriological and salvific actualization of Christ event.<sup>821</sup> Gill Emery in one of his recent articles in *Nova et Vetera* deepen such dogmatic knowledge by presenting the concept of *kenosis* in light of Aquinas perspective. According to Emery’s interpretation of Aquinas, the *kenosis* or *exinanitio* means littleness (fr. *la petitesse*) or emptiness (fr. *le vide*) of a human nature including all of the deficiency and impairments of the human body and the soul which are appropriate to its mission of salvation and which are therefore compatible with its perfect sanctity. The *kenosis* in such regard applies only to the son, more specifically to His incarnation.<sup>822</sup> Keeping on the abovementioned dogmatic knowledge on *kenosis*, my assessment of the Phil 2:7 is, however, a rather an *ethical* reading, which sees within *kenosis* God’s radical openness towards his people by making himself vulnerable, by becoming the person of Jesus Christ. This event was only possible out of abundant love from the Father, and of a radical obedience and humility of Jesus. Christ emptying himself by undertaking the form of a human became obedient to his Father until his death on the Cross. God in Jesus showed his compassion with the human race and became an icon of the vulnerable. *Becoming a man means becoming flesh*. Through relational openness and availability to creatures, Jesus makes himself vulnerable. He however, due to such vulnerability did not loss his availability and his divine capacity. In Christ, God became involved

<sup>818</sup> For more robust interpretation and exegesis on this see Biblical Dictionary... See also Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, Wednesday, 3 December 2008., available from [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2008/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20081203.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20081203.html), [accessed March 2018]

<sup>819</sup> International Theological Commission, at its plenary session in 1979 chose Christology as its theme for consideration; in 1980 it published its conclusions (cf. the Latin text “Quaestiones selectae de Christologia”, in the periodical *Gregorianum* 61 [1980]: 609-32; Cf. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1979\\_cristologia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1979_cristologia_en.html)

<sup>820</sup> Besides limited numbers of scholars and references mentioned within perspective of this research, there is a large reference to the theme of *kenosis* and differences in opinion among Biblical Scholarship and Dogmatitians. Among most prevailing authors on that subject, see for instance Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*; Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*; H. U. Von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*; J. Dupont, „Jesus – Christ dans son abaissement“, *RSRS*, 37; etc.

<sup>821</sup> Cf. International Theological Commission, Cf. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1982\\_tologia-cristologia-antropologia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1982_tologia-cristologia-antropologia_en.html)

<sup>822</sup> Cf. Gilles Emery, “La “kenose” chez saint Thomas d’Aquin,” in *Nova et Vetera*, 93 (2018): p. 357-387.

within the horizon of history through the presence of his Son; through sharing and in relationship with humanity, Jesus Christ as an image of God became affected by the suffering, pain and vulnerability of his people, out of his loving freedom, obedience and humility. Jesus not only descended for the redemption of sins. A less emphasized part of Christ's descent into human flesh for the redemption of sins, possible only through His obedience and humility, in my view, is the reopening within a human person the possibility of a way back towards acceptance of his/her ontological condition as something creaturely and humanly given. The event of *emptying himself* by taking upon him - self a human condition is therefore threefold, as it includes the obedience to the Father, the humility of the Son, and the acceptance of the human nature. In other words, the emptying of himself, in my understanding, set forward a moral reconsideration of human vulnerability as the human condition that implies inclination towards the acceptance of being limited, broken, fragile, even incapable humanly speaking. But at the same time it reopens the possibility for the actualization of hope to see vulnerability not as something tragic, but as a value and capacity in embracing it as something creaturely given, not as something deprived from a grace or inflicted by sin at the first place. The acceptance of such human condition in light of Christ's *kenosis* is, in my opinion, a sign that expresses not only a need for the other but provokes the human pride and ignorance of non - acceptance of one self and a difference in the other. *Thus, to accept vulnerability as the human condition requires a virtue of humility.* Or in other words, the humility is a necessary prerequisite of the acceptance of vulnerability. As a reminder to that, the very etymology of the word humility in lat. *humilitas*, expresses the character of the one who is humble (*humilis*). The meaning of the adjective *humilis* signify the one who is close to the earth (*humus*), or the ground.<sup>823</sup> In an attempt to reach its proper understanding, my reflection on humility, first of all, distance from the mainstream contemporary meaning that associates it with often depressing attitudes, such as, the characteristic of one's striking dignity (close to pity and oppression) or a life under humiliating circumstances (often associated with people's low social status, e.g. homeless). On the contrary, humility in my perspective is a very much linked with the recognition of seeing and accepting, in terms of embracing, a threefold meaning on relation between *homo-humus-humanitas* condition, that, before all, represent a vulnerable human nature, inclined towards diagonal symmetry with the other. Therefore, the meaning of *kenosis*, humility and acceptance of vulnerability are rather related, than separated notions. The *kenosis* of the Christ in Phil, 2, 7, is a turn towards rethinking vulnerability in terms of accepting the limits of human condition. But it is also a return of human's towards the love of Triune God and an openness towards growth in humility. This entail that the meaning of *kenosis* associated with the aspect of obedient descending into a human nature and the aspect of humble acceptance of human vulnerability, is in correlation with the very meaning of humility. After a brief assessment of the very meaning of vulnerability in academic discourses and its practical importance for the realization of human, my next step is to set forward the framework where vulnerability contributes the rethinking of the friendship redefinition.

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<sup>823</sup> See Pierre Adnes, s.v. „Humilite“, *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Bude*, 5,6 (1948):p.68-69.



#### **3.4.4. Vulnerability and its implication for the relationship of friendship - understood as relational anthropology of interdependent participation**

The previous reference to the impossibility of people with disability not having friends, is of a relevance for my reconstruction of the meaning of friendship. It reconfirms that the process of friendship can bring towards the re-co-creation of human dignity, not in terms that it defines human, but that it reconstructs moral and socio-relational status of the human person. The lack of relationship of friendship, on the contrary, as we might have seen in narratives associated with the history of disability, can decrease or even diminish one's dignity and one's sense of moral and self-worth. Therefore, the impossibility of and lack of access to friendship is in my opinion a matter of particular moral injustice, whereas on the contrary, the opportunity and possibility of friendship contribute to one's human and moral growth. For such a reason, friendship matters as the dynamic of mutual exchange of elements between the two persons' concerned, leads towards the rebirth of human dignity and one's moral value.

My rethinking on friendship first of all implies a distinction between its anthropological and its relational character. This means that the moral value and importance of friendship first consist in re-establishing one person's dignity and secondly, one's capacity for relational participation. My rethinking of the definition of friendship includes the voices of people with and without disabilities. This suggests that the redefinition and rethinking of friendship within the context of this research is not overconcerned with the question of distinction whereas friendship is a virtue or altruistic emotion. The moral significance of friendship, in my opinion, rather consists in the integration of both. This means that friendship presupposes the anthropological ground that stimulates the openness and one's disclosure towards the other. The element of self-disclosure in such regard is the notion of vulnerability considered as an openness towards and risk of the possibility for moral growth. In such regard my redefinition of friendship suggests that friendship is before all a *relational anthropology of interdependent participation. It is a process of dynamic participation through which the intrinsic potentiality of every person per se to relate with others is called to be realized.* To explain such rethinking of the redefinition of friendship will be my task in a further analysis. **The anthropological and relational basis for one person's dignity and its relation to a framework of friendship rationale**

Looking at the notion of a person's identity from the theological perspective, human identity implies human dignity and vice versa. This entails that relationships with others can help in reestablishing human dignity but *can never be determinative of human dignity*. Human dignity is an intrinsic category given and realized within a person's inner disposition. This, according to Gen 1:26 and reflected in *Gaudium et Spes*, and several documents of Catholic social teaching (e.g. *Centesimuss Annus*, *Evangelium Vitae*, *Salvifici Doloris*), implies being made in God's image. God imprinted his own image on man coffering him with the incomparable dignity. This dignity is not only a *gift*, but is a man's essential „*right*“ before any other right can be distributed to man. (c.f. *Centesimuss Annus*, no.11). This is important to keep in mind, before reaching the following discussion on man's relational identity, and particularly when this relational identity concerns people with intellectual disability, or profound intellectual disability. Now, in order to enable the possibility of friendship, if we remember Swinton, one needs to be acknowledged as a

human person. In other words, one's being must be realized, not only within the terms of existential ontology, but also as a person with the potential for relationship. Every such person or human being, as previously addressed by JP II, as cardinal Wojtyła, poses its outward and inward capacity not only ontologically, but in terms of relationship with the Triune God and with others. Every human being is a person, and every person made in the image of God is a human being and is able to communicate within the inward and outward word. This includes people with profound intellectual disabilities, mental illness and different types of mental neurodiversity who, as creatures, theologically speaking, also belong to the species of *homo sapiens* (*contra* Singer). No other species according to God's creation plan were called to participate in the relationship of friendship, besides man (c.f. Gen; John 15,15; *Dei Verbum*). From such a reason, friendship in my opinion is a category peculiarly given to the human, despite man's physical deformity and differences in mental capacity or his/her physical deformity. In such regard it reaches its dynamic participation through which the intrinsic potentiality of every person *per se* is called to relate with others. In other words, friendship is a process that enables a person's realization of personhood in a sense that a person can reveal, exercise and develop his/her identity as a relational being. Or put slightly differently, the intrinsic gift to relate with others is enabled through participation in a process of relationship. The realization of such potentiality within the scope of this thesis corresponds to the meaning of friendship. The relationship of friendship is the dynamic of giving and receiving, but, as Reinders correctly observed, it is firstly a receiving. Borrowing the term - *receiving the gift of friendship* from Reinders, - I add that not only such address reminds us that friendship from God towards man was initiated (given) by God and received by man, but that prior to receiving the gift of friendship, man as God's creation and as an image of God receives its dignity and, related to this, its capacity for relationship. This translated into the contemporary language means that friendship as a dynamic relationship of mutual receiving and giving can contribute towards the re-construction of oneself and the other's intrinsic worth. Nevertheless, though the nature and quality of relationships with others can impact on one's character, however, it cannot completely define a person's identity.

#### 3.4.4.1. Vulnerability implications for the relationship of friendship

Related to the section above where I addressed friendship as the **relational anthropology of interdependent participation**, my purpose in a later paragraph is to bring precision to such redefinition. Rethinking friendship as relational anthropology implies the other person and the dynamic relationship exchange between the one and the other. The notion of vulnerability in such a perspective as an element of disclosure of relational interdependency between friends can add to such thinking.

The previous assessment on vulnerability pointed to its ontological and anthropological importance. The notion of vulnerability implied within friendship not only contributes to disclosure and acceptance but is an element that can combat stigmatization of disabled people. How? By acknowledging that as human we all are vulnerable at some point in our lives and as such we are vulnerable by our ontologically created need for the other. In such a way the implication and recognition of vulnerability are of crucial importance for the recognition of

humanity. Though friendship has been universally acknowledged as an important stance for the development and moral growth of the human, not all persons have equal access to or possibility of it. What concerns me even more is the fact that some people are even deprived from being acknowledged as having the capacity to participate in a relationship of friendships. This has been displayed in our second part and earlier within this paragraph. Additionally, the research within sociology, Disability studies and Disability theology, evidences the lack and impossibility of friendship for people with disabilities, which sooner or later bring into question why friendship as something fully human fails to be accessible and realized by certain people. *Does friendship require particular superhuman skills to be attained and maintained? Or why, as humans, we still have a need for friendship relationships, despite the degree of our autonomous self-dependent esteem?* Putted slightly differently: if friendship and vulnerability are both seen as categories that bear the universal (friendship) and ontological (vulnerability) anthropological application, than how on the one hand are there people who are deprived from participation in friendship; and on the other hand why does being vulnerable fail to bear a universal moral recognition? The human need for the other within a scope of this research, as we might have seen, has been realized through the relationship of friendship, distribution of civil rights in terms of social participation, or in the form of professional (staff - residents) relationships. However, the civil rights as a way of social inclusion and as a certain type of formal relationship, shows its limits, as it does not respond to a deeper human need, that is not only a need to be appointed with citizenship, but to be acknowledged with a certain type of interpersonal belonging. This is to say that there is something more profound about this human need, that overpasses a mere distribution of a civil human rights.<sup>824</sup> This need of interpersonal belonging within the scope of this thesis corresponds to the relationship of friendship. This further means, that friendship should not remain something elitist, only privileged to some. Rather, it should be something profoundly human, applicable to all. In my understanding of friendship as a *relational anthropology of interdependent participation*, vulnerability as a human condition and friendship as active participation, both distinctively human categories require integration. In other words, the anthropology based on recognition of vulnerability in my redefinition of friendship does not only provide a reminder of something ontologically human, but implicates the reconsideration of friendship anthropology, as friendship in many aspects implies revelation and recognition of one's own and another person's identity. Based on the abovementioned, my intention in the next paragraph is to relate friendship and vulnerability as two categories distinctively human.

Vulnerability as a distinctively human, anthropological category fails to be universally acknowledged as something positive. To acknowledge vulnerability as an ontologically human category, has to do with the acceptance of one's ontological nature as contingent. For instance, revealed vulnerability in front of the other according to Levinas, means becoming „naked“ in terms of not hiding self - identity from who one truly is. The revelation of vulnerability within an interdependent process of friendship could be a source to reveal one's true self, and a source that

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<sup>824</sup> For more polemics on such regard, see Martha Nussbaum response to John Rawls available from <http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/1897/Theory-of-Justice-by-John-Rawls:-its-criticism-by-Martha-C.-Nussbaum-and-Amartya-Sen.html>, [accessed June 15 2018]; See also Hans S. Reinders, *The Future of Disabled In Liberal Society. An ethical analysis.*, (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

stimulates moral growth. For instance, acceptance of vulnerability could be a way towards growth in the virtues of humility, truth, love, patience and fortitude. The relationship of friendship that in its process implies vulnerability could fasten friendship relationships in terms of increasing loyalty, honesty, and the other's person respect. As essential to humans' categories, friendship and vulnerability, in certain aspects, fail to bear such universal application, because as mentioned above, not all humans have friends or they have very few friends, whereas, not all would acknowledge friendship with „more than vulnerable“ as something ordinary. It is morally acceptable to help a vulnerable or more than vulnerable person but being a friend with such a person posits a challenge to us. This presents a moral and social problem, not only of the universal application of friendship, but also the implication of vulnerability. What would be our response, first as Christians and then as theologians, in such regard to such inquiry?

#### **3.4.4.1.1. Vulnerability applied into a process of friendship**

Every human relationship, including friendship, is marked by certain stages of development. In my rethinking of friendship implying vulnerability, I will set forward a threefold structure. This in my thinking includes, that first, friendship starts with an *encounter*; second, *culminates in a process*; and, third result in its *purpose*, perceived as an *end* of friendship.

##### **a) The encounter**

Friendship, like most human relationships, begins with the encounter. But what kind of encounter we are considering here? The encounter with the suffering (JP II) or the vulnerable (JV) presence of the other, as addressed on several occasions by JP II and JV in a section of otherness, speaks most profoundly to us by challenging our „autonomous“ normal body functioning. In my thinking I am not proposing that we should take into account people with profound disability or any other person's suffering as something contributory to our so called „normal“ or established functioning. What I am proposing is that the exposed or revealed vulnerability of a particular individual is an appeal for shifting the conceptual understanding of the anthropology of human vulnerability and interdependency as something profoundly human, that in return serves as the ground for reconsidering the notion of friendship. In the next paragraph I propose *vulnerability* as an element for the retrieval of the anthropology of friendship that is before all a *relational anthropology*. The continuous problem of moral application and the universal recognition of vulnerability is, on the one hand, that it is rather a subject to avoid than to be acknowledged and accepted. People with disability are among those categories of people that have few friends, often associated with high degree of vulnerability or a group of vulnerable people. Is their lack of friendship due to their disability or acknowledged vulnerability, or is it because their vulnerability challenges autonomous able-bodied individuals about theirs? People with disability for the mainstream of our contemporary culture are seen as different, they point to an unpleasant presence, the threat produces fear in able-bodied individuals, etc. The encounter points to a dynamism or irruption that comes from the other, and that is simultaneously caused by the other. This says that every encounter presupposes the risk that after inducing another risk towards not only encounter, but of being open and reopen. But finally, not every such undertaken risk is a catastrophe or tragic. It could be also a source of grace and a new possibility. The question is who is capable of taking such a risk?

When Francis of Assisi encountered the leper, he was first shocked by the appearance of the leper;<sup>825</sup> but soon after the encounter (embrace) the barriers of fear present within himself dropped down. St. Bonaventura, the author of his biography informs us that this encounter was a focal point in life of st. Francis, as it caused *douceur*. The fruit of such encounter was not merely a grace he received. Francis of Assisi was transformed, and the transformation was not only visible as an outward change. It was an inner process that impacted transformation in his personality and in the life of the leper.

« Au moment où j'étais encore dans les péchés, la vue des lépreux m'était insupportable. Mais le Seigneur lui-même me conduisit parmi eux ; je les soignai de tout mon cœur ; et au retour, ce qui m'avait semblé si amer s'était changé pour moi en douceur pour l'esprit et pour le corps. ».<sup>826</sup>

I do not propose or make any parallel between leprosy and disability, neither the categorical distinction between suffering and non - suffering people, illness and health. What matters in this narrative is to highlight the conditions before (the fear) the meeting the leper, and the outcome of this meetings (*douceur*) which was the grace and transformation he received after encountering the leper. The encounter resulted in the beginning of something new, not merely in Francis of Assisi's life, but in the twelfth-century church. What happens when we become aware of our embodied vulnerability - with our deepest self - revealed through encountering the vulnerability of the other, shares something of what Vanier said about the encounter, and Emmanuel Levinas about the vulnerable face of the other: *true encounter is a shock to our ego, as it throws us into our own impotence*;<sup>827</sup> *the relation with the other as a face heals allergy*.<sup>828</sup>

Understanding the person as an integrity and a subject of vulnerable interdependency redirects our thinking from a merely material understanding of the biological body, utilitarian or consumerist perspectives of a person, towards rather more essential and forgotten invisible realities within the realm of humanity. What happened in the story of Francis of Assisi, is not only the encounter with himself, but was the beginning of something new. So, the encounter with the truth about oneself, that in my perception corresponds to the encounter with the often a visible vulnerability of the other, matters not only as a beginning of relationship, but as a process of something new. It is a part of a relationship dynamic between the two persons involved.

## **b) The development and a process of friendship**

Vulnerability has been given much attention within care ethics, nursing ethics, but little has been said about vulnerability considering its application for the relationship of friendship. Does the relationship of friendship understood as a close or intimate relationship between the two

<sup>825</sup> *The Life of st. Francis of Assisi by Saint Bonaventure-Legenda Major*, (Massachusetts, Harvard College Library, 1918).

