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## La coscienza di zeno riassunto pdf

La coscienza di Zeno pubblicato nel 1923 è il terzo e più importante romanzo di Italo Svevo (dopo Una vita e Senilità). Svevo iniziò la stesura del romanzo subito dopo la prima guerra mondiale, ottenendo subito pareri favorevoli da intellettuali come James Joyce ed Eugenio Montale. Seguirono molti riconoscimenti internazionali. Si tratta del primo romanzo psicoanalitico delle nostra letteratura e uno dei capolavori della letteratura e uno dei è adombrato Sigmund Freud), studioso delle recenti teorie psicoanalitiche. Questi gli consiglia di annotare in un diario ricordi, immagini e sogni al fine di risalire alle remote origini della propria nevrosi. La nevrosi si manifesta in improvvisi dolori al finno e in una fastidiosa zoppìa nei momenti di emozione e di disagio. Zeno esegue il compito assegnato dal medico, ma dopo qualche tempo decide di interrompere la cura, perché ritiene di non averne più bisogno; ciò spinge il dottor S. a pubblicare per vendetta il diario del paziente, premettendo una nota scritta di suo pugno, in cui dichiara apertamente di volerlo danneggiare, smascherandone bugie e viltà. Lo scrittore nella Prefazione che apre il libro, finge dunque che il manoscritto inviato da Zeno venga pubblicato dal dottor S stesso, per vendicarsi del paziente, che si è sottratto alla cura, frodando al medico il frutto dell'analisi. Al termine del libro, invece, Svevo inserisce una sorta di diario di Zeno, in cui questi spiega il suo abbandono della terapia perché dichiara di essere quarito da ogni malattia, in coincidenza con i successi commerciali ottenuti durante la guerra grazie a fortunate e lucrose speculazioni. Il romanzo, dopo la Prefazione del dottor S e un Preambolo in cui Zeno racconta i propri tentativi di risalire alla prima infanzia, si articola in sei capitoli. La coscienza di Zeno riassunto capitolo Nel primo capitolo Nel primo capitolo Nel primo capitolo Nel primo capitolo nel romanzo si intitola "La coscienza di Zeno riassunto capitolo Nel primo capit morte di mio padre". In esso Zeno traccia un ritratto del padre, un agiato commerciante che rimprovera al figlio l'indecisione e l'incapacità negli affari. Per queste ragioni il vecchio Cosini, al momento di ritirarsi dall'attività, affida all'amministratore Olivi il compito di gestire le proprietà di famiglia al posto di Zeno. a quale spetterà solo una rendita Con l'atteggiamento ambiguo che gli è caratteristico, Zeno rimprovera il padre di non aver fiducia in lui, ma al contempo è lieto di essere esentato da obblighi e attività concrete. Quando il padre si ammala gravemente, Zeno gli si riavvicina, ma le incomprensioni e i conflitti che hanno caratterizzato il loro rapporto non cessano e lo schiaffo dato al figlio, poco prima di morire, lascerà in Zeno un perenne disagio e un vago senso di colpa. Terzo capitolo Il terzo capitolo Il terzo capitolo si intitola "La storia del mio matrimonio". Grazie all'amicizia con Giovanni Malfenti, un intraprendente uomo d'affari, Zeno è stato introdotto a casa di questi e ne conosce le quattro figlie, due delle quali, Ada e Augusta, in età da marito. Zeno, che ritiene sia giunto per lui il momento di sposarsi, corteggia con le sue solite ambiguità Ada, la bellissima sorella maggiore. Ada però lo rifiuta perché innamorata di Guido Speier. Umiliato da questo rifiuto, Zeno si dichiara nella stessa serata dapprima alla sorella Alberta, che è poco più di una scolaretta, e infine ad Augusta, la sorella brutta, che il protagonista non aveva mai preso in considerazione. Augusta, che si rivela dotata di spirito e buon senso, accetta l'offerta di matrimonio. Il mondo di sua moglie si regge su principi saldi e indiscutibili: si mangia a orari fissi; si indossano abiti di un certo tipo; per la salvezza dell'anima si va in chiesa e per quella del corpo si ci affida al governo e ai medici. Questi sani principi, fondamento della società borghese, appaiono assurdi al protagonista-narratore, che sperimenta su se stesso, quanto essi siano svuotati di significato e ridotti a semplici riti. Zeno, pertanto, si ritiene l'unico "sano" in un mondo di malati di conformismo, al quale però anche lui si conforma, assumendo il ruolo di capofamiglia, esattamente come il padre che aveva tanto odiato. Alla moglie Zeno affianca la giovane amante Carla, una ragazza povera che egli ostenta di proteggere in modo "paterno", finché ella non lo abbandona per un uomo più giovane. E Zeno ritorna, senza scandali né scenate, alla tradizionale e monotona vita di coppia con la moglie. Quinto capitolo Il quinto capitolo s'intitola "Storia di un'associazione commerciale". Con il cognato Guido, che ha sposato Ada (la sorella della moglie un tempo desiderata), fonda un'associazione commerciale. Nei confronti di Guido - bello, disinvolto, sicuro di sé (insomma l'antitesi di Zeno, come Macario, in Una vita e Balli in Senilità) Zeno nutre un inconfessabile odio. L'associazione commerciale si conclude tragicamente con il dissesto economico di Guido e il suo suicidio. Il suicidio doveva essere solo simulato e invece avviene realmente per il tardivo intervento del medico. L'odio verso Guido si tradisce clamorosamente ai funerali: Zeno sbaglia corteo funebre. Si tratta di uno di quegli "atti mancati" che Freud nella Psicopatologia della vita quotidiana ha dimostrato essere estremamente rivelatori dei nostri impulsi inconsci, come i "lapsus" e le "dimenticanze". Sesto capitolo Il diario di Zeno si conclude con il sesto capitolo, "Psicanalisi", che, a differenza degli altri, è datato dal maggio 1915 al marzo 1916. In queste pagine Zeno racconta di aver perso fiducia nel dottore e nella terapia psicanalitica. Abbandonata la cura, comincia a sentirsi guarito e si inserisce nel mondo concreto e attivo degli affari. Infatti, in seguito allo scoppio della Prima Guerra Mondiale, inizia a gestire l'azienda di famiglia ricavandone soddisfazioni e lauti quadagni. Zeno, nelle pagine finali, arriva a sottolineare il confine incerto tra malattia è la condizione normale dell'umanità e che, più degli altri, lo è chi è convinto di essere sano. Il romanzo chiude in chiave apocalittica, con la profezia di «una catastrofe inaudita prodotta dagli ordigni», attraverso la quale l'umanità, forse, quarirà dai germi di cui si nutre e