



Alexandru Buzalic, *Anthropos—Omul*
Paradigmele unui model antropologic integral
[Anthropos—Man. Paradigms of an Integral
Anthropological Model]
Târgu-Lăpuș: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2022, 228 pp.

The author of the reviewed book discusses the most serious question of philosophy with regard to the current changes in the anthropological paradigm. Buzalic claims that we are on the verge of an irreversible change in the relationship between man and nature, and confirms this with the meaning we give to cyberspace, robotization, human hybridization, global connectivity, but also genetic manipulation and eugenics. The Rev. Professor Buzalic's study moves in a space defined by theology, philosophy, and religious studies, though it remains interdisciplinary in character.

Buzalic proposes a solution to the identified problems with the help of integral anthropology as a complex methodological approach that offers a link between positive research and metaphysics (through the "Ontological Sacred" defined by Mircea Eliade). At the same time, it reflects the phenomenon of religion by defining a person as *homo religiosus*, as a material-spiritual entity whose spiritual life is materialized through culture. Religiosity and spirituality, as the psychological sphere of an individual in which the experience of the sacred is manifested, are the most important cultural-genetic factors.

Pope John Paul II proposed to theologians and philosophers the term "integral anthropology," as a conception of man who takes into account all dimensions of one's own being as a person in its individual, social, physical, cultural, and spiritual meaning. This turn to metaphysics through integral anthropology is made possible by the philosophy of religion and the study of religions proposed by Mircea Eliade and Cardinal Marian Jaworski. Both thinkers put forward an

integral vision of man and, in this way, also an integral vision of research in the field of social sciences and the humanities. Integral anthropology brings philosophy and theology into the scientific dialogue.

Man is perceived as a unified whole, which is based on their structure (material body—biological and soul—psyche and spirit in the world) and passes through their free and conscious action in the world. Pope Francis further develops the concept of integral anthropology in the context of integral ecology, since everything is intimately connected to everything and contemporary problems require a view that takes into account all aspects of the global crisis, leading to an extension of reflection to all human and social dimensions. Theological research offers a hermeneutic, as if “from within,” religious phenomenon: in the continuity of the intergenerational transmission of Revelation and the exegetical tradition, in the organic development of religion/church and its efforts to actualize the metahistorical message in a cultural language updated according to the particular time in which one receives the message of salvation. At the same time, the presence of the issues of religion and theology in the universal openness of integral anthropology becomes a common platform that can enable the dialogue of philosophy and theology with the positive sciences, all of which are part of the heritage of knowledge as *scientia*.

The author of the reviewed book, among other things, finds inspiration for his reflection in the work of the French paleoanthropologist Pascal Picq, a professor at the Collège de France, who introduced the concept of coevolution into the analysis of human society. Coevolution as an ecosystemic vision goes beyond a simple evolutionary interpretation and takes into account all the determining interactions that shape the physical relationship between man and nature, the psychological relationship that shapes interpersonal family or group relationships, and the symbolic relationship that gives meaning to everything and reveals the sacred in a metaphysical dimension. In the amount of all the aspects that shape the ontogenesis of the individual and are constitutive of the human being, we can create a complete picture of the human phenomenon. According to Picq, in the original evolutionary interpretation, man develops through a double mutual relationship: with the natural environment and with the technical-cultural environment.

Buzalic’s research interest further concentrates on transhumanism as an intellectual and cultural movement that precedes artificial interventions to improve the capabilities of tomorrow’s individuals. He distinguishes between primary transhumanism, which arises as a result of man’s coexistence with nature and coevolution, and secondary transhumanism, which arises in the man–culture relationship. Finally, in the last chapter, the author discusses the phenomenological aspects that situate man in the cosmos, from the perception of their special status among other beings in the universe to free and responsible human action and the dignity of an existential condition marked by historicity, finitude, and death.

The problem raised in the book under review is highly topical. We see that the contemporary world, in the permanent dynamics of change taking place in the shadow of the desacralization of culture and the secularization of society, has slipped into the pursuit of totalitarian pragmatism, economic and financial efficiency at the expense of knowledge, basic research, knowledge defined as *Scientia*, almost forgetting what “the love of Christ“ means. The famous “know thyself,” present in the thinking of humanity since Plato, passing through patristic thought to the present day, nourished, however, by the “love of Christ” and by faith as “encounter,” today benefits from a multitude of sciences that present us with medical, psychological, sociological, behavioral, cultural or spiritual aspects. Each field, however, remains isolated, confined to its own field of competence and developed in an academic circle of experts. In the abundance of data available today, the existential question (Who am I?) takes on a new urgency.

The author, Father Professor Alexandru Buzalic, seeks to propose anthropological foundations that can be applied within a contemporary fundamental theology that is intended to be an objective reflection on revelation and faith. Christian anthropology, as part of integral anthropology, can become a common language in which the positive sciences can find themselves with fundamental theology, which is a discipline of dialogue and a frontier through which we encounter historical religions more than confrontation in abstract notions of faith and reason: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, with forms of manifestations of modern atheism, with forms of religious indifferentism in a secularized world in which technology and economic values have primacy, with the very demands of believers today, which contain the germs of new doubts and difficulties and pose new questions for theology and catechesis.


Integral anthropology, more than a new humanism, integrates the vision of the positive disciplines into a meta-interpretation that can become the basis for a specific vision of fundamental theology, integrating into a philosophical-theological hermeneutics the current insights of the positive sciences on topics of common concern.

Going back to basics and finding a common platform for dialogue between positive sciences and philosophy and theology, underpinned by the same “love of Christ,” is essential for the world of tomorrow in promoting a humanist culture. And it should not be forgotten that cultural humanism is based on “Christian love, which finds its foundation and form in faith,” as Pope Benedict XVI also reminds us. In his encyclical *Deus caritas est*, he states that “the whole Christian ethos derives its meaning from faith as an ‘encounter’ with the love of Christ, which offers a new horizon and gives life a decisive direction.” Buzalic stresses that we are called to understand the changes that humanity is undergoing. The Church is faced with a renewed mission to ensure the presence of God’s Word in a culture characterized by digital technologies, while it is

essential to protect all that secures our humanity and the human face of tomorrow's civilization. It is necessary to safeguard both interpersonal interaction and man's relationship with God. A conception of the human that is consistent with the nature of the human phenomenon, which guarantees the preservation of the limits of bioengineering interventions in the spirit of transhumanism, serves the human being and does not aim at the establishment of anti-humanist ideological goals.

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