<sup>826</sup> Cf. St Francis of Assisi Testament accessed <https://ofm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Testament.pdf> [accessed Mai 2017]; "When I was still in sin, the look on the lepers was unbearable for me. But the Lord himself led me among them; I started helping them with all my heart; and afterwards, what had seemed so bitter to me at first, had changed me gently in the mind and body." (translation mine).

<sup>827</sup> Vanier, *Signs of the Times*, p. 54.

<sup>828</sup> Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, "Ethics and The Face" in *Totality and Infinity - an essay on exteriority*, transl. by Alphonso Lingis, (Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania): p.194-219.

different human persons (ontologically vulnerable) imply the rupture of vulnerability? Cicero in his dialogue-treatise on friendship said that friendship reveals something about a person's character.<sup>829</sup> Friendship as a process of dynamic interdependency exposes one person towards the other person, but it could also become a shelter, a safeguarding place for one self and the other. *The implication of vulnerability into the dynamic of friendship stands as a corrective to the contemporary view that reduces friendship to something of a „used and consumeristic“ morality.* The friendship as a dynamic relationship not only implies two people becoming more similar to each other through exposure of one's true self, but it is also a relationship of two people encountering each other's vulnerability and uniqueness. The need for friendship expressed as a human need for dependency and belonging is something that points to the relational character of human existence. Being dependent means being vulnerable, because one is not only in need of the other, but vulnerable by that need. Locating vulnerability in the process of a dynamic of friendship brings value for the retrieval not only of relationship, but of the structure of friendship. This means that when the vulnerability is implied into a dynamic of friendship, it can bind together people of a different status, class and intelligence, and at the same time requires from friendship the exercise of the virtues of patience, love and fortitude. The implication of vulnerability in the process of friendship includes dynamic exchange. It is the other who reveals to me that I am vulnerable, but also that despite being vulnerable I am unique and can be accepted as such. A person may not be conscious of his/her vulnerability until the encounter with the other reveals to him/her the true face of oneself. This is according to my assumption a *relational dictum* within close relationship, one of which is friendship. Now, as for the mainstream definitions of friendship, when two people enter into a relationship of friendship they are not just the two autonomous beings, where one's autonomy may be more dominant or revealing than the other. They are also two contingent beings, inclined towards being vulnerable before each other, and as with autonomy, the degree of their vulnerability varies. In my assumption, if vulnerability, as well as autonomy is an anthropological category than two persons within relationship of friendship are inclined towards being autonomous, but also, what we often forget, being vulnerable. What in Levinas terminology underpins the presence of the other revealed through the other's vulnerable face, does within the scope of this research imply one's body, as an indicator of a person's presence. The process of friendship relationship can be never diminished of the exchange of autonomy and vulnerability. Though this research offers a portion of the importance of vulnerability for the relationship of friendship, it does not say that autonomy does not matter within a friendly relationship. It requires that both concepts, autonomy and vulnerability will be reexamined. The reason I decided to engage in conversation on the implication of vulnerability has to do with the fact that vulnerability in comparison to autonomy within major mainstream discourses on friendship has been either neglected or misinterpreted. Or put slightly differently, the relationship of friendship measured according to the principle of autonomy is often in danger of becoming instrumental and elitist. Such friendship relationships, despite their virtuous character, do not recognize the other as a mirroring self, including the other's vulnerable face. When deprived of such reality, it only sees the other often as a means for one's (hidden) self-centered purposes. In a similar way, Reynolds addresses that „genuine wholeness is found not through bodily completeness or ability but through

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<sup>829</sup> Cicero, *On Friendship*, (De Amicitia) in Michael Pakaluk, *Other Selves*, pp.77-116

the acknowledgement of vulnerability that is made concrete in relations of mutual giving to, and receiving from, others. “*Human beings are exposed to one another, subjects to each other even before any clear sense of self emerges.*”<sup>830</sup>

In order to become oneself, it is impossible not to acknowledge or encounter one’s vulnerability. The result of acknowledging vulnerability within a process of relational interdependency (friendship) results in the acceptance of oneself and the other, as well as recognition of a person’s true identity. The recognition of oneself in such a perspective, contrasts with the consumeristic consumption of friendship reducing its value to the instrumental or utilitarian purposes. The real condition of such friendship is recognition of the other, it is a presence of one person that matters, and not its hidden „well-wishing“ often material merits. In one way or another the revelation or acceptance of vulnerability could be the catalyst of true friendship and in my opinion the only improving factor of a friendship relationship, instead of detrimental. In such perspective, friendship, including openness towards vulnerability, makes another person not only another self, but a visible other. Slightly differently than Levinas ethics of „vulnerable face of the other” as the responsibility suggests, my thinking on vulnerability within the relationship of friendship implies reciprocal responsibility. Vulnerability as a socio-relational category unlocks the false identity of myself and the other and reciprocally, makes another person and myself the true visible other. Being recognized as another self means being treated as a person. Being treated as a person means being accepted as an embodied self in relation to the other. This means that equality/similarity is not a precondition for friendship formation but its consequence within the perspective of mutual or reciprocal exchange and growth. The implication of vulnerability in the relationship of friendship is therefore a valuable corrective or prevention of the one self-sufficient understanding of the other. The exposure of vulnerability or the recognition of vulnerability in friendship relationships matters for many reasons. Among many reasons, I will specify the two most important in accordance with the theme of this research. It firstly supplies friendship with a view that the other is equal to me in my ontological and socio-relational esteem. Secondly, by implication of vulnerability into the process of friendship, it detaches a friend’s need for the other, from false consumeristic or utilitarian motives, and refocuses upon its true moral end, that is otherwise than the false recognition of the other and one’s disembodiment.

As friendship in my rethinking is a certain type of disclosure, the recognition of vulnerability through the dynamic of relationship exchange is the essence of such disclosure. The awareness of vulnerability as a human condition shared by all could eventually be a matrix of exposure of a socio relational vulnerability. The anthropological factuality of being vulnerable *per se* is the cause or a factor for the revealing of its socio relational aspect. Assuming vulnerability as a category shared among all humans, the accidental differences among humans such as social status, intellectual capacities, class, etc. will be less emphasized when we realized that as humans we share in the same human vulnerability, which nevertheless does not take anything from our (autonomously perceived) human dignity. Vulnerability balances inequalities. Friendship that implies vulnerability as something shared by all is an opportunity to acknowledge difference as something positive, instead of a threat. In other words, the recognition of vulnerability within

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<sup>830</sup> Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p. 116

human relationships, could be a source of managing equality. For such reasons the value of friendship between people with and without disability is not of less importance than the friendship between Aristotle's friends. The only difference between these two types of friendships is that friendship bonds people together, not by natural motives of their virtue character or what they have achieved (Aristotle), but because of who they are as God's creature and as humans.

### **b.1.) The role of vulnerability as an element of self-disclosure within a process of friendship**

My aim in the further analysis in addressing the vulnerability as an element of self-disclosure leaves to the additional development of the abovementioned statements. Jewish philosopher Martin Buber in his master piece *I and Thou* address that the discovery of mutual relationship includes not merely the affection of both subjects involved, but that the true relationship includes an element of knowing based on the principle „cognosco ergo sum“, instead of „cogito ergo sum“, as suggested by Decartes.<sup>831</sup> He further explains that the implication „cognosco ergo sum“ does not imply the primitive function of knowledge such as is the case with Decartes's postulation of „cogito ergo sum“, but the true knowledge of oneself and the other implies two subjects interacting.<sup>832</sup> Friendship relationships that include the mutual exchange of vulnerability are a way towards the discovery of one's true self and the better knowing of one's friend and the self. In order to become a true self, one needs to accept its onto-anthropological state that is about being vulnerable. Only after accepting the anthropological condition of vulnerability can one be in a position to reveal it within the dynamic of mutual relationships. Being vulnerable (ontologically) means being exposed to the need of others, but also being vulnerable by that need. Contrary to the view of the cult of normalcy as addressed by Reynolds, or the principles of utilitarian thinking that support self-dependency, individualism and self-centeredness (e.g. Singer), where a person is diminished from the need of the other, the friendship relationship based on the anthropology of vulnerability implies dependency and need for the other, that ultimately result in the „friendship community.“ In my view the friendship relationship grounded in the recognition of mutual vulnerability has the potential to confront utilitarian thinking about the other and can re-open a possibility in seeking the true inclusion. But becoming oneself in the process of mutual relationships, one needs to accept the possibility of being vulnerable and also the vulnerability of the other. The element of vulnerability exposed within the dynamism of friendship in such a way is a possibility to direct oneself into one's true knowledge. Without this element involved, friendship remains plastic. This again does not mean that generally speaking friendships, if they do not process vulnerability, are false, or missing the moral end. The vulnerability as an element of true encounter, the revelation and possibility of becoming more of who one truly is, within the scope of this research is only of the argumentative suggestion. Being vulnerable or encountering vulnerability of oneself or the other, can be a painful experience. It can cause anger, frustration and sometimes even inner suffering. When put into the dynamic of relationship, it could also be inflicted by others, or of what Eva Feder Kittay said earlier, it „*implicates exposure of already inflicted vulnerability.*“<sup>833</sup> Despite my suggestion for vulnerability as an element of recognition of a true self within the friendship formation, friendship cannot be

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<sup>831</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, (Edinburgh, T&T Clarck, 1973).

<sup>832</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 21.

<sup>833</sup> Kittay, *Love's Labor*, p. 52-57.



reduced to merely a vulnerability. This is not what I am proposing. Friendship as much as it implies vulnerability, must counterbalance autonomy, or respect of one's person's dignity. The question is how autonomy is defined. To open a discourse on autonomy is beyond the scope of this research. However, I would like to trace awareness that in my opinion the autonomy of a person primarily stems from his/her dignity as a creature, as suggested by Pope JP II and indirectly addressed by Jean Vanier in the sacred history of a person, instead of the Enlightenment or late modernity consumption of such the notion (e.g. Kant). This is where the intrinsic autonomy or person's sameness according to my assumption receives its first establishment. Only when we reconsider the aspect of autonomy grounded in respect for a person's dignity, can we counterbalance the person's autonomy based on Decartes's principle of „cogito ergo sum“ and Enlightenment moral postulations of respect of *auto-nomous* identity of self - determination and rational capacity.

### c) The End and Purpose of friendship

One of the results of friendship relationship that includes vulnerability is recognition. Recognition in such perspective results from a process of acknowledging the condition of vulnerability as distinctively human. Besides this, recognition is also formed through shared activities, being with another person, spending time together, etc. The notion of recognition has been the result of a friendship relationship in a second (empirical) part of the thesis. It was understood as a positive component of one's self - esteem and a value. The empirical research on friendship within the second part concerning the academic field of Disability studies, acknowledges friendship as a contributory factor to one's well - being Friendship according to disability theologians plays an important role for the process of re-humanization (Swinton) and personhood (Reinders). The notion of recognition is by the mainstream scholarly literature identified as normative or as a psychological dimension. It affirms the respect for the other person features such as autonomy; or is a positive value of one-self-esteem.<sup>834</sup> The online Cambridge dictionary relates the meaning of recognition with acceptance, appreciation, knowing and knowledge of something or someone as true or legal.<sup>835</sup> Referring the importance of recognition, Axel Honnet in *Struggle for Recognition* addresses that not a struggle for self - preservation, but the struggle for the establishment of relations of mutual recognition is a precondition for a self-realization.<sup>836</sup>

In “The Course of Recognition” Paul Ricoeur interprets recognition not merely as something that implies identification for a particular person, but recognition understood as approbation, including approval of the other person's existence.<sup>837</sup> Moreover for Ricoeur, recognition is a demand and expectation from the other (passive voice) to be recognized and is a responsible

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<sup>834</sup> Cf. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, s.v. „Recognition“ available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/recognition/>, [accessed November 2017].

<sup>835</sup> The Online Cambridge Dictionary, s.v. “Recognition” available from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/recognition>, [accessed November 2017].

<sup>836</sup> See Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition. The moral grammar of Social Conflicts.*, transl. Joel Anderson., (Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1995).

<sup>837</sup> See Paul Ricoeur, „Mutual Recognition,“ in *The Course of Recognition*, transl. David Pellauer, (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2005): p. 150-247

response from the another other (active voice).<sup>838</sup> Though the Ricœurian concept of recognition has been the subject of concerns within care and feminist ethics, it also has valuable contribution in rethinking friendship, as in my opinion the concept itself as presented by Ricœur, has a universal application, which is to say, that it is of a mainstream anthropological and ethical concern. Recognition applied to a scope of rethinking friendship includes mutual respect and responsibility that the relationship of friendship cannot be deprived off. Within a friendship relationship both friends' desires and expectations are to be respected and affirmed as a person's with dignity and equal identity; and secondly, they express their desire for being concerned for each other.<sup>839</sup> Vulnerability expressed within the relationship of friendship is part of the personal identity. The true recognition of another includes vulnerability revealed or hidden within the relationship of friendship. A friendship relationship that expresses one's need for the other simultaneously expresses the need for the recognition of the other. Vulnerability as an element and the recognition as result of friendship, create unity between people despite their differences. The type of recognition discussed within this section, that also draws on Ricœur's suggestion of mutual recognition, (including respect and responsibility), places the element of the personal in the center of discourse of recognition. This means that recognition is a personal category and an element of friendship in a way that goes beyond a commercial reciprocal exchange of good (normative dimension) by highlighting regard for who the other person is, instead seeking the interest of the other's person's features and activity. Jesus's friendship in John 15, 15 and the feet - washing narrative (John 13) is the best example of such friendship, as it is a corrective for the misrecognition of the other person's identity and value. The narrative in John 13, 15, demonstrates the "descending" morality of Jesus that goes from God towards the human person. He not only expresses his vulnerability by expressing the need for the other, but by such need he confirms the other person's identity. Through the exchange of roles (master - slave) he shows that humility is an important element of recognition of others and by such recognition, He, in an act of washing the feet, elevates the other (Apostles) and places Himself in a descending (slave) role position (analogically speaking). Jesus's friendship expressed concerns for equality (equal treatment) between persons; recognizes the other's identity (personal treatment) and reveals something of his shared human vulnerability - the need and love for the other. It also reconfirmed another person's identity that is in seeing the other as one truly is. Both vulnerability and recognition understood in terms of having worth and being accepted for who one is are essentially human characteristics. People with and without disability as humans in order to fully function as human persons are inclined towards on the one hand, disclosure of vulnerability, and on the other, a fundamental human need of being recognized in terms of being seen as one truly is - a person with intrinsic dignity and a potential for relationship.

The proposal to rethink friendship that includes the notion of vulnerability is not only a way towards managing the inclusion of people with disabilities who, due to misrecognized identities, have been deprived of the relationship of friendship. People without disabilities also need recognition, which not only includes the equal value of one's presence, but also the recognition of

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<sup>838</sup> Cf. Hille Haker, "Recognition and Misrecognition" - lecture at the International conference: on Paul Ricœur Antwerp, Belgium, 2014.

<sup>839</sup> I will give more detailed presentation on responsibility in my next section concerning the concern and solicitude

vulnerability as a ground for managing equality. Friendship based on the idea of reciprocal well wishing, seeks for the other person's good, not merely a good for oneself on behalf of the other. The acceptance of vulnerability as an anthropological category revealed within the relationship of mutual giving and receiving stimulates this reciprocal recognition. Such friendship is a corrective from individualism and utilitarianism of late modernity that is motivated by priority to external appearances (culture of the body) in searching the moral, frequently materialized end of friendship. Friendship that includes vulnerability as so called "disinterested value" matters as it shows that my concerns for the other do not proceed from my interest, but out of the value of the other person's presence. This further leads towards the recognition of the other person's intrinsic value and reveals the friendship's inner components. In such regard, value is put on one's person's presence and one's being with, instead of doing for. In other words, the acknowledgement of vulnerability as a category distinctively human goes beyond false representation and results in recognition and true seeing of the other as one truly is.

