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one of the old flashes: 'You can tell an insufficiently experienced director by the number of doors used without being used in his film. This is only one example among the hundred different ellipses whereby cinema renders null and void the lazy calligraphy of beginnings and endings' (1947).

Translated by Tom Milne

After *Le Tempestaire*, there was only *Les Feux de la Mer* (1948); Epstein died in 1953. But he has not been totally forgotten. In 1953, *Cahiers du Cinéma* published an *hommage* (June, No. 24), and in 1964 Pierre Leprohon wrote a volume in the Seghers series on him. In 1966, Philippe Haudiquet published a monograph on Epstein. In 1955, Gideon Bachmann organized, under the aegis of Jean Benoit-Lévy, a tribute to Epstein in New York, and in 1972 *Anthology Cinema*, with the Cinémathèque Française, put on a retrospective screening of his films in New York.

JEAN EUSTACHE

James Monaco

Jean Eustache (born 1938) made several interesting medium-length films during the 60s (*Les Mauvaises Fréquentations*, 1963; *Le Père Noël a les Yeux Bleus*, 1965; *La Rosière de Pessac*, 1968; *Le Cochon*, co-directed with Jean-Michel Barjol, 1970; and *Numéro Zéro*, filmed in 1971 but unreleased), but it was not until *La Maman et la Putain* (*The Mother and the Whore*, 1973) that Eustache achieved an international reputation. This intense three-and-a-half-hour black-and-white series of monologues, dialogues, set-pieces, stories, confessions and conversations remains one of the most significant French films of the 70s. It is not only invested with an extraordinary sense of its own time (the early 70s) and place (the Parisian intellectual and artistic milieu) but, because it is highly referential, it also acts as a summary of many of the elements of French cinema since the beginning of the New Wave fifteen years previously. Like his predecessors Godard, Truffaut *et al.*, Eustache is absorbed with the relationship between film and life. 'I wanted to show,' he explains, 'that cinema has a direct influence on life, as literature does.' To this end, he

constructed an extraordinarily rich fabric of allusions, puns and references which gives the film a highly written quality and an exceptional resonance.

It is the vitality and irony of the language which first impress us in *La Maman et la Putain*, but more important perhaps is the sexual and ethical geometry which that language is meant to reveal. Like Eric Rohmer, Eustache is interested in the lies we tell ourselves in order to explain away our inaction. His characters are not young: they are the descendants of the cultural revolution of the 60s—over thirty but still single and uncommitted. They are both the heroes and the victims of recent sexual liberation. And the anxiety and alienation which accompany that new freedom erupt every once in a while through the placid, sardonic surface of the film in bursts of violence, punctuating the witty, seemingly self-confident monologues and revealing the characters' essential bad faith. Sex is the cement that holds together the three characters—Alexandre, Marie and Veronika—in their obsessive triangle and gives the film its relentless power. Although it is Jean-Pierre Léaud's Alexandre who occupies the centre of the film, it is Bernadette Lafont's Marie and Françoise Lebrun's Veronika who most intrigue us and who finally hold the balance of power. As Eustache assiduously and wittily works through the pain and *longueur* of the triangular relationship, we come to an understanding of the politics of sex and the result is a strange catharsis. Eustache is not only interested in the power relationships of his characters, but also in the balance between audience and characters—one reason for the unusual length of the film. Distance he finds 'absolutely necessary. The audience is not *in* the film, always outside—in front of an object for reflection. So then they judge—and they judge themselves.' The intensity of the language of *La Maman et la Putain* is matched by the complexity of its ethics.

The success of *La Maman* enabled Eustache, in 1975, to return to a project he had conceived earlier, *Mes Petites Amoureuses*, a film about an adolescent boy and his first, fumbling encounters with sex.

Alas, *Mes Petites Amoureuses* was not a success. Beautifully made, it had a subject

too lightweight for the intensive treatment. It seems to prove that Eustache works best under pressure—for unlike *La Maman et la Putain*, here he had all the time and (relatively speaking) all the money he needed, but the Bressonian perfection of the film was much less rewarding than the messier previous film, But Eustache remains a talent to be reckoned with.

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS and MARY PICKFORD

John Gillett

Douglas Fairbanks (1883–1939) still remains the favourite image of the virile, all-American adventurer, leaping acrobatically from tree to balcony, always outrunning his pursuers and treating his heroines to a dashing smile and a quick kiss. This image first began to appear in the fairly modest films made during the First World War, flowering into the 20s with such assured and enjoyable extravaganzas as *Three Musketeers* (1921), *Robin Hood* (1922), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), *The Black Pirate* (1926, in early Technicolor) and *The Gaucho* (1927). Fairbanks also wrote some of these films under a pseudonym, supervised their production and encouraged extremely lavish production values, notably William Cameron Menzies' exotic fantasy décor for *The Thief of Bagdad*. In 1919, he founded United Artists with Mary Pickford, D. W. Griffith and Charles Chaplin. He starred with one of his wives, Mary Pickford (1893–1979), in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1929), an unsubtle, though boisterous, Shakespearean adaptation directed by Sam Taylor, and ended his career in Britain in 1934 with *The Private Life of Don Juan*, whose ageing lover seemed to evoke a sad, personal response in him.

Mary Pickford started her own career as a child actress, and she developed a character combining tomboy resilience with a wan charm which earned her the title of 'America's sweetheart'. Apart from a tendency to overplay these winsome qualities, Pickford was a remarkable actress in her silent heyday between 1917 and 1923; in films like *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (Neilan, 1917), *Poor Little Rich Girl* (Tourneur, 1917), *Pride of the Clan* (Tourneur, 1917), *Pollyanna* (Powell, 1920), *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (Green and Pickford, 1921) and especially *Stella*

Maris (Neilan, 1918), her talents for mime and building up characterizations are most developed and extended. In 1923, she brought Ernst Lubitsch to America to direct her in *Rosita*; and she constantly took an interest in production, founding various companies and choosing her directors carefully. Apart from *The Taming of the Shrew*, her main sound success was in *Secrets* (1933), co-starring Leslie Howard and directed by Frank Borzage.

Not surprisingly, Fairbanks, the archetypal W.A.S.P., was born Julius Ulman (cf. that archetypal Englishman, Leslie Howard, who was the son of Hungarian immigrants). Allan Dwan, who directed Fairbanks most notably in *Robin Hood*, has been quoted as saying, 'Fairbanks was very athletic and active, liked movement and space, so he enjoyed every minute. Pictures were made for him. He worked with speed and . . . with grace.' True enough, but when he was not actually on the move, he tended to be a little dull. Actually, despite all her squareness, Miss Pickford had more charm.

Mary Pickford wrote her autobiography twice: *My Rendezvous with Life* (1935) and *Sunshine and Shadow* (1956). For Fairbanks, see Alistair Cooke's *Douglas Fairbanks: The Making of a Screen Character* (1940) and Richard Schickel's *Douglas Fairbanks: The First Celebrity* (1976). There is much interesting material on Pickford in Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By* (1968).

RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER

David Wilson

Inert, stolid, isolationist, the post-war West German cinema finally emerged into the light in the mid-60s, when a new generation of directors began to challenge the deep-seated complacency of the economic miracle. Since then, film-makers like Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Werner Schroeter and Hans Jurgens Syberberg have put German cinema back on the map. But perhaps none of them has made quite so explosive an impact as Rainer Werner Fassbinder (born 1946), who in less than ten years has made more than