succeeding Catanese novel, *Sulle lagune*, in which forms and situations, proper to the Gothic novel, assume a different meaning.

Jannuzzi's research on *I Carbonari della montagna* has produced many thought-provoking observations and indicates a new road for Verga scholars in their examination of his biography and literary career.

S. BERNARD CHANDLER

University of Toronto

Mario B. Mignone. *Eduardo De Filippo*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984. Pp. 197.

Mario Mignone's monographic study of the late Eduardo De Filippo is an important contribution to Italian studies. De Filippo's name is practically unknown in this country, although his work is familiar to a few specialists. As an indication of the interest that De Filippo's work arouses among theater people I can mention "en passant" that in 1984 the present writer was commissioned by Anthony Quinn to prepare an English translation of *L'eredità*. The actor was exploring the possibility of producing the play in this country. Unfortunately, nothing has come of it to this date. Because De Filippo's reputation in the United States lags far behind his popularity and fame in Italy, as well as in other European countries, including England, no one until now had made any attempt to examine his opus in a systematic and scholarly way. Professor Mignone's work is, therefore, very timely and useful. In fact, one has to wonder why it took so long for an American publisher to recognize the need for a serious study of this Neapolitan actor-playwright-director who after Betti was the leading theatrical figure of Italy. The Twayne Series is thus to be commended for having been the first to produce a work on De Filippo for the American public.

Mignone has organized his presentation around thematic kernels rather than adopting the usual chronological approach found in the Twayne Series. In Chapter I, "Naples and the Neapolitan Popular Theatre," Mignone briefly traces the history of Neapolitan theatre up to the turn of the century, highlighting the influences of such innovators as Eduardo Scarpetta (De Filippo's natural father) and Raffaele Viviani on the young and talented performer, and giving a succinct analysis of how the early experiences found maturation in the many facets of De Filippo's career, that is, his writing, and his directing; Chapter II is devoted to an analysis of the creative process and the matters which acted as catalysts in De Filippo's inspiration. Mignone focuses on the playwright's ability to portray in his plays the people of Naples with all their absurdities and contradictions. Mignone says: "To love and understand De Filippo's theater one has to love and understand the theater performed in the vast stage of the bay of Naples." In Chapter III, entitled "Early Works: Range and Versatility," Mignone argues convincingly that the early works, which amply demonstrate his indebtedness to the *Commedia dell'Arte* and to the Neapolitan writers of the turn of the century, have more than just a documentary value—contrary to a generally held critical opinion—because they introduce many of those themes that were to become typical of his later work, such as the emphasis on characterization, the mixture of humor and pathos, the need to theorize on the human condition, and the need to reflect on the role and status of the theatre; in Chapter IV, Mignone discusses the renewed sense of hope in the future of society that was characteristic of many Italian intellectuals following the

end of World War II. Mignone finds in De Filippo's postwar dramas a stronger sense of "engagement." The farcical mood that was present in earlier comedies is toned down in favor of delivering a more serious message about the need for humanity, generosity, social equality and justice in society. The most important plays of this period, *Napoli Milionaria!* and *Filumena Marturano*, are analysed as representative of the evolution in De Filippo's attitudes towards the theatre. Particularly interesting is Mignone's analysis of the failure of both Broadway productions of *Filumena*. We know that Italian plays, like expensive wines, do not travel well, especially across the Atlantic. It is not surprising to me that Mignone found that the translation for the first production was the primary cause for the play's disastrous failure and that the "translation" of the text into a "performance" was to blame for the second near failure. Having had the opportunity to check the authenticity of a few translations of Pirandellian works, I agree wholeheartedly with him and take this opportunity to impress upon Italianists the need for more accurate translations of our writers.

In Chapter V, entitled "Reality vs. Illusion," the sense of euphoria and optimism which pervaded some of De Filippo's early postwar plays was replaced by a feeling of disillusionment which paralleled the disillusionment of those who during the war had fought to bring about a new order. This disillusionment manifested itself through a sense of pessimism which colored the dramatic production of this period, *Questi fantasmi* (1947), *La grande magia* (1949) which is the most Pirandellian, while remaining quintessentially De Filippian, *Le bugie con le gambe corte* (1947) and *Le voci di dentro* (1948).

