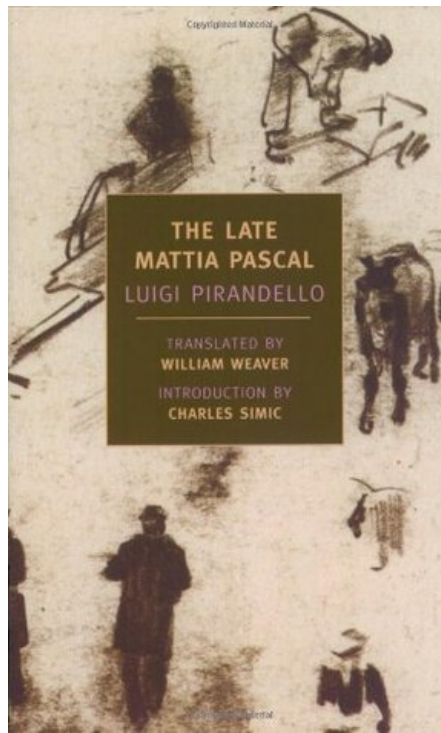




The Late Mattia Pascal

Luigi Pirandello , William Weaver (Translator) , Charles Simic (Introduction)

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Mattia Pascal endures a life of drudgery in a provincial town. Then, providentially, he discovers that he has been declared dead. Realizing he has a chance to start over, to do it right this time, he moves to a new city, adopts a new name, and a new course of life—only to find that this new existence is as insufferable as the old one. But when he returns to the world he left behind, it's too late: his job is gone, his wife has remarried. Mattia Pascal's fate is to live on as the ghost of the man he was.

An explorer of identity and its mysteries, a connoisseur of black humor, Nobel Prize winner Luigi Pirandello is among the most teasing and profound of modern masters. *The Late Mattia Pascal*, here rendered into English by the outstanding translator William Weaver, offers an irresistible introduction to this great writer's work

The Late Mattia Pascal Details

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From Reader Review The Late Mattia Pascal for online ebook

Lea says

Central questions of Pirandello's novel are "Who am I" and "What is freedom".

One of the few things, in fact about the only thing I was sure of was my name: Mattia Pascal.

The last time I read Pirandello I was in high school, and I think I read some plays that I have to re-read because I don't remember them very well. This is his most-famous novel that has some autobiographical features and is exploring themes of identity, self, freedom, and death that were the most obvious and prominent, spiced up with a humorous note that made this novel relatively light read. Mattia was full of deep introspective philosophical questions, with a little bit of hopeless, nihilistic world-view. I would say that death and mourning really accompanied him through his childhood and adolescence and shaped his perspective on himself and the world. First the early death of his father, that became a distant, unfamiliar and unrememberable figure, and then death his two baby daughters and his mother, that was a living shadow, without any initiative or authority in her life, that could handle her own life issues and was over-sensitive about Mattia and his brother. Without an example of how to handle maturely the problems that he was facing in his life, Mattia started to escape into solitude with books and deep abstract thoughts. He felt pretty empty and alone in the world with questions of meaning and direction he should take in his life. I could certainly relate to this type of defense mechanism of avoiding problems and conflicts with other people as I believe many people who adore books and are intellectual types could.

So I read and read, a little of everything, haphazard, but books of philosophy especially. Heavy stuff, I grant you; but when you get a little of it inside you, you grow light as a feather and begin to touch the clouds. I believe I was always a bit queer in my head. But these readings quite finished me. When I no longer knew what I was about, I would shut up the Library, and go off along a little path that led down a steep incline to a solitary strip of seashore.

His own financial and marital situations became a cage that he associated with his own sense of self, and that was the beginning of his longing to escape not only his situation, but his own self. The idea of a suicide as in killing his former identity rises and he does, helped by the series of the events, he becomes Adriano Meis, the man that travels the world with any obligations to anyone except himself.

What could possibly happen to me anywhere worse than what I had been through? Perhaps beyond the horizon ahead a new slavery awaited me--but with heavier chains, I asked myself, than those I had just snapped from my feet?

In time he learns through the pain that there is excruciating loneliness in the absolute freedom, and our longing for connectedness makes us dependant on others and the quest for absolute freedom impossible. Freedom is the dream we dream but never achieve, and even if we could achieve it, as Mattia, we wouldn't be happy or fulfilled. We can crave solitude only to get it and learn that we cannot live alone.

I was so absolutely free that it was difficult for me to bring myself to any particular kind of life.

Fear of being caught again by the tentacles of life would keep me more than ever aloof from men. Alone! Alone! Utterly alone!

I'm worse than dead: as old Anselmo reminded me--the dead are through with dying, while I have to die again. Alive as regards the dead, dead as regards the living! What kind of a life can I live, after all? Again alone, all by myself--solitude!"

The only ultimate liberation that we have on this earth is death.