troverà la salute in un mondo asettico. La coscienza di Zeno analisi e commento La coscienza di Zeno affronta, per la prima volta in Italia, il tema della psicanalisi, la scienza fondata alla fine del XIX secolo dal medico austriaco Sigmund Freud allo scopo di indagare le parti più nascoste e profonde della personalità umana. La particolare struttura del romanzo lo rende straordinariamente innovativo nell'ambito della narrativa italiana dei primi anni del Novecento. Il punto di vista è sempre quello del narratore interno (Zeno), che è anche il protagonista, presentato come inattendibile sin dall'inizio del romanzo; i ricordi fluiscono sulla base delle libere associazioni mentali di Zeno. Episodi della vita passata spesso si confondono con il presente, determinando il cosiddetto tempo misto: il presente, in cui Zeno ormai vecchio, scrive e giudica; il passato rivissuto attraverso fatti e persone. Il racconto prende così la forma di un lungo monologo interiore, ovvero un discorso che il narratore rivolge a se stesso. Leggendo il diario, Zeno appare al lettore come un inetto, un uomo debole e indeciso, sempre alla ricerca di giustificazioni per i suoi fallimenti, i suoi imbrogli, le sue bugie. E' un anti-eroe, attraverso il quale Svevo smaschera le contraddizioni interiori e la fragilità dell'uomo contemporaneo, senza però esprimere giudizi morali, bensì mantenendo un atteggiamento di ironica comprensione per la fragilità e le paure umane, determinate da una vita sempre più precaria, instabile e, in definitiva, ingovernabile dalla volontà individuale. La visione catastrofica con cui si conclude il romanzo è il significativo emblema del lucido pessimismo di Italia Svevo. by Italia Svevo. the adventures and comic misadventures of a Triestine businessman, Zeno Cosini: his failed attempt to quit smoking, the death of his father, his marriage, his unsuccessful business endeavors, and his problematic interaction with psychoanalysis. Events in History at the Time of the NovelThe Novel in FocusFor More InformationItalo Svevo, whose real name was Ettore Aron Schmitz, was born in 1861 in Trieste to Jewish parents of mixed backgrounds. His mother, Allegra Moravia, belonged to an Italian Jewish family's. His father, Francesco Schmitz, a German Jew also born in Trieste, had by then managed to establish himself as a successful businessman. Schmitz had a comfortable childhood. At the age of 11 he was sent to an academy near Würzburg, Germany, where, for the next five years he studied business and commerce and improved his command of the German and French languages. Upon returning to Trieste, he enrolled at the Istituto Revoltella, the local business school for higher education, and during his tenure there read French German, and Italian literary works in their original languages, and English and Russian texts in translation. Trieste had a very fine theater, which Schmitz attended regularly. He began to write short literary reviews for the local paper, L'Indipendente (The Independent), as well as some short stories and plays. His relatively carefree lifestyle ended in 1880, however; his father's business failed, and Schmitz felt compelled to take a job as a clerk at Union-bank, a Viennese bank with a branch in Trieste. Although very unhappy in it, he kept the job for the next 20 years while continuing to write. In 1892 Schmitz self-published his first novel, Una Vita (A Life), the tale of an inept bank clerk with literary aspirations. Here for the first time Ettore Schmitz used the pseudonym Italo Svevo, meaning "Italian Swabian (or German)," to underline his mixed heritage. In 1896, after a short but intense affair with a local working-class woman, Schmitz married Livia Veneziani, the daughter of his first cousin (a successful industrialist), with whom he had his only is publish" (Svevo in Veneziani, p. 35).In 1899 Svevo began work at his in-laws' factory (manufacturing naval and submarine paint). Because his new job took him to England intermittently, he decided to take English lessons at the Berlitz school in Trieste. It was here that in 1906, he met Irish writer James Joyce, a teacher at the school. The two developed a friendship based on mutual admiration. Joyce read Senilitdà with pleasure and encouraged Schmitz to keep writing. In the next decade Svevo became interested in the recently published works of Sigmund Freud and continued to draft short stories and plays. He began his masterpiece, La coscienza di Zeno (Zeno's Conscience), in 1919 and yet again published it at his own expense in 1923. Schmitz died after a car accident just five years later, in September 1928. The masterpiece he left behind does for Trieste what Joyce's works do for Dublin, and Franz Kafka's do for Prague. Trieste becomes a virtual character, a symbolic city reflective of the complex cultural and political identity of its inhabitants at the turn of the twentieth century. Events in History at the Time of the NovelTrieste—historical backgroundA small, independent, vulnerable settlement after the fall of the Roman Empire, in 1382 Trieste placed itself under the protection of the Holy Roman Empire for fear of being conquered by the nearby rich and powerful Republic of Venice. Until the eighteenth century it remained an insignificant fishing town; even the imperialistic Habsburg dynasty of Europe had little interest in this small outpost. Things changed in the eighteenth century when, thanks to a 1749 decree by Archduchess Maria Teresa, the city of Trieste acquired the privileges and exemptions of a during the nineteenth century Trieste housed a very active stock exchange as well as insurance companies and shipping agencies. The Austro-Hungarian policy of religious tolerance and the mid-nineteenth century, the city population included not only Italians but also Slavs, Germans, Austrians, Eastern European Jews, Greeks, and Turks; Trieste attained a multiethnic, multicultural quality, which by century's end was one of its most Italian Triestines mostly of Slovenes, who abandoned the surrounding countryside to try to improve their economic conditions in the city. The ever-increasing number of Slovenes who moved to Trieste to offer cheap labor (between 1864 and 1909 the city's population doubled, increasing from 112,000 to 224,000) threatened the Italian Triestines, who feared becoming a