In Chapter VI, family dramas are discussed and, in Chapter VII, those plays that contain a denunciation of social ills such as poverty, the plight of illegitimate children, the oppression of the people by institutions, the low social status of women. But whereas the earlier plays were animated by similar denunciations, De Filippo displays here a heightened sense of awareness about the role of theatre in affecting social changes. Denunciation, in fact, is coupled with a demand for change. In Chapter VIII, Mignone examines those plays in which De Filippo's growing sense of commitment to the theatre's social responsibilities manifests itself more openly, as in *De Pretore Vincenzo*, a play which was closed by Italian authorities after three performances because, according to Church officials, it contained blasphemous elements, and *Il figlio di Pulcinella* in which the old character of the Commedia dell'Arte was resurrected to bring a message of revolt and change. A brief conclusion is appended in which the author summarizes De Filippo's work and places it in a clear perspective, highlighting the playwrights's concern with the drama of the individual at odds with a corrupt society, his ability to blend moral indignation with wit and to create characters that seem to step out of the kaleidoscopic canvas of Neapolitan streets (whose humanity, however, reaches across national barriers), and his poetical gifts which combine with the consummate artistry of the experienced actor-director to create many a magical moment in the theatre.

Professor Mignone's work is to be commended. He has broken the ice and has begun the difficult task of taking a critical stance towards this prolific and very successful playwright who undoubtedly deserves to be better known in the English-speaking world. Mignone's analyses of the plays is straightforward and provides the reader with the data that is essential for an understanding of the playwright and his work. The volume has a short bibliography which should be sufficient for the objectives of the series.

In general, this volume presents an overview of De Filippo's work that is eminently readable, informative, and insightful, and at times, even passionate.

GAETANO CIPOLLA

St. John's University

William Van Watson. *Pier Paolo Pasolini and the Theatre of the Word*. With a Foreword by Millicent Marcus. Ann Arbor, Michigan and London: UMI Research Press, 1989. Pp. 149. Index.

One of Pasolini's least known or studied facets has been brought to light recently with the publication of Van Watson's study of this "heretical" writer's dramatic works. Van Watson furnishes North American readers with the first book-length account of Pasolini's theatre in English, designed as an introduction to this largely neglected aspect of Pasolini's artistic production. Indeed, in North America, Pasolini's fame rests almost entirely upon his filmmaking, while his poetic, narrative, theoretical and dramatic output remains largely ignored. Recent English translations of some of this material will help to remedy the situation. Yet Pasolini's plays remain, as far as I know, untranslated, and thus largely unproduced on this side of the Atlantic. And as Van Watson shows, this neglect is only slightly worse than that found in Italy, where there appears to be, not surprisingly, a certain amount of resistance to the possibility of staging Pasolini's plays. This resistance, he shows, results not only from the subject matter and language of Pasolini's theatre, but also from his very demanding and perhaps confusing "postmodern" instructions for the staging of works such as his own.

Van Watson's account of Pasolini's theoretical attitudes towards theatrical production is based upon the writer's "Manifesto for a New Theatre" first published in 1968. In this essay Pasolini describes his antagonism toward traditional theatrical conventions, which function in such a manner as to produce a passively satisfied spectator, one whose capacities for critical thinking and active interpretation have been perniciously voided. Van Watson describes traditional Italian theatre, with its cult of directorial genius, its privileging of *mattatori*—virtuoso actors who use a role solely as a means to display their marvelous abilities as actors—and its function of serving only as a bourgeois "social rite" for its spectators.

Van Watson describes how Pasolini contests such an "evasive" theatre (of "chatter"), and seeks to displace it with his own brand of engaged theatre which, as Pasolini wrote, would present "an exchange of ideas, a literary and political struggle in the most democratic . . . manner possible" (33). Moreover, such a theatre would not form itself as a "theatrical rite," as Pasolini describes the avant-garde practices of Artaud, the Living Theatre and Grotowski, types of theatre held to be "self-absorbed," and "engaged only with the art of the theatre itself" (29). Furthermore, rather than being completely at odds with one another, Pasolini viewed both the traditional bourgeois theatre and avant-garde performance as complicit in contributing to the "disappearance of the word from the Italian stage"; and Van Watson sets out to describe how all of Pasolini's plays (*Calderon*, *Affabulation*, *Pylades*, *Pigsty*, *Orgy*, and *Beast of Style*) present "a theatre which was engaged and availed itself of both the beauty and the communicative potential of the word" (29).