### 3.5. Solicitude and responsiveness implied in the relationship of friendship understood as relational anthropology of interdependent participation

#### 3.5.1. Introduction: The present concerns and a New suggestion

The notion of concern and solicitude relates to my proposal of friendship redefinition as a relationship of *interdependent participation*. In a previous section concerning the implication of an element of vulnerability for the rethinking the definition of friendship, I propose vulnerability as an element of confrontation with one's personal limits as a living being or, in other words, the element of one's self - disclosure as a way towards becoming a true self. At this point I intend to examine how the *benevolence as well - wishing* and the *beneficent love* understood as *good - doing*, when implied into the relationship of friendship, can refigure the mainstream account of thinking about friendship. To do so, it should be noted that I will use the term "concern" in relation to the meaning "solicitude" as an alternative for the well - wishing in relation to well doing. My intention, on the one hand, is to show that the meaning of concern and solicitude integrated into the dynamic of friendship interlocks the meaning of well-wishing and the ethical imperative of reciprocal good doing within the concept of, for instance, a Golden Rule. On the other hand, my intention is also to demonstrate that concern and solicitude, despite being often applied into the ethics of care discourses, slightly differ from the very meaning of care. So far, we might have noticed that mutual well - wishing and mutual well - doing are of significant importance for Aristotelian friendship (c.f. *NE*, 1168b). In fact, the mutual well - wishing and mutual well doing not only require a reciprocal exchange in such regard. For Aristotle, the person is most truly a friend to another if s/he wishes well or *cares* about his friend's own sake. Going into more details, exercising the friendship of mutual well - wishing among friends, according to the previously-mentioned Cooper's interpretation of Aristotelian friends, means not only a distinction between true friendship from a derivative or incidental friendship; Aristotle made a distinction between true friends and those who are well *disposed* towards the other, but are not friends.<sup>840</sup> In addition, a fully-fledged friendship will exist then when such intentions are recognized by both parties as existing reciprocally.<sup>841</sup> What I aim to highlight is that the Aristotle's notion of mutual well - wishing actually implies reciprocal concerns (*NE*, 1168b), an important element of Aristotle's friendship. When these elements are lost or are not exercised it is only with distinction that one can talk about true friendship. Thus, to qualify something as a true friendship for Aristotle implies concern for the other or wishes good for the other apart from oneself (*NE*, 1168B). It is therefore clear that the degree of mutual concern for each other in so called derivative friendships demonstrates a lower value of the other, except for the subjective benefit of oneself. This is to say, that in the cases where the so-called hidden subjective self - centeredness of oneself prevails above mutual well - wishing, one cannot speak about the true *telos* of friendship. In other words, being

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<sup>840</sup> For instance this could be found in Cooper's on „Forms of friendship“ as cited: „friendship exists only where you wish to the other party what is good for him, for his own sake, and this well-wishing is reciprocated: people say that one ought to wish to a friend what is good, for his own sake; but those who wish what is good [to someone else] in this way people call 'well-disposed' (εὖνομι) [and not 'friends'], if the other person does not return the wish: for friendship is good will (εὐνοία) when reciprocated" (*NE*, 1155b31-34), cf. Cooper, "Forms of Friendship", p.624

<sup>841</sup> See Cooper, „Forms of Friendship“, p.634.

perceived as “another self” entails well - wishing, but in my opinion also doing good for the other person’s sake. When the principle of well - wishing applies in Christianity it often refers to the idea of a *Golden Rule*. In other words, the crux of well-wishing in such a context related to principle of the *Golden Rule*, understood as the universally accepted ethics of reciprocity,<sup>842</sup> sets the requirements of consistency and an equal basic worth for each individual. However, when set in a context of Christianity, the idea of reciprocal well-wishing in a perspective of the *Golden Rule* eventually prevails in the imperative of doing good to one’s neighbor (Mt 7,12; Lk 6:31), but, ethically speaking, does not fully abandon the framework of well - wishing. This, nevertheless, within Christendom, became enlarged by Jesus’s imperative to love each other and God, as one would like to be loved in return (c.f. Mk, 12, 29-31; Rom 13, 8-10; Gal 5:14). The idea of the *Golden Rule* since then (“*Do to others what you would like that the others do to you,*” c.f. Mt 7,12) has been the subject of interpretations among many philosophers, theologians and ethicists, not merely within Christianity. The most evoking address of the *Golden Rule* principle, in my opinion refer Paul Ricœur, who expresses within it, not only the idea of reciprocity, but understood it as a principle that embodies the notion of justice and the aim of a good life.<sup>843</sup> Returning to Aristotelian friends, when the principle of the *Golden Rule* is applied in a context of friendship, it not only exceeds Aristotle’s claim that “it is finer to benefit friends, than to benefit stranger” (*NE*, 1169b10), it interlocks and actualizes benevolent and beneficent love within the relationship of friendship. The problem of well - wishing related to the discourse among ancient philosophers and the Christian idea of reciprocal good doing for one’s neighbor implies a distinction between love as *philia* and love as *agape*. Frequently the two forms of “*well-wishing*” in my opinion actually underscore the good doing. Now, when applied to the context of a caring relationship, good doing underpins the meaning of beneficence; and well-wishing when applied to a friendship relationship (*philia*) underpins the meaning of benevolence, but often appears exclusive to such meaning, due to strict distinction between love as *philia* and love as *agape*. The love of *philia* within modern discourses is not only conditional, but also accompanies one’s free choice, whereas love as *agape* is unconditional as it expresses one’s moral obligation towards the other without much consideration for one’s own choice. This further creates a problem, not only among Christian theology discourses in terms of looking upon inclusion through the lens of merely solidarity, participation and Catholic social teaching; but also posit a problem to academic fields of Ethics of care discourses. The emphasis on *agape* love as often prevailing within the domain of Christian theology discourses, became detached from a thinking of friendship love. Friendship, on the other hand, was understood as separated from *agape*, reduced to the meaning of private reciprocal exchange, whereas *agape* understood as love for one’s neighbor became associated with a universal non-reciprocal moral obligation from one towards the other. It is clear than when such discourses on the one hand imply the meaning of *agape* they became a charitable axiom within Christian charity and solidarity. On the other hand, when love as *philia* is implicated in a process of a formal caring relationship, frequently it is replaced with a notion of love as sacrificial love and falls into one’s moral obligation towards the other. In what way, if possible, is the Christian principle of reciprocal good doing perceived within an ethical principle of the *Golden Rule*,

<sup>842</sup> For more on that topic see, Jeffrey Wattles, *The Golden Rule*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>843</sup> Paul Ricœur, *One self as Another*, transl. by Kathleen Blamey, (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1992).

corresponding to the well - wishing of a relationship of friendship and vice versa? What change does it make to friendship if the idea of “solidarity as concerns,” close to *agape* love, impacts the process of rethinking friendship?

I suggest that it is actually a notion of concern understood as solicitude that interlocks the well -wishing of *philia* (benevolence) with well - doing (beneficence) of *agape*. My aim in the following discussion is to prove such statements and show their relevance for the relationship of friendship as the relationship of interdependent participation. But before entering such discussion, I would like to clarify the meaning of care understood within a scope of this research, and also applied in a context of ethics of care. My main tendency in embarking into such analysis is to indicate upon its slight distinctiveness from the meaning of concern and solicitude.

### **3.5.2. The notion of care - academic context and application**

My interest in exploring the meaning of care within the academic context of care ethics and related academic fields stems from two reasons: first I am interested in exploring the meaning of care and its distinction from the meaning of concern and solicitude implied in the relationship of friendship; second, I would like to address its link and suggestion to understanding the concept of interdependency applied in relationship of friendship.

As has been noticed in a previous discussion, well - wishing was one important element of not only Aristotle friendship, but was present as a general feature of relationship of friendship. Besides Blum’s thinking of friendship and most specifically Biblical friendship explored in Jn 15, 15, no other places explicitly emphasize caring as an element important within a process of friendship. (cf. first part of the thesis). Within the second part of this research, care was applied with the meaning of *caring for another*, identified as one of the elements peculiar to friendship in L’Arche (between people with disabilities and their assistants). The conceptual analysis of the academic field of Disability studies has shown that care implies negative connotations due to people with disability being reduced to cure of medical interventions or care of charitable associations. The empirical research in the first chapter of the second part within Disability studies discourses, identifies “helping each other” and the notion of “support” not only as emerging elements of friendship but also as elements specific to taking care for another friend (cf. pp. 101-112). The caring relationship that includes the care giver (personal assistant) and the receiver of care, also examined earlier in the second part, shows ambiguity in prescribing caring as an element of friendship (Willmot, 1987; Ungerson, 1999). Rather, the care was in such a perspective identified as an element of a formal (professional) caring relationship, instead of an element of friendship. What exactly is implied in the meaning of the notion of care and in what aspect can it be applied within the context of the friendship relationship?

In order to answer this question, I will distinguish between the meaning of care, and the meaning of care approached through various academic contexts.

As an academic field, the ethics of care emerges during the 1970/80s as a reaction to the male education principals and, as such, it appears at first to be a subject of discussion for a feminist

author.<sup>844</sup> One characteristic of the approach to care that stems from Carol Gilligan addresses the distinction between care as an outcome of a process of moral growth and care as a rule-based justice specific to male morality (*contra* principlism). This, in other words, means that Gilligan tends to distinguish between the meaning of care as a merely physical work, and its meaning related to a process of social relationship. Though many feminist authors follow Gilligan's approach, they nevertheless also diverge from C. Gilligan by stressing the importance to the social value of care, and its positive universal features, instead of approaching it as a merely private activity undertaken by women.

In *Dictionary of Ethics*, care is prescribed as a distinct moral sentiment, the emotional attitude embedded in a relationship with another person - yet, by some theorists, it is seen as structuring an entire moral outlook.<sup>845</sup> The *Dictionary* adds that caring implies concern for the other in a way that implicates caring for another out of desire, inclination or well - wishing good for another (feeling, emotional concerns), not primarily as a recognition of a duty towards another or a reason to help another (the cognitive dimension).

When the concept of care is implied in the academic settings most of the scholarly discourses on such a theme arrive from the scope of care ethics and the feminist authors. They nevertheless indicate that care as social concept must be approached as a subject of social justice as it involves a social relationship characterized by giving and receiving, vulnerability, dependency, and empowerment.<sup>846</sup> The academic field of ethics of care or care ethics drove a distinction between the discourse on the meaning of care as a moral duty in responding to one's need, and the variety of its interpretations and approaches within certain academic contexts (e.g. Noddings, 1984;<sup>847</sup> Tronto, 1993;<sup>848</sup> and Sevenhuijsen, 1993;<sup>849</sup> 1998).

In other words, as might be clear so far, it is correct to notice that the baseline of the ethics of care applied in an academic discourse orbits around the very meaning of care. But it does not stay there; it goes further in enlarging its meaning and application. This means that the ethics of care discourses do not only apply into the context of biomedical ethics, as often perceived, but the notion of care is also applied in the discourse of moral education, and different contexts such as motherhood, nursing, friendship, disability and old age.

Nel Noddings sets forward the understanding of care, with a meaning that goes beyond one's attitude or one's moral obligation. According to Noddings, care involves a receptivity or openness - a responsiveness - towards the other as other, not assuming that one knows of what the other's

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<sup>844</sup> See for instance Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Woman's Development*. (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993); See also Baldwin, S. and Twigg, J., "Woman and Community care" in *Women's Issues in Social Policy*, Maclean, M. and Groves, D. (eds.), (Routledge, London, 1991): p.117-35

<sup>845</sup> Cf. Lawrence Becker and Charlotte Becker, s.v. "Care" *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, p. 125

<sup>846</sup> Martina Vuk, "Vulnerability and Disability: An Ethical and Theological Analysis" unpublished Advanced Master's Thesis, Faculty of Theology, KU Leuven, 2014.

<sup>847</sup> Nel Noddings, *Caring - A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>848</sup> Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: a political argument for an ethics of care.*, (New York: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>849</sup> Selma Sevenhuijsen, *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care. Feminist consideration on justice, morality and politics*, (transl.) Liz Savage, (London and New York, Routledge, 1998).

good consists. Instead one's actions are guided by the actions and views of the other's own reality.<sup>850</sup>

The view on care proposed by J. Tronto encompasses much broader settings. Tronto's foundation of care consists of three general orientations. Accordingly, care implies; a) the relationship with others (care for others in dyadic relationships); b) the institutional orientation of care which considers social and political functions; and finally; c) care as an ongoing activity rather than a theory.<sup>851</sup> More specifically Tronto adds that in its very basis, the concept of care implies selflessness and action to respond a particular human need. To answer to that need is understood as one's moral motivation and responsibility towards the other. This means that, in a nutshell, care requires that morality be regarded from a broader context and perspective, not solely from the form of principles and abstraction, but rather from the concrete living situations.

The research on the ethics of care or care ethics<sup>852</sup> approach, pioneered by Carol Gilligan and developed by Joan Tronto, Nel Noddings, has been further expanded by other feminist authors whose approach to care emphasizes relational interdependency. One of such feminist authors is already cited Eva Feder Kittay. In *Love's Labor*, Kittay raises awareness on the tensions between language of care, disability and dependency demonstrating concerns for the importance of power balances and protection from the exposure of already inflicted vulnerability.

As a feminist author, Kittay's approach to care departs from relational dependency and challenges the content of social and political theories within democratic institutions, which acknowledge the model of self-independency and individual based equality.<sup>853</sup> Kittay's approach is motivated by the agenda of moral and political theories of justice by making the shift towards the recognition of human vulnerabilities, the requirements of basic needs and dependency relations, which are of crucial importance in her model. Therefore, her model of care implies a dependency relation and is founded on the assumption that care stems from the recognition of human need as a primarily fundamental aspect of human existence, and as such it re-affirms human interdependency. The relational aspect of care bears moral responsibility in that it emerges as a consequence of the caring processes of dependents (e.g. caring worker) and a dependent (e.g. receiver of care).

With a brief presentation of the above discussion, I attempt to provide insights on the distinction between the meaning of care and the relationship between the meaning of care and interdependency. The discussion demonstrates that care has been a social concept and a daily reality. As a social concept, care denotes the concept of social justice and as such it is prescribed with tasks, activities in responding to a person's needs. However, care is a complex concept in that it involves characteristics that extend its relationship with physical activity. The social relationship character of care cannot be in opposition to dependency. In other words, sometimes it is difficult to look upon care merely as a formal welfare service and not be aware of a particular narrative involved in a process of caring. This is to say that the matter of care as a personal communication is determined by certain dialectics of giving and receiving, and the shared narrative between subjects involved. This means that caring as a social relationship includes interdependent and dependent relationships with others. Or, in other words, the process of care constructs a particular

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<sup>850</sup> Cf. Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 79-89.

<sup>851</sup> Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 103.

<sup>852</sup> For more on this distinction is available from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethics-of-care>

<sup>853</sup> See Kittay, *Love's Labor*, 75-99.



type of social interdependency. Departing from the aspect of justice, the main understanding of care within the care ethics approach addresses care as an element of dialogue and a lived experience. The care in such an aspect is considered as part of daily experience in responding to a person's needs, implying a moral response and responsibility.

Though "care" implicates its interdependent character, it still remains attached to a formal, professional and caring type of relationship. As seen previously, care was not explicitly mentioned as an element of friendship, a personal relationship, but remained understood within a scope of physical provision of support and help within caring relationships.

My intention in the next paragraph is to expand the framework of a concept of care, by looking at its interdependent character and its reference to the meaning of concern and solicitude.

### **3.6. The meaning of concern and its implication for the relationship of friendship**

We might have noticed that the meaning of the notion of concern often associates with the meaning of care and caring. The concern related to caring in Disability studies discourse attaches to the framework of a formal or professional caring relationship. Very rarely, the meaning of concern applied into the context of such discourses points to the relationship of friendship. Similarly, the philosophical and theological discourses on friendship referring to concern for the other, show ambiguity in aligning concern with the meaning of love as *philia* and love as *agape*. The same ambiguity exists regarding the meaning of well - wishing (benevolence) and good doing (beneficence). This puzzled situation regarding the meaning of concern invites further questions: where is the limit of caring relationship and where does the friendship begin? Can friendship be deprived of concern for the other? Or more importantly can friendship love be detached from love as *agape*? What is the actual meaning of the notion of concern when applied to a framework of friendship relationships? The *Cambridge Online Dictionary* defines concern as something that does not only imply worries, but something that is of importance to someone, something that is involved in something.<sup>854</sup> This, in my opinion, indicates that the meaning of concern transcends the meaning of care as a straightforward concept of the distribution of physical care within the context of caring. Concerns, related to the notion of responsiveness and reception of the other, applied to a friendship relationship, demonstrate that friendship does not eliminate otherness, in terms of perceiving the other merely as a subject of moral obligation. Instead, it demonstrates that such relationships are not merely reduced to the morality of rational decision making, but imply an aspect of relationality. This means that the application of concern into a friendship relationship not only supplies friendship with recognition of mutual interdependency but also opens the possibility of re-balancing the power of a so-called unequal relationship. This entails that when mutual or reciprocal concern is applied to the relationship of friendship, the caring surpasses the notion of duty, the power balance, or the respect of ethical boundaries, it shows that friendship is not only about its ends, but also about the *process*. This includes the concern, the responsiveness, the respect and the well-being of the two persons involved.

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<sup>854</sup> Cf. Cambridge Online Dictionary, s.v. „Concern“ available from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/concern?q=concerns>

Additionally, my understanding of concern within the scope of this research includes certain aspects of care understood within the context of an ethics of care, it also departs from its meaning. From such reasoning, my understanding of concern aligns Paul Ricœur's account of the notion of solicitude in *One self and another*. This means that my understanding of care will depart from the strict notion of care applied within professional formal settings, but will share with care ethics an understanding of the responsiveness, as an element of recognition of not merely the other person's needs, but as an aspect of respect of a person's vulnerability and applied inequality. The notion of concerns, in my view, cannot be detached from the implication of receptivity and responsiveness. But neither can it be detached from the relationship of friendship. Exactly what I mean by this will best be portrayed in drawing on Paul Ricœur's understanding of solicitude, and my task is to explain this in the following paragraph.

### 3.6.1. Paul Ricœur's implication on the meaning of concern and solicitude

Paul Ricœur who did not write an explicit treatise on friendship, was given attention on such a matter on various occasions and perspectives. The most relevant contemporary dictionaries, such as *Dictionnaire d'éthique et de philosophie morale*<sup>855</sup> and *Dictionnaire Encyclopedique D'Éthique Chretienne*,<sup>856</sup> in addressing the notion of friendship (*amitie*) both refer to Paul Ricœur's address on *benevolence* in his book *One self as Another*. Revealing such ideas within the mentioned source, Ricœur's view on explaining friendship implicates Aristotle's view, but also he adapts and exceeds it interchangeably through his reference to Edmund Husserl and Emmanuel Levinas. The most general inquiry in my reading of Ricœur's book *One self as Another* orbits around the question: *Who am I*, or *What is the I*, and *Who is the self*? What corresponds mostly to the interest of this research within such queries is not only the question of *Whom am I* or *Who is the self*. Besides, established philosophical anthropology grounded in such a query, Ricœur's postulation interrogates the framework of practical philosophy, best corresponding to the relationship concerning the other, and the other within a friendship framework. The ultimate purpose of such a postulation is not only to rethink the established knowledge of the other and friendship relationality, but also, through his relational principle integrated into his dialectic of one self and another, Ricœur challenges the cartesian *cogito*. The link between the Ricœur's reflection on the meaning of the other and friendship does not only consist in the conceptual framework of its rationale. Ricœur's attachment to friendship hermeneutics is of a practical importance in such a way that it says that friendship is not only about discovering the meaning of the other (human self); its (friendship) importance lies in its process, including shared activities understood as human action and a friendship narrative understood as a friendship's testimony.<sup>857</sup> As friendship within the scope of this research is thought of as relational anthropology and interdependent participation, and the notion of solicitude is understood as an intertwined exchange of the meaning of concern and responsiveness, my key focus in *One self as Another* with regard to the idea of

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<sup>855</sup> Cf. Canto-Sperber, Monique, s.v. « amitie » *Dictionnaire D'Éthique et de Philosophie Morale*, 1996.

<sup>856</sup> Cf. Laurent, Lemoine, Gaziaux Eric, Müller Denis, « amitie » *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique D'Éthique Chretienne*, 2013.

<sup>857</sup> Ricœur, *One self as Another*, p.16.

friendship involves looking at the notion of solicitude and the dialectics of Ricœur's usage of one-self as another. To understand Ricœur's implication of his anthropology (the meaning of the other) for an ethics of friendship (in this particular perspective, his notion of solicitude) and vice versa, I will arrive at the notion of solicitude by first departing from his insight into a knowledge of the other.

