

**CLAUDIA CHIOREAN**

**CHRIST - RESTORER OF HUMAN ESCHATOLOGY**

**Claudia Chiorean**

Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication  
Sciences, Cluj- Napoca, Romania.

**Email:** chiorean@fspac.ro

**Abstract:** Review of Ioan Chirilă, *Model, Chip, Sens (Eseuri)*, București: Editura Eikon, 2017.

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Father Ioan Chirilă, professor at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Cluj-Napoca, proposes in 2017 a new volume of theological essays: *Model, Chip, Sens*, published by the Eikon Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca. The previous volume, also appeared in 2017 - *The Scale of the Word, Homiletic Essays*, “is, certainly, an elevated demonstration of hermeneutic incursion into the text and the spirit of Holy Scripture” (Cubleșan 2017). By contrast - *Model, Chip, Sens* - is an essay puzzle from which you can select, as you like, your favorite piece to go on with another and the next, until you grab all the thoughts and feelings.

Located in the continuation of the long line of thinkers: N. Steinhardt (monk Nicholas from Rophia), G. Galaction (the priest), T. Arghezi (former monk) or V. Anania (the hierarch Bartholomeu Anania), Father Chirilă rebuilds in the new volume a universally spiritualized universe, as we can see in many of his works of which we speak: *Traces in the Sky* 2016; *Scramble of Heaven* 2014; *Sacred Scripture - The Word of Words* 2010; *Echoes in Babel* 2000 etc.

Although the volume is composed of disparate elements, published in different contexts and cultural spaces, these meditations of Father Chirilă impress the rhythm of reading with increased intensity. The book conceals a climb on the scale of the word as the reading passes from the human model to the Christological reference point and the eschatological endpoint of the meaning of life and death: Anastasis (Resurrection).

The one who in the 1997 wrote *Homo Deus* conceives in this volume a real plea for meaning, which is gradually reached through models (human models) and then by Chip the only Chip that we should refer to to Sense/Meaning, the true meaning of life: “Man is a living being, who, walking to God, endures” (Chirilă 2017, 180).

It is a fundamentally optimistic writing, despite the anchoring in the concrete social, economic, cultural, spiritual crisis, optimism that transpires from every part of the saying: “Yes, it is a crisis, but we have the seed of eternity to stand in the white of the night to choose the grain with our Father “and He will give the crown of the coming year, with rains, with waters that make him to be born.” (Chirilă 2017, 230)

The insertion of linguistic procedures of a facile style in the doctus style, loaded with solid theological, cultural arguments, specific to the author, pleasantly surprises you during a demanding reading: “One day I looked at the top of the city, he seemed to me like a miter, like a crown of crown on which the cross crosses. But in that view, something more said: they were the crosses of the historical Churches and the cross of the Cities, all of them were revealing to me as the keys that open the sky” (Chirilă 2017, 195).

In fact, throughout the writing, Father Chirilă is familiar with the models and faces invoked. It is the familiarity of meeting in spirit with the

characters with whom he or she interacts with or interacts with the reader. The faces of the Bible translator, Galaction, or the philosopher D. Stăniloae, are made with delicate, plastic, literary, with challenging stylistic abilities. A resounding sensitivity, liveliness, prosperity to the Miracle of Life, is the essay dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

In the first structure of the book, the model, the human archetype (concept found in C. G. Jung or C. Noica) is surprised in the midst of a process of “spiritualizing the created existence” (Chirilă 2017, 53). Surprisingly, the restoration of man “in His likeness” (Chirilă 2017, 61) does not require superhuman circumstances. Through prayer, for example, seen as the “way of restoring cognition and human attitude” (Chirilă 2017, 69) or by the faith “who held the two of the Christ-Stone the head of the corner and the deliverance” (Chirilă 2017, 82), man finds “the happiness of resting in God” (Chirilă 2017, 73). Even the Romanian in the Transylvanian space, at the intersection of two spaces / cultures, can manifest their faith in accordance with the traditional Romanian spirit, regardless of the dynamics of Europe’s cultural borders.

Perhaps not by chance, the entire second structure of the book, that of the Chip, gradually turns into an obvious plea for the humanization of man. The models in the first part revealed to the reader sequences of the state of affection. The Lives of Saints Ioan Casian and Gherman or the life of Bishop Nicholas Ivan, gently invoked with nostalgia, are only a few human landmarks that have revealed to the world “the rays of the eternal shining of the face” (Chirilă 2017, 89).

But the fullness of the significance that the volume sums up is found in the third part, and the last - *About the sense* - an apogee of the whole essayistic approach. A set of seemingly tangential themes are intertwined to outline the idea of meaning and existential significance.

In an essay dedicated to IPS Bartolomeu Anania, on the occasion of the Doctor Honoris Causa award in 2001 - About “Theoria and creation” - the author gives the essence of the clergy / writer Bartolomeu / Valeriu Anania, in a permanent dialogue through which “contemplation and creation, ... man can find the logical structures of his own existence and through them to perceive and express the harmony and the beauty of creation ... “. The explicitly expressed reason is that “from the human person, the world is a fundamental evidence for creation: culture through man is or is meant to become a cultic element by which, the sum of the rationales of creation united in a doxological sense, returns to the Creator” (Chirilă 2017, 207).

