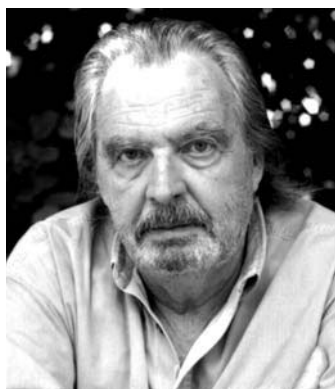


Born in Geneva in 1929, Alain Tanner studied socio-economics. At the age of 23 he enlisted in the merchant navy and was mustered by the West Africa Line in the port of Genoa. After this very formative experience on the high seas, he returned briefly to Switzerland, then set off for London, where he lived from 1955 to 1958. It was here that he fell in love with the cinema, frequenting the Cinéma-thèque and making friends with critics and members of the British "Free Cinema" movement, such as Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz. With them he shared an interest in the critical and political dimension of the cinema, inspired largely by Bertolt Brecht. In 1957, he made his first film in London with his friend Claude Goretta. This 16-mm short, entitled **Nice Time**, featured the night life of the Piccadilly district. In 1960, Alain Tanner returned permanently to Switzerland, where he was commissioned to make a number of documentaries in the cinéma vérité style of the time. This was the beginning of a long period of collaboration with Swiss television. From 1965 to 1968, Tanner made films on a wide range of subjects, including **Docteur B, médecin de campagne** (1968), on the daily life of a doctor in the Swiss countryside, and **Une ville à Chandigarh** (1966), on the work of the architect Le Corbusier in India. Tanner's work for Swiss television came to an end in 1968, when he embarked on his career as an independent director. In that year, he founded Groupe 5 in conjunction with four other Swiss film-makers: Claude Goretta, Michel Soutter, Jean-Louis Roy and Jean-Jacques Lagrange. Since 1969, Alain Tanner has made 20 full-length films, the most recent being **Paul s'en va** (2004).

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The subtle subversion of Alain Tanner

In an article on Alain Tanner's **No Man's Land**, a film made at the mid-point of a career which began in 1969 with **Charles Dead or Alive** and reached its (provisional?) conclusion in 2004 with **Paul s'en va**, the critic Serge Daney wrote: "I looked at the landscapes of **No Man's Land** and was not disorientated. I felt at home. I had seen it all before in an earlier life punctuated by the nine other films of Alain Tanner (...) I even knew what it consisted of: frontier posts with a French and a Swiss side, slow-

moving bicycles and tidy little cafés, ruminating cows and drawling accents, roads into the mountains and paths leading nowhere; I knew the characters, too, having seen them come and go: they were flawed and bad in '68, then armchair idealists, then, in '85, embittered, dissatisfied hippies, that's all." Then, having expressed his deep sense of familiarity with the world of the film, the critic voices a doubt: "It struck me that all the things that – thanks to Tanner and other Swiss film-makers (Reusser, Soutter, Murer) – I had come to see as familiar, all this mildly clean, mildly sinister, mildly beautiful Swiss cinema, with its cows and its traffickers, its calculated slowness and vague storytelling, might be on the way out." (1).

In introducing the work of Alain Tanner, it is impossible to ignore this bitter but lucid comment from twenty years ago, impossible to grasp the meaning of his work except through an act of retrospection, looking back and realising that the body of ideas and the creative context which opened the way

"One of the principal merits of Alain Tanner's cinematographic work is no doubt that – in a nation drowsed by a facile ideology of neutrality – he has aroused and stimulated the dormant critical faculties and spirit of his audience." Domenico Lucchini, 2002

for the films of Alain Tanner – and indeed the emergence of the new Swiss cinema at the end of the 1960s – have been gradually buried since the 1980s. The cinematographic modernity embodied by Tanner, a tough and constant questioning of the nature and status of representation in film, has been superseded by the age of visual promiscuity and ad-industry rhetoric – with the inevitable effects. The result has been the slow but sure disappearance of the cinematographic memory and awareness which gave birth to Tanner's films.

From the 1980s, his films are increasingly influenced by a sense of loss and extinction. He is compelled to respond by concentrating on essentials, moving away from the discourse deriving from 1968 and striking out for more physical territory, exploring a sensual side of his creativity which, though it still says a great deal about the world, is concerned above all with recording it in

(1) Serge Daney, *Libération*, 30 August 1985, quoted in *Ciné-journal*, volume 2, Petite bibliothèque des Cahiers du cinéma, Paris, 1998.

FILMOGRAPHY

1957	Nice Time
1961	Ramuz, passage d'un poète
1962	The School
1964	Les apprentis
1966	A City at Chandigarh
1969	Charles, mort ou vif
1971	La salamandre
1973	Le retour d'Afrique
1974	Le Milieu du Monde
1976	Jonas qui aura vingt-cinq ans en l'an 2000
1977	Foot-Ball Dead Time
1978	Messidor
1981	Light Years Away
1983	Dans la ville blanche
1985	No Man's Land
1987	Une flamme dans mon cœur La vallée fantôme
1989	La femme de Rose Hill
1991	L'homme qui a perdu son ombre
1992	Le journal de Lady M.
1995	Les hommes du port Fourbi
1998	Requiem
1999	Jonas et Lila, à demain
2002	Fleurs de sang (co-directeur)
2004	Paul s'en va

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its starkness. So we have Bruno Ganz's wanderings in Lisbon in **In the White City** (1982), the fragile, feral body of Myriam Mézières in **A Flame in My Heart** or **The Diary of Lady M...** It is therefore legitimate to note a progression from the political to the poetic – the two are never mutually exclusive in Tanner's work – and to make something of a distinction between the films that came out of 1968, with their concern for utopian illusions and disappointments – **Charles Dead or Alive**, **The Salamander**, **Return from Africa**, **The Middle of the World**, **Messidor** and of course **Jonas Who Will Be 25...** – and those that seem to have left that legacy behind: **Light Years Away**, **In the White City**, **A Flame in My Heart**.