Supposing, in a word, that there were no such thing as this death which fills us with such terror, that death should prove to be not the extinction of life but a gust of wind, merely, which blows out the light in our lantern, extinguishes this dolorous, painful, terrifying sense of life we have--terrifying, because it is limited, narrowed, fenced in by the circle of fictitious darkness that begins just where the light from our lantern stops.

Very mind-provoking read with themes that deeply interest me, but for some reason, I didn't connect with the novel as well as I thought I would. Maybe I read it at the wrong time and might change the rating in the future, but for now, 4 stars, even though I would highly recommend this novel to all the people who have a need to think about themselves and the world in a deeper way.

Donato says

Before you read another book (or finish the one you're reading), before you see another movie, before you contemplate any work of art, get yourself to the nearest bookstore or library or wherever you prefer to look at books, and find Pirandello's *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (*The Late Mattia Pascal*), wherein you will find "Avvertenza sugli scrupoli della fantasia" ("A Warning on the Scruples of the Imagination"). Just read those 4 or 5 pages, which are not actually part of the novel, and you will begin to see (perhaps) that Art is True.

Here's a taste:

"...quei tali signori che, giudicando un romanzo..., condannano questo o quel personaggio, questa o quella rappresentazione di fatti o di sentimenti, non già in nome dell'arte come sarebbe giusto, ma in nome d'una _umanità_ che sembra essi conoscano a perfezione, come se realmente in astratto esistesse, fuori cioè di quell'infinita varietà d'uomini capaci di commettere tutte quelle sullodate assurdità _che non hanno bisogno di parer verosimili, perché sono vere_."

"...those gentlemen that, in judging a novel..., condemn this or that character, this or that representation of facts or feelings, not in the name of art as would be right, but in the name of a _humanity_ that they seem to know perfectly, as if it actually existed, but is in fact separate from that infinite variety of men and women who are capable of committing all those above-mentioned absurdities _that don't need to seem verisimilar, because they are real_." (my translation)

Oh yeah, what about the novel itself? A philosophical romp into what it means to to be Alive. So good I wanted to read it again right away, but of course there's more literature to be consumed.....

Simona Bartolotta says

«Io?... Scomparso... riconosciuto... Mattia Pascal...»

Rilessi con piglio feroce e col cuore in tumulto non so più quante volte quelle poche righe. Nel primo impeto, tutte le mie energie vitali insorsero violentemente per protestare: come se quella notizia, così irritante nella sua impassibile laconicità, potesse anche per me esser vera. Ma, se non per me, era pur vera per gli altri; e la certezza che questi altri avevano fin da jeri della mia morte era su me come una insopportabile sopraffazione, permanente, schiacciante...

Come ogni maturando che si rispetti («Individuo appartenente alla specie *homo sapiens* di età compresa tra i diciotto e i diciannove anni, subordinato alle arbitrarie bizzesche di una razza dominante detta "corpo docente"; la sua peculiarità risiede nel fatto che, in accordo con le teorie bergsoniane e con i risvolti più oscuri della relatività einsteiniana, probabilmente ibridati con i più reconditi e sadici corollari della legge di Murphy, per il tapino maturando tempo scorre diversamente: in breve, non ne ha neppure per respirare» -così si legge nel *Glossario dello scolaro*); come ogni maturando, dicevo, ho dedicato le notti del mese di maggio alla redazione della mia tesina. Il metodo che ho adottato per scegliere gli argomenti è stato semplice: ho scelto le materie che mi piacciono di più e ho seguito lo stesso criterio per gli specifici moduli, poi mi sono messa alla ricerca del legame che li univa e, una volta trovato, ho avuto la mia mappa. Ecco, una delle prime voci comparse su questa mia lista è stata proprio la dicitura *Pirandello*, con aggiunto, tra parentesi, un timido *possibilmente la buon'anima del bibliotecario*.

E sì, infine il mio progetto si è realizzato e io ho avuto la fortuna di unire piacere e dovere e rileggermi con bell'agio questo *Fu Mattia Pascal* senza dovermi rimproverare di togliere tempo allo studio. Così nella tesina ho potuto sproloquiare a piacere (sotto il beffardo titolo di "Chi non muore si rivede": dovevo pur introdurre il motivo dell'umorismo) della tappa che questo romanzo rappresenta nella poetica pirandelliana, come essa viene espressa, quale sarà il passo successivo e di innumerevoli altre cose per me sempre interessantissime ma più marcatamente accademiche. In questa recensione, invece, voglio fare quello che nelle mie recensioni faccio sempre: voglio cosa è stato questo libro per me e per me soltanto, lasciando stare il vitalismo, la trappola, la lanterninosofia, o meglio reinterpretandoli su misura per una lettura che si proponeva, oltre ai fini didattici, anche quelli propri di una degustazione dell'opera che sia individuale, solitaria, indipendente e deliziosamente soggettiva.