minority in a city they considered Italian. Theirs was a complicated nationalism, though; they could not accept without reservations the Italian nationalist movement, being perfectly aware that their economic power depended upon belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Pulled by conflicting national, ethnic, and economic interests, the city became, for turn-of-the-twentieth-century Triestine authors, an emblem of the crisis of the modern man and woman. They had to learn to live in a world that was becoming more and more fragmented, in which no single set of beliefs was enough to deal with the complexities of life. The cultural and political ambivalence came to an abrupt end at the onset of World War I, when Italy joined France, Russia, and Britain against Germany and Austro-Hungary. Many Italian Triestines, although they were Austrian citizens, escaped to Italy to join the Italian army and fight as Italian soldiers against the Empire. With the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, Trieste and the surrounding Adriation coast became part of Italy, and the unique cosmopolitan atmosphere that had characterized the city soon disappeared. There was an intensely nationalistic atmosphere in the immediate aftermath of the war that swept the city into its fold (and would lead Italy in a few years to embrace the Fascist regime). Literary Trieste and its philosophical influencesBecause of its unique cosmopolitan environment, early-twentieth-century Trieste produced what Claudio Magris later called "the great Triestine generation" (Magris, p. 293). To this generation belonged, among others, the writers Scipio Slataper, Umberto Saba, and Carlo Michelstaedter, all of whom were interested in the irresolvable conflicts of modern civilization that were so visible in their city (e.g., nationalism versus internationalism, urban versus for the famous literary and cultural journal La Voce (The Voice; based in Florence), Slataper analyzes Trieste's cultural and political heterogeneity, and in his fragmentary autobiography il mio Carso (My Karst) portrays the city's complex urban environment. The poetry of Umberto Saba (1883-1957) is inspired by the lively, tormented atmosphere from the nearby town of Gorizia, wrote the treatise Le persuasione e la rettorica (Persuasion and Rhetoric), and then killed himself. The text examines the impossibility of living an authentic life in a world whose relationships are dictated by pure appearance and Michelstaedter, even attended the same university in Florence, they did not collaborate with one another. This is readily apparent from Slataper's articles for La Voce, in which he dismisses Trieste's cultural and literary assets: he strongly criticizes Saba's poems while ignoring the existence of Svevo's first two novels. Yet, while not a homogenous group, all three were reacting to the same literary practice, aestheticism, promoted by Gabriele elegant imageries, and aristocratic settings that characterized D'Annunzio's novels Il Piacere (1889; Child of Pleasure, also in WLAIT 7: Italian Literature and Its Times) and L'Innocente (1892; The Intruder), the Triestine authors offered a prosaic style that originated from the bourgeois setting in which they lived. Their reading and assimilation of the theories of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is particularly telling. Although it is indisputable that Nietzsche was a major influence on D'Annunzio, as on many Triestine authors, his philosophy was filtered differently on either side of the border. The authors writing in Trieste at this time recognized Nietzsche "to be an extremely writers focused on a prominent part of the philosophy, Nietzsche's notion that all values "are relative to a particular framework, an outlook, a culture, a time and place," that it is impossible to get at separate truths unfettered by conditions or perspectives (Solomon and Higgins, p. 37). It was this unveiling of the relativity of any system of values that preoccupied the writers of Trieste.IMPORTANT DATES IN TRIESTE'S HISTORYc. 60 b.c.e. Trieste is the Roman colony of Tergeste 1000sTrieste becomes independent commune 1100s-1200sSeries of armed conflicts with Venice1382Trieste accepts the protection of Leopold III of Austria1719Trieste is declared a free port1749Archduchess Maria Teresa Hungarian army desert, form irredentist organizations committed to an expanded Italy, including not-yet-acquired border territories such as Trieste 1882Emperor Franz Joseph visits Trieste to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Austrian power; Guglielmo oberdan, a young Triestine irredentist found with two bombs he planned to use against the emperor, is sentenced to death1914Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, by Serbian nationalists; beginning of World War I1915Italy enters the war against Austria and Germany and after some devastating losses, emerges a victor in 19181919Trieste becomes part of the Kingdom of ItalyFrom psychoanalysis to sexBecause of its geographical position, Trieste became a hub of cultural dissemination between northern Europe and Italy. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theories (late 1890s) and Otto Weininger's controversial study Sex and Character (1903) both entered Italy through Trieste. "Whilst in Italy Freud's ideas met with considerable opposition, both in their scientific and cultural implications, in Trieste they took root with relative ease, on account of the particular social and political configuration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as Trieste, psychoanalysis would find fertile soil. The most eminent psychoanalytical authority in the city was Freud's student Edoardo Weiss, a Triestine who practiced there until 1931. The Triestine intellectual class was generally intrigued by these new theories; Weiss could count among his patients the poet Umberto Saba and the critic Bobi Bazlen. Svevo, however, remained skeptical about psychoanalysis, in part because he saw the negative effects it had on his brother-in-law, who, in 1910, after suffering a serious nervous breakdown, was sent to Vienna to be analyzed by Freud himself. Not only did analysis not help the young man, but as Svevo liked to recall: "He returned from the cure destroyed, as lacking in will power as before, but with