



# Edoardo Weiss: The House that Freud Built

*Paul Roazen*

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Edoardo Weiss (1889-1970) was a favored disciple of Freud and is acknowledged as the founder of psychoanalysis in Italy. Although he was the author of six books and over a hundred professional papers, he has remained a shadowy figure. In this volume, Paul Roazen provides a definitive portrait of this notable individual. Based on his extensive interviews with Weiss, Roazen evaluates the significance of Weiss's own contribution to psychoanalytic thought and practice and presents a fascinating picture of the reception given to Freud's thought in Italy.

Despite his prominence, Weiss's life and work has not been well documented. Roazen shows that his links to modern Italian history and culture were extensive and closely bound to the political and social conflicts of the twentieth century. Born in the cosmopolitan city of Trieste, Weiss was the nephew of the novelist Italo Svevo, whose masterpiece *The Confessions of Zeno* remains one of the principle psychoanalytic novels in modern literature. Another Triestine, Umberto Saba, one of the great modern Italian poets, was Weiss's patient. Weiss's career also intersected with Italian politics. The daughter of one of Mussolini's cabinet ministers was one of his patients, an analysis that has raised questions about Freud's own relation to the Italian dictator. Roazen documents Weiss's tribulations in trying to establish a psychoanalytic culture opposed not only by the fascist regime but the Catholic Church. In spite of these instances of opposition, Roazen shows that the Italian intellectual world was highly receptive to Freudian ideas and that psychoanalysis is flourishing today in Italy.

Weiss has never before been recognized as a front-rank analytic thinker, but he was leader of the movement in Italy, a country that mattered deeply to Freud. This, along with the genuine intimacy of his contacts with Freud makes Weiss a figure of considerable interest to students of psychoanalysis, Italian culture, and intellectual history..

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