Il drammaturgo girgentino dal puntuto pizzetto bianco è sempre stato uno dei miei pilastri letterari, e con "sempre" intendo proprio dal principio, quando ero ancora una bambinetta imberbe e il mio numero di libri letti non superava la cinquantina, compreso Geronimo Stilton. Se adesso dovessi cercare di mettere nero su bianco quel che ci capii alla mia prima lettura il risultato sarebbe una parola di cinque lettere che comincia con n e finisce con a, ma non importa, perché, anche se avevo solo undici anni e mi pareva di leggere un'altra lingua, anche così questo libro mi lasciò qualcosa. Ora, a distanza di anni, a colpirmi è soprattutto la forte umanità di Pascal, un'umanità che è in primis debolezza; un'umanità che non si desume da caratteristiche morali o spirituali, ma che è piuttosto condizione comune a qualunque persona viva, attributo terreno, che non presume né elargisce meriti, che è anzi un peso, una zavorra. Mattia Pascal è convinto di potersene liberare, e con essa liberarsi anche di quelle disgrazie che la appesantiscono, la moglie, la suocera, il lutto per le morti della madre e della figlioletta, quando il caso lo uccide annegandolo nella gora del mulino del suo stesso terreno, la Stìa, ma lasciandolo vivo e vegeto e gettando al suo posto, in quel canale, il cadavere di uno

sconosciuto. Pascal si gode la sua libertà, girovaga, fa il vagabondo, vede tante città da perderne il conto; ma eccola, eccola l'umanità, quella bestia ferina che Mattia non è abbastanza «forestiere» da seminare, non abbastanza «filosofo» da stordire a pensieri o a parole, che lo fa stabilire, lo fa diventare Adriano Meis, lo fa innamorare penosamente, teneramente, della creatura più dolce che esista. Lei, però è viva, viva mentre Mattia Pascal è morto e Adriano peggio che morto, perché vivo ma tale da dover vivere da morto. Tutti gli svantaggi dell'esser stato trovato cadavere e nessuno dei privilegi, aver liberato dalla propria presenza la moglie ma non poter a sua volta voltare pagina, non dover pagare le tasse ed essere derubato senza possibilità di denunciare il fatto: sfuggire ad una trappola e gettarsi di propria sponte, quasi con voluttà, tra le maglie dell'altra. Quale incubo peggiore di questo?

Credo che chiunque di noi abbia sognato almeno una volta di essere Mattia Pascal, di ritrovarsi di colpo con un bel gruzzolo in tasca e sgravato da qualunque incombenza, libero di poter fare della propria vita quel che meglio crede. Forse il problema non sono le costrizioni sociali ma il modo in cui noi le viviamo, o forse ha ragione Pirandello e nessuna serenità quantomeno apparente potrà essere raggiunta fino a che il mondo e i suoi tranelli continueranno a ipnotizzare l'uomo col loro canto della sirena riconducendolo sempre punto e a capo; sinceramente non lo so, e temo che la risposta sia troppo cruda per essere sopportata. Solo che, mano nella mano con Pirandello, la sua ricerca, seppur spaventosa, è anche incredibilmente, paradossalmente piacevole.

peiman-mir5 rezakhani says

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Carminé says

Vivere fuori dalla vita

"Il fu Mattia Pascal" è incentrato sul tema della maschera e dell'identità, elementi che sono ricorrenti nelle opere pirandelliane.

Come nel racconto "la carriola", nella quale uno stimato avvocato ha come unica valvola di sfogo il poter far fare la carriola al cane, anche qui abbiamo un protagonista ingabbiato nelle convenzioni sociali e con l'ossessivo desiderio di allontanarle.

Se la maschera è considerata un peso per noi insostenibile - quasi decisivo nel nostro alienamento dalla realtà -, allo stesso tempo risulta l'unico modo per uniformarsi a un sistema impossibile da controllare: la nostra grigia e fastidiosa esistenza, perlomeno, viene convalidata.

Il gettare la maschera - sconfinare nella realtà vera - esalta l'identità, ma al prezzo di non essere più riconosciuto da quel meccanismo: l'esistenza cessa.

Tyler Jones says

Even in so-called literary circles, the name of Luigi Pirandello is connected primarily with his innovative work as a playwright. Almost entirely forgotten, at least outside of the Italian speaking world, are the early novels which launched his literary career. The Late Mattia Pascal, published in 1904 could certainly lay claim to being one of the most unjustly under-appreciated books of the Twentieth Century. It is a psychological meditation grafted on to a rollicking comic adventure. Perhaps these very comic elements are what has doomed the book to be taken less seriously than it deserves.