his feebleness aggravated by the conviction that, being as he was, he could not behave otherwise. It was he who convinced me how dangerous it was to explain to a man how he is made" (Svevo in Veneziani, p. 75). Still, while Svevo never embraced psychoanalysis as a possible cure, he recognized its value "as a method of looking at the world" and maintained a profound curiosity about it; many of the lapses and neuroses presented in his novel are influenced by Freud's studies occurred in 1908. By this time Freud had already published some of his most important works: The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), The Psychopathologous times are influenced by Freud's studies occurred in 1908. By this time Freud had already published some of his most important works: The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), The Psychopathologous times are influenced by Freud's studies occurred in 1908. By this time Freud had already published some of his most important works: The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), The Psychopathologous times are influenced by Freud's studies occurred in 1908. By this time Freud's studies occurred in 1908. of Everyday Life (1901), Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, the sexual origination of neuroses, and the meaningfulness of dreams, but what he found especially compelling was the Austrian analyst's use of writers and artists to expound his theories. Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's "Gradiva," for instance, invokes a story by German writer Wilhelm Jensen about the effigy to explain the relationship between dreams about the marble relationship between dreams about an archeologist's obsession with and recurrent dreams about the effigy to explain the relationship between dreams archeologist's obsession with and recurrent dreams about the effigy to explain the relationship between dreams archeologist's obsession with and recurrent dreams archeologist who is enthralled with the marble relationship between dreams archeologist's obsession with and recurrent dreams archeologist who is enthralled with the marble relationship between dreams archeologist who is enthralled with the marble relationship between dreams archeologist who is enthralled with the marble relationship between dreams archeologist who is enthralled with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a story by German writer with the marble relationship between dreams are not observed as a stor and reality. "[A] great man our Freud, but more for novelists than for invalids," wrote Svevo in 1927 to Italian author Valerio Jahier (Svevo in Gatt-Rutter, p. 247). The other intellectual widely read in Trieste at the time was also an Austrian, Otto Weininger, whose anti-feminist and anti-Semitic views made his philosophical treatise, Sex and Character, highly controversial among Triestine intellectuals, who could read his work in the original even before it was translated into Italian in 1912. The fact that Weininger committed suicide at age 23, shortly after publishing the work, only made him even more appealing to Triestine intellectuals. As with Freud, Svevo maintained a detached irony towards Weininger's theories. Although he quotes Weininger in his novel, and Weininger's concerns about masculinity and genius are present in his text, he presents them with amused irony. In Zeno's Conscience, Svevo infuses contemporary philosophical/cultural concerns as well as the political complexities peculiar to Trieste into his story. He does so by having his initially confused protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented, disoriented, disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented, disoriented, disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented, disoriented, disoriented, disoriented, disoriented, disoriented, disoriented, disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that is becoming ever more labyrinthine. It is a disoriented protagonist learn to navigate a world that attempts to categorize every human and artistic expression in terms of absolute opposites (health versus illness, masculinity versus femininity, nationalism versus illness, masculinity versus illness, masculinity versus femininity versus feminini internationalism) is being replaced by a more ironic, ambiguous way of perceiving reality. The Novel in Focus Plot summary The novel is introduced by a comical preface, in which a psychoanalyst, Doctor S., states that he is publishing an autobiography written by his patient, Zeno Cosini, as part of his treatment. The doctor is doing so without the patient's consent, in revenge for Cosini having "suspended treatment just when things were going well, denying me the fruit of my long and painstaking analysis of these memories" (Svevo, Zeno's Conscience, p. 3). With regret, the doctor concludes that if Cosini had continued with the analysis, he would now be able to discuss and learn from "the many truths and the many lies he has assembled here" (Zeno's Conscience, p. 3). This preface introduces us to the frame of the plot: the aged Zeno Cosini decides to undergo psychoanalysis, seeking a cure for what he considers his various diseases (his inability to quit smoking, his inability to see life as a coherent whole, his constant desire to cheat or his wife, and so forth). The doctor tells him to write down his memories, and Zeno grudgingly complies, although he is uncertain if what he is writing really happened or if he is inventing it. These inconsistent memories form the novel itself. The various entries in Zeno's journal follow a thematic rather than linear narrative pattern; the same period of time is revisited in different chapters, giving the novel a circular, disorienting pattern that captures Zeno's own perception of his life: "For me, time is not that inconceivable thing that never stops. For me, and only for me, it retraces its steps" (Zeno's Conscience, p. 14). The events of the novel can be summarized as follows: Zeno Cosini is born into a circular, disorienting pattern that captures Zeno's own perception of his life: "For me, time is not that inconceivable thing that never stops. For me, and only for me, it retraces its steps" (Zeno's Conscience, p. 14). The events of the novel can be summarized as follows: Zeno Cosini is born into