### **3.6.2. Friendship, solicitude and dialectics between other and another**

Ricœur's thinking on friendship in *One self as Another* approach to friendship integrates an anthropological and an ethical perspective. This means that his meaning of friendship includes his aspect on the meaning of the other and his friendship reflection underlines the aspect of a good life on an individual level and the notion of justice, on the more general socio - political level. In such a regard, he differentiates between the notion of reciprocity and mutuality. His notion of reciprocity that he adapts from Aristotle relates to the logic of justice, while his notion of the term mutuality corresponds to the notion of gift. This is to say that he leaves from Aristotle's reflection on friendship but does not remain attached merely to such thinking either. Considering the anthropological aspect of his rethinking on friendship, it is important to first mention that according to Ricœur, the meaning of selfhood refers to the identity that belongs to an individual person not the *another*. This in Biblical terminology means that before God no one is the same, as each person carries a unique identity, that, theologically speaking, refers to the meaning of a person's dignity. This is to say that friendship is never between two equal persons with equal identities. It is always between two different people with specific (different) identities. The two persons are, according to Ricœur, beginning to create something together. *In other words, the dissymmetry between the two rather creates equality and unity, but separation and exclusion.* The dialectics of self and the other in Ricœur is interesting as it says that selfhood refers to the other, which further means that another as oneself and one self as another are important ethical identities, as by *seeing the other as oneself, implies being concerned about the other.* Another as oneself and one self as another corresponds to the dialectics of united ethical identity. Regarding his aspect of friendship, it is important to notice that for Ricœur friendship though implying justice also implies a certain amount of love. This is to say that the meaning of justice considered is not strictly a legal type of justice. It is before all a justice based on a reciprocal dissymmetrical exchange between giving and receiving. This means that justice when applied in a framework of friendship, does not correspond to a strict proportional exchange governed by certain proportions. Instead, Ricœur's justice applied in a friendship framework implies a certain amount of responsiveness and love that best corresponds to the meaning of mutuality (sympathetic exchange). It is exactly the solicitude that when applied in Ricœur's framework of friendship, challenges the Aristotelian notion of justice integrated into a process of reciprocity as a strict sharing between equals. This is to say that in my reading, the Ricœur's notion of friendship posits the question with regard to the status of reciprocity and the status of equality or dissymmetry between the persons involved. Such reflection also challenges the moral or ethical aim of the friendship rationale. The ethical according to Ricœur is not separated from the anthropological. Or, in other words, the concept of friendship is not a separated category, distinguished from the process of practical (that includes a mutual exchange between the two persons involved). In fact, as indicated earlier it integrates the human

subject and human action, whose anthropological composition is based on a dialectic between the other and another.

In line with such an ethical view of friendship, the other is not simply an *alter ego*, but the true other (*veritablement autre*). The love of one neighbor (*agape*) and the love for one friend (*philia*) in my assessment of Ricoeur thought, are interchangeably interwoven and are best exemplified within the notion of solicitude. The other is not merely me, s/he is like myself. Solicitude, departing from the original idea of friendship, is a form of foundation of connection between one-self and the other. In other words, the concerns for the one self, make one self-attuning to the other. Solicitude in such a sense is not merely a concern in its strict sense, but besides, it underpins empathy and responsiveness for the other.<sup>858</sup>

As he put it:

Solicitude adds the dimension of value, whereby each person is irreplaceable in our affection and our esteem. In this respect, it is in experiencing the irreparable loss of the loved other that we learn, through the transfer of the other onto ourselves, the irreplaceable character of our own life. It is first for the other that I am irreplaceable. In this sense, solicitude replies to the other's esteem for me. But if this response were not in a certain manner spontaneous, how could solicitude not be reduced to dreary duty?<sup>859</sup>

When solicitude is applied into a context of friendship rationale, its meaning departs from a strict obligation, and is inclined towards more spontaneous benevolence. Namely, the notion of solicitude when applied into the context of friendship is a reminder that friendship cannot be deprived from its component of living well in a sense that it contributes to one's personal self-esteem. But the concern for the other and about the other is not only a service to the other but implies the notion of justice and complementarity in a friendly *face to face* encounter. The concern understood as solicitude matters for friendship not only because it supplies friendship with the certain "duty" towards the other, but also because it protects the friendship union from becoming individualized and utilitarian, which is to say self-focused. Differently, it also "prevent" the concept of solicitude to be reduced to the meaning of a pure obligation. The sense of justice in such a perspective is applied to the notion of the other,<sup>860</sup> and from another towards the other. When such solicitude is applied into the context of friendship, the ethical aim and moral aim of concern for the other are used *interalia*. This means that the moral aim of friendship precedes the ethical aim. Being concerned for another friend means recognizing the other as the other, but also means that the other realizes that he/she is recognized by one self as one true self. Being concerned for the other out of concern and not merely duty or obligation has a moral character and an ethical aim. This is to say that friendship is a moral category because it concerns one's being, and one's ethical aim that is the good or happy life. In my observation of such dialectics it is impossible to separate the moral dimension of friendship from its ethical aim, or "anthropology" of friendship from "ethics" of friendship. This implies the meaning Ricoeur ascribes to solicitude; that solicitude is not simply a duty or certain moral obedience. It transcends it as its status lies in *benevolent*

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<sup>858</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "Autonomy and Vulnerability.," In *Reflections On the Just*, transl. D. Pellauer (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2007): p. 72-90.

<sup>859</sup> Ricoeur, *One self as the Another*, 193.

<sup>860</sup> Ricoeur, *One self as Another*, 194.

*spontaneity* which includes one's self - esteem and one's aim for the "good" life.<sup>861</sup> The moral and ethical aim of concerns according to Ricoeur does not lie in the obligation of one to respond to the vulnerable face of the other, as this was for Levinas. His focus is motivated by the orientation of one towards the other out of regard for the other. This means that the ethical aim of the action within interdependent human relationships for Ricoeur is not invoked by the norm or obligation, but out of benevolent spontaneity that is fundamental in understanding concern and solicitude.<sup>862</sup> Ricoeur's thinking on friendship adds Levinas's relation to the face of the other, but also distinguishes from Levinas in that he put the notion of *face* into the dynamic of solicitude based on benevolent spontaneity, instead of what we can read through "Levinas" responsibility. The benevolent spontaneity when put into the context of interdependent relationships according to Ricoeur includes the receiving and giving. The receiving in such a sense equalizes responsibility and recognition in accordance with love and justice. The benevolent spontaneity proposed by Ricoeur matters for friendship in such a way that giving stems from sympathy and is located into a dissymmetry of the mutual exchange of receiving and giving. The sympathy is not reduced to pity even when it includes the other's person suffering but is governed through the recognition of the value of other and the value of one self. It comes from the self and extends to the other and in such a way it reestablished equality through the shared admission of fragility and finally of mortality.<sup>863</sup> Put into a relationship of friendship which implies a recognition of vulnerability, the concern is in equilibrium as one does not act towards the other by being affected by the other's pity, weakness and suffering, but through acceptance and recognition, of one self as the other and the other as the another other. The dissymmetry here is not expressed via an exchange of an unequal power. It lies in recognition of each person's uniqueness and sacredness that departs from first acceptance of the same ontological nature, which in my perspective is already a sufficient anthropological basis for forming the relationship of friendship. Related to this we can admit that when friendship presupposes dissymmetry it means that the giving and receiving as constitutive to friendship are not measured by equality, but by inequality. Aristotle's treatise on perfect friendship, grounded in the strict equal exchange of giving and receiving, excludes slaves and women as they could never reach the strict proportion of an equal reciprocal exchange. Ricoeur by the implication of solicitude and benevolent sympathy demonstrated the limitation of such a view, adding that the proper equilibrium or symmetry between friends does not consist only in sharing the pleasure or in respect of one's virtuous character, but, as he adds, "sharing the pain of suffering is not symmetrically opposite to sharing a pleasure."<sup>864</sup> In my assumption when the notion of concern understood as solicitude implies the context of a friendship relationship, it can never equalize the proportion of receiving and giving exchange. My further thinking on concern, understood as solicitude, says that friendship cannot be deprived from the implication of benevolent spontaneity, due to assumption, that there is always a dissymmetry between the two people involved, as two persons are always asymmetrical in themselves, because they are unique. The dissymmetry in light of asymmetry, means that each person is prescribed with an intrinsic dignity and poses a distinct subjectivity. In other words, the solicitude unites and justifies the

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<sup>861</sup> Ricœur, *One self as Another*, p. 190.

<sup>862</sup> Ricœur, *One self as Another*, p. 189.

<sup>863</sup> Ricœur, *One self as Another*, p. 192.

<sup>864</sup> Ricœur, *One self as Another*, p. 191.

ethical aim with spontaneous benevolence. It adds to the spontaneity dimension of the other's value, saying that each person is irreplaceable: *I cannot myself have self-esteem unless I esteem others as myself.*<sup>865</sup> The value is projected into the irreplaceability of the other, which is to say that the emphasis is on the response to the other because the other carries the value. Friendship permits that benevolent spontaneity is reversible as it permits the exchange of roles, which means that it removes the strict hierarchical role exchange and is non - substitutive of the persons involved. The importance of solicitude for the relationship of friendship can be summarized in what Ricoeur has addressed:

to self-esteem, understood as a reflexive moment of the wish for the "good life", solicitude as essentially, the dimension of lack, the fact that we need friends; as a reaction to the effect of solicitude on self - esteem, the self perceives itself as another among others.<sup>866</sup>

Friendship should not be merely an intellectual meeting of minds (although friendship sometimes includes that) but, as has been seen so far, the priority of friendship lies in the meeting of the heart. The concern understood as solicitude and put into the dynamic of benevolent spontaneity underpins reciprocal sense (attuning) and empathic knowledge from one person towards the other and vice versa. It is the reciprocal exchange of emphatic knowledge, but sensitivity at the first place, that fits into the framework of spontaneous benevolence, and ultimately corresponds to the meaning of the *solicitude related concern and benevolent spontaneity*.

### **3.6.3. A further complexity regarding the meaning of concern and solicitude in relation to the love as *philia* and love as *agape***

Can love of friendship (*philia*) be deprived from love for one neighbor (*agape*) and vice versa? Can the concern for the other be deprived from the informal (personal) and reduced merely to a formal relationship? Being concerned for the other as one would like to be concerned by the other in return, in my view, is a strictly moral, even virtuous, activity in the sense that it not only demonstrates the person's outward reality, but moreover his/her inward moral dispositions. What I am aiming to say by such a suggestion is that our regard for the other, particularly the other who is in need of the another in terms of sharing a common time, enjoys one's presence, and being empowered through the exchange of reciprocal communication realizes one's person moral stance on concern of the other. However, such thinking posits a challenge firstly to a care ethicist and to moral philosophers in responding, whereas the concept of caring can exceed the relationship of caring and locate it into a friendship relationship (we should remember that the caring relationship includes a different framework: one that implies equality, free choice and the equal measurement of power balances). The second challenge of such suggestions concerns theological discourses, that attach care or the concern for the other with the meaning of social solidarity; or places it into a realm of a neighborhood love and detaches it from the scope of friendship. ***What harm will it do to friendship if concern and responsiveness for the other, or concern expressed in a form of love as *agape*, are placed into a framework of friendship? No harm, in my opinion. It will only make it more real and life giving, instead of reducing friendship to closed intellectual property, missing the practice.***

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<sup>865</sup> Ricoeur, *One self as Another*, 192.

<sup>866</sup> Ricoeur, *One self as Another*, 192.

*Agape* as a love for one neighbor<sup>867</sup> and friendship as a more specific love for one friend, despite their conceptual differences, have a common purpose: a (moral) good to the human person. Though these two loves are often regarded with distinction, according to my perception, they cannot be straightforwardly separated from each other. Rather, as I already implicitly suggested earlier, they need integration. The field of Theological Ethics and Catholic social teaching concerning a “theme of disability” gave little attention regarding the relationship with people with disabilities as potential friends, apart from the realm of neighborhood love. In other words, within a major theological discourse, the Catholic social doctrine, including teaching on the preferential option of the poor, the “disabled” were given attention within charitable love. The personalistic relational aspect in such a perspective has often been marginalized. Theologian Pia Matthews, referring to the story of the Good Samaritan within Scripture, interrogates such question in a slightly reverse dialectic regarding the aspect of reciprocal love. Matthews, pointing to the reciprocal character of love as *agape*, questions the reversal action of interdependency, addressing that often *it is not only a good Samaritan as the one who helps the Jew. Instead, it is a Jew as a “good Samaritan” helping a Samaritan.*<sup>868</sup> Applied to the discourse including people with disability and their care workers or assistants, Matthews’s argument actually says that within the context of mutual care exchange it is the people with disability that are often acting as good Samaritans towards the non - disabled people, instead of non-disabled people being the first line cares for the disabled. The process Matthews indicates reveals the reversal act of giving and receiving, equally applied in both the relationship of friendship, and a caring relationship. Accordingly, the personalistic aspect of mutual exchange says that the acting person (care giver) and apparently non-acting person (care receiver) are mutually involved and intertwined, as the very same process is sometimes governed, not through the exchange between giving and receiving, but also the exchange between love as *philia* and love as *agape*. Without the intention to enter a larger discussion on a “preferential” option for the poor, my intention, for the purpose of this research, is only to highlight that as Christians we must be aware that the preferential option for the poor is not a service based on a provision of humanitarian aid or a charitable action from the rich or the powerful towards the poor or powerless. Regarding people with disability, this means that speaking about people with disabilities from the perspective of a preferential option for the poor is actually limited, if the action from one towards the other is guided merely by a moral obligation or a duty to act out of charity, instead of a benevolent responsiveness. People with intellectual disability as every other person, should be regarded not merely as those towards whom the action of love as service is directed, but from a personalistic initiative of a free love as an encounter with another other as one true self. The meaning of beneficence in such regards exceeds the relationship of giving and receiving within the context of care, whereas the meaning of benevolence surpasses the context of merely a relationship of friendship. Regarding the context of a caring relationship, with reference to empirical results in the second part of this thesis and also research on work and care within Disability studies discourses, the person that is in the role of an assistant (care giver) is, by the receivers of care, not perceived only as a care giver, neither is the person who receives care reduced to merely a receiver. The perplexity of such roles means that in both cases the person is regarded

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<sup>867</sup> For instance an official address of this distinction can be found also in the first Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas est*; Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas est.*, 25 December, 2005.

<sup>868</sup> Matthews, *Pope John Paul II and the Apparently „Non-acting“ Person*, p. 155.

as either the *another self* (in Aristotelian sense), or according to more contemporary authors such as Paul Ricœur, the *another other*. Caring for another in terms of a formal relationship includes provision of physical care. When care is applied to a relationship of friendship, it does not only imply physical care. The meaning of care within such discourses exceeds the provision of physical care, and implies *concern* for the other in terms of one's psychological and spiritual need. My point here is to indicate that caring in both ways (formal and informal relationship), as within the context of charity love, implies the meaning of both benevolence and beneficence, as the person is not merely reduced to the object of care, but before all, s/he is a subject of responsive action, seen as another other, capable to participate in relationship. From the reason above, I suggest solicitude not only regarded in light of benevolent spontaneity but related to the meaning of concern and responsiveness as two elements of friendship relationships. This is not only to straightforwardly challenge the meaning of utility friendship, but, moreover, my suggestion sees within it an important moral concept, understood as an inward disposition towards the other in terms of a *hidden attuning* for the well - being of the other and the one's dependent need for the another other. More precisely, the suggestion I propose underpins the meaning of solicitude with a relationship of friendship and aims to demonstrate that friendship as one type of interdependent relationship based on giving and receiving cannot be completely detached from the notion of *philia*, neither can the *philia* be fully deprived of the meaning of *agape*. *Concern understood as solicitude or solicitude understood as concern in this research refer a disinterested gift of friendship whose focal point is to reaffirm the stability of friendship from being reduced to the desire of utilitarian consumeristic morality or materialized pleasure.* The element of concern understood as solicitude is a way which directs friendship towards an authentic relationship, instead of "mirroring" its false friendly representation. Stressing the attention upon the concern for the other friend and also as one important aspect of a relationship of friendship arrives from two related reasons already indicated within the scope of this research. The friend is not only the one that acts as being concerned for the other, but as one that needs to permit /accept being concerned. In such a sense I do not think about physical concern as an action for the other towards the another at the first place. My thinking in such an aspect looks at concern within the perspective of a friendship relationship before all as a moral relationship that includes the lives of people with and without disabilities, but also relationships between people with disabilities themselves, as well as between people with and without disabilities. This is to say that all the types of interdependent relationship mentioned above are before all the interdependent relationship based on giving and receiving, specific to humans. Those interdependent relationships understood as relationships between humans are disposed towards each other through affection that facilitates certain type of concerns for the other. The subjects involved in the relationship of friendship includes equal empowerment, instead of the distinction between those of low cognitive capacity and those of higher cognitive capacity, or those of higher power and those of a lower power. What friendship is about in the first place and what this research project aims to emphasized, is that friendship is a moral relationship, not the intellectual property in itself. This is to say that there is nothing wrong with being concerned for the other on the level of a reciprocal caring relationship or being concerned by and for the other within a relationship of friendship. But it could be a moral failure for such a type of relationship, if concern in relation to solicitude is reduced to its margins or is completely deprived of the relationships of friendship.



### 3.6.3.1. What about caring friends?

The ancient dimension of friendship, despite being highly symmetrical, stresses the importance of the idea of well - wishing understood as being concerned with other person's good (cf. *NE*, 1168b). As this has been previously discussed, the well-wishing according to *NE*, 155b29-31 expresses the disposition of one wishing good to the other. The dimension of well-wishing in terms of caring has been less emphasized within a modern and late modernity concept of friendship. However, it was not deprived of it either. Lawrence Blum, for instance, being concerned with a moral value of friendship in contrast to Kantian rationalistic morality, expresses this idea in light of an altruistic emotion, but it is actually Paul Ricœur, in *One self and Another* who displays the idea of good wishing in a sense of an ethical demand of benevolent love. This as we might previously have noticed places friendship and a friend into an ethical perspective where the other could be regarded as one neighbor or one friend towards whom another's action is oriented.<sup>869</sup> Regarding the academic disciplines previously discussed, the Disability studies literature does not provide sustained discussion on caring friendships. Similarly, contemporary theological discussions are rather neutral regarding the moral aspect of „caring friends. “Though Aristotle and ancient friendship set forward the aspect of well - wishing as caring, their friendship, as well as certain friendships in modernity, remain not only symmetrical and normative, but addresses certain moral closure of friendship, where friendship is perceived as a movement between those similar in virtue, status and character. In other words, despite Aristotle friendship acknowledges aspect of caring, it remains exclusive to those similar in character. In contrast to that, the caring friends in L'Arche as we might have seen within the third chapter of the second part of the thesis, besides being asymmetrical, are formed by the reciprocity of hospitality, instead of calculous exchange between the one who provides care and the one who receives care. The relationships between people with disability or people without disability or, in other words, care givers and care receivers in the context of academic field of Disability studies, is, according to the results in the first chapter, the relationship between two people who care for each other despite their differences, because the other is recognized as the another other who not only poses a gift to offer, but is a gift him/her self for the other.<sup>870</sup> This in my view means, that caring friends care for each other, not just because of some pleasure (fun or fulfillment of sentiments) or utility (money or prosperity), but because they accept the other person as he/she is. The difference/asymmetry in this relationship is not an obstacle, but an opportunity to meet another person as a true other, capable of a friendship relationship. Being concerned for one's friend also does not mean that other care for the another as his/her care giver. Such concern or care in my perspective places the dynamic of friendship reciprocity into an economy of hospitality, instead of strict reciprocal exchange.

