

SOLOMON MARCUS FROM ONE TO SEVEN

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Abstract

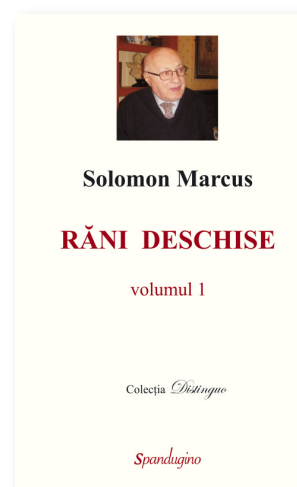
Solomon Marcus is the author of a multitude of valuable publications of which one can distinguish the seven volumes of which the “*Open wounds*” series is formed. The title owes its dramatic nature to the fact that the author approaches significant topics for the contemporary society, revealing painful aspects from the various areas of the Romanian social, cultural and political life. The series has an autobiographic character revealing the author’s reactions to restrictions, offences and absurd inequities lived by Solomon Marcus as a young Jewish ethnic during Antonescu’s legionary period, as well as later on, explaining the condition of the genuine intellectual in those times better than anyone else. Furthermore, the profound nature of Solomon Marcus’ work “*Open wounds*” partly resides in the description of events from a spiritual rather than strictly historical perspective. Marcus’ criticism of Romania’s social and cultural development in the last decades is subtle and fine, but profound, accompanied by pertinent argumentations. A great pedagogue, Marcus offers a path for Romanian society to go on in order to find balance and progress, also highlighting the necessity of replacing the wrong binary logic used in education (to memorize and reproduce) with “to understand” and then “to know”. On the whole, the seven volumes help us decipher a complex and complexed society, in a continuous aberrant torment, in search of its own destiny. If someone ever dared to write a history of the mentalities of the Romanian society over the past five decades, they would have to cite “*Open wounds*”.

Keywords: *autobiography, criticism, education, politics, Romanian society.*

Spandugino publishing house made a duty of honour by bringing Solomon Marcus’s writing into the light of the print with perseverance and a highly praised rhythm. The editor’s professionalism is also present in the technical achievement of the volumes which distinguish themselves through the elegance of the shape, sobriety, but also the warm image of the covers, all achieved in a unity that turns every volume into a book of bibliophile.

From the multitude of publications one can distinguish the seven volumes from the “*Open wounds*” series. The title owes its dramatic nature to the fact that the author, incredibly active on the journalistic side (and on the scientific journalistic

side) approaches significant topics for the contemporary society, revealing painful aspects from the various areas of the Romanian social, cultural and political life. The author assimilates them moving up to identification, militating, offering solutions and suggesting measures. Another reason for the title, which is revealed especially by the first volumes, offers as argument some unpleasant events, restrictions, offences and absurd inequities lived by Solomon Marcus in his youth, as a young Jewish ethnic during Antonescu’s legionary period, but also later on.



As Solomon Marcus himself says, “the volumes “*Open wounds*” represent my reaction to the events that I came across.” We can therefore draw the conclusion that the volumes have an autobiographic character, which is perfectly true. We do not speak about the concrete autobiography with facts, places and dates, but about something completely different, more profound and more subtle. The six volumes present the elements of a spiritual autobiography which constantly coagulates from the order of the chapters which is not at all accidental. We discover a sort of chaste modesty in Solomon Marcus who refuses a pragmatic

biography dominated by concrete events, making us part of his spiritual adventure and his "reactions" towards various events. We find a similar attitude in Constantin Noica, the philosopher who states in "The testamentary note": "If someone is going to be interested in my scholarly activity, I ask him to remember the following: 1. My biography does not have a content, mostly due to my own will," etc.



Marcus's observations included in the seven volumes which represent the object of our presentation cover in an impressive ambitus a long period of time of over half a century and it refers to numerous aspects. The selection criterion for the interventions is a chronological and not a thematic one. However, the ideas presented are harmoniously assembled in a homogenous whole, sweeping away the idea of heterogeneity.