a circular, disorienting pattern that captures Zeno's own perception of his life: "For me, time is not that inconceivable thing that never stops." rich bourgeois family's and spends a carefree youth studying at the university. His innate laziness and indecisiveness make him constantly change his field of study—from chemistry, to law, and then back to chemistry—without ever finishing his degree. The same indecisiveness is visible in his inability to quit smoking despite many attempts, some of which are comical. In the most outlandish, he becomes obsessed with dates, which he writes all over the walls of his room, in the belief that, if the date is significant enough, such as the "ninth day of the ninth month of 1899" or "first day of the first month of 1899" or "first day of the first month of 1901," he will be able to give up smoking (Zeno's Conscience, p. 13). The only result is that when the walls are completely covered with dates he moves into a different apartment: "Probably I left that room precisely because it had become the graveyard of my good intentions and I believed it no longer possible to conceive any further such intentions in that tomb of so many old ones" (Zeno's Conscience, p. 12). Needless to say, Zeno's odd character worries his father, an old-fashioned businessman who believes his son is crazy. As a consequence, the old Cosini arranges it so that his son will never have executive powers within his firm, and makes Mr. Olivi, his faithful manager, the sole administrator. This slap in the face is coupled with a real one: just before dying the old Cosini raises his hand and then lets it fall against his son's cheek. Was his last intention to chastise Zeno or was it just a freak accident? This question will haunt Zeno for the rest of his life.FAMOUS CITIZENSBecause of its cosmopolitan aura and its beautiful Adriatic setting, Trieste attracted some prominent intellectual figures. In 1911 the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) was a guest of the Princess von Thurn und Taxis at the Duino Castle, not far from Trieste, and it was here that he was inspired to write his most famous collection of poems, The Duino Elegies (1923). The Irish writer James Joyce (1882-1941) made Trieste his home for about a decade, from approximately 1904 until the beginning of World War I, and then returned for another short period in 1919. Dubliners (1914) was finished in Trieste, and here he also wrote A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) and conceived his modernist masterpiece, Ulysses (1922). (Some critics suggest that Svevo himself was the model for Ulysses' hero, Leopold Bloom.) Finally, Sigmund Freud lived in Trieste for a short time when, as a medical student, he worked at the city's marine biology laboratory. Left with a generous monthly salary, and very little to do, Zeno becomes more and more obsessed with his idiosyncratic neuroses and his attempts to cure them: "Disease is a conviction, and I was born with that conviction" (Zeno's him some tricks of the trade. However, he never takes Zeno seriously; indeed, when Zeno, excited by this new activity, proposes to get rid of Olivi and to manage his father's business himself, Malfenti firmly opposes Zeno.OTTO WEININGIR'S SEX AND CHARACTERIn his long treatise Weininger sets out to define the differences between the sexes. He posits an "ideal man" and an "ideal woman" (similar to the platonic ideals). While "man" is capable of abstracting a coherent whole from the multiplicity of existence, he says, "woman" (and she shares this with the Jew) is wholly defined by her sexuality: The female, moreover, is completely occupied and content with sexual matters, whilst the male is interested in much else, in war and sports, in social affairs, and feasting, in philosophy and art" (Weininger, p, 89), This obsession distracts women from the higher spiritual and intellectual achievements of humankind, which can be accomplished only by men. Thus, only men can ever achieve a level of genius: "genius declares itself to be a kind of higher masculinity, and thus the female cannot be possessed of genius" (Weininger, p, 111). For Wetninger the end of the nineteenth century is the most degenerate period ever experienced by humankind because the Jewish and feminine elements prevail over the masculinity, and thus the female cannot be possessed of genius" (Weininger, p, 111). For Wetninger the end of the nineteenth century is the most degenerate period ever experienced by humankind because the Jewish and feminine elements prevail over the masculinity, and thus the female cannot be possessed of genius" (Weininger, p, 111). sense of unity, their wholeness: "Our age is not only the most Jewish but the most feminine. It is a time with no great philosophers; a time with the most foolish craving for originality" (Weininger, pp. 329-30)Soon Zeno is introduced to Malfenti's wife and four daughters. Zeno decides that, in order to be cured from his various pathologies, he should find a wife, and in this way become a respectable patriarch. He immediately falls in love with the beautiful and serious Ada, but she rejects him. He then proposes to the other sisters (all in the course of a single evening) and finally contracts to marry the homely Augusta, the least attractive of the Malfenti girls. Shortly afterwards, Ada marries Guido Spaier, who seems blessed with the healthy attributes that Zeno lacks. He is good-looking, well-spoken, and self-assured. Also he plays violin and, most importantly, has a business degree; in fact, he is in charge of his own business. The two marriages play out quite differently. Zeno's marriage turns out to be a happy one. Augusta is a very devoted wife, and she is able to laugh at Zeno's many oddities, while Zeno admires her matter-of-fact attitude towards life: "She knew all the things that could drive me to despair, but in her hands these things changed their nature." Just because the earth rotates, you don't have to get seasick! Quite the contrary! The earth turned, but all other things stayed in their proper place" (Zeno's Conscience, p. 157). With her concrete approach to reality, Augusta comes to represent the health that Zeno lacks; he even believes that, through Augusta, he will finally become a healthy man This, of course, does not happen, so Zeno keeps turning