The friendship that implies concern or solicitude for the other friend means caring for the other out of recognition that the other is a person who shares with me an intrinsic dignity and the same ontological nature, and for such a reason s/he is worthy of my concern. This in other words means

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<sup>869</sup> Bruno Godefroy, Pauline Sabrier, s.v. „Amitié“ in *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique D'Ethique Chretienne*, Laurent, Lemoine, Gaziaux Eric, Müller Denis, eds., p. 127-130.

<sup>870</sup> Similar regard on narrative of reciprocity can be found in Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*, (New York, Image book Doubleday, 1972).

that I primarily care for a person who is my friend, independently of my motivation or orientation towards the achievement of certain good. Caring friends are bound together out of independent interdependency, not the other way around. Thus, the explanation why I care and why I am a caring friend involves my motivation in a reference, not to a person's character or achievement of a certain good, but out of what we share as humans: that we are both vulnerable and that we both interdependently need each other. *Such reasoning allows friendship among differences.* Being concerned for the other and responsive to the other's needs is a way towards flourishing. As an interdependent relationship, in such understanding friendship helps people understand one - self-worth and wellbeing. The sense of well-being, as Ricoeur has said, depends on the other, the adequate concerns and responsiveness from the other towards the another.<sup>871</sup> Concern for the other and responsiveness in addition to friendship is interrelation and as such is a necessary indicator of the renewal of a relational anthropology of friendship. The other is not the other consuming, neither should the friendship be consuming. Concern for the other as a way of responsiveness towards the other is a process to help the other grow, to impact one's self-esteem and to combat utilitarian and consumeristic ideas implicated, but often hidden within a relationship of friendship. If friendship as a concept of universal importance cannot be reachable by all (for instance people with disability in our case), can at least concern, responsiveness and recognition of common vulnerability between other and another remedy such a situation? From such reasons, my suggestion is that concern for the other and responsiveness are the two key elements for the renewal of a moral stance of friendship. This also means that, in the first place, care is not a process merely to satisfy the other person's needs, that is often understood within disability and rehabilitation or within the scope of a charitable initiative such as the preferential option of the poor. Neither should the concern or caring implied in a friendship relationship be confused with the traditional notion of distribution of care as one's moral obligation towards the other. Caring, from the theological point of view, I would prescribe with the meaning of concern for the other according to 1Cor 12, 25-29 (c.f. "*That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*"); and John 15, 12;15 (c.f. *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you; Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant know not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you*). This means that the true recognition of the other's identity steams from who one is before God; and one loves the other more than one should love one self. It does not only imply a one-way process, but a dynamic of mutual recognition and exchange out of love and principle for God. This further means that the demand for the notion of "caring friends" has been set forward by Jesus himself in John 15, 15. *It was actually Jesus's example of true friendship in John 15,15 that contradicted Aristotle's notion in NE 1161b: "that the master sees the slave as an extrinsic good for himself, like commodity, he cannot see slave's self as an extension of his own self (NE, 1161b). So he can see nothing of himself in the slave qua slave."* It is this version of a true Christian friendship that best integrates the elements not only of love as *agape* and *philia*, but also recognizes a person *qua* person, and places the concerns and recognition, the acceptance and responsiveness

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<sup>871</sup> See Paul Ricoeur, *One self as another*, p. 180-181.

in the center of friendship's framework. From the perspective of moral and ethical reasoning, John 15, 15 demonstrates Jesus's gesture of breaking down the hierarchical tendency, not only between the master-slave dichotomy, but breaking the "world composition" in terms of one self over the other. Such a gesture in my opinion is not only the example, but a paradigm of deliberation and inclusion as the concern, acceptance and recognition of one's identity are central to Jesus's notion of friendship. John 15,15, indicates a direction that supplies friendship with a reversal in terms that brings friendship a new category, the category of inclusion and befriending. The friendship in John 15, 15 and the previously mentioned account of Ricœur's dialectics between the other and another, when put together indicates one's common element: the value of friendship is put on the recognition of and love for the other, not out of one's self - centered egocentric interest and purposes (purchase of certain good), but out of the love and care for the other because he is the other person who deserves my respect and I need his/hers. The overcoming of the barrier of the master - slave dichotomy reorients the identity of friendship, and shows that the identity of Jesus who, as master, is taking the identity of a slave, actually expresses His desire to participate in the lives of others, by sharing in the same nature as those others. The other is not perceived as a commodity, or as extension of his own self (*NE*, 1161b), but is recognized within the interdependent participation of an inter-relational exchange of mutual concerns and responsiveness. The difference between Aristotle's friendship and Jesus's friendship is in the form of participation, where the pyramid (hierarchy) is replaced by the presence of one's body, the exchange of identity recognition and is an appeal towards the maintenance of such a reestablished friendship. Jesus's friendship represents a newly established covenant of friendship. This friendship not only expresses solicitude as responsiveness (*"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets,"* c.f. Mt, 7:12), but shows how friendship and not merely caring within a formal relationship, is a movement towards the other and from the other towards the another. The implication of vulnerability and solicitude in revision of the friendship definition, aims to challenge the friendship framework grounded in an equal exchange of giving and receiving. As the large interest of this thesis includes the perspective on disability, the friendship based on a relational anthropology and interdependent participation, is inclusive and important part to people with profound and intellectual disability. More precisely, the suggestion of an element of vulnerability and solicitude on the one hand, challenges the universally accepted friendship framework governed by power and hierarchy, whereas on the other hand, it offers an open possibility for people with disability in partaking in *friendship reconsidered framework*. Vulnerability and solicitude are the modes which impacts the practice of friendship and determine the truth and false about the friendship intentions, its value and the moral character of the person's involved. When different people recognize each other and when their relationship implies reciprocity, they become bearers of equality. Therefore, friendship that implies recognition of vulnerability and implication of solicitude is not only asymmetrical, but it confronts the symmetrical vision of friendship, and places friendship's orientation towards the concerns for other. The otherness in relation to friendship points upon a dynamic form of respecting and valuing another person *vis a vis* the other person and because of one's relationship with God.

My next step in a further analysis is to expand the very structure of rethinking the friendship redefinition. This in my perspective and for the purposes of this research includes the friendship

**development; the friendship process understood as narrative and the friendship hermeneutics** regarding the overall meaning of friendship. Besides the element of vulnerability and solicitude crucial and applicable in reconsidering the friendship, otherness and disability, my further suggestion for the concerns of the friendship development, process and hermeneutics, considers the provision of a complete structure of a friendship framework.

#### **3.6.4. The friendship as a narrative and a process**

The empirical and systematic conceptual assessment of friendship within a scope of this thesis demonstrate that friendship requires formation and development. The development and formation of friendship in my opinion underlines particular narrative integrated into its very process. My aim in the following discussion is to portray the notion of narrative as something central to friendship and peculiar to each friendship dyad. This is to say that every friendship understood as an interdependent relationship between two subjects implies particular narrative, which contributes to the comprehension of the universal meaning of friendship but is not reduced to a merely verbal expressions. The narrative of friendship in my view, implies friendship foundation, practice and complication. In fact, the narrative of friendship creates the body of friendship, and in reversal, posit a challenge to a disembodied form of friendship, such as for instance Facebook friendship. But what the friendship narrative, explicitly, involves? What I mean by friendship narrative does not underpin, as addressed partially above, some ethnographic observation of friendship dyads or lists friendship stories. It also does not correspond, as Ricœur indicated, in *One Self and Another*, the straightforward verbal use of language communication between two subjects involved.<sup>872</sup> Narrative implies other forms of human intercommunication and interdependency, including the body language, face expressions, and certain movements. As a concept, narrative, according to Kevin Reimer, provides a horizon for understanding a “deeper humanity” in others and self.<sup>873</sup> From such reasons the narrative includes broader understanding, the story which does not underpin a merely a story telling but is rather a foundation and a process formation of particular friendship between the two persons. Narrative reveals a form of relationship, type of friendship and the identity of a person. Narrative demonstrate that friendship is full of a different situation, that friendship is a complex process and that a particular narrative of friendship does not correspond merely to a possibility to share personal life story within a process of friendship itself, but that narrative also means to create its particular friendship uniqueness. I would add that narrative understands friendship in a way that surpasses the conceptual understanding, providing insights into not only the friendship formation, but the true knowledge of two friends, as the other and the another. This means that narrative demonstrate what is at midst of friendship, it invites towards liberation of friendship relationship from the false prejudices enabling the mutual respect and a way to flourish. The narrative enrich friendship in a way that it challenges its structural expectations and prediction bringing into a context a dynamic of non-expectancy (a surprise). For instance, the narrative of people who are different in social status, character or cognitive capacities demonstrate different friendship character,<sup>874</sup> by involving

<sup>872</sup> More on this see Ricœur, *One self as Another*, p. 163-168.

<sup>873</sup> Kevin S. Reimer, *Living L'Arche*, (New York, Continuum, 2009): p. 7

<sup>874</sup> Many of such stories and testimonies can be find across L'Arche. Some of them are available at *L'Arche International* website. Cf. [https://www.larche.org/news/-/asset\\_publisher/KgJzVt6eYeTd/content/no-right-way-to-live-l-arche-solidarity-assistant](https://www.larche.org/news/-/asset_publisher/KgJzVt6eYeTd/content/no-right-way-to-live-l-arche-solidarity-assistant), [accessed June 2018].

a different narrative of friendship. Despite person's lower capacities to speak or even a non-capacity to express one - self verbally, people involved into a certain friendship narrative creates something that adds historical meaning to the universality of a friendship. In an attempt to determine a friendship narrative as particular story between two interdependent individuals includes the beginning - the foundation and formation; implies its content - the process of friendship formation; and end - perceived friendship with its further development, its maintenance and the very end of friendship. Moreover, friendship narrative reveals human need for the other. However, despite revealing the need for other, narrative does not mean that every person involved into a process of friendship is a true friend. From such reason friendship must include a special kind of human experience that is a friendship foundation. The foundation of friendship does not always depart from reciprocal choice, interest or sentiment involved, as the mainstream account of friendship suggest. Sometimes friendship is simply a given; it is an involuntary choice from one towards the other. In such regard the involuntary element involved into a process of friendship in my opinion refers to previously addressed *disinterested gift* of friendship, because the relationship that starts as involuntary, often implies a strong friendship narrative. For instance, as this is the case in the communities of L'Arche, people who are involuntarily brought together into a process of relationship, through dynamic of relationship, sharing of the activities, stories, similar interest, discover potentiality of becoming friends. This in other words means, they created a particular friendship narrative. The narrative of friendship also permits two people who are coming together, to discover and share their vulnerability that further implicates trust and impacts the friendship maintenance, in a form of being concern for each other. The reciprocal good - will that gradually develops through the process of friendship, cannot be the foundational factor of friendship, besides being gradually developed and fasten through a friendship narrative. These characteristics brings to friendship dimension the openness and solidarity in terms that the very content of friendship is not reduced to a merely discussion about friendship but implicates lived reality and personal exchange between the friends involved into such a friendship narrative.

The very **process** of friendship provides the answer of how experience of friendship is developed. It consists of shared activities, equal respect and value for each other, affection, a certain spontaneity, shared interest, shared vulnerability, particular benevolence and beneficence, personal growth, etc. The process is a life giving, in terms that the narrative implicated into the very center of process of friendship demonstrate its life-giving experience.<sup>875</sup>

In a nutshell, the importance of the narrative adds to friendship a specific meaning which consist not only in conceptual discourses around the theme of friendship; it includes *activities, attuning and body expressions and the encounter* between the persons involved. It is precisely the friendship

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<sup>875</sup> The narrative as already indicated within foregoing research is not only reduced to the verbal communication. Strully (2013) in the study regarding the meaning of friendship between people with limited verbal communication stressed importance upon person's behavior and expressions that replaces a "verbal communication." Cf. Strully, Jeffrey L., *There is a Difference between Living in a Dream and Living a Dream: A Response to Romer and Walker*, in "Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities," 38, 3 (2013): 202-205. Similar study on friendship relationship between people with and without disabilities, including a non-verbal communication has been conducted by Pottie & Sumarah, Cf. Pottie, C., Sumarah, J. "Friendships between persons with and without developmental disabilities," in *Mental retardation*, 42, 1 (2004): 55-66.

narrative, consisting of friendship foundation, process and development, that creates a dialogue of friendship and brings in reconsideration the very friendship definition.

### **3.6.5. The rethinking of the moral significance of friendship hermeneutics**

Looking at hermeneutics of friendship from the perspective of moral theology and social ethics I will distinguish between its threefold meaning: its moral, socio-anthropological and theological significance. One of the questions often associated with the moral significance of friendship relates to the reasons people choose to enter into friendship (the question of motivation) and the very purpose or the end of friendship. What about the very meaning of friendship? In what exactly lies its moral significance and how the moral significance of the process can be further reconsidered? In the further paragraph the focal point of my arguments focuses on rethinking the moral significance of friendship. My primary motivation is to rethink the moral process of friendship itself, as a way towards achieving the moral end and trustworthiness of friendship motivation. This I will do by outlining the contours of friendship where people enters without looking firstly at their interest, or the moral benefits of the very end of a friendship process. I will separately look at socio-anthropological and a theo-anthropological meaning of friendship crucial to rethink the very meaning of a friendship itself. In rethinking friendship as theo-anthropological and socio-anthropological dimension, simultaneously implies theological and anthropological knowledge on friendship. Friendship as theo-anthropological and socio-anthropological dimension, integrates theological and anthropological perspective and the very end of friendship. In other words, the theological (supernatural) and anthropological (natural) aspect of friendship in order to provide a complete view on friendship rationale, must be intertwined. When I said that friendship has its socio-anthropological, as well as, theo-anthropological character, I do not see them as two separate entities or approaches to friendship. The distinction refers to implication of a different argumentation. The different approaches to the very argumentation of friendship will be my task in a next paragraph.

#### **3.6.5.1. Socio - Anthropological view on friendship**

In setting the framework for a socio-anthropological understanding of friendship, I am interested in emphasizing the impact, the value of friendship has upon personal well - being. My point is to draw upon the importance of a socio-anthropological elements of friendship, primarily from the reason that in my opinion friendship is not only a highly virtuous moral activity created to achieve a moral good. It is primarily a human activity, essential to human, ontologically integrated into a person's existence. It also departs from a view which prescribe friendship with a notion of a need or a right. It is a form of belonging and a participation, crucial for a "normal" development of a person. In grasping such understanding, I will consider the sociological and psychological literature. The empirical research within the field of Disability studies and the psychological and sociological literature previously examined, has shown that the lack of friendship can have damaging consequences for person's socio - psychological and physical functioning. People with disabilities due to isolation and unjust treatments within history of disability has been those who were deprived from a possibility of friendship (c.f. second part of thesis). The constant isolation, resulted, as we could have seen, in damaging consequences,

increasing the loneliness and risk of so-called iatrogenic diseases. On the contrary the possibility of friendship relationship creates positive impact on people functional behavior and psycho-social development. The most relevant socio psychological literature on personal development, prescribe friendship with the importance of quality of life or as a person's right (this refers to previously cited e.g. Myers, 2000). Such perspectives are rather unfortunate, as friendship cannot be reduced to an object of normative or legal requirement. Instead, friendship relationship is a necessary requirement in creating an emotional dependence different from the family ties and from such reason friends plays key role in one's person socio-emotional growth. The most relevant socio-psychological literature on friendship prescribe friendship as informal interaction between two persons involved. Friend is a person other than family or staff with whom a person looks forward in spending a time or participating in some common activity.<sup>876</sup> Friends are thought as significant others, in affirming sense of the self and the other. Similarly, as Bogdan and Taylor (1988; 1991) indicated, the relationship with something different that myself, are prescribed as new possibilities for self - expression. Research in sociology and psychology also have shown, that friendship departs from a picture of being idealized. Friendship can become burdensome and obligation, even instrumental. In addition to that sociologist raise awareness about different circumstances that can damage or decrease the quality of friendship. Different social, material, cultural circumstances, as well as age, gender and social class can impact the quality of friendship relationship in terms of its formation and maintenance.<sup>877</sup> The key elements that within psychological and sociological study of friendship prescribe to the anthropological importance, add to rethink the meaning of friendship as the acceptance and recognition. Friendship is not merely a need, but it is a relationship of acceptance and recognition of such need. The study, conducted by Bogdan and Taylor, between people with and without disabilities, outlines that friendship is before all a relationship of acceptance based on recognition and a value of interpersonal interaction and a possibility to create such interaction.<sup>878</sup> Despite the focus of their study has been concerned by relationship between people with and without disabilities as relationship between residents-stuff relationship, the large portion of sociological and psychological research came to a similar conclusion. My point in prescribing friendship its socio - anthropological understanding, is to highlight that friendship in my opinion, matters for the development of personal and sociological character of human. It is not merely a moral category important for the development of one's character, but also for a socio-psychological functioning of a person, despite a person's rational capacities. If the person is deprived from the possibility of friendship, s/he is demolished from the possibility in not only developing its intrinsic capacity for relationship, but also his/her capacity of so called *rational* and *social animal*. The relationship of friendship or a presence of a friend in one's person's life impacts the socio-psychological character of normal functioning and communication with the surrounding world, and from such a reason, friendship carries socio-anthropological importance for development of a personal.

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<sup>876</sup> See second part of the thesis; See also, Anderson, D. J., Lakin, K. C., Hill, B. K., & Chen, T.-h. "Social Integration of older persons with mental retardation in residential facilities," in *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 96,5 (1992): p. 493.

<sup>877</sup> C.f. this in first part of the thesis

<sup>878</sup> Bogdan, Robert & Taylor, Steven, "Toward a Sociology of Acceptance: The Other Side of the Study of Deviance," In *Social Policy*, 18,2, (1987): p.34-39.