Elsewhere, he points out the essence of the concept of exegesis, drawing attention to the purpose for which the text was written: “... a goal that is firstly accomplished in a community, of its tradition of a living stream of thought, but the exegetic act does not eliminate the primary meaning of the event or the signifier, it gives it a new dimension, as the case may be, asserts the existence of a dimension held in potential form

and which, in various chronological-historical structures, becomes an act” (Chirilă 2017, 214).

But all the themes of this last structure of the volume find their crown in the *Pledge for Sense* essay. In a plastic, almost colloquial style, as can often be heard from the church pulpit, Father Chirilă pleads for the restoration of the meaning of human existence, as it was and is from the beginning: “This is the meaning, there are meanings: which always passes through the same gate of hope, even if the sky is cloudy and you can neither hear nor read his speech. When you can not hear the sighing of the sky, the voice of his prayer, then the fear of the bottom of the world, the darkness of the bottom, even though you think you look up. It is chaos, yes, it is chaos, I can not hear heaven anymore, that’s why it is chaos” (Chirilă 2017, 228).

The concept has enjoyed the attention to its importance. Although Kant identifies the meaning of human life as a surplus to the meaning of history, Berdiaev said that History has no meaning in itself, that, bearing in it the evidence of human impotence, demonstrates the necessity of faith in God, so that we do not feel abandoned in a world without meaning. Dostoevsky sees in the same faith in God, salvation from total despair, as Kierkegaard does. Nietzsche, Rimbaud, the atheists declared, come to believe in God’s existence once they see Him as an enemy. For to exist as an enemy, God must firstly exist, Berdiaev says (Berdiaev 2013, 69). While the existential atheist J.-P. Sartre finds pure despair as the only acceptable solution, the approach of a contemporary psychiatrist comes in the face of Christian’s original Christian concept of Chirilă.

In 1984, *The man in search of the meaning of life*, the psychiatrist V. Frankl makes a real pledge for life with meaning. Frankl should make a few points. Detained for long periods in the inhuman concentration camps, he was found to be reduced to the most rudimentary form of existence. His father, mother, brother and wife died in camps or sent to the gas chambers. Under these circumstances, with the scattered goods, with all the values being destroyed, suffering from hunger, cold and because of violence, waiting from one hour to another to be exterminated manages to plead for life, basing the logotherapy.

Logotherapy is truly a form of psychotherapy centered on meaning. In logotherapy, the patient is confronted with the meaning of his life and reorientated to it. Logos is a Greek word, meaning Sense. Logotherapy or, as some authors have called, “The Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy” focuses on the meaning of human existence and the search for meaning by man. According to logotherapy, “this man’s endeavor to find meaning in his life is the prime motivating force in man” (Frankl 2009, 67).

Frankl comes with a specific approach to psychiatry, but that does not prevent him from inserting into the pages of the book, quoted in the Bible. Whether he chooses fragments of the New Testament, or that he

stops on the Old Testament, his selections, as well as that of Father Chirilă, are an extension of the idea he writes about. For example, *Song of Songs*, the great love poem written by King Solomon (8: 6): “Put me like a seal on your heart like a seal on your arm; For love is strong as death, and jealousy is unburied as the dwelling of the dead; its jar is a jar of fire, a flame of the Lord “comes to reinforce the hypothesis of the author that” love is the last and highest goal to which man can aspire” (Frankl 2009, 31).

Perhaps at Frankl the plasticity of language does not compete with that of Father Chirilă, but the conception of man’s will of meaning defined by Christian values is eloquently reflected in the fragment: “man can take everything but one thing: the last of human freedoms - namely to choose one’s own attitude in a given set of circumstances, to choose its own way of being. Elections should always have been made. Every day, every hour gave us the chance to make a decision, a decision that determined whether or not you subjected those powers that threatened to rob you of your own, your inner freedom; which determined whether you became a toy at the expense of circumstances, giving up freedom and dignity, being modeled on the face and resemblance of the typical prisoner. ... The consciousness of its own value is anchored in the higher, spiritual things, and it could not be disturbed by the life of the camp. But how many free people have it, not to mention detainees?” (Frankl 2009, 48).

In another way, Father Chirilă surprises the question of self-reappearance in the Christ-Self, under an interrogative-rhetorical tone: “Are we kneeling to exalt ourselves in understanding, man is willing and has the awareness of necessity of kneeling, man postmodern?” (Chirilă 2017, 203). “For the bodily relaxation takes us away from God and prevents our thinking to think of Him, for from here is born in our souls, the love of Him and the ascension. Therefore, the kneeling begins with kneeling” (Chirilă 2017, 204), even if “the age wants us kneeling” (Chirilă 2017, 205).

Confirmation of this attitude to V. Frankl: “The work that we really needed was a fundamental change of our attitude towards life” (Frankl 2009, 55) turns to Father Chirilă, after a whole volume of arguments, in - I urge you directly: “So let’s look for the garden of prayer, the Ghetsimani of the Resurrection! In this garden man is fulfilled by prayer in Christ” (Chirilă 2017, 254)

*Model, Chip, Sens* remains in the mind of the reader a volume with wide addressability, with profound theological and cultural perspectives.

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