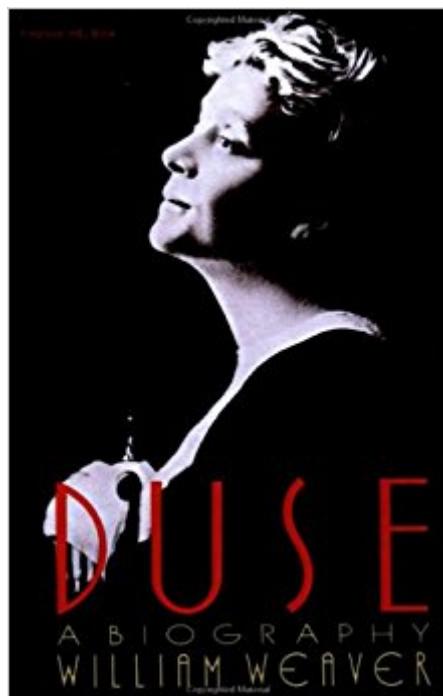


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# Duse: A Biography



## Synopsis

Drawing on a wealth of unpublished letters, diaries, and personal papers, Weaver brings alive the legend of Italian actress Eleanor Duse, one of the greatest actresses in the history of the theater. Index; photographs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

William Fense Weaver (born 24 July 1923) is considered the preeminent living English language translator of Italian literature. William Weaver is perhaps best known for his translations of the work of Umberto Eco and Italo Calvino, and has translated many other prominent Italian authors over the course of a career spanning more than fifty years. In addition to prose, he has translated Italian poetry and opera libretti, and has worked as a critic and commentator on broadcasts of the U.S. Metropolitan Opera. Born in the U.S. state of Virginia and educated at Princeton University B.A. (summa cum laude), 1946, with postgraduate study at the University of Rome, 1949. Weaver was an ambulance driver in Italy during World War II for the American Field Service, and lived primarily in Italy after the end of the war. Through his friendships with Elsa Morante, Alberto Moravia and others, Weaver met many of Italy's leading authors and intellectuals in Rome in the late 1940s and early 1950s; he paid tribute to them in his anthology *Open City* (1999). Most recently, Weaver was a professor of literature at Bard College in New York, and a Bard Center Fellow. He received honorary degrees from the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom and Trinity College in Connecticut. According to translator Geoffrey Brock, Weaver was too ill to translate Umberto Eco's 2005 novel,

The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana (La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana, 2004).

Fascinating life difficult to convey to American readers, but the author has pulled it off. Worthwhile read for anyone interested in theater history.

Great

Eleonora Duse, (born Oct. 3, 1858, near or in Vigevano, Lombardy, Austrian Empire [now in Italy]—died April 21, 1924, Pittsburgh, Pa., U.S.), Italian actress who found her great interpretive roles in the heroines of the Italian playwright Gabriele D'Annunzio and of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Most of Duse's family were actors who played in the same touring troupe, and she made her first stage appearance at the age of four in a dramatization of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. By the age of 14, when she played Juliet at Verona, her talents were already being recognized by critics; but after her family died she moved from one company to another, without a great deal of success, until her appearance at Naples in 1878. This marked the turning point of her career. Her performance there of the title role in *Mile Zola's Thérèse Raquin* won great acclaim, with audiences and critics united in the opinion that a woman's anguish had never before been played with such truth.

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