Mattia Pascal is born into a family of modest wealth, but whose fortune has all but vanished while Mattia is still in his teens. Through his own misadventures (though Mattia would certainly lay the blame on others) he finds himself trapped in an unbearable marriage and deeply in debt. Then an incredible turn of events presents Mattia with the opportunity to escape his dreary life and start fresh with enough money that he need never work again.

Pirandello brilliantly layers a novel with insight and philosophical weight on top of a plot that is escapist fantasy-fulfillment; for who hasn't dreamed of starting life over with a clean slate and pile of cash? Then, in "A Warning on the Scruples of the Imagination", Pirandello successfully argues that his outrageous plot is not at all far-fetched - that in fact just such events are more common place than we suspect. Thus, through art, Pirandello opens our eyes to the magic of everyday life.

Kudos again to New York Review Books for bringing important works such as this back into print.

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?????? Ταμετο?ρο Αμ says

Η πρ?τη φορ? που π?θανά...

"Τ?ποτα ? πολ? λ?γα συγκρ?τησα απ? εκε?να που αρχικ? ε?χα φανταστε?. Ε?ναι αλ?θεια πως τ?ποτα δεν ε?ναι δυνατ?ν να επινοηθε?, που να μην ?χει κ?ποια ρ?ζα, λ?γο-πολ? βαθι?, στην πραγματικ?τητα? ακ?μη και τα πιο παρ?ξένα πρ?γματα μπορο?ν να ε?ναι αληθιν?, αντιθ?τως καμ?α φαντασ?α δεν φτ?νει να συλλ?βει κ?ποιες τρ?λες, κ?ποιες μη αληθοφανε? περιπ?τειες που ελευθερ?νονται απ? τα δεσμ? και εκρ?γνυνται απ' την αν?συχη ψυχ? της ζω?ς? παρ' ?λ' αυτ?, ?μωσ, π?ς και π?σο διαφορετικ? φα?νεται η ολοζ?ντανη πραγματικ?τητα απ? τα επινο?ματα που μπορο?με να δημιουργ?σουμε εμε?ς απ? αυτ?ν!

Π?σα ουσι?δη, ασ?μαντα, ασ?λληπτα πρ?γματα ?χει αν?γκη το επιν?ημ? μας, για να γ?νει και π?λι εκε?νη η ?δια η πραγματικ?τητα απ' την οπο?α δημιουργ?θηκε, π?σα ν?ματα που να το συνδ?ουν με το περιπλοκ?τατο μπλ?ξιμο της ζω?ς, ν?ματα που ?χουμε κ?ψει εμε?ς, για να το κ?νουμε να γ?νει κ?τι ξεχωριστ?!

Τι ?μουν τ?ρα εγ?, αν ?χι ?νας επινοημ?νος ?νθρωπος; ?να περιφερ?μενο επιν?ημα που ?θελε και, εξ?λλου, ?πρεπε αναγκαστικ? να ζει για τον εαυτ? του, αφο? ε?χε ριχτε? στην πραγματικ?τητα".

Ο μακαρ?της Ματ?ας Πασκ?λ ε?ναι ?νας "διανοητικ?ς" μ?ρτυρας του θαν?του του. Ε?ναι στην ουσ?α τα "μ?τια και οι σκ?ψεις του πεθαμ?νου" που ?μαθε απο τις εφημερ?δες για το θ?νατο του και περιγρ?φει τα γεγον?τα που συν?βησαν στη ζω? του μετ? την αυτοκτον?α του...

Ο αναγν?στης ταυτισμ?νος με τον "πνευματικ?" θεατ?-μακαρ?τη, παρακολουθε? ?λη την ιστορ?α της προ και μεταθαν?τίας μορ?ας του.

Ο Πασκ?λ γ?νεται αναχωρητ?ς απο την ?δια του τη ζω? που δεν τον χωρ?ει. Ε?ναι καταδικασμ?νος σε ?ναν δυστυχισμ?νο γ?μο, κατεστραμμ?νος οικονομικ?,εργ?ζεται σε μια ?σκοπη δουλει? ως βιβλιοθηκ?ριος και ?χει τραγικ?ς αναμν?σεις απο το χαμ? αγαπημ?νων του ανθρ?πων.

?ταν ανακαλ?πτει πως τον θεωρο?ν νεκρ? και τον διαγρ?φουν ?λοι, αποφασ?ζει να επινο?σει μια καινο?ργια ταυτ?τητα,?να ψε?τικο ?νομα,μια απολ?τως ελε?θερη ν?α ζω?.

Μετ? απο πολλ?ς περιπ?τειες ?ρχεται αντιμ?τωπος με τον ?διο του τον εαυτ? και διαπιστ?νει με π?νο πως πρ?πει να γνωρ?σει την αληθιν? του ?παρξη.