Then there is a final period, reflecting Tanner's collaboration with the writer Bernard Comment. The resulting "trilogy" – **Fourbi**, **Jonah and Lila**, till **tomorrow** and **Paul s'en va** – is both ambitious and muddled.

These films reflect a renewed belief in the world, his experiences and the thinking which makes sense of it, almost a return to earlier years. In these three films, the enemy is more clearly identified and a strong desire expressed with a kind of gentle rage: to break free of the sad age in which we live, armed with poetry and sensitive to the beauty of the world. "If all I can do is speak, it is for you I will speak": this quotation from Aimé Césaire echoes through **Paul s'en va** as it did in **Return from Africa**, reconnecting with the past, re-establishing the cyclical, tribal sense of time so dear to Tanner, which stands in opposition to the "capitalist motorway of progress". Poetics and politics combined.

The name of Alain Tanner is inextricably linked with a particular historical moment. Politically, post-1968 is the space-time frame in which his films are set. Artistically, his work corresponds to the emergence, in the period 1965–1975, of the "new cinema" movements, which brought forth such notable film-makers as Glauber Rocha, Miklós Jancsó, Jerzy Skolimowski, Marco Bellochio and Alain Tanner himself. The common factor linking these directors, despite their widely differing styles and approaches, is that they build on the lessons taught by the "great modernists" of the post-war era (Rossellini, Bresson) – not to engage in a parodied form of post-modernity, which is now the dominant trend, but to work out connections between the language these great directors invented and the new world emerging in this post-post-war period. However, unlike the other directors mentioned, each of whom invented an imaginary world strongly influenced by their country of origin (the culturally mixed Brazil of Rocha, the highly politicised Hungary of Jancsó, the Italy of Bellochio...), in his films Alain Tanner created a world built on a defective foundation: Switzerland. The director once expressed the regret that, unlike the Taviani brothers on their travels, he could not take along a little of his native soil on his shoes. Switzerland as a non-place,

"It takes cosmopolitan cities and deserts to give new life to the film genre. I am imbued by place, and I don't mean stage settings, but place itself, the eroticism of landscape. I didn't invent this term, but it fits me."

Alain Tanner, 1996

1957	Nice Time , Best Experimental Film, in the category Short Film, Venice International Film Festival and Locarno Film Festival
1968	Docteur B., Médecin de Campagne , Swiss TV Prize
1971	La Salamandre , Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film (Swiss entry)
1973	Le retour d'Afrique , International Film Festival Berlin, Ecumenical Jury Prize
1976	Jonas, qui aura vingt-cinq ans en l'an 2000 , Locarno International Film Festival, Critics' Prize; American Critics' Prize for Best Script, New York 1976
1978	Messidor , Festival of Lima 1980, Lama d'Or
1981	Les années lumières , Cannes International Film Festival, Special Jury Prize
1983	Dans la ville blanche , César (Best French-Language Film) 1983; Official Selection
1985	No Man's Land , Official Selection in Competition, Venice International Film Festival
1986	Une flamme dans mon cœur , Houston International Film Festival 1988, Special Jury Prize
1987	La vallée fantôme , Official Selection in Competition, Venice International Film Festival
1989	La femme de Rose Hill , Official Selection in Competition, Venice International Film Festival
1995	Fourbi , Official Selection in "Un Certain Regard", Cannes International Film Festival
1997	Requiem , Selection for "30th Directors' Fortnight", Cannes International Film Festival 1998
1999	Jonas et Lila, à demain , Official Selection, San Sebastian Film Festival

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a land "without history", fatally neutral, the country of the "cuckoo clock" made fun of in *The Third Man*, is the ever-present/absent figure in Tanner's cinema, the stateless state which supplies the poetic nourishment for each of his films. And this no-man's-land status and lack of national character call forth their opposite: the Utopia (etymologically: no place) of which Tanner draws a tender and accurate map.

Ultimately, the characters in Tanner's films always have three questions in mind, concerning a) their desires and b) the space in which they are to deploy them – Utopia being the term expressing the possibility of reconciliation between the two when "terra firma" (society, family, homeland) gives up on them. The first question – to whom or what am I attached? – is the question of desire. There are various responses: abandon one's bourgeois comfort (**Charles Dead or Alive**), quit one's job and take to the streets (**The Salamander**), run away and gamble everything (**Messidor**), get on a ship and go into exile (**In the White City**).