### 3.6.5.2. Theo - anthropological view on friendship

In addition to the anthropological reasoning, the friendship as a theo-anthropological concept, includes the ontological and metaphysical perspective on friendship rationale. Most of the arguments in such discussions are rooted in a Scripture or refer the Fathers of the Church and Christian theologians' interpretations on friendship. The character of a theo-anthropological reasoning, besides seeing friendship as natural activity, supplies friendship with a supernatural end (which transcends the natural) and a possibility to reconsider God as an acting agent within a very process of friendship. When the friendship is approached from the theological point of view, as this is the case in my research, then it appears that friendship before all is not a choice, but a gift; it is not an individualistic or utilitarian aspect of self and other dependent relation. It is a community which integrates the aspect of the love as *philia* and love as *agape*. As a gift, friendship does not only mean that friendship is a gift; but because the other is a gift so is the friendship (cf. JP II anthropology of interdependency). Friendship is conditioned by the other who is the gift to me and vice versa and this gift is revealed within the dynamic of friendship understood as an interdependent relationship. Perceiving friendship as a gift is a reminder about the neglected forms of friendship, one's that propose and allows asymmetries in terms of understanding the difference. Such friendship proposes vulnerability and recognition in connection with the solicitude and responsiveness, key elements in adding to a meaning of friendships proposed within the scope of this research. As a community, I will distinguish between friendship as community of being together and community of the unity of love.

### 3.6.5.3. Friendship as a community of being together

When the two people enters into a relationship of friendship they build something new. They not only depend on each other, and became one self, but they create unity. To became one self or to create unity is a process not a straightforward relational harmony of equality, as this has been with Aristotle's friends (*NE*, book 8, 5; 1157b36). The unity marked by certain ambivalence and rupture, means that a faithful friend considers the misfortunes of his friend, and bears them together with him, even the one's suffering. This means that the harmony in friendship depends on eruptions or particular disclosures of one self towards the other. One of the elements that this eruption consist is not only the share of suffering. In my view such eruption is caused by the exposure or implication of a common human vulnerability, first as anthropological condition, and secondly as relational category, revealed and exposed through the very process of friendship. Community of friendship is not a typical unity of feelings, will, self-interest, opinions, even sympathy. It is neither the dissolution of individuality. What I am thinking by community here, is close to the meaning of being together, or simply a participation in a presence of each other. The meaning of being together within the scope of this thesis underlines the meaning which explains that being together expresses more than simply doing things for the person. The participation was not only marked by being immersed into a presence of each other, but resulted in growth of virtue of patience and humility. Being together was one essential element which indicates upon the matter of time within the relationship of friendship, that according to Swinton, does not only implicates



a value of another person, but contrast the speedy approach towards the other that frequently reduces person to the notion of things.<sup>879</sup> The common life within first Church was of an immense importance.<sup>880</sup> Communal life does not only imply to family ties, parish, or the very meaning of the body of Church. Friendship also requires moment of being together, not virtually, but through the awareness of the one's presence. Thus, the communitarian aspect of being together, simply shows that friendship is embodied human experience and from that reason, it bears moral significance. Moreover, the person with profound intellectual disability who does not talk or walk, can participate within the relationship of friendship understood as embodied experience, only through the presence of his/her body. A person's physical existence depends on the existence of other's presence (a visible presence) that not only bears recognition, but also bears acknowledgement, and vice versa. Through the presence of the two person's bodies, friends acknowledge each other presence and being acknowledged as persons, they create community of friendship. Being together strengthen the relationship of friendship as embodied relationship. Being together as friends is the communion of love, which transcends the abstract thinking, but necessarily requires concrete manifestation of the presence of one's and another human person. Being together is a strong opposition in reducing a person to the means of an object, either as being guided by the means of the utility and altruism, or solidarity of a charitable activity. The imperative stressed upon the importance of being together, posit a challenge to a person character, as it not only revoke person's capacity of being embodied into relationship of friendship, but is the test of person's capacity to love another person despite person's attributes, interest or looking at the very end of friendship.

#### **3.6.5.4. Friendship as the community of the unity of love**

The friendship as the community of being together, demands further explanation completed in the assumption as the unity of love. The greatest and most challenging discourses regarding the notion of friendship concerned the very bond of friendship. This addresses the distinction between love as *philia* (friendship love) and love as *agape* (love as a service and sacrifice). The historical changes impacting the conceptual thinking on friendship, progressively impact not only the shift in understanding the friendship but resulted in confusion and ambivalences between use of a love as *philia* and the love as *agape*. Although, the mainstream notion on distinction between *philia* love and *agape* love indicates the character of friendship or a preferential and particular character of love (*philia*); or underlines the impartial and universal character of love (*agape*), my suggestion in integrating these two loves, provides friendship its embodied character, understood as *interdependent relationality and participation*.

The idea of integration of this two loves as united in relationship of friendship, could be a problematic issues in contemporary discussions in ethics of care and a process of formal relationship (relationship between people with intellectual disabilities and their support workers), as well as, the mainstream account of friendship between equals. The New Testament dictum which Jesus reveal to his disciples in Jn 15, 14-15; Lk 12, 4 in relation to John 17, make a difference in such a regard. Namely, as we could had noticed, Jesus friendships according to the assessment

<sup>879</sup> C.f. Swinton, "Introduction," in *Becoming Friends of Time*.

<sup>880</sup> C.f. Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson, LL.D., eds., *Writings of the Apostolic Fathers: Mathetes, Polycarp, Barnabas, and Papias*, (Veritatis Splendor Publication, 2014): p. 35-55.

within a first part, interchangeably reveals the use of *philia* with the notion of *agape*. The Church Fathers such as e.g. St Clement of Alexandria<sup>881</sup> and St Basil the Great<sup>882</sup> also stress direct attention to importance and the parallel between the love as *agape* and love of friendship within the friendship relationship referring to Jn 15, 14-15 and Lk, 16:9. Number of theologians, in their attempt to explain the relation between love and the friendship, commonly accepted the St. Thomas doctrine (*ST* II, II, q.23), who inspired by St. Augustine, the Fathers of the Church, and the Scripture, write that the charity is the supernatural friendship with God and one's neighbor, understanding friendship as mutual well-wishing, sharing of a common life and having the same end.<sup>883</sup> Coming to the modern and contemporary idea of friendship, particularly when the discourses includes discussion within academic field of Disability studies or Disability theology, the integration of love as *philia* and love as *agape* within relationship of friendship, present a challenge. The challenge lies in conceptual difficulty to separate the sacrificial, service or caring (love) from the relationship of friendship depending on a straightforward notion of *philia*. My suggestion in perceiving friendship as interdependent participation and relational anthropology, including the reasons mentioned above, suggest that in order to make a friendship a dynamic and a vivid process of mutual exchange, the integration of the two loves is a necessary condition in order to rethink a friendship. When two persons enters relationship of friendship, they are first two strangers who through the very process of friendship (includes their narrative) became closer or similar to each other. In order to achieve the end of *philia* love, that within the reconstruction of a definition of friendship, includes the recognition of one's true identity, the love as *agape* (including solicitude and openness towards disclosure of vulnerability) became a means in achieving the true end of a perfect *philia*. The very nature of *philia* in Greek (Platonic) sense signifies a friendly relation that often refer to inner disposition. In contrast to *philia*, the *agape* (in relation to the verb *agapeo*) points upon the rational love with a fewer sensation and a direct inclination. Putted in the context of the modern languages, the *agape* is closer to the meaning of conviction, whereas *philia* is closer to the meaning of the tender love. The *agape* and *philia* paralleled to each other in many ways. In order, that the friendship do not became over comfortable, utilitarian or individualistic, the love of *agape* is a necessary condition for the trustworthiness of friendship, which reveals the moral significance of friendship.

In a nutshell, the integration of the two loves into a dynamic of friendship, unites the two persons in unity of friendship, in such a way, that they (integration, and a mutual exchange of the two loves) protect friendship, from on the one hand, becoming the romantic or consumeristic community; and on the other hand, from becoming over universal, impartial, or rational - close to obligation concept. The perfect giving and receiving in friendship is possible on the ground of combination of these two loves. The proportional exchange of love as *philia* and love as *agape*, met a proper justice within the dynamic of friendship exchange. Based on such exchange of two loves within the relationship of friendship, friendship is a dyad unity that involves the co-rejoicing and co-suffering. Being together in creating the community as unity of two loves, does not mean

<sup>881</sup> E.g. see in Clement of Alexandria (St), "Stromata", in: A. Roberts, J. Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol.II., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

<sup>882</sup> E.g. see in Basil the Great (St), "Ascetical Works: Long Rules", transl. by M. Wagner., in: *The Fathers of the Church*, vol.9, (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1962).

<sup>883</sup> Cf. first part of the thesis pp. 33-38.

being enslaved, possessed or immersed by friendship. Or put differently, being together as unity of love, is not a dissolution of individuality or the otherness. The friend as the other, discovers in the another other his/her own actualized human and relational potentiality, becoming of who one truly is at the condition of being accepted by another friend. The antinomy of *agape* and *philia* is inseparable from the community of friendship as it does not only give value to relationship of friendship, but it also shows value and appreciation for the other friend as a different other. Friends are unequal, or different persons who together process the actualization of the community of friendship. Friends dispositions towards the love as *agape* and love as *philia*, not only is the relationship of interdependent participation, but creates interdependent unity, not enslavement by one's moral obligation towards the another. Being together, not only refer to the meaning of friendship as *relational anthropology* but creates dual unity where each of the person remain one self in relation to the other.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The **specificity of this study** in rethinking friendship is significant as it includes *voices of people with disability* whose experience of friendship, expands the mainstream perspective in thinking about friendship. Related to this, the research is of particular contribution to theological ethics, theological anthropology, moral philosophy and Disability studies to rethink friendship “differently.” **If friendship as a concept and a living experience bears universal importance, but at the same time, cannot be reachable by all (for instance people with intellectual disability in our case) in what sense friendship, if at all, remains a universal category? In what way implication of the notion of concern, responsiveness and recognition of common vulnerability can remedy or compromise such a situation?**

My research has suggested that overcoming the barrier of the master - slave dichotomy reorients the thinking about friendship. It shows that e.g. the identity of Jesus who, as master, in taking upon himself the identity of a slave, actually expresses His desire to participate in the lives of others, by sharing in the same nature as those others. The other in such perspective is not perceived as a commodity, or as extension of his own self (*contra NE*, 1161b), but is recognized within the interdependent participation of an inter-relational exchange of mutual concerns and responsiveness. This further means that accepting the (anthropological) condition of vulnerability and common interdependency could enable our understanding of solicitude as benevolent spontaneity, which when integrated into a relationship of friendship, bears recognition, acceptance and responsiveness. My proposal to reconsider friendship as the relational anthropological category that - on the one hand includes vulnerability, and on the other, the solicitude understood as the concerns for the other within the friendship framework examined - re-confirms each person's relational capability or at least a desire for relationship, integrated into one's person humanity. If the discourses and thinking of friendship remain highly intellectual and a task of merely academic discourse, then the possibility to rethink friendship otherwise, would be exclusive of certain groups of people (e.g. profound intellectual disability, homeless, migrants). In such a case, friendship fails from being the matter of moral justice, acceptance and recognition. The rethinking of friendship as *relational anthropological category and interdependent participation* means that people with disability are not „contributors“ (*contra* contributory approach and charity model), but “reminders” of often forgotten realities in terms of human communication and interactions. The way towards reaching equality within the process of human interrelations first includes renewal of our anthropological thinking that as human we are interdependent and vulnerable. The research suggests that friendship as a category of universal importance, based on the acceptance of vulnerability and common interdependency understood as solicitude of benevolent spontaneity, is actualized as relationship of recognition, acceptance and responsiveness. From such reasons, to address friendship as the relational anthropology of interdependent participation, as this research has shown, despite being an uneasy task, is in fact, the necessity. Vulnerability and solicitude applied into friendships' framework, are the modes which change a practice of friendship, but also

determine the truth and falsehood about the friendship intentions, its value and the moral character of the persons involved. When different people recognize each other as human, they became bearers of (relational) equality. This is to say that through the exposure of vulnerability that could lead to the recognition of one's true identity, as well as, reciprocal concerns and receptiveness, the relationships that are asymmetrical are directed to become symmetrical. Therefore, friendship that implies recognition of vulnerability and the implication of solicitude is not only an open and inclusive narrative, but it also confronts the symmetrical gap of exclusivist friendship. "Numeric" otherness, as for instance in context of L'Arche, is not detrimental to friendship as this could be the case in Aristotle. The otherness in relation to friendship points to a dynamic form of respecting and valuing another person *vis a vis* this other person. This dynamic implies recognition of the alterity of the other in relation to God, because of God himself and not as God's "property." Such understanding is not merely of importance in rethinking the rationale of friendship but is beneficial for social justice and Christian solidarity discourses. On the one hand, it is of contribution to social policy makers and community support programs to expand the ways of social inclusion and participation of people with disability in society. On the other hand, the research contributes a renewal of a Christian solidarity suggesting to seek charitable love in a different perspective, one that surpasses the formality of charitable activism, and instead practices charity within a „face to face“ encounter demanding participation in relationships.

Besides the specific outcome and the abovementioned impact of this research, the **primary objective** of this research was to demonstrate that, in order to reconsider friendship as inclusive for all category, (people with disability included), it was necessary for me as a researcher to first reconsider the understanding of disability and the meaning of otherness. Thus, the first purpose of the on-going doctoral research was to find the way in which the openness and recognition of a true self in the experience of mutual relationships transcends the boundaries of cognitive differences, social status, likeness or utility and based on such rationale, suggests the friendship redefinition. I did that by illustrating experience of friendship in L'Arche by listening to people's voices (c.f. second part). Related to the reconsideration of the application and redefinition of friendship, the secondary purpose of this research interrogated the meaning of the notion of disability and the meaning of the other. This has been processed through the systematic examination of the most appealing approaches to the meaning of friendship definition in the first part; the systematic and critical examination of the literature of the two academic disciplines (Disability studies and Theology of Disability); the qualitative research based on a phenomenological method in the second part; and thirdly, based on the abovementioned, a proposal for the reconstruction of the friendship redefinition grounded in a previously redefined anthropology of otherness.

The **interim goal** of the research process after all, was to provide an open, accessible and inclusive model of friendship. Related to this, my aim was to understand disability as the condition *per se*, not separately from the person's experience. Finally, this suggests rethinking the concept of otherness in a way that goes beyond the conceptual settings determined by rational, consumeristic or highly individualistic views, which resulted in the renewal of rethinking

disability, otherness and friendship. The **results central to this research I will divide into three sections**. First, is the suggested rethinking of the friendship, disability and otherness. Secondly, the findings also reveal particular tensions resulted from the distinction in opinions and approaches to the concepts explored. Thirdly, the research re-opens many intriguing questions valuable for further research proceedings. In the next paragraph I will separately explain each of the research findings in more detail.

## **I. Rethinking of the friendship, disability and otherness**

### **Rethinking of the Friendship**

The historical context of friendship development has shown how complex it is to determine friendship in only following one perspective or one moral view. The very definition of friendship explored in a first part, orbits around its caveats and varieties, that are not only the varieties based on a particular historical view or academic perspective. These varieties and caveats integrated into the very definition of friendship are also determined by cultural and personal impacts and perceptions. As such they are integrated into the very structure of friendship embodied and revealed in a particular friendship narrative. In general, the research has shown that friendship, besides being a personal and moral matter, consists of different categorizations, conceptualizations and transgressions. The particular analysis of different approaches shows that friendship was and remains a valuable and meaningful anthropological, spiritual and moral category. It shows certain distinctions between themes and particular academic interests and emphasis. Aristotle's treatise on friendship, as most dominant among ancient thinkers and most cited among modern thinkers, harbors friendship with a moral framework important for the development of human character and distinct from the framework of modernity. Yet his ethical framework remains symmetrical and exclusive to only a *few*. The reflection on the notion *philia* was among most central topics within the ethos of his friendship, as well as his idea of *polis*. This is to say that friendship besides its moral significance (important for the development of human character) carries a political dimension, important for the stability of the Greek *polis*. Biblical, New Testament perception in this particular research including Paul's Letters and John's Gospel, strive to fit friendship with its universal framework surpassing the natural finality of friendship, impossible to imagine for Aristotle. The Christian idea of friendship contrary to Aristotle makes a turn and opens a possibility to rethink friendship not merely as horizontal, but as a vertical dimension. The great contribution in rethinking friendship in such perspective was the Christian approach to the notion of love, based on the interchangeable use of *philia* and *agape*. Based on such distinction, Paul's concept of friendship set forward the idea of reconciliation within the idea of friendship, whereas John's friendship in Jn 15, 15 demonstrated a rather intimate and more personal character of friendship supplying the notion of love with the meaning of self - sacrificial and a *service for other* love. Contrary to classic friendship, the modern friendship shows certain discontinuity in comparison to classic. Friendship loses its proper value, not merely because it became a marginalized concept, but within modernity it loses its moral importance crucial for the development of the human. With the advent of the Enlightenment, not only did the dichotomies regarding the metaphysical

constructs create certain disagreements between thinkers, but also the very project of modernity and late modernity perceived human nature in light of a reason, and the other in a form of a self-dependent individual. The rational subjectivity not only deprived certain people from the relationship of friendship creating the further power imbalances, but also detached justice, love and trust from the very definition of friendship. The positive sight of modern friendship, nevertheless, thanks to research in psychology and social science, opens its *telos* towards encapsulating difference. This, for instance, means that the science of socio-psychology brought into friendship the *emotional* aspect which provides friendship with the insights of one's importance for one's wellbeing and one's self-esteem. Additionally, this research project has shown that "Facebook friendship" as an extended version of late modernity's friendship is a controversial form of social friendly networking, as, on the one hand, it is a great tool to enlarge inclusion and support privacy, but on the other hand, it creates further isolation and risks false presentations of personality. "Facebook friendship" is a platform which best shows how the approach to friendship and the other has been changed. This, on the one hand, implies virtual transparency of communication, but on the other hand, it causes personal disembodiment.

The academic field of Disability Studies and Disability Theology - because of the application of empirical research and a specific friendship narrative - addresses its slight departure from the friendship review in the first part of the thesis. The friendship in its form implies discourse on justice, love, well-being, social inclusion, gift, community life, caring, dependency, flourishing. The overall meaning of friendship in this regard addresses friendship with a particular complexity, the notion of a need, rehumanisation, interdependency, inclusion and participation. Yet it seems that for Disability Studies, friendship is a relationship of empowerment and inclusion; whereas for Disability Theology friendship is closely related to one's confirmation of personhood. Likewise, friendship varies between those who stress the importance of the symmetrical and those who see value in asymmetrical friendship. Though both fields acknowledge a critique towards a classic (Aristotle and Aquinas) hierarchy of friendship, and regard for the notion of love and justice as constitutive elements in their friendship rationale, they do not show how this love and justice can be differently integrated and conceptualized in friendship, besides as a means of a social inclusion and participation.