Ε?χε αποφασ?σει να παραμε?νει ?γνωστος απο τον επινοημ?νο του εαυτ? και απο ?λους γ?ρω του. Αρχικ? χα?ρεται και απολαμβ?νει αυτ? το παιχν?δι της μακ?βριας ελευθερ?ας. Καταλ?γει ?μωσ βαθι? δυστυχισμ?νος.

Με δραματικ? τρ?πο ο συγγραφ?ας απεικον?ζει την πολυδι?στατη ανθρ?πινη προσωπικ?τητα που ε?ναι κυρ?ως μεταβλητ? και σχετικ? αληθιν?.

Αμφισβητε? με αξιοθα?μαστη μομφ? την πραγματικ?τητα. Φ?ρνει το ?τομο αντιμ?τωπο με τον εαυτ? του για να γνωρ?σει την ουσ?α της ?παρξης του.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Il fu Mattia Pascal = The Late Mattia Pascal, Luigi Pirandello

The Late Mattia Pascal (Italian: Il fu Mattia Pascal) is a 1904 novel by Luigi Pirandello. It is one of his best-known works and was his first major treatment of the theme of the mask. The protagonist, Mattia Pascal, finds that his promising youth has, through misfortune or misdeed, dissolved into a dreary dead-end job and a miserable marriage. His inheritance and the woman he loved are stolen from him by the same man, his eventual wife and mother-in-law badger him constantly, and his twin daughters, neglected by their mother, can provide him with joy only until an untimely death takes them. Death robs him even of his beloved mother.

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Marco Tamborrino says

«Se noi riconosciamo,» pensavo, «che errare è dell'uomo, non è crudeltà sovrumana la giustizia?»

Discutendo riguardo "Il diavolo in corpo" di Raymond Radiguet, l'altro giorno, è saltato fuori, detto da qualcuno, che si trattava di un libro con una trama tutto sottomato banale, ma scritta con uno stile talmente sublime da renderlo un piccolo gioiello. Ora, io sono d'accordo in parte. Ma lasciamo stare. Credo che sia una definizione che si potrebbe appioppare anche a questo romanzo pirandelliano. A detta di alcuni miei amici la trama è geniale. A me ha comunicato solo tanta, tantissima noia, e lo stile pesante e farraginoso non rendono piacevole la lettura. Ma, ecco, se uno va a vedersi lo stile e l'approfondimento psicologico, eh! Che roba! Mi sembra di tornare al periodo in cui lessi "La coscienza di zeno". C'è anche una situazione pressoché identica.

Mattia Pascal è morto.

Allegria.

Addio moglie.

Addio suocera.

Addio creditori.

Addio debiti.

Libero!

Un'improbabile coincidenza porta al ritrovamento di un cadavere con le stesse fattezze del protagonista, che al momento si trova a Nizza a fare soldi giocando al Casinò. Tutti prendono lo sconosciuto morto per lui. Così Mattia Pascal si ritrova, per due anni e qualche mese, a condurre una vita alternativa sotto il nome di Adriano Meis, ma non potendo né amare la donna che lo ama, né avere amici, né denunciare un furto e così via, perché per fare queste cose avrebbe bisogno di un nome reale, cosa che lui non ha, capisce dunque che il

prezzo della sua libertà supera la libertà stessa.

Mattia Pascal è morto.

Alle... no.

Lib.. no, direi di no.

Allora, sotto sotto, forse Mattia Pascal non è morto per davvero. Ha continuato a vivere in lui, e chi va ucciso è Adriano Meis, che si era impadronito della sua identità! Che guazzabuglio! Ma dato che poi dite che uso parole troppo difficili, dirò: troiaio.

È tutto un giochino psicologico. Pirandello gioca sulla morte, sulla vita e sulla libertà. Ma, a parer mio, il protagonista nuota, anzi annega, nelle seghe mentali. Insomma, c'hai i soldi, fattela veramente questa nuova vita! Registra il tuo nuovo nome! E ma questo di qua, quello di là... insomma, tutta 'na scusa per scrivere pagine e pagine di trattato psicologico che, pur essendo estremamente interessanti, non riscontrano la mia approvazione. Come a dire: bello, ne riconosco il valore, ma mi tengo bel lontano dal giudicarlo "appassionante". Libri scritti dieci anni dopo lo erano dieci volte di più. Non cerco un romanzo d'avventura, per carità. Solo un po' di amor per la varietà nella trama. Cosa che qui è totalmente assente.

Alcune battute sono velate da un'esplicita ironia che mi ha fatto sorridere e anche ridere, ma ciò non compensa la carenza di spunti narrativi nelle varie scene descritte. C'è quasi da dire che "non succede niente".

Mattia Pascal è vivo.

Vivo?

Di più! Resuscita!