This desire, which runs throughout Tanner's fiction, is stubborn and tenacious. Like that of the tick, an insect taken from the

Deleuzian bestiary (no coincidence!), which Roger Jendly (the peasant farmer) praises in **Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000**: to survive, the tick needs only light, a tuft of hair and an extremity. A model of obstinate thrift.

The second question refers back to and depends on the first: to whom or what do I belong? This is the issue of territory, of defining boundaries: "My territory extends as far as I can see," says someone in **Jonah**... And often, we go off and look elsewhere. The distance and trajectory travelled fix the frontiers of the desire revealed in movement. Finally, the third question is practically an affirmation, a lucid impulse suggesting the pessimism of his work. It is a doubt (felt by the director, or the character himself) that undermines the enterprise of liberation, of escape from the person's territory. Tanner is one of those directors who is never satisfied with the mere appearance of truth. The indecisiveness of his characters is part of the genetic make-up of his cinema. In **A Flame in My Heart**, Pierre and Mercedes are on the balcony of their Cairo hotel. Fullness of joy, desire fulfilled, far from the grey grind of daily life? "With no clothes on, it is impossible to think," he says, looking at her. "It was Rodin who said that," she replies. Why, at this precise moment, does Pierre think about thinking? Here lies the doubt that eventually pushes Mercedes to run away and leads to her sublime plan of ultimate solitude.

Roland Barthes preferred the word "subversion" to "revolution" because – he said – the former is a "clearer word" denoting an "underhand way of cheating on things, turning them aside, taking them somewhere other than the place expected". Subversion as a way of shifting things,

"I never considered making films as work. It was never a conscious effort, it was always fun." Alain Tanner, 1996

FILMS ABOUT ALAIN TANNER

- 1978 **Cinema Mort ou Vif?**
Cinema Dead or Alive? Directed by: Urs Graf, Mathias Knauer, Hans Stürm. Produced by: Filmkollektiv Zürich. 16mm, colour, 105'
- 1981 **Tanner tourne Light Years Away**, Tanner's Making of Light Years Away. Directed by: Francis Reusser. Produced by: SSR. 16mm, colour, 15'

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1974 Freddy Buache, *Le cinéma Suisse, L'Age d'homme*, Lausanne, pp. 139–159, publication completed in 1978
- 1984 Jim Leach, *A Possible Cinema: the Films of Alain Tanner*, The Scarecrow Press Inc., Metuchen, and London
- 1985 Christian Dimitriu, *Alain Tanner*, Henri Veyrier, Paris
- 1987 Piera Detassis, *Alain Tanner*, La Nuova Italia, Il castoro cinema, Florence.
- 2002 Domenico Lucchini, *Alain Tanner, Tra realismo et utopia*, Centro Culturale Svizzero and Editrice Il Castoro, Milan

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frédéric Bas is a lecturer and a cinema critic for the Chronicart website and magazine. He lives in Paris and is currently writing a book on the films of Alain Tanner.

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of imposing a deviation on the straight line, a subtle engine of war against the commonplace, is a possible key to the cinema of Alain Tanner. Taking into account the poetic and the political, it explains an approach which never tries too hard to grab the spectator's attention, but is careful to allow him some space, which "plays" with his expectations and avoids overwhelming him visually. Cultivating this visual vigilance so as not to err on the side of the panoramic, shattering the mirror effect of the screen, has always been Tanner's concern, his primary subversion on the aesthetic level. In the years after 1968, this was known as "the work of the spectator". At the time, making the camera movements obvious (the famous right-to-left shots in **Return from Africa**) or accentuating the diction of the actors was a way of subverting the transparency of the grand Hollywood manner so as to reconnect with the spectator and at last give him a place: the physical place from which he observes in the darkened auditorium, when he is alone facing the screen; not the "ticket place" sold at the box-office, when he is lost in the waiting queue. Nowadays, there is no such distinction. In his diary, the critic Serge Daney (again!) wrote that the "author's policy" should be matched by a "spectator's policy". Of the former, he said that it was not only "the recognition of a director's artistic autonomy", but also "the possibility of transfer (and therefore of love) between two people who use the film (whether already made or to be made) to get their bearings in the world, to find their place there". More than any other, Tanner's cinema enables us to feel our way to this place. Frédéric Bas, 2004

Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Renato Berta
Sound: Paul Girard
Editing: Sylvia Bachmann
Music: Jacques Olivier

Cast: François Simon, Marcel Robert,
Marie-Claire Dufour, André Schmidt,
Maya Simon, Michèle Martel
and others