to the medical community. Throughout the story we are introduced to different doctors, who attempt unsuccessfully to cure Zeno's various ticks and ailments. Augusta soon becomes a mother, but the children interest Zeno very little, and not much is said about them. In spite of his happiness at home, he is unable to remain faithful to his wife. He soon meets a young singer, Carla, who becomes his mistress. Although he feels terrible for cheating on Augusta, and is many times on the verge of confessing his adultery, he finds himself unable to leave the young woman and rationalizes the affair by stating that his sense of guilt towards Augusta makes him love her even more. The affair ends when Carla marries her music teacher. In the meantime Guido invites (or at least so we are told) Zeno to become his partner, and the two brothers-in-law start working together. Zeno accepts the partnership not only in order to keep himself busy, but also because in this way he can be close to Ada, for whom he still has some feelings, although he denies them. Soon he realizes that Guido is not as smart a businessman as he has led the Malfenti family to believe. His "health" is just a façade: he loses money quickly; he is indiscreet about his love affair with his beautiful and incompetent secretary; and he is unable to complete even the simplest business transaction. Ada, aware of what is going on, suffers miserably. She is soon diagnosed with a thyroid ailment and must be sent to a clinic for long periods of time. Uncertain about what to do, Ada, who now sees in Zeno the perfect husband, begs him to keep an eye on her husband and help him reestablish his business. The old patriarch Malfenti, who is too sick to take charge of the situation, soon dies. At this point, as the rest of the family sees it, Zeno becomes the man in charge. Moved by Ada's plea, he sets out to restructure the business. Guido, in an attempt to regain a large amount of capital, plays the stock market with disastrous results. Not knowing what to do, he feigns suicide (an expedient he used before to get some money from Ada), but this time he takes too much poison and dies. Although Zeno is indeed able to recuperate most of the losses However, he is late for Guido's funeral, and once he makes it to the cemetery, he follows the wrong procession. Ada interprets Zeno's absence as a clear sign of Zeno's hatred for helping restore the family's's capital, he is instead accused of being responsible for Guido's death. This ends the bulk of Zeno's memories. The last chapter, "Psychoanalysis," is added a year later, after six months of psychoanalysis. In this chapter Zeno states that he is disappointed with the psychoanalysis. In this chapter Zeno states that he is disappointed with the psychoanalysis. In this chapter Zeno states that he is disappointed with the psychoanalysis. In this chapter Zeno states that he has been cured. He also complains that the doctor is paying too much attention to his confessions. At the end of the novel Zeno reveals how misleading his written in Tuscan Italian, which he has not mastered as well:[T]he doctor puts too much faith also in those damned confessions of mine, which he won't return to me so I can revise them. Good heavens! He studied only medicine and therefore doesn't know what it means to write in Italian for those of us who speak the dialect and can't write it. A confession in writing is always a lie. With our every Tuscan word, we lie! If he knew how, by predilection, we recount all the things for which we have the words at hand, and how we avoid those things that would oblige us to turn to the dictionary! (Zeno's Conscience, p. 404) The best proof that Zeno is not healed is that his attraction to much younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a young peasant girl. After having dismissed the doctor's cure, Zeno turns his attraction to much younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a young peasant girl. After having dismissed the doctor's cure, Zeno turns his attraction to much younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a young peasant girl. After having dismissed the doctor's cure, Zeno turns his attraction to much younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a younger women still afflicts him, as he points out after an innocent encounter with a younger women still afflicts him. attention to the events that are shaking the world at this time. It is May 1915 (the time Italy joined France and England against Austria and Germany in the First World War), and Zeno remembers finding himself in the midst of the war. He and his family's are on vacation in their house in Italy, not far from Trieste, and one fine morning Zeno decides to go out for a long walk before his usual morning coffee. Without realizing it, he crosses the border into Austro, but when he tries to get back to the Italian side, Austro-Hungarian soldiers will not let him cross over. After a few unfortunate attempts to return to his family's, he decides that there is nothing else for him to do but take the train all the way to Trieste, still yearning for his coffee. Once in Trieste, for the first time in his life he must take care of his own affairs because Olivi, an Italian, has fled with his family's. Zeno starts to buy and sell all sorts of goods, making an incredible profit. The frantic economic activity in the midst of the conflict makes him realize that indeed he is healthy. What he had been trying to cure was life itself, and unlike other illnesses, life is always fatal: "It doesn't tolerate therapies" (Zeno's Conscience, p. 435). In the novel's final paragraph Zeno comments on the human condition. Looking at the devastation around him, he recognizes that man's attempt to use various mechanical devices to improve on life is in fact responsible for its decline. In apocalyptic terms he concludes by stating that perhaps an enormous explosion will free the earth from all of its parasites and sickness. The obsession with health Throughout the novel Zeno searches for a sense of health. By the end of the story he considers Dr. S., his psychoanalyst, no more than a charlatan and is also disappointed with Dr. Paoli, a physician who has tried for years to cure him. Finally Zeno decides that true health does not exist and that it is futile and ridiculous