Come già detto, si rende conto che la sua libertà è tutta finta, non esiste. È in realtà incatenato alla sua vecchia vita e alle leggi del mondo che lo vorrebbero reale, mentre lui è come se restasse sospeso tra vita e morte, e le riflessioni legate a questo argomento sono molto acute e introspettive. In generale ho trovato meglio scritto il romanzo di Svevo, ma alla fine sono gusti. Non penso che diventerò un amante di Pirandello. Almeno, a differenza di Calvino, lui riesco a leggerlo. Poi va be', c'è Pavese, ma Pavese è amore e basta. Lo spunto di partenza di questo romanzo è ottimo, mancano le idee centrali, qualcosa che dia più movimento all'architettura narrativa. Non lo dico tanto per criticare. Penso che, leggendo tre romanzi in contemporanea (ed essendo uno "Le Voyage" di Céline), mi renda conto di cosa provochi noia e di cosa non la provochi. E non c'entra lo spessore psicologico. Semplicemente, ne "Il fu Mattia Pascal", a volte il sonno ha il sopravvento.

Megha says

Have you ever thought about going to a place where nobody knows you and starting a new life as an entirely new person?

Luigi Pirandello makes Mattia Pascal live out this fantasy. Great misery has befallen Mattia Pascal and there is no silver lining in sight. Unable to think of anything else to do, he runs away leaving everyone and everything behind. A few days later on his way back home, he discovers that while he was away a dead body was mistaken for his and he has been declared dead in his town. Out of the confusion this caused emerged

one thought: FREEDOM!! All the ties of his past life were now broken and Mattia could now re-invent himself and live a new, better life.

And then follows the tragi-comic tale of the late Mattia Pascal. Life experiences have a great say in shaping a person. In trying to erase his past, Mattia Pascal had to lose a great part of himself. His roots were cut-off and he was empty, a mere shadow of a person. He found himself struggling with the questions of self-identity and his purpose in life. The people he had left behind, the ones who thought he was dead were indeed free of him, in a true sense. He, on the other hand, could not escape the past life he had lived. Poor Mattia's miserable adventure at living a new life reminds me of something Fyodor Dostoevsky said in **Crime and Punishment**:

"If you ran away, you'd come back to yourself."

Mattia never found real freedom, it was only an illusion. The question of whether free will really exists has been a long standing debate. And Pirandello's take on this is in the negative. What Mattia was living was tyranny masked as freedom. How could he ever hope for a true friendship or relationship when he was not free to reveal the real himself to anyone. His freedom tied him in the chains of solitude, complete solitude. The only life left for Mattia Pascal was that of the ghost of himself.

Pirandello's writing is very accessible and easy to read. It is flavored with wit, irony and subtle humor. For casual readers, he gives a compelling and well-crafted story. For more serious readers, it is interspersed with intriguing thoughts, reflections on life and some beautiful passages. The novel is a little treat for those who love existential themes and paradoxes.

My copy of the book has a brief beautiful post-script by the author where he talks about art, reality vs. illusion and how very realistic human significance can sometimes be found in imaginary fables. This was in response to critics who had denounced his work for being unrealistic and far from normal life. The postscript is followed by another one which reports a *real life* case similar to the life of Mattia Pascal in this novel, which happened several years after the novel was first published. Fiction is real, after all!

Parastoo says

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Caroline says

This is an interesting contrast with 'Sheppard Lee, Written by Himself', which I read a short time ago. In Sheppard Lee a man flees debts and a generally unsatisfactory, pointless life by magic. That is, dying in an accident, he finds he can magically inhabit another body whose 'owner' has just died. However, he takes on the character and life circumstances of said dead man, which in time, for each of the sequence of bodies he adapts, becomes intolerable.

Mattia Pascal, in contrast, doesn't die but is released when his wife and his harridan mother-in-law identify someone else's dead body as his. Mattia has run away a few days before and takes the misidentification as a godsend; Pascal too flees debts as well as a miserable home life. But he suddenly finds equal misery in having no identity at all in his un-dead state. Both he and Sheppard Lee avoided any kind of serious education or training, and they have no inner resources to support them when adversity and boredom strike. Both have lost their inherited lands to devious business managers, and thus as gentlemen have no way to earn a living.

Pirandello investigates authenticity, asking how much of our identity is dependent on external definition: heritage, relationships, position, law. Not an innovative subject for a novel now, but in 1904 this must have been a fairly unusual work. Mattia tries to live without any home or relationships for a while, then gradually becomes enmeshed in a new set of relationships which he cannot sustain in his inauthentic, unrecognizable (legal) state. He both takes advantage of others and is taken advantage of, without a 'self' of recognized responsibility and integrity.

The following quote is interesting in the context of other WWI era reading:

‘ This feeling about life, for Signor Anselmo, was exactly like a lantern which makes us see ourselves scattered over the earth, and makes us perceive good and evil; a lantern which projects all around us a more or less extensive circle of light, beyond which lies the blank shadow, a fearful shadow, which would not exist if the lantern was not lit in us, but which we must unfortunately believe to be real as long as the lantern is alight within us. When at the end it is snuffed out, perpetual night will greet us after the misty daylight of our illusion, or rather, we will be left to the mercy of Being, which will only have shattered the vain forms of our reasoning.