Production: Alain Tanner and the
Groupe Cinq

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French

CHARLES DEAD OR ALIVE



| 1969 | 16/35mm | b/w | 94' | b/w | Charles mort ou vif

Charles *Dead or Alive*, Alain Tanner's first feature film, which won the Grand Prix at the Locarno Festival in 1969, is the kind of manifesto that, with other films such as *La lune avec les dents* and *Haschich* by Michel Soutter, put Switzerland on the world cinema map at the end of the 1960s. That the critics baptised the wave which emerged at this time as the "new Swiss cinema" simply reflects the fact that the "old" Swiss cinema was unknown to the cinema-going public. Today, the appeal and energy of this first film remain undiminished, magnified by the exceptional stature and presence of François Simon and the sublimely uncluttered camera work of Renato Berta. Tanner drew his subject matter from what he saw of the events of May '68 in Paris, which he covered for Swiss television. Unimpressed by the ideological pronouncements of the young demonstrators (Tanner was nearly 40 and mistrustful of the siren songs of militancy), he was more struck by the elderly people marching alongside them. The film therefore paints the portrait of an old man who decides to abandon his comfortable bourgeois way of life and live with a bohemian couple. There he rediscovers his freedom to think and his joie de vivre. As Mireille Amiel points out in *Cinéma 70*: "**Charles Dead or Alive**, which the author himself defines as a 'small-scale historical fresco' is a good example of the best of political cinema in our developed Western societies." It is also worth adding another, definitive judgement, pronounced by Jean-Louis Bory in *Le Nouvel Observateur*: "It is the most intelligent film inspired by the spirit of May '68." Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner and John Berger
Camera: Renato Berta
Sound: Marcel Sommerer, Gerard Rhône

Editing: Brigitte Sousselier, Marc Blavet
Music: Patrick Moraz and the Main Horse Airline Group

Cast: Bulle Ogier, Jean-Luc Bideau, Jacques Denis
Production: Alain Tanner in association with Gabriel Auer for SvoCiné (Geneva)

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French



| 1971 | 16/35mm | b/w | 128' | La Salamandre

The **Salamander** brought Alain Tanner acclaim and his first public triumph. Presented at the Cannes Film Festival in the “Quinzaine des réalisateurs” section in 1971, the film made the world aware of the abrasive tone and energy of the new Swiss cinema, with Tanner as its emblematic director. The scenario derives from Tanner’s experience as a journalist/reporter for Swiss television between 1965 and 1968. **The Salamander** begins with a succession of enigmatic images of the kind very much favoured by today’s TV reconstructions: a man is shown cleaning his gun; the gun goes off; furtively, a woman’s face appears. What is happening? On this mysterious opening, which serves as a pretext, Tanner builds a metaphorical scenario: two men, a journalist and a writer, throw themselves into the investigation to find out the truth about this woman. Each uses his own weapons: documentary research in one case, boundless imagination in the other. But gradually, both courses of action prove futile. As it turns out, the encounter with their subject, Rosemonde, ruins their studied efforts to discover the truth, and the emergence of a trio of free, critical individuals supersedes the cold, laborious exercise in truth-seeking. The beauty of the film lies in its capacity to make sense without ever hammering the message: reality outruns all efforts to grasp it, the thesis of all modern cinema since *Citizen Kane*, to which **The Salamander** is a kind of Swiss response. Played by Bulle Ogier, Rosemonde is still a definitive incarnation of post-1968 freedom. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Renato Berta
Sound: Marcel Sommerer
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier

Music: J.S. Bach, arranged by Arié
Dzierlatka. Interpreted by: François
Marthouret, Josée Destoop, Juliet
Berto, Anne Wiazemski, Pierre Holdener

Cast: Josée Destoop, François Mar-
thouret, Juliet Berto, Anne Wiazemsky,
François Roulet and others

Production: Alain Tanner, Groupe Cinq
World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French

RETURN FROM AFRICA



| 1973 | 16/35mm | b/w | 113' | Le retour d'Afrique

An ode to liberated speech and to the power of words, “those one speaks to others, those one speaks in silence”, Alain Tanner’s third film is inspired by a poet and a poetic text which deeply affected him as a young director: *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal*, written in 1939 by Aimé Césaire. A poem extolled by the Surrealists, this seminal flow of anti-colonial thinking by the West-Indian-born poet is the bubbling spring which inspires the gestures and words of the film’s main character, Vincent (François Marthouret), a 30-year-old from Geneva. Weighed down by the monotony and boredom of his life as a well-off westerner, he sells all his possessions and decides to leave for Algeria with his fiancée. The subject is clearly that of escape from one’s place of belonging, a Rimbaudesque theme dear to Tanner, which is here directly linked to the Third Worldist discourse of the 1960s and 1970s. But the strength of the film lies in the way it turns this thinking on its head: on the eve of their departure, chance circumstances prevent the couple from leaving. Instead, they decide to pursue their dream of escape by living hidden away in their empty apartment. Again, Tanner shows that it is the inner mileage travelled that matters, not the arrival at a destination; the posing of a question rather than the answer. As the director says at the beginning of the film: “Speaking words can be an act in itself, it can also be a substitute for action.” This is an important precept for the understanding of Tanner’s cinema: poetry is a form of action, and having it in mind, reciting it, can help to give a new shape to reality: in the film’s final scene, the couple decide to have a child. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner, John Berger
Camera: Renato Berta
Sound: Pierre Gamet
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier

Music: Patrick Moraz
Cast: Olimpia Carlisi, Philippe Léotard
and others

Production: Citel Films, Geneva,
Action Films, Paris, SSR Geneva

World Rights: Yves Peyrot
Original Version: French

THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD



1974 | 35mm | colour | 120' | Le milieu du monde

Like **Return from Africa**, **The Middle of the World** is a film about couples and the way people experienced life in the early 1970s. It is also Tanner's most theoretical work, the film which most explicitly sets out his attitudes as a director. The previous film integrated content (the crisis of the contemporary individual) and form (a distancing effect achieved through the words spoken by the characters and the camera movements accompanying them), whereas **The Middle of the World** makes a sharp separation between the story of a difficult love affair and a strict, sometimes rigid form, which constantly shatters the apparent naturalism of the plot and the film's realistic effects. The film begins with a voice-off: "This film was shot in 1974 in a time of normalisation", then "This film tells the story of an Italian café waitress and a middle-world engineer over a period of 112 days." The cartoons indicating the dates of the various events (there are many gaps in the story), Patrick Moraz's musical interludes, the landscape shots, which are out of kilter with the order of the seasons and the events of the story: all are signs of an unusual didactic approach in a work which manages to conceal its demanding intentions behind the form of the film. But this strong Brechtian flavour is also explained by the political dimension of the film. Tanner has probably never identified the enemy so pointedly as here: shady, male-chauvinist, provincial politicians, narrow-minded denizens of bistros. In opposition to this social tackiness, which is all-pervasive, Tanner proposes liberation by the cinema and its language: putting a distance between the reality represented and the spectator enables the latter to exercise his critical consciousness, performing what contemporary critics defined as "the work of the spectator". Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner and John Berger
Camera: Renato Berta
Sound: Pierre Gamet

Editing: Brigitte Sousselier
Music: Jean-Marie Sènia
Cast: Nicolas, Myriam Mézières, Jean-Luc Bideau, Myriam Boyer, Rufus,

Dominique Labourier, Roger Jendly, Miou-Miou, Jacques Denis, Raymond Bussièrès and others
Production: Citel Films, Geneva,

Action Films, Paris, SFP SSR
World Rights: Yves Peyrot
Original Version: French

JONAH WHO WILL BE 25 IN THE YEAR 2000



1976 | 35mm | colour and b/w | 110' | Jonas qui aura 25 ans en l'an 2000

Together with **The Salamander**, **Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000** is Alain Tanner's best-known film, and the one which has almost permanently fixed his directorial style in the consciousness of the public: a mixture of seriousness and humour against a backdrop of social criticism, a sweet-and-sour utopia of characters given over to their thoughts and fantasies in a world which is not always designed with them in mind. However, this judgement of the film and its director carries a risk of misunderstanding. As Serge Daney has written in an article which is basic reading for this film ⁽¹⁾, **Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000** in no way expresses an unambiguous left-wing point of view and does not crystallise the social struggle in the name of comradesly nostalgia. Although the film records the states of mind and dreams of the 1968 generation without their violence or hatred, the intention is definitely not to paint a reassuring picture and turn the militants of yesterday into likeable figures. The aim is to reveal the secret, generally concealed wounds of a series of individuals sufficiently inured to the social order not to engage in open conflict. The eight characters featured in the film (their names all begin with "Ma...", possibly an allusion to "Mao") fight with their own weapons, which are rarely political but derive from their childhood, an area of boundless freedom and playfulness which the system cannot tame. This praise of the indomitably childlike quality of the 1968 generation is one of the morals of the film: "**Jonah...** is a didactic film with no lesson to teach, an encyclopaedic film with no conclusion", a film of freedom. Frédéric Bas

(1): "Les huit Ma", in *Le cinéma et le monde*, 1; *Le Temps des Cahiers* 1962-1981, P.O.L., Paris, 2001, pp. 184-189

Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Renato Berta

Sound: Pierre Gamey
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier
Music: Arié Dzierlatka

Cast: Clémentine Amoroux,
Catherine Rétoré and others
Production: Citel Films, Geneva,

Action Films, Paris, SSR
World Rights: Yves Peyrot
Original Version: French

MESSIDOR



| 1979 | 35mm | colour | 130'

A project initially entrusted to Maurice Pialat, who had already begun to film it under the title of “Meurtrières” (see the special edition of *Les Inrockuptibles* devoted to Pialat), **Messorior** is based on a crime story which hit the headlines in France in the 1970s: two adolescent girls run away and go on a criminal spree which ends in their deaths. On the face of it, this subject is remote from the world we associate with Tanner, since a violent story of this kind and its social background would seem to impose the realistic, even naturalistic form always shunned by the Swiss director. Moreover, Tanner is instinctively averse to filming physical violence. “Killing a person”, he says, “is generally a gratuitous special effect.” Consequently, of all Tanner’s films **Messorior** is the only one in which someone dies of non-natural causes. It is also Tanner’s most sombre work, characterised by a despair unmitigated by his usual verbal and situational humour. This is because Tanner accepted the project only on condition that he could recast the original idea and use this violent story as a vehicle for more personal preoccupations: the limits of freedom (already treated in his previous film) are here related to the girls’ frantic flight in the Swiss countryside. What interests him is the possible sully of this place of excessive peace and quiet, now transformed into a field of experience and criminal fun-and-games by the two characters. Many people have not forgiven Tanner for the shot in which one of the girls defecates in an Alpine meadow after exchanging caresses with her partner. In the course of the film, the idyllic Swiss countryside – valleys, cows and mountains – transmutes into its opposite: the heavy police presence weighs on everything, killing all desire. This is the first film to mark a break in Tanner’s relationship with Switzerland.

