

far enough for many? And some blows were self-inflicted: Yeates's account of Jim Larkin's disastrous attempt to regain power in Ireland in the 1920s is a case in point, given the manner in which it fractured the labour movement for generations. The arrival of Larkin back from America at the end of the revolutionary period provides a neat if downbeat symmetry as Dublin's revolution drew to its close.

Yeates is an astute writer with an impressive eye for detail and an evident compassion for those on the margins or on the bottom rung of the ladder. He writes in a lucid style that effortlessly and vividly conveys the rich detail that his impressive researches have uncovered. Given the seemingly incessant commentaries on how events should be commemorated, it is refreshing to come across a work that confines itself to the essential and far more interesting task of finding out what actually happened. Localised studies are transforming our understanding of the Irish revolution, but Yeates has surely, in this sequence of books, written the fullest study of this kind. This excellent final instalment in his Dublin trilogy deserves the wide readership it will surely reach, whether in the capital or beyond.

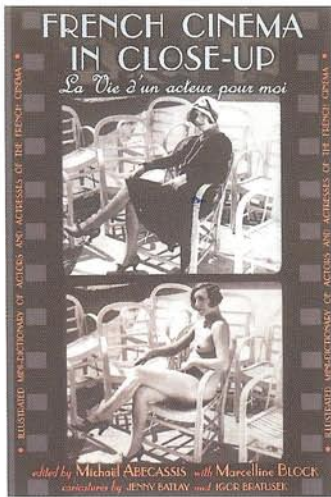
John Gibney

Cinema

French Cinema in Close-up: La vie d'un acteur pour moi. Michaël Abecassis and Marcelline Block (eds). *Phaeton Publishing*; 450pp; €35/£25/US\$35 pb; 23cm; 978-1-908420-11-4.

French cinema under the magnifying glass

This book is a collaborative project that weaves together writing from almost 70 different contributors in order to form an illustrated mini-dictionary of actors and actresses who have influenced French cinema since it began. Instead of aiming to form an exhaustive list, it seeks to create a brief but personal sketch of the key players. This is not limited to household



names, however. Even though the collection aptly describes internationally known actors and actresses such as Audrey Tautou and Gérard Depardieu, it also pays deserved attention to artists who are usually left in the shadows and brings old household names back to life. The mini-dictionary format makes all of this easily accessible to the reader, who can use three different indexes in order to search by actor, film or contributor.

The range of contributors and subjects is extremely varied, which allows for a mix of academic writing and less formal styles. Each contributor makes use of different source materials, including personal anecdotes, quotes from biographies, interviews and everything in between. Each entry is so different from the last that the reader gets the impression that the book evolves in order to accommodate the unique story of each actor or actress. Furthermore, the mixing of styles ensures that the book avoids being dragged down by an overly academic tone. In fact, some entries—for example that of Jenny Batlay, which details several personal encounters with Charles Aznavour in order to paint his portrait—are so rich in personal detail that it feels as if the reader is hearing the story from an old friend.

This is further enhanced by the clever use of caricature. Each entry begins with a sketch by Jenny Batlay or Igor Bratusek that adds a touch of humour to what could otherwise be a dry subject. These funny little sketches of the greats of French cinema also underline the individual nature of the work, as each entry looks different from its predecessor.

Alongside each caricature is a sentence which sums up the person under discussion. At times these are perhaps a little too basic: in the case of Emmanuelle Béart, for example, it is simply stated that she is beautiful. They are also useful, however, as they set the tone for each essay and sum up the public persona of the subject.

Any lack of critical engagement in these introductions is more than made up for by the amount of detail in the main body of each entry. While attention is paid to the films in which each person has been involved, whether as an actor, director or writer, these short texts branch out and seek to present a snapshot of the private lives of those behind French cinema by unpacking their rise to fame, sharing rare trivia and shedding light on their other passions. Even those well versed in cinema trivia will find something new and interesting to learn here, as *French Cinema in Close-up* goes beyond the screen time and time again.

On another level, the book offers multiple insights into classical and contemporary films by situating them within the careers of the different actors involved. One of the most interesting aspects of this collection is that it not only deconstructs the celebrity persona surrounding the actors and actresses by carefully making use of personal details but also does this with the French cinema industry itself. In shedding light from many different angles, it gives the readers personal insight into their favourite French films. While each actor and actress is situated within the rich history of French cinema, the book also succeeds in situating France's seventh art within the history of the arts in France.

As each actor's unique story is explored, so are the main themes of French cinema. In particular, the book draws attention to the way in which cinema and theatre are deeply connected by showing how many of cinema's first stars began their careers on the stage and had already found fame there. Owing to the attention to personal detail, as the lives of cinema's celebrities are unravelled so are the links between the art form and events such as World War I, World War II and

France's student protests in 1968. All of this combines to offer a much deeper understanding of French cinema and those who influence it.

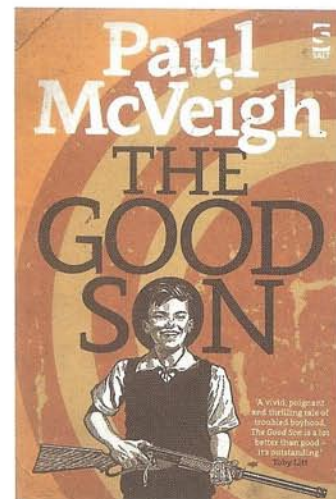
This collection of essays makes clever use of academic analysis and anecdotal sources in order to present nearly 200 portraits of those who have had the greatest influence on French cinema. Thanks to its innovative format of a mini-dictionary, it allows for a vast range of contributors, which ensures that each portrait is different from the others. In linking French cinema to the other arts and to the history of France, the book succeeds in offering everyone who picks it up, from the veteran cinema buff to the merely curious, a chance to learn something new. This collaborative project succeeds in placing French cinema in general under the magnifying glass, not just its actors and actresses.

Rebecca E. Anderson

Troubles

The Good Son. Paul McVeigh. Salt; 245pp; £8.99 pb; 19cm; 978-1-78463-023-2.

Hard-hitting and captivating



Paul McVeigh's coming-of-age novel begins with an opening line that is hard to beat and one that can only draw the reader straight in: 'I was born the day the Troubles started'. McVeigh's turbulent novel starts as it means to go on. 'Troubles' with a capital T describes every