The volumes' main bonding agent is exactly the lucid and responsible attitude of the extraordinary intellectual, developed within a society that seems to have lost its helm, and is at same time vicious and confused. Going through the seven volumes makes us all agree that interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity represent the second pillar of the set of ideas conveyed. Together with honesty and sincerity they represent the main elements of a pleasant but at the same time profound reading.

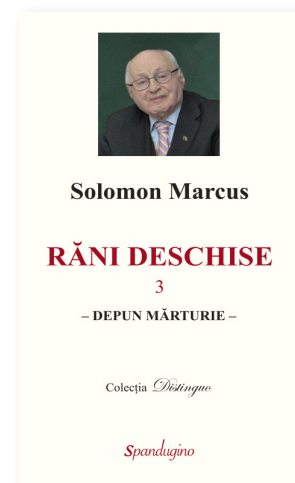
Interesting, but also expressive are the subtitles of the six volumes of "Open wounds":

- Vol. 1 – The chance of being able to express yourself
- Vol. 2 – Culture under dictatorship
- Vol. 3 – I testify
- Vol. 4 – Waking us up

- Vol. 5 – Fire and mirror
- Vol. 6 – I only ask
- Vol 7 – The education of human

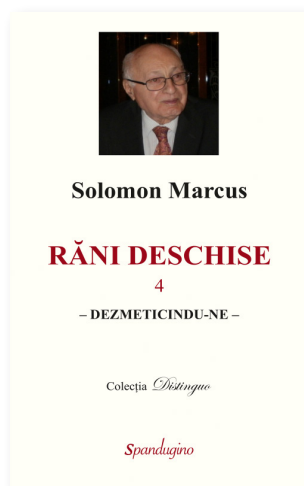
The first three volumes speak about the adventure of an intellectual during the communist period, and the subtitle of the first volume expresses the joy of the freedom of the word from the terror of the interdiction "The chance of being able to express yourself," whereas the second and the third volumes approach the essential elements of the era: "Culture under dictatorship" and "I testify." The analysis is decent and pertinent, without partisan influences on any part, but a ruthless one. They give the author the opportunity to self-analyse together with the analysis of the study period.

Solomon Marcus did not need to retract anything from that period, but he explained better than anyone else the condition of the genuine intellectual in those times. About those times, Solomon Marcus said: "It was a kind of game between them and us, they tried to attract us, and we tried to avoid the ideological traps." And in another place: "I am ashamed of some statements from those times, which today I do not longer agree with." Each of us should assimilate this statement, before we accuse somebody else. This would represent an honest solution necessary in order to move forward. Marcus's lesson is simple, clear and brilliant at the same time.



The last volumes express his critical attitude towards the social and cultural development of Romania in the last decades. The genuine and complete intellectual takes responsibility, up to painful intensities (*Open wounds*), for going through

the critical filter, apparently critical events, as effects of a society without helm. He treats them with a very fine sense of observation, sometimes focusing on details, he integrates them upon the whole, but more importantly he knows how to extract the essential and to even offer solutions.



His observations and Marcus's criticism has no connection with the media information that we are used to from TV, radio or written press. Unlike the general atmosphere, Marcus's criticism is subtle and fine, but profound, with inappellable reasonable argumentations. But we have to remember that Marcus's criticism is not at all biased and destructive, but on the contrary, it has strong constructive accents, in order to prospect the future and impregnated with a rational and beneficial optimism.

He mostly focuses on education, school, and Romanian education in general, which he analyses without circumspections. He always spoke wittingly. He was invited to meetings with secondary school students, high school students, university students, doctors, architects, writers, etc. and he did not refuse any invitation. He corresponded with everyone who requested it, even with children. At meetings he always spoke about the surprisingly abnormalities of the educational system that he discovered from the direct contact with his correspondents.

Following these direct experiences, in these last volume he arguments the necessity of replacing the educational system which terrorised the student, proposing a harmonious tow-way teacher-student relationship and he asks to replace the wrong binary logic (to memorize and

reproduce) with "to understand" and then "to know."