Frédéric Bas

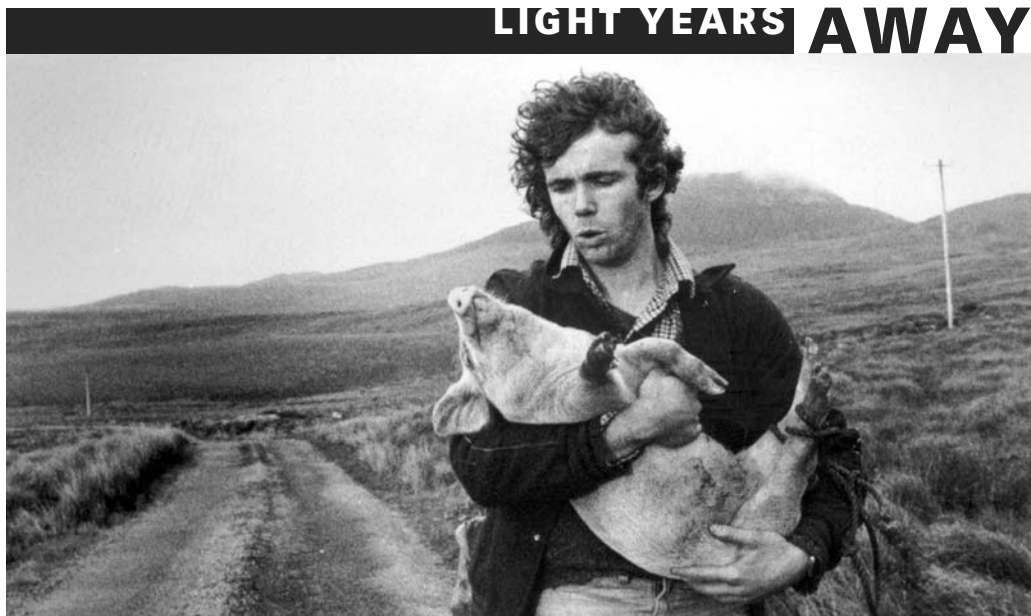
Script: Alain Tanner based on
La voie sauvage by Daniel Odier
Camera: Jean-François Robin

Sound: Alain Lachassagne
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier
Music: Arié Dzierlatka

Cast: Trevor Howard, Mick Ford,
Bernice Stegers, Odile Schmitt
and others

Production: L.P.A. Phénix-Paris,
Slotint-SSR, Geneva
World Rights: Yves Peyrot
Original Version: French

LIGHT YEARS AWAY



| 1981 | 35mm | colour | 110' | Les Années-lumières

Light Years Away is an adaptation of the novel *La Voie sauvage* by the Geneva-based writer Daniel Odier. For Tanner, this film was an opportunity to return to a subject which transcends political and ideological frontiers. In the past, Tanner had entertained a “desire for the Atlantic, the wind, other places”, no doubt an expression of the *Zeitgeist* of his youth. The result was a film mixing realism and fantasy. As on previous occasions, Tanner embarked on a voyage on the margins of the social “circle”, but this time with greater technical and financial resources. Tanner’s desire to go to sea is affirmed on several levels in the film: the choice of Ireland as his location, the use of English in the original version, and above all the metaphorical use of myth and legend. The film is essentially the account of an intense relationship between father and son.

“Tanner implies, with great sensitivity and insight, that true life is always an inner process of experience... in a film that seems to pulsate with love and care for life. Its beauty, its gravity (which never comes at the expense of humour) is more gripping than the most brilliant dialogue of his earlier films.” Bruno Jaeggi

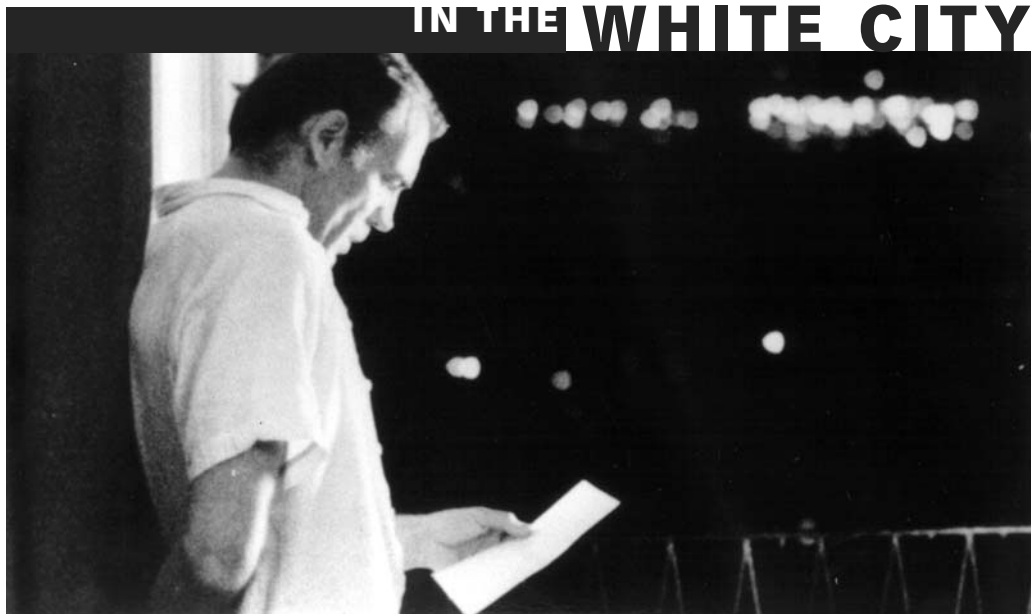
Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Acacio de Almeida
Sound: Jean-Paul Muel