...In each period, in fact, a certain agreement about feelings tends to establish itself among men, which gives light and color to those lanterns which are represented by the abstract terms : Truth, Virtue, Beauty, Honour and so on...Don't you think, for example, that the lantern of pagan Virtue must have been red? Christian Virtue must have been violet, a depressing color. The light of a common idea is fed by a collective feeling; if however , this feeling stops being general, the lantern of the abstract term stays standing, but the flame of the idea crackles, flickers, and dips, as usually happens in all periods of so-called transition. Then there are periods in history, not altogether rare, when proud gusts of wind suddenly extinguish all the lanterns. Wonderful! In the unexpected darkness there is an indescribable sense of disorientation amongst the smaller lanterns: some go hither, some thither, some turn back, some falter; no-one knows the way any longer: they bump into one another, perhaps make groups for a while of ten or twenty, but cannot come to any agreement and go back to being scattered about in a state of confusion and anguish and fury, like ants that can't find the entrance to the anthill when some cruel child has blocked it up just for fun. I think, Signor Meis, that we are at one such time at this very moment. It is very dark and confused. All the great lanterns have gone out. Who should we turn to? Should we turn back perhaps? Should we go back to the surviving lanterns which great men now dead have left burning on their tombs?

...The weak, but constant light of these little lanterns [re: lanterns of men who get their lantern oil from the church] of course awakens a painful envy in many of us; whilst certain others, who think they are armed, like so many Jupiters, with the tame thunderbolts of science and who, in place of the little lanterns, carry triumphantly electric torches, feel disdain and pity....

Praj says

R.I.P.

Mattia Pascal.

Mattia Pascal was a man born to endure adversities in every walk of life. He was a dutiful son who saw his family affluence ruined by a benefactor after his father's death and his mother's existence fading into rueful shadows. He was a concerned husband and a doting father even in the thorniest situations that brought demoralizing repercussions in his marital life. The only thing Mattia was ever sure about in his burdensome life was his name-Mattia Pascal. It was his solitary possession that he found solace in. May God bless his soul and hope that he ultimately finds peace for he truly needs it.

Remember you until the end of time – *Adriano Meis*.

R.I.P.

Adriano Meis

Adriano Meis cradled in boundless freedom. He was an architect of his own life. Adriano lived a cheerful life with no obligatory relations. Free as a bird; he traveled places, embraced a new world with open arms where imagination had no boundaries. He was a self-made man justly born to be free. Yet, he died in solitude being caged in his own individuality; a man whose existence was in itself a nothingness.

Thanking you for an ephemeral bliss -- *Anonymous*.

Late Mattia Pascal is indisputably Pirandello's masterpiece. Written in a biographical form it deals with the facet of personal identity and the calamitous dilemma of its mutability. The plot runs through familiarizing the reader with the fateful life of a young Italian man- Mattia Pascal, to whom happiness is a rare commodity. Troubled by a miserable marriage, penurious livelihood and utter condemnation of his survival; Mattia leaves his native land in search of a unsullied liberated self. Compelled by his rebellious mind-set, he finds an opportunity in a miscalculation when a newspaper reports his fallacious death. Finally, an escape to a freer life and thus an alter-ego unchained to societal obligation is created. Adriano Meis was a specter of broken ties who would be distressed by the humanness of Mattia Pascal.

Unmasking a phantom.

The famous Pirandellian epistemology of post-modernism/existentialism questioning the foundation of distinguishable identity and its significance to human existence illuminates through the minute details of Mattia's life. Was Mattia legit in his actions of concealing the truth and using the passage to live an entirely different life? Would it have been better if he had braved his unfortunate situations rather than living like a ghost? Is a specified identity essential to individual to acquire a civil status that may sometimes become burdensome? Is identity purely mechanical or is there a human trait to its implication? The manuscript undeniably rattles your grey cells and makes you ponder on the limits of unconsciously self-constructing a new identity without acquiring a legit civil status. Freedom is what everyone craves to escape the harsh conditions of misfortune. But with limitless freedom comes the human aspect of excruciating seclusion and constraints of legitimacy. Death was seen as a liberating prospect by Mattia from his entire monetary and emotional burden. His newly altered appearance and name bestowed him contentment, until his past caught up overwhelming him with nostalgic reminiscences, thus gradually transmuting his new persona into a dense prison in itself. Pirandello justifies the legitimacy of society and reality that forms convinced "shadows" of

which individuals can never liberate themselves, except when death overtakes mind, body and soul. In the end, whether it was Mattia or his alter-ego (Adriano), they were merely trying to unmask a self-created phantom as neither both could entirely break away from from each other.