to spend one's life pursuing it. Zeno's realization reflects the crisis of modern man, who would like to believe in absolute truths (here represented by the idea of health) but must admit that in the contemporary world this is impossible. Compared to his father-in-law Malfenti, and even Guido, Zeno appears weak and inept—but he is the only male figure in the novel who survives and prospers. Svevo here is demonstrating how in his day the old, solid, patriarchal society with its traditional world view must be replaced by a more complex interpretation of existence that allows for contradictions and multiplicity. Instead of seeing life as a coherent organic whole, late-nineteenth-century society must be open to unpredictability and fragmentation. This becomes clear at the end of the novel when Zeno starts buying wares as everyone is selling them. Having become conscious of the variability of reality, he accepts the flexibility of the economic market and purposely decides to invest his money not in gold, but in any type of merchandise whose price can fluctuate constantly. Metaphorically, Zeno's investment practice corresponds to his realization that every experience and situation is relative. Zeno's decision to be a buyer of "any goods" signifies his acceptance of any event as potentially positive and valuable (Zeno's Conscience, p. 434). Commerce is the perfect cure for Zeno, not because it validates his understanding and acceptance of the fluctuation of all seemingly fixed values. By embracing the fluidity of the economic world, Zeno also reevaluates the concept of illness, insofar as inconsistency is considered a disease in turn-ofthe-twentieth-century Europe. Thus, Svevo, like other Italian writers in Trieste, begins to disseminate through fiction the concept (from Nietzsche) that adjustment to life in post-World War I Italy calls for a fresh approach, a new philosophical outlook, one that embraces the validity of relative perspectives. Sources and literary contextWith his usual irony, Svevo points out in one of his essays just how deceptive his use of philosophical ideas really is; novelists, he says, "have the habit of playing with philosophic ideas, without really being in a position to expound them. We falsify them, but we also humanize them" (Svevo in Furbank, p. 178). Still, it is possible to detect the profound influence that the ideas of Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation in 1885. More than Schopenhauer's pessimism, what interested Svevo was the position that life is an illusory facade. Embracing this and other Schopenhauer ideas enabled Svevo to identify beneath one's conscious motives and the hidden egoism which is always working away in secret" (Gatt-Rutter, p. 69). One of the best examples of Svevo's use of Freud's theory of the unconscious occurs when Zeno misses Guido's funeral. Although Zeno keeps telling us he considered Guido a friend, the fact that "by mistake" he follows the wrong funeral suggests that he indeed hates him, as Ada suggests. The importance that dreams acquire in Freud's theories is reflected early in the novel by descriptions of Zeno's dreams. The third obvious influence is Weininger's anti-feminine and anti-Semitic philosophy, which is questioned by our "feminine"-style hero, whose success at the end of the novel depends on his embracing his sickness. Against Weininger, Svevo, as suggested, favors the view of Nietzsche that existence does not add up to a coherent whole but must be embraced in all its peculiar, fragmented parts. The name Zeno, as well as the character's inability to see time as a linear procession of events, might have been inspired by the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno, as well as the character's inability to see time as a linear procession of events, might have been inspired by the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno of Elea, whose paradoxes argued against the very existence of motion, or by Zino Zini, a contemporary of Svevo, whose 1914 The Two-Fold Mask of the Universe: A Philosophy of Time and Space (1914) argues that the concept of linear time is illusory. While the extended use of psychoanalysis is Svevo's own creation, the use of a journal narrative was used before by Luigi Piranello in The Late Mattia Pascal, 1904). Both writers are interested in similar issues: the lack of a precise identity and the ways a person deals with reality. But while for Pirandello's characters, the individual perceives his or her lack of an unequivocal identity as a crisis, for Svevo this lack is a part of existence that must be embraced and can, in fact, lead to interesting and positive outcomes. In Svevo's day, first-person and autobiographical narrative was particularly popular with the vociani, a group of young writers who worked for the Florence-based journal La Voce. Svevo's text, however, differs greatly from those proposed by the vociani. Whereas they made extensive use of expressionistic fragments and were mainly interested in art that communicated their ethical concerns, Svevo was more interested in emphasizing the deceptive role of language. Svevo's association with James Joyce influenced him greatly. As Svevo's wife recalls, the two writers' weekly English lessons "had nothing to do with grammar; the pair of them talked of literature and touched on a hundred other subjects" (Veneziani, p. 66). Both wanted to find a style that would allow them to reflect on the inner workings of the individual mind. Finally, there are strong autobiographical elements in the novel. The constant smoking, the inability to play the violin, and the authoritarian father are all parts of Svevo's father-in-law, while his brother-in-law, Giuseppe Oberti, inspired the character of Guido. Reception La coscienza di Zeno was published in 1923 to very little interest. The few reviews that appeared in Italian papers were mixed: Silvio Benco, a famous Triestine critic, showed some reservations, deeming the style of the novel to be syntactically flawed. A brief summary and comment on the novel in Milan's Corriere della Sera newspaper described it as "a somewhat ram-shackle and fragmentary novel, perhaps over-prolix, but not without psychological interest" (Caprin in Gatt-Rutter, p. 318). Concerned that his latest novel would suffer the same destiny as his first two, Svevo sent James Joyce a copy of the book. The Irish author, who by this time was famous and could count among his friends authors of the caliber of Andre Gide, Paul Valery, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot, did not hesitate to help his Triestine friend by introducing the novel to his literary circle. In 1925 Joyce arranged a dinner in Paris with Svevo and the French literary critics Valery Larbaud and BenjaminZENO'S NEW PERCEPTION OF ILLNESS"Naturally I am not ingenuous, and I forgive the doctor for seeing life itself as a manifestation of sickness a bit, as it proceeds by crises and lyses, and has daily improvements and setbacks. Unlike other sicknesses, life is always fatal. It doesn't tolerate therapies. It would be like stopping holes that we have in our bodies, believing them wounds. We would die of strangulation the moment we were treated".