The illustration of a practical insights of friendship narrative in L'Arche stresses attention on rethinking the friendship definition and in such a way enlarges a previously established understanding. The empirical insights - in the very process of reality of friendship - emphasizes the *emphatic knowledge, the acceptance, the element of caring, the non-verbal communication, the exposure of vulnerability, changes in a person's character (conversion of one's humanity) understood as transformation* - the central elements of the meaning of friendship. Namely it "gives" particular credibility to the already re-defined thinking on friendship, particularly as it recognizes the voices of people with and without disabilities partaking in building the friendship rationale. The reality of friendship examined in the third chapter of the second part demonstrated that the anthropological impediments to socio-relational biases toward the impossibility of

friendship for people with disability have been overcome. This was indeed possible to rethink due to the examination of friendship in the context of L'Arche, which stimulates such encounters and sees a person before a person's disability. The asymmetrical gap between disabled and non-disabled, *including differences in character, social status and cognitive capacities*, did not stop the socio-relational possibility of its realization. Instead it became its stimulus, challenge and opportunity in living the friendship.

The classic definition and conceptual definitions of friendship are richer as they imply a very detailed and precise determination of the meaning of friendship. Yet, they are not complete without its practical part. The very "body" of friendship actualized within a process of living friendship transcends the established symmetry and enables the overcoming of those barriers that are impossible to be conceptually overcome. The practical insights, together with the conceptual framework, reconfirms friendship as a natural human activity which should be inclusive and achievable by all people. Moreover, the illustration of practical insights demonstrated that friendship is not merely a way towards inclusion, nor towards participation, but a freely given interaction and interdependent communication between different persons who are willing to give and receive; who are responsive to each other; and who value each other's presence, more than one's reason for entering into a relationship of friendship.

Finally, *my suggestion in rethinking **friendship** as a relational anthropological category of interdependent participation*, sets forward the implication for the aspect of vulnerability and solicitude as two often disinterested elements of friendship rationale.

The aspect of vulnerability and solicitude integrated into a framework of rethinking friendship is a possibility for every person to relate with others on a level of respect of a person's intrinsic dignity. In other words, to rethink friendship in reference to disability and otherness, including the elements of vulnerability, interdependency and solicitude is constitutive to perceive friendship as the universal and impartial concept, inclusive to people both with and without disability. The inclusion of the voices of people with disabilities into the analysis of friendship stressed attention on the notion of difference, and based on the implication of such a difference, resulted in rethinking the concept of an "alter ego" meaning of the other. This means that contrary to the friendship grounded in a high appreciation of similarity, the difference and uniqueness embodied into this friendship reconsideration evokes otherness and friendship in its metaphysical and ontological perspective; and disability as an integrative part of such a framework. This, in other words, means that the integration of vulnerability and solicitude as two embodied elements of the reconsideration of a friendship definition contributes to re-co-creation of a person's dignity in terms of a rebirth of one's moral and personal value.

### **Rethinking of Disability**

The overall research to rethink the **disability** as the concept demonstrated that a disability definition is not a subject of a constituent and coherent agreement but is a subject of various interpretations and changes in opinion. After the examination of various approaches, including the



academic field of Disability studies and Disability theology, I am congruent with my threefold rethinking on disability, which sees it as concept, human condition *per se* and an experience of difference in terms of human heterogeneity and indispensable part of the body of Christ (1Cor 12, 12-30). Disability in such regard is a descriptive notion which primarily means that its understanding requires not only disagreement of opinions, but integration of conceptual knowledge and practical experience. This also means that the definition of disability cannot be a matter of political, medical or legalistic discourses; it is an important ethical and anthropological subject. However, different anthropological aspects, models and approaches to the same human reality do not explain the complete phenomenon in itself, but only help us understand. Therefore, the future approaches to disability, in my opinion, require integration. Additionally, as the major discourses regarding the definition and approaches to disability have been impacted by dichotomies between medical and social models, such changes, in my opinion, will continue. However, differently as before, it will continue to be impacted by the cultural upheavals and personal narratives. *This means that in the future disability as the concept will be impacted by cultural and contextual inconsistencies in opinions, depending on prevailing moral and ethical approaches to the human person.*

### **The Rethinking of the Otherness**

The concept of **otherness** as an anthropological notion has been a subject of constant ethical, theological and philosophical changes and divergences in opinion within academia and practice (c.f. third part). The real possibility to perceive the other who is different and unique requires integration of a various anthropological perspectives and a distinguished personalistic view. When such a view includes a person with disability, it in fact requires exploration of the theo-anthropological systems for mainly two reasons. The first reason attaches to our thinking on “disabled person identity.” The second reason considers the impact modernity has upon disabled and disability terminology. This recalls into discourse the position which firstly sees a human person as a human being and vice versa; secondly which within a perspective of human sees not only a rational and independent, but also a vulnerable and interdependent individual. The rational is not the only capacity that a person “poses.” A person’s capacity consists of knowledge of the heart. Thus, this thesis suggests a view that sees vulnerability and interdependency in light of a possible (human) transformation, instead of as a threat to independency and the capacity to reason. The contribution of JP II and IV in regard to the other is an open possibility to rethink anthropology that includes interdependency and vulnerability. It is an anthropology which objects liberal ethical praxis and principle discussed (e.g. Singer, McMahan, Dawkins); it is also an anthropology which sets forward the practical anthropological and ethical settlements regarding the human person and human relationship, different from a modern liberal anthropology. The depths of such anthropology open the possibility to understand friendship differently, beyond being guided by principles of mere contingency, similarity, equality and utility. Consequently, such anthropology re-values the premises for an *ethics of being*, instead of being guided by utilitarian aspects immersed in an *ethics of doing*.

Their notion of the other that stems from such an anthropology sees the other in the perspective of the image of God, (including the perspective of the body); and a person's capacity of knowing God (*capax Dei*); and capacity for relation (also means being capable of human friendship). JP II's reflection on the other sees the other as a person capable of interpersonal communication. This means that the other is an interdependent subject. Indicating that a human person is relational not only means that a human person can communicate, but that a human person is a transcendental and integrated entity, capable of self-giving. The indispensable value of human dignity according to Vanier lies in the core of a person's consciousness, which implies the quality of the heart. Both the person's sacredness (quality of heart) and his/her dependency-oriented capacity (relational capacity) are in Vanier's understanding related, and as such constitutive for the meaning of the other.

## **II. Conceptual and Practical Tensions**

This research thesis addresses particular *tensions* arriving not only from its threefold structure concerning the explored subjects but involves tensions in integrating the conceptual and practical approaches referring the universality of friendship. What I mean by *tension*, additionally, involves the distinction between conceptual and practical approaches to explored realities, as well as different ethical and anthropological systems of thought regarding such realities. This, for instance, includes different understanding of charity, friendship, caring, vulnerability and dependency between Disability studies scholars and Disability theologians. The *tension* also arrives regarding the perception of disability definition, concept of imago Dei, and the meaning of human person. Regarding the examination of the meaning of friendship, the *tension* is attached to the approaches which see it as a subject of conceptual thinking; and the subject of practical experience (partaking in a community life). The *tension* has been also identified within the framework of friendship research, including a person with disability. It seems that when the friendship research framework includes a person with disability, this does not require entirely a new framework; but in my opinion only a *renewed framework*. In such regard, it is the prerequisite for a researcher to firstly understand the matter of disability, and meaning of otherness, in order to avoid an arbitrary conclusion concerning the experience of friendship between people with and without disability. People with disability must be included in research as an active participant of reference instead a being merely reduced to the *subject of research*.

## **III. Re-opening towards a further research**

Thirdly, indirectly facilitated through previously mentioned tensions, this research project is an "opening up" towards a future research. Namely, looking at the friendship, otherness and disability as integrated, interchangeably correlative concepts, actualized in the context of living experience, brought certain challenges to the established conceptual knowledge of the meaning of a person and a friend, not only to a theological and non - theological anthropology, but also different ethical systems. Though the primary aim of this project tends to contribute to a better systematic understanding of disability, otherness and friendship, the research project itself echoes particular conceptual tensions facilitated by the distinction between practical and theoretical

approaches to addressed issues. From such, the research project is an opening request for a continuous further reflection. Theses includes a) reconsidering the meaning of vulnerability and autonomy; b) reconsidering the meaning of charity; c) revision of theo-anthropological approaches to imago Dei; d) rethinking the Christian traditions and the mainstream approaches to Disability; e) the impact of friendship on the development of one's moral character; f) the rethinking of the concept of dis- ableism, ableism and disability, in the perspective of emerging new technologies e.g. robotics; g) rethinking of the concept of flourishing.

**a) The reconsidering the vulnerability and autonomy**

This, in my thinking, first refers to a conflict of disagreement in understanding the condition of vulnerability; secondly, the same disagreement concerns the disparity between vulnerability and autonomy. Considering the first distinction, I intend to point to perspectives (which understanding I share) that to understand vulnerability as a human (ontological and anthropological) condition of all people; and those who claims that vulnerability is exclusive to only some (e.g. "more than ordinary vulnerable," cf. *WHO*). Pointing upon perspectives of vulnerability and autonomy, I aim to address that in order to grasp a holistic and adequate view of a human person, human identity cannot be reduced merely to vulnerability. It requires its counterpart, which is a human autonomy. This, in my view, means that vulnerability and autonomy should be balanced, instead of regarded as opposite realities of humans. The autonomy cannot be realized without the implication of vulnerability, neither can the vulnerability be the only feature of humans. The problem arises when all of human is reduced to either the possibility of vulnerability or autonomy; or when the thinking on autonomy is immersed into a concept of invulnerability.

**b) Reconsidering the concept of charity**

The ongoing research project demonstrates an apparent difficulty in communicating the understanding of charity. The academic field of Disability studies approach to charity that stems from a charity model addresses charity with a negative meaning. This indicates objectifying and pitiful attitudes towards disabled people which left damaging consequences not only in regard to charity, but also to disabled people's identities. The academic field of theology, on the contrary, looks on charity as a form of *communicatio*, friendship, participation, common belonging or Christian solidarity. Not only does the hermeneutic of these two approaches to charity oppose each other: they also require adequate elaboration which will either stimulate integration or particular conceptual clarity. In addition, as the notion of charity, understood as lat. *Caritas*, underpins the understanding of Christian solidarity within the doctrine of social teaching of the Catholic Church, the further development on the meaning of charity, not as a preferential option of the poor, but as a distinguished element of Christian love, could prevent objectification and set forward the framework which looks on the other in forms of participation instead of formal good-doing.

**c)The revision of theo-anthropological approaches to imago Dei**

This research thesis brought into light the concept of imago Dei as a critical point for a future discussion. The concept of imago Dei as we might have noticed is particularly challenged

when it is confronted with the condition of disability, the person with Alzheimer, but also with the difference between human and non-human (cyberspace) reality. The concept of *imago Dei* matters, as it is not only important to reflect on how we retain a core affirmation of *imago Dei*, but also the concept itself matters in shaping our stance on universal morality. Therefore, the notion of *imago Dei* must be re-considered, not as a separate subject of dogmatic theology or ethics, it requires an integrative knowledge of both disciplines. Is the concept of *imago Dei* associated with the capacity of altruism; intellect; or human agency for relationship? What is the relationship between *imago Dei* and human personhood, particularly when our thinking on the other includes a person with profound intellectual disability, a person with Alzheimer or any other person who exceeds the framework of so-called universal determination of normalcy?

#### **d) Christian traditions and the mainstream approaches to Disability**

We might have noticed that approaches to disability and disabled persons in the early Christian period, late monasticism and scholasticism, were defined in social and cultural terms. Considering the history of disability, images of disabled people were associated with those of the poor, the pitiful and the needy. Disabled people were also reduced to the institutional care of religious organizations, monasteries or hospices. The gap in such understanding has been also increased by divergence in opinions between Disability studies scholars who sees such approaches as oppressive, and theologians, who within such approaches see the liberating image of Christ the poor, or actualization of the *agape* love. (e.g.early Church fathers, the rule of St. Benedict and the theology of St Thomas Aquinas). The biases in opinions and approaches are, in my opinion, rather incomplete and ambiguous, as on the one hand we are unsure whereas such approaches are impacted by the contemporary mainstream perception of Christian solidarity; or the inconsistency in adequately defining disability. On the other hand, the question also arises, whether, the early Christian period fails to bear an adequate knowledge of the human person, love and disability, or does this conception arise with the advent of late modernity upheavals? Therefore, in grasping a proper approach to disabled people, future research requires clarity and demands a rather robust theological examination of such approaches and related terminologies.

#### **e) The impact friendship has on development of one's moral character**

My suggestion for further research regarding the impact of friendship on one's character is on the one way an appeal to Christian ethics to renew knowledge on virtue ethics approaches. However, my suggestion instead of being straightforwardly oriented towards merely the framework of virtue ethics, is in fact an appeal to re-focus our established ethical reasoning from the ethics of doing towards the ethics of being. This means that an ethical and anthropological system of thought not only should be reoriented from a decision making and good-doing towards the human and moral growth, but also that in order to combat the utilitarian, self-oriented and liberal morality, our ethical system should be refocused on the development of a person's moral character in terms of its „Christlike“ perspective.

**f) The rethinking of the concept of Disability in light of new Technologies**

The rethinking on disability in light of new technologies certainly concerns the relation between normalcy, the notion of the body and the implication of assistive technologies impacting the reality of being human. I consider this as a particular paradox as, on the one hand it stimulates the humanization of the technical, and on the other hand it is a particular partaking of the implication of the technical in the normalization of the human. One of the instances of such a paradox is the possibility of making a perfectly designed body; whereas in reality we are faced by impossibility in responding to human imperfections, deformed bodies, the challenges between normal and pathological. Another example tackles the implication of assistive technologies into a reality of human in a way than can be useful in the process of caring, improve mobility, accessibility, even fixing the human anomalies and deformities. This cannot be disregarded as the link between disability and technology does not only posit a challenge, but could also be a new possibility, and for such reasons requires moral positioning towards such innovations.

**g) Rethinking of the Concept of Flourishing**

The research shows that the academic field of Disability studies and Disability theology perceive flourishing differently. Moreover, the mainstream cultural attitudes associate flourishing with the idea of well being, material prosperity, quality of life, or happiness. My suggestion to undertake future research regarding flourishing concerns not only friendship's *telos* and its end; it also has to do with the essence of the very idea of flourishing. The future rethinking on flourishing in my perspective includes the following inquiries: What is the root of flourishing? Can the dependent person with a diminished cognitive capacity flourish in the same way as the self- dependent individual, or must the very concept of flourishing be reconsidered? In what way does the concept of suffering invite us to rethink flourishing closely with the idea of transcendence, the notion of truth, contemplation and spirituality? Does suffering related to disability prevent a person flourishing? How can flourishing be realized in its non-material end?

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A Pilot Interview**

Nationality: L'Arche: Sex:

1. How long have you spent in L'Arche and where?
2. What was significant for you in L'Arche?
3. In L'Arche community you were living with people with and without developmental/intellectual disabilities. How would you describe the experience of that relationships?
4. What in your opinion characterizes friendship?
5. Jean Vanier emphasized that the crucial question that started L'Arche was "Will you be my friend?" Jean, seeking an authentic way to say 'yes', invited some people from mental institution to live with him, and so L'Arche began. Friendships continues to be at the heart of L'Arche - friendships that transcend the categories into which we all too easily put people. However, recently L'Arche stance on friendship has been challenged by professionals and members of L'Arche community which cause division in opinion. Is there anyone of the core members with who you have meaningful or special relationship? How would you call it (this relationship)?
6. Were you able to build friendship relationship with persons with disability?
7. If yes, what was important characteristics of this friendship? (mutuality, reciprocity, caring, affection, etc.)
8. Do you think that is possible to live friendship relationship with people with development disabilities?
9. Why do you think is not possible?
10. Do you think that particularity of friendship relationship with people with disabilities is possible only in L'Arche?

11. Is there anything what you have learn in L'Arche could benefit/contribute your way of building friendship relationship outside the context of L'Arche?

## APPENDIX B

### Letter to L'Arche Community



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**Title of research:** Disability, Otherness, Friendship -Theological and Ethical Reconsideration  
**Researcher:** Martina Vuk, PhD Candidate, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, e-mail: martina.vuk@unifr.ch

#### Dear Community Leader

I am a PhD Candidate in Moral Theology and Social Christian Ethics from University of Fribourg under the supervision of Dr. Thierry Collaud. I was also an assistant in L'Arche Cork, Trosly - Breuill and Fribourg.

The purpose of my research and proceeding interviews is to understand the friendships relationship (if any) between people with and without disabilities in selected L'Arche communities.

#### Description of the Research:

In general the research explores the problems of contemporary theological perspectives on disability and vulnerability and construct the framework which facilitates inclusion of more than ordinary vulnerable people - people with disabilities (Maillard 2011; CIOMS 2002; Reynolds, 2008) into realm of participation in human friendship (M. Vuk 2013; Reinders 2008; Vanier 1998). Although the contemporary theological ethics and anthropology reflects a turn from the concept of *imago Dei* towards more relational perspectives (Kelsey, 2009), concepts remain exclusionary to persons with disabilities. The question of human uniqueness requests openness to rethink the fundamental values of what is essentially human. Friendship is an essential human activity integrated into a human identity realized through the experience of people living together (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book VIII; IX). Friendship with persons with disability is something profoundly different from the contemporary perspective of the modern man. Thus, the concept of friendship we tend to examine in this research distinguishes from the ordinary way of thinking about friendship. Through the implication of qualitative research my aim is to examine the concept of relationship between people with and without developmental<sup>884</sup> disabilities who have been actively engaged in activities in the L'Arche community. Particular attention will be stressed upon the concept of *philia* as a form of a mutual interdependency.

#### Procedure of the Research:

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<sup>884</sup> My suggestion is to use the term intellectual and developmental disabilities, although different expressions can be used in different countries



The research will examine the experience of friendship of people with (core - members) and without disabilities (current and past assistants) in L'Arche communities in anglo-saxon (Ireland, United Kingdom) and francophone context (France and Switzerland) context. In the anglo-saxon context the research include L'Arche community in Cork, Manchester and Edinburgh. Considering the context of francophone communities in France and Switzerland, my aim is to proceed interviews in L'Arche Trosly- Breuill, Fribourg and Marseille. The interview includes core members (people with disabilities) and assistants without disabilities, resulting in total number of the four participants in each of abovementioned communities. The total number of interviewees is 15 participants in the six L'Arche communities.

The interview aims to examine the experience of friendship between people with (core - members) and without disabilities (current and past assistants) in L'Arche communities in anglo-saxon (Ireland, United Kingdom) and francophone context (France and Switzerland). In each country I selected L'Arche community in which the interview will be proceed. Each interview will be recorded and will consist of the two parts. The first part of interview will be longer and will take about 35 min. The second part of the interview will take additional reflection on abovementioned questionnaire. This will take about 10-15 min.