Οδυσσ?ας Μουζ?λης says

Να ζ?σουμε να τον θυμ?μαστε! ;)

<https://pepperlines.blogspot.com/2018...>

Reza Mardani says

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Paula M. says

O que somos sem identidade? E o que fazemos com a nossa vida se a vivermos como uma sombra de nós mesmos? Mattia Pascalle, o homem que morreu duas vezes e ressuscitou para afinal voltar a morrer (metaforicamente falando, é claro), vai respondendo com o seu exemplo a estas questões. Fiquei a pensar que se ele fosse aquele agente secreto ao serviço de Sua Majestade as preocupações e conclusões registadas não se aplicariam.

Ressalta deste livro o humor: apesar de tudo e de todos, Mattia conta-nos a sua história com uma grande dose de humor. Não fosse isso e esta seria uma história insuportável de se ler.

Jim Fonseca says

Right in the first few pages the author tells us this is the story of a man who “died twice.” Our hero, or anti-hero, is going nowhere in late 1800’s Italy. He earns a pittance as the librarian in backwater Italian town. He lives with screaming kids, a wife who has lost interest in him and a viscous mother-in-law who hates him. One day while out of town, he learns from newspapers that the decomposed body of a suicide victim down by the watermill in his home town was mistaken for him. He is free! He goes on a gambling spree and actually makes money and creates a new life for himself in a distant town. But living a second life is far from easy and the plot turns into a farcical soap opera (or a real opera, since the work is translated from the Italian).

The book was published in 1904, and like other novels of that era, such as Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment or Unamuno’s Abel Sanchez, there is a lot of exploring of the psychology of the main character

dues to the newly developing field of psychology. The author won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1934. It kept my attention and I found the plot fast-paced and with a bit of a mystery to it.

Nikos Tsentemeidis says

Άλλο ένα εξαιρετικό βιβλίο του Pirandello και σ'γουρα πρωτότυπο, τόσο ως προς τα υπόλοιπα του που εποχ'ν διαβ'σει όσο και γενικ'τερα.

Κατ'αρχ'ς είναι υποδειγματικές αφηγητ'ς, χρησιμοποι'ντας το πρώτο πρόσωπο (Ματτ'α Πασκ'λ) σαν να μη γρ'φει ο ίδιος. Αυτ' την ικαν'τητα που δεν 'χουν πολλοί συγγραφ'ς, οι οποίοι στα περισσότερα τους 'ργα είναι προβλ'ψιμα καθ'ς το 'φος τους είναι απαρ'λλακτο, για τον υποφαιν'μενο αποτελε' μεγάλο πλεον'κτημα. Η αφ'γηση του είναι πολ' ζωνταν'.

Ο 'ρωας καθ'ς αφηγ'ται τη ζω' του διαβ'ζει τον θ'νατ' του στις εφημερ'δες. Η συγκεκριμ'νη σκην' είναι π'ρα για π'ρα απολαυστικ'. Αποφασ'ζει λοιπ'ν, να δραπετε'σει απ' τη ζω' αυτ' που για τους άλλου 'χει τελει'σει. Ξαφνικ' νι'θει ελε'θερος, μακρι' απ' οποιεσδ'ποτε δεσμε'σεις, οπ'τε δοκιμ'ζει την τ'χη του.

Φε'γοντας μακρι' φτι'χνει εκ ν'ου την ζω' του. Μετ' απ' δ'ο χρ'νια 'μωσ διαπιστ'νει 'τι είναι ξ'νος σε μια κοινων'α που δεν τον αποδ'χτηκε. Τ'τε λοιπ'ν αποφασ'ζει να επιστρ'ψει στην παλι' του ζω', πιο ευτυχ'ς απ' ποτ'. Σ'ντομα 'μωσ θα αντιληφθε' 'τι 'λα προχ'ρησαν και κανε'ς δε νοι'ζεται πλ'ον για τον 'διο.

«Μ'λιν κατ'βηκα στον δρ'μο, βρ'θηκα ακ'μα μια φορ' χαμ'νος, ακ'μη κι εδ', στην ιδια'τερη πατρ'δα μου. Μ'νος δ'χως σπ'τι, δ'χως προορισμ'».

Ο Pirandello συνηθ'ζει με απλ'ς πλοκ'ς, 'πως στο θεατρικ' του «'τσι είναι αν 'τσι νομ'ζετε», να δημιουργε' μεγ'λα 'ργα με μεγ'λα νομ'ματα. Είναι τεχν'της του λ'γου, 'χει τρομερ' α'σθηση του χιο'μορ. Μετ' και το τρ'το του 'ργο που διαβ'ζω (το «'νας καν'νας και εκατ' χιλι'δες» είναι το πιο βαθυστ'χαστο), αποτελε' αγαπημ'νο συγγραφ'α.