(Zero's Conscience, p. 435)Cremieux, who later that year wrote an influential article that hailed Svevo as the Italian Marcel Proust. Cremieux, who later that year wrote an influential article that hailed Svevo as the Italian Marcel Proust. Cremieux, who later that year wrote an influential article that hailed Svevo as the Italian Marcel Proust. Cremieux, who later that year wrote an influential article that hailed Svevo as the Italian Marcel Proust. Cremieux, who later that year wrote an influential article that hailed Svevo as the Italian Marcel Proust. Cremieux, who later that year wrote an influential article that hailed Svevo as the Italian Marcel Proust. Cremieux, who later that year wrote an influential article that hailed Svevo as the Italian Marcel Proust. In the meantime, the young poet Eugenio Montale heard the name of Svevo for the first time in Paris, where Svevo was held to be one of the most interesting figures of contemporary Italian narrative. Back in Italy Montale bought and read all three novels and, impressed by them, wrote an article for the literary journal L'Esame (The Exam) that praised Svevo's innovative style, pointing out how the circular structure of the novel on Zeno reflected the madness of the contemporary world. Montale in Gatt-Rutter, p. 330). After the publication of these reviews and articles Svevo was finally recognized as an important literary figure, both in Italy and German.—Elena CodaFor More InformationCary, Joseph. A Ghost in Trieste. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Furbank, P. N. Italo Svevo: The Man and the Writer. London: Secker and Warburg, 1966. Gatt-Rutter, John. Italo Svevo: A Double Life. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978. Magris, Claudio. "Things Near and Far: Nietzsche and the Great Triestine Generation." Stanford Italian Review 6, nos. 1-2 (1986): 293-99.McCourt, John. The Years of Bloom. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2000. Minghelli, Giuliana. 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Potrebbe anche piacerti "Svevo's masterpiece, a novel overflowing with human truth in all its murkiness, laughter and terror, a book as striking and relevant today as when it was first published, and a book that is in every good way-its originality included-like life." - Claire Messud, The New Republic"... Effortlessly inventive and eerily prescient.... William Weaver... updates the novelist's idiosyncratic prose with great affection." -The Atlantic Monthly"An event in modern publishing. For the first time, I believe, in English, we get the true, dark music, the pewter tints, of Svevo's great last novel. . . . [Svevo is] a master." - [Joan Acocella, The New Yorker"[An] exhilarating and utterly original novel. . . . twentieth century. . . . [Svevo is] perhaps the most significant Italian modernist novelist." -The Times Literary Supplement"[A] neglected masterpiece. Seventy-five years old, the novel feels entirely modern. "-The Boston Globe" a reason for celebration. . . . If you have never read Svevo, do so as soon as you can. He is beautiful and important." -New Statesman "One of the indispensable 20th-century novels. . . . A revolutionary book, and arguably (in fact, probably) the finest of all Italian novels. "-Kirkus Reviews "No one has done more to make modern Italian literature available in English than William Weaver. . . . [His new translation is] scrupulously accurate." -Anniston Star as a seminal work of modernism in the tradition of Joyce and Kafka, and now available in a supple new English translation, Italo Svevos charming and splendidly idiosyncratic novel conducts readers deep into one hilariously hyperactive and endlessly self-deluding mind. The mind in question belongs to Zeno Cosini, a neurotic Italian businessman who is writing his confessions at the behest of his psychiatrist. Here are Zenos interminable attempts to quit smoking, his courtship of the beautiful yet unresponsive Ada, his unexpected unexpec unblinking and compassionate, Zenos Conscienceis a miracle of psychological realism. Long hailed as a seminal work of modernism in the tradition, Italo Svevo's charming and splendidly idiosyncratic novel conducts readers deep into one hilariously hyperactive and endlessly self-deluding mind. The mind in question belongs to Zeno Cosini, a neurotic Italian businessman who is writing his confessions at the behest of his psychiatrist. Here are Zeno's interminable attempts to quit smoking, his courtship of the beautiful yet unresponsive Ada, his unexpectedly happy-marriage to Ada's homely sister Augusta, and his affair with a shrill-voiced aspiring singer. Relating these misadventures with wry wit and a perspicacity at once unblinking and compassionate, Zeno's Conscience" is a miracle of psychological realism. Sean Barrett has won over twenty Earphones Awards and two prestigious Audie Awards for his audiobook narrations. He started acting professionally at the age of twelve and has since appeared on television and in film in Minder, Brush Strokes, War and Peace, Sons and Lovers, and Return to Oz. His stage credits include performing in the West End with Noël Coward in his Suite in Three Keys. He has worked extensively on BBC Radio and has also narrated several television series, including People's Century and Crash. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licenser endorses you or your use. 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