In order to lead a valuable research, I will ensure that the research is ethically structured. This means that I will follow ethical directives such as (not to expose harm to people with disabilities) and respect the freedom and ability to participate (to select the participants who are able and willing to participate). My selection of the participants will be proceeded only after the consultation with the L'Arche community directives advisory board of abovementioned countries and communities.

## APPENDIX C

### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

**Title of research:** Disability, Otherness, Friendship -Theological and Ethical Reconsideration

**Researcher:** Martina Vuk, PhD Candidate, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, e-mail:  
[martina.vuk@unifr.ch](mailto:martina.vuk@unifr.ch)

**Purpose of the Research:** This research explores the problems of contemporary theological perspectives on disability and vulnerability and construct the framework which facilitates inclusion of more than ordinary vulnerable people - people with disabilities (N.Maillard 2011, CIOMS 2002, T. Reynolds ) into realm of participation in human friendship (M. Vuk 2013, H.Reinders 2008, J. Vanier 1998). Thus the attention of this research will be stressed upon the concept of friendship that distinguishes from the ordinary way of thinking about friendship. By the implication of qualitative research we will examine the concept of relationship between people with and without developmental<sup>885</sup> disabilities who has been actively engaged in activities in the L'Arche community.

**Participant Selection** You are being invited to take part in this research because we feel that your experience as an assistant living in L'Arche community can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of friendship relationships.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

**Procedure:** The interview aims to examine the experience of friendship between people with (core - members) and without disabilities (current and past assistants) in L'Arche communities in anglo-saxon (Ireland, United Kingdom) and francophone context (France and Switzerland). In each country I selected L'Arche community in which the interview will be proceed. Each interview will be recorded and will consist of the two parts. The first part of interview will be longer and will take about 35 min. The second part of the interview will take additional reflection on abovementioned questionnaire. This will take about 10-15 min.

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<sup>885</sup> I will use the term intellectual and developmental disabilities according to AAIDD. Different expressions can be used in a different countries.

**Risks:** There will be no direct risks to you or community. The answers you provide will be analyzed and will not be used outside the authorized sources, which is to say L'Arche community and academic team of this research.

**Benefits:** There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about how to understand properly the concept of friendship relationships both in practice and in theory.

**Confidentiality:** The research being done in the community may draw attention and if you participate you may be asked questions by other people in the community. Your identity will be treated confidentially. We will not be sharing your answers to anyone outside of the research team. The results that we get after the analysis from this research will be shared with you and your community before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant will receive a summary of the results and conclusion.

**Contact:** This proposal has been approved by L'Arche National coordinators and Community Leaders, which is a committee whose task is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm and that they are familiar with the procedure of the research. For additional questions and the results you can send to [martina.vuk@unifr.ch](mailto:martina.vuk@unifr.ch).

**Participant:**

_____ Name of Representative	_____ Signature	_____ Date
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**Researcher:**

_____ Name of Researcher	_____ Signature	_____ Date
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## APPENDIX D

### Informed Consent


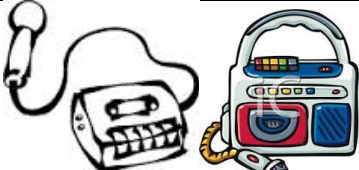






UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG  
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

**Researcher:** Martina Vuk, M.A.; PhD student

**Supervisor:** Prof. dr. Thierry Collaud

#### Informed Consent

<p>I understood the presented form of the inquiry and I agree to participate in this study.</p>	 <p><b>YES</b></p>
<p>I am aware that the interview will be recorded.</p>	
<p>I accept that what I say will be presented as a part of the conferences or research.</p>	
<p>If I have questions or suggestions about the results I have right to talk to someone.</p>	
<p>The interview is about friendship relationships between people with and without disabilities.</p>	

<b>Name and surname</b> .....  ..... <b>Signature</b> .....	
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## **APPENDIX E**

### **Interview Questions**

#### **Questions for the Assistants**

##### **First Part of the Interview (10 questions)**

1. How long have you spent in L'Arche and where?
2. In L'Arche community you were living with people with and without developmental and learning disabilities. Is there anyone of the core members with who you have had meaningful or special relationship? How would you describe the experience of that relationship? What did you like about this relationship? How would you call this relationship?<sup>886</sup>
3. Were you able to build friendship relationship with this person?
4. What have been characteristics of this friendship? Can you describe it?
5. Were you able to maintain friendship after L'Arche with that person? How, in which way?
6. Do you have a lot of friends? What is friendship for you? How you will determine a real friendship? What are the characteristics one person should have for becoming friends with someone?
8. What are the differences from your own point of friendship and the friendship relationship you have been living in L'Arche?
9. Did relationship with people with disabilities change you/ transform you a little bit? If yes, how?
10. Have you already been in conflict with one of your friends? How did you resolve misunderstandings?
11. Do you think that particularity of friendship relationship with people with disabilities is possible only in L'Arche?

##### **Second Part of the Interview (3 questions)**

1. Is there anything else you would still like to add about friendship to this interview?

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<sup>886</sup> Jean Vanier emphasized that the crucial question that started L'Arche was "Will you be my friend?" "Jean, seeking an authentic way to say 'yes', invited some people from the nearby mental institution to come and live with him, and so that was a beginning of L'Arche. Friendships continue to be at the heart of L'Arche – friendships that transcend the categories which we all too easily place people. However, recently L'Arche stance on friendship has been challenged by professionals and members of L'Arche community themselves which cause division in opinion.

2. What has been significant for you in L´Arche?
3. Do you think that it is possible to live friendship relationships with people with disabilities?
4. According to you is there a difference between friendship relationship in L´Arche and ordinary way of thinking about friendship?

## **II. Questions for core - members (people with disabilities)<sup>887</sup>**

1. Where did you live before you came in L´Arche? 1.1 With who? 1.2. Did you like it there?
2. When did you come in L´Arche? Are you happy that you are living in L´Arche? What do you particularly like about living in L´Arche? Do you like the house where you are living? Do you have your room in L´Arche? Do you like your room? Who are the people with who you are living? What are their names? Do you know them for a long time? Do you like spending time with other people in your home? With who especially? What are you doing with him/her: are you going to Church together; are you sharing meals together; preparing food together; going to the shop together?
3. Do you like people in your house? Who you like the most? Why is s/he special for you? Do you like spending time with that person?
4. Can you describe me your favorites assistant? Who is s/he for you? Are you happy that s/he is in L´Arche? Why? How you will describe your relationship with that person? Why s/he is special for you?
5. Do you have a lot´s of friends in L´Arche? What are their names? Do you like them? Why you call them friends?
6. Do you have any assistant as a friend? Why s/he is your friend? Can you describe me him or her? Can you describe me your friendship with that assistant?
7. Are you happy that s/he is in L´Arche? Would you like that s/he stay´s here with you or would you like her/him to leave? Will you still be friends after this person leaves? Will you still think about this person? Will you call her/him? Will you send her/him some postcard? Would you like to visit her/him?
8. Tell me one thing that you really like about your friendship with that person.
9. What is friendship for you? What is important for friendship? What is important for friends? Do you think that all people can be friends?

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<sup>887</sup> I have selected a short and more descriptive questions as we assume that will be of importance and significance to people with disabilities

10. How would you feel if you had no friends?

11. Have you already been in conflict with one of your friends? How did you resolve misunderstandings?

11. Do you have friends only in L'Arche? Or also outside? What do you prefer: spending time with your friends in L'Arche or people outside the L'Arche?

12. Is it nice to live in L'Arche? Do you like when new people come in L'Arche? Why do you think they should come in L'Arche? Do you think new assistants may like L'Arche? Do you think that they may find a friend in L'Arche? 13. Are you sad when assistants must leave L'Arche? Would you like them to come back? Why is important that they should remember L'Arche?



## APPENDIX F

### Interview with Jean Vanier<sup>888</sup>

#### Introduction and Interview:

**Martina Vuk, MA.,STL.**

**Ph.D Candidate University of Fribourg, Switzerland**

**[martina.vuk@unifr.ch](mailto:martina.vuk@unifr.ch)**

Jean Vanier, known worldwide as founder of the international network of L'Arche communities, the inspiring spiritual writer and humanitarian was born in Geneva in 1928, son of Canadian Governor General Georges-Philias Vanier and Pauline Archer. At the age of 13, he joined the British Royal Navy during World War II. He left the Navy in 1950, seeking his own path and responding to an inner call within himself. He earned a doctorate at the Catholic Institute of Paris and shortly after that he taught philosophy at the University of St Michael's College in Toronto, Canada. In 1964, through Dominican priest, Father Thomas Phillippe, he met with a few people with learning and developmental disabilities who had been living in a mental institution in northern France. This was the beginning of what would later be called the L'Arche community. Although the core of Vanier's doctoral thesis questioned the notion of *happiness as the beginning and the end of Aristotle's ethics of friendship between equals*, in L'Arche, Vanier began to build friendships between 'unequals'. He started to share life with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities whose lives were spent in social isolation and in institutions. Very soon this modest coexistence would shape the character of communion and friendship. Without certainty, but with confidence in God's providential plan, the L'Arche community began to grow around the world. Today there are about 149 communities in nearly 37 countries. Vanier saw the gospel passage Matthew 5.1-12 as the driving force and meaning behind L'Arche. In this gospel spirit, people with developmental and learning disabilities in L'Arche are all equal in dignity and value. Their coexistence with other members of the community is based upon the ideals of mutual respect and reciprocal help and has greatly contributed to personal growth and the true self-knowledge. In L'Arche, living together with different people in spite of their diverse intellectual, religious, and cultural backgrounds is in itself a recognition and a testimony of God's presence among humans. These characteristics are the keys to building peace and contribute to each person's own flourishing. There are, however, challenges and risks involved in this coexistence, which sometimes require honesty in facing the truth about one's identity. Only through being honest and open to oneself and others can authentic connections be established.

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<sup>888</sup> Cf. Vuk, Martina „Interview with Jean Vanier,“ In *The Pastoral Review*, Januray/February (2017): 37-41.

After more than 50 years of sharing life with people with learning and developmental disabilities, writing a significant opus of spiritual books, helping in building peace among different people and cultures, and promoting social justice and inter-religious dialogue, Vanier was awarded the Templeton Prize in 2015 for his spiritual and humanitarian contribution to the world. Pope Francis' particular interest and theological-pastoral work is thematically very similar to that of Vanier as well as the communities of L'Arche. Hence, in 2014 he met with Vanier and L'Arche community members at the Vatican. Moreover, as part of his monthly visits during the Year of Mercy, the Pope visited the L'Arche community in Rome, Italy and spent an afternoon with the members sharing a snack. It is worth noting that there are many links between the concept of relationship living in L'Arche and the Christian vocation of service and acceptance of others, regardless of class, race, religious and ethnic background, upon which the Pope himself constantly appeals. Therefore, the encounter between Vanier and Pope Francis before the Year of Mercy really was a *kairos* moment which calls us to live out joy and hope in fulfilling our practical Christian living. It is also a call signaling that the theology from above and theology from below truly meet as the two dimensions of one reality, not only through dialogue but also, and primarily, through an encounter. In an interview with Martina Vuk, Ph.D Candidate at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, Jean Vanier talks about the difference between experience and theory, the notion of dialogue, mercy, justice and forgiveness.

**MV: Many people talk about forgiveness, but when it comes to real situations, it's hard to forgive. It seems that people are more keen on justice than forgiveness. You have been in the British Navy, throughout life you have met different people, world leaders and politicians, Mother Theresa, John Paul II, and many others. As a spiritual writer you have given many retreats, people come to you with different kinds of problems, opening their soul to you. Why is it so difficult for people to forgive? And why do justice and forgiveness often seem to be in contradiction?**

**JV:** We need to protect our identity and our identity is the identity of '*I am right and you are wrong.*' We need to discover that it is not important who is right and who is wrong, but coming together. That is why there is now a restorative justice, where the victim meets a perpetrator, the evil one. They meet as two people in pain. So, forgiveness applies a big shift in identity, the realization "I belong to the human race and my mission is the mission of peace and of unity." That can only arrive if we accept to meet and lower our barriers. And forgiveness is to slash barriers, so that I can meet you and you can meet me back.

**MV: In academia we often confront a gap between our theoretical knowledge and experience. Is our theoretical knowledge insufficient and why do we need experience? Do you think that experience can improve theory? Or vice versa?**

**JV:** The whole of humanity is built up through experience. And then we reflect on this experience. For instance, until recently Catholics were not supposed to speak to Protestants - theoretically. But then we met and we discovered that many Protestants are holy people. Pope Francis said: “Go to the periphery and meet the people and when you meet them you discover something, and you receive some of their wisdom.”. The poor and broken on the streets, faced with pain and death, have a certain wisdom that we are not capable of having. So, what is particular in this? Isn't this a discovery of the presence of another person who has a gift to give to me? To be with the different leads us to a very specific humility. The danger of human person is to desire to be the best. We define our identity through winning. But we can also find our identity through communion with another person. What is that communion? That's an element that is difficult to explain. What is this communion with Jesus? It is difficult to define, but we can experience this feeling of oneness - of you and me being together. We can experience these, yet not define it too closely. We can define what the war is, what a separation is, but communion and togetherness are difficult to define. And in the mystery of people with disabilities that we can discover through the body. You find this in the beggar and in the person with disabilities because they are closer to the wisdom of the body than the wisdom of the intellect. There are also the mentally sick or the people with Alzheimer's who are close to the body and who have something to tell us about the body.

**MV: Many people see the link between L'Arche and Pope Francis' vision of humanity. Would you agree with this? JV: Yes.**

**MV: You met Pope Francis in March 2014. What was the highlight of this meeting? What hopes do you have that the Jubilee Year of Mercy could bring us?**

**JV:** The meeting with Pope Francis was just a moment of communion but we spoke about people and there was a sense that we are together, and a sense of oneness. So the whole question of mercy begins to open doors. Mercy is to meet and to risk. The great sign of mercy is in the story of the good Samaritan. The man stopped and that was the grace he received. The two others didn't stop, he stopped and it was communion through the body as he put wine on a wounded Samaritan. But he didn't stop there, he took him and stayed all day with him. So there was a meeting of the body. This Samaritan was normally rejected by the Jews and they hated Jews, yet they met. So this meeting changed the good Samaritan and changed the Jew. It is about stopping and taking a risk. There was a risk if he continued, because where this would lead to? The danger of mercy is to go to the prison and meet the prisoners. But what will happen if we stay and something happens? Maybe the person will come out of prison, what then? The same happened with the L'Arche. We started with the meeting and there was a risk that we did not know where this will lead us. Mercy is not just giving food to the poor. It is meeting the poor and risking, there is always a question 'where this will take

me, where this will lead me?’ And this means that my barriers are dropped and the poor are leading me to something new.

**MV: What is disability according to you?**

**JV:** There is a disability compared to the vision of what human being should be. It is more defined by logos and by capacity to do or to think and grow through the thinking. So, somebody who has disability and who cannot perform is considering disabled. And the same thing is with people with Alzheimer. All of this people with disability they lost something, they lost this capability to do things, so the handicap is the physical reality where people are unable to accomplish what we think a human being should be or should be capable to do.

**MV: What according to you is the biggest problem of contemporary men and women?**

**JV:** The sadness and a lack of belief in *growth*. When I say lack of belief in *growth*, I'm not talking about knowledge and having more money. To grow in humanity means let barriers of fear drop. The meeting is about two people who coming together in the recognition of the fact that we are human beings. And that is the place of growth. This means not being frightened of people of other cultures but letting our barriers drop down. Which means that I discover the secret that I am not just what is seen from the outside, not just what I achieve. But that I am a person who yearns to be loved and who wants to love others, and to discover the joy of what it is to love other people.

**MV: And do you think this could be possible in dialogue with Islam?**

**JV:** We have to work on it. Bishop Pierre Claverie who was killed in Oran said the important thing is to meet Muslims, not just dialogue with them. There is something prior to that dialogue, and that is a meeting of two people coming together. We have to work on it. There is a danger in Islam of a sort of tribal element, but some are becoming free of that. You can see that people in Tunisia and Egypt want to meet, they want a change. It was the case with the Second Vatican Council which represented a conversion. Yet many “traditionalist” Christians were frightened by Vatican II because they had barriers. In that sense there are Muslims who become free and want to meet and Christians who also become free and want to meet. There is hope between two people who are open to meet each other.

**MV: We are living in the era of rapid technological progress in all areas particularly in biomedicine. Improvements in modern medicine and pharmacy have been also beneficial to people with disabilities. Yet, there are numerous attacks on human life from conception till the end, with the intention to eliminate suffering. Modern law and medicine is particularly hostile towards fragile and**

**vulnerable life stages or individuals. What is your answer to that? Where does the problem lie? Could prevention of suffering bring our time more progress?**

**JV:** There is something about our humanity that we are born in great fragility and we will die in great fragility. The meaning of fragility is to bring us back to reality. The reality is that we are body and spirit. And what is most important? It is to work for peace. A beautiful expression of Andrea Riccardi was that community is founded in history but could be a hope for utopia. Pope Francis defines utopia as a possible outcome of what we desire. The meaning of L'Arche is to work and to be with people with disabilities because we believe that they are fully human and that they are open and loved by God. But utopia is the wish that the world would be like that. What is the influence of L'Arche on the world? So that other people can discover that we do not have to be in a struggle between power and love. We are often told, even in school, that we have to be powerful and achieve the most, but the reality is that the most important thing is not whether we write the best thesis or not, but the way how do we live, how we are open to people, how we love people. So there are two visions of humanity: one is the vision of winning and another vision is to be open to the other.

**MV: What would be your message to the Church regarding theology?**

**JV:** My message to theologians would be come and spend time in L'Arche or to spend time in the prison or to work in palliative care, or with homeless people in order to have an experience with the weak. Because the great challenge is to move from the head to the heart. In the head we have certitudes and in the heart we don't. We enter into relationship with someone we do not know, and we do not know where this will lead us. It's a risk and it takes time. In Australia there was a guy a long time ago who was dying from an overdose and his last words were: *'you always wanted to change me but you never wanted to meet me.'* To meet is not easy, to listen, to enter into a relationship with somebody who is different is not easy. So, we are in the world that wants to change people to become like them, like me, but we are frightened of meeting.

**MV: What does our time need the most today?**

**JV:** To live the experience of humanness! And this comes back to Pope Francis. He's calling people to mercifulness, to compassion. Leviticus said 'be holy as I am holy'. Jesus said 'be compassionate as your father is compassionate.' To be holy is to be pure, to be compassionate means to "have your head in mouth" [i.e., to put your self at risk and incertitude, MV] and "hands in the dirt". So what Francis is calling us to is not the purity of the faith but to relate with people, to be dirty in relationships, in meeting with another.

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