Editing: Laurent Uhler
Music: Jean-Luc Barbier
Cast: Bruno Ganz, Teresa Madruga,

Julia Vonderlin and others
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,
Metro-Film, Lisbon

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French,
German, Polish

IN THE WHITE CITY



1983 | 35mm with sequences in Super-8 enlarged to 35mm | colour | 107' | Dans la ville blanche

In the White City was a turning-point in Tanner's career as a director. Bringing him renewed public acclaim, which he had not enjoyed since **Jonah Who Will Be 25...**, it also marked a change in his aesthetic approach. Although escape and the desire for solitude had always been key Tannerian themes, they had previously been developed on a left-wing foundation and characterised by conversation and playful fantasy, a paradise of puns and facetious remarks in which his characters were at home. There is nothing of the kind in this film, the most striking aspect of which is its silence, stark poetry and sombre melancholy. The Swiss director must have been inspired by his younger days in the merchant navy in imagining this portrait of a sailor (sublimely acted by Bruno Ganz) who abandons everything to merge body and soul into Lisbon. At the beginning of the film, Ganz remarks to a barmaid that the clock in her bar is not indicating the right time. She replies: "The clock is right. It's the world that is wrong." And it is with this sense of the world being out of joint that the hero lives his urban solitude, using his cine-camera to record fragments of reality which he sends to his wife, moving around at random as if he expected to be caught up by reality, to be absorbed into it. With **In the White City**, Tanner affirms his reputation as a great director in physical, territorial terms, as the chart of his hero's emotions and the topography of the city gradually flow together and merge. As if the sailor's mad dream is simply to become Lisbon.

Frédéric Bas

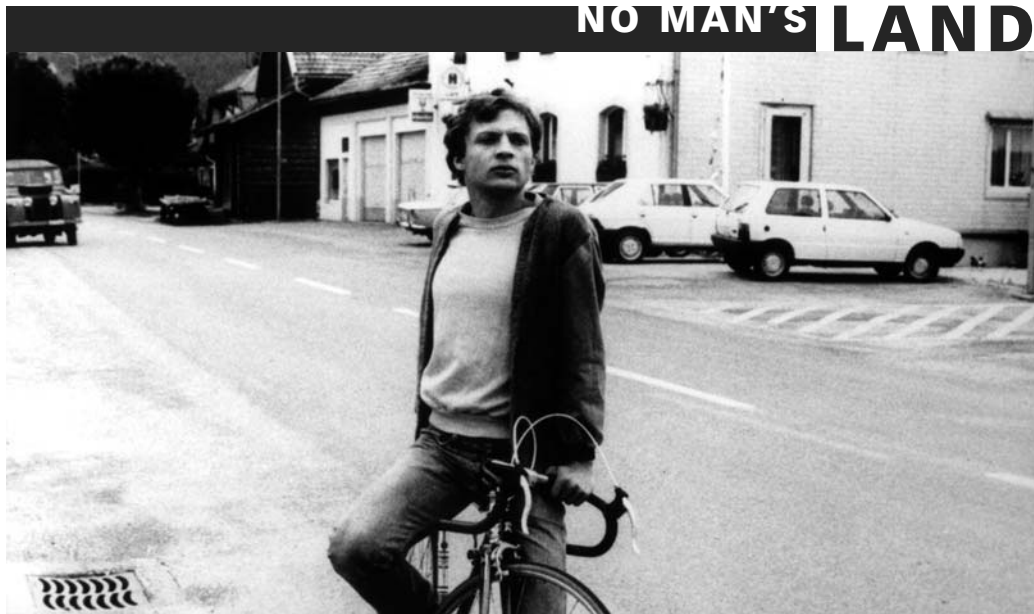
Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Bernard Zitzermann
Sound: Jean-Paul Muel

Editing: Laurent Uhler
Music: Terry Riley

Cast: Hugues Quester, Myriam
Mézières, Jean-Philippe Ecoffey,
Betty Berr, Marie-Luce Felber,
André Steiger, Teco Celio and others

Production: Filmograph SA Geneve,
MK2 Paris
World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French

NO MAN'S LAND



1985 | 35mm | colour | 105'

No Man's Land, Tanner's ninth full-length feature, is an adventure story – not an adventure in the conventional sense that it sets out to be entertaining, but that it tells the story of four people trying to fulfil their most basic desires in life.

A group of young people meet up regularly in a nightclub situated in a former customs house on the Swiss-French border, as a means of escape from their drab lives. **No Man's Land** is an "in-between" film. Between staying and leaving, between Paul and Jean, about friendship, between Paul and Madelaine, Jean and Mali, Jean and Lucie, about love. Between Paul and his route of escape, Jean and his territory, Madelaine and her music, Mali and her exile. A sparse, beautiful film as a philosophical reflection on and a poetic, atmospheric representation of human homelessness. "Alain Tanner has taken up and rearranged his recurrent topics: the state of suspension, a wavering between the home that we seek and the urge to flee combined with the inability to actually go to the station and board a train; the necessity of work and the hope of one day escaping the constraints of work; the yearning for distant lands, the unknown, the other, which in the end turns out to be more of the same old thing and is thereby an anticipation of the inevitable return."