We discovered Solomon Marcus very close to Jean Jacques Rousseau, when he sayd that the overstimulation of competition to the detriment of cooperation leads to an emphasis on human egoism.

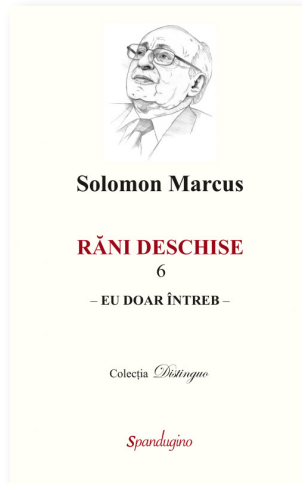
But did the nonagenarian Solomon Marcus discover the path that the Romanian society has to go on in order to find balance and progress? Perhaps that in these regards some elements could be extracted from his speech. It is certain that besides the scientific fields in which he exceled, Solomon Marcus proved once again that he is a great pedagogue, suggesting as a subtitle for his last volume the statement "I only ask," offering present and future generations the responsibility to search and the satisfaction to find. We, as reviewers, as a solution to the above said, can only say the same as Novalis: "Apparently, we go further!"



Volume seven appears as a huge bouquet of the mind, varied and wonderful in its magnificence. The chapters amaze through their thematic variety and unexpected observations, whether it is about ordinary aspects of life or about the high gentility of human thought. The volume expresses the author's same suffering in front of the wounds that remain unhealed, due to their impotence of interfering with the resolution of some important diseases of the social systems.

Marcuse's spirit is ubiquitous in Romanian science and culture. We come across it in conferences held by architects, doctors, actors, mathematicians, physicists, approaching varied subjects: either Archimedes' axiom of continuity or the mathematical rigors of music, linguistics, performance, or it tells the ministries of education

about the wave of counter education. Marcus's interventions are always critical but also constructive, generating real lines of force, inviting to action and to look for solutions.



It is also interesting to notice the “fair play” spirit that animates Solomon Marcus to tell us that he knows that there are some people who do not love him because of his critical spirit, which he always used to approbate those people who lacked any merit but managed to climb the academic or social scale in general.

Solomon Marcus fully lived the feeling of alienation from the authentic or real world. Because, as the author says, the image of the world as we know it today is filtered and distorted due to the broadcasting of events by the modern media, which by communicating about communication estranges us from the real world. His conferences always present issues of interest for the ordinary reader, but they also present fundamental clarifications of scientists.

We have chosen some directions that we hope will not remain unexploited:

- Between the macro and microcosmos there is no tight separation. On the contrary, there is a unity between the Newtonian mechanics and the quantum mechanics. The idea is to discover the crossing interface from one lawfulness to the other.
- We simplify too much in order to understand, but the holistic theory has to put things back into their own complexity (the theory of complexity)
- The existence of conjugate options which reject one another, but cannot exist one

without the others and they cannot be separated and analysed singularly.

- Substantiating education in the spirit of the natural and of the human, in order to learn not from obligation but from the joy of knowledge.
- This volume also contains some hymns dedicated to maths. The warmth and the sincerity with which they are presented make you regret that you are not one of them.
- In volume seven Solomon Marcus speaks about “the glory of the human being” in the passages of such a warm prose that could make you place them alongside the poem “Song for the human being.”

It is a book that offers new satisfactions in every page, but which has to be read not without breathing but with a pencil in your hand and which asks you directly: “Do you want to live the moment or do you want to have more profound satisfactions?”

Solomon Marcu left behind a fabulous inheritance – essays and PhD. papers will be written, seminars, conferences and congresses will be organized, and his writing will preserve the same freshness and novelty. Putting together everything that he wrote – it would be ideal for a group of researchers to analyse and order – a “Solomon Marcus” institute would honour every University.

In the end we restate the idea that, on the whole, the seven volumes represent an opposite which helps us decipher a complex and complexed society, in a continuous aberrant torment, in search of its own destiny. If someone ever dared to write a history of the mentalities of the Romanian society over the past five decades, he would have to read “Open wounds.”