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Screenplay: Myriam Mézières
Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Acacio de Almeida

Sound: Joaquin Pinto
Editing: Laurent Uhler
Music: J.S. Bach, interpreted by
Nell Gotkovsky

Cast: Myriam Mézières, Aziz
Kabouche, Benoît Régent
Production: Garance, La Sept Paris,
Filmograph SA, Geneva

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French



1987 | 35mm | colour | 110' | Une flamme dans mon cœur

Until **A Flame in My Heart**, the question of sexual desire, though touched on in many of his earlier films, where it clearly affected the characters' identities and relations with the external world, had never previously been tackled head-on by Tanner. His characters had entertained all kinds of relationships, but their more intimate aspects were always conveyed by suggestion. The absence of the human body in the sexual act can be explained as a defensive reaction against a "purely visceral" cinema, in which – according to Tanner – directors "go overboard". "For my part, I need the external world, reality." With **A Flame in My Heart**, Tanner proves that it is possible to talk about the world and sex without losing anything in this respect. Tanner is indebted to Myriam Mézières for this new physical dimension to his film-making: after a stormy relationship with a tyrannical lover, Mercedes throws herself into a new affair with a journalist, but her longing for the ultimate experience comes up against the normality of her companion, who remains off-puttingly detached. Her subsequent drifting is reminiscent of that of the sailor in **In the White City**. In hindsight, **A Flame in My Heart** has a kind of symmetry with **The Salamander**. It presents the same portrait of a free, almost feral woman – engine of desire in a world without desire – and ends on the same note of solitude. The difference between the two characters, apart from the stunningly present naked body of Myriam Mézières, is that while Rosemonde embodied a joyful, triumphant freedom (see her final smile), Mercedes is a resistance fighter in a desperate world: "To be stripped of all hope, that is how to be free of care, to be at peace," she says. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Patrick Blossier
Sound: Jean-Paul Muel

Editing: Laurent Uhler
Music: Arië Dzierlatka

Cast: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Laura
Morante, Jacob Berger and others
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,
MK2, Paris

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French

THE GHOST VALLEY



| 1987 | 16/35mm | b/w | 105' | La vallée fantôme

Paul is a roughly 50-year-old film-maker. He writes a script as if writing were his profession and then sets out to seek a lead actress. His inability to find one must have its reasons. Perhaps there are too many stories, too many images, too many actresses, too little calm and no ultimate necessity. Paul spontaneously bins his script. Then there is Jean, straight from film school, whom Paul rather superfluously employs as his assistant. One day, on a discarded photograph, Paul discovers Dara, an Italian actress he had known and admired and who has been absent from the screen for a long time. He instructs his assistant to find her. Paul and Jean become obsessed with their quest of returning Dara to the world of fiction and acting. To achieve this they must come to terms with feelings, confrontations and dreams. Paul once again ascends to the valley where he can rediscover for himself the fantasies that had abandoned him.

"... a cinematographic essay on self-doubt and how to confront it, on the danger and averting of failure, but for all this an essay without didactic cumbersomeness. The way Tanner succeeds in denouncing the surfeit of film images while employing visual means himself, albeit full of suggestive power, sending forth his alter ego in a struggle for artistic survival, is indeed admirable."

Hans-Dieter Seidel, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Hugues Ryffel
Sound: Jean-Paul Muel
Editing: Lauren Uhler

Music: Michel Wintsch
Credits: Marie Gaydou, Jean-Philippe
Ecoffey, Denise Péron, Roger Jendly
and others

Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,
CAB Productions, Lausanne,
Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French

THE WOMAN FROM ROSE HILL



| 1989 | 35mm | scope | colour | 95' | La femme de Rose Hill

She comes from an Indian Ocean island and ends up in a small village in Canton Vaud: her name is Julie; she is black-skinned. Chosen from an agency catalogue, she has just married Marcel, a local farmer. Marriage does not cancel out distance, and, in this land of snow and frost, Julie's main problem is the cold.

"Tanner is a question-mark-shaped artist; you sense his satisfaction when he poses disturbing questions intending to shake his audience out of their everyday apathy. He tries to explain: 'There was a time when I could not care less about the plot, the traditional way of telling a story. Here, too, I initially summarised the narrative in thirty pages, then I met Marie Gaydu, the actress who plays Julie, who had never been in a film before. For her, for Jean-Philippe Ecoffey, Denise Person, Roger Jendly and the others, I wrote a real script. As you can see, I am making progress.' Tanner is changing, then, but he is still less interested in story-telling than in the characters and the atmosphere in which they engage with one another.

For Tanner, the aim is not to please a large audience, but to lend his focus, his angle of seeing things, to a small number of friends, to let them in on his truth." Pierre Montaigne, Le Figaro, 22 November 1989

Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: José Luis Gomez Linares
Sound: Jean-Paul Muel
Editing: Monica Goux

Music: Arié Dzierlatka
Credits: Francisco Rabal, Angela Molina, Dominic Gould, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi and others

Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva, Tornasol Films SA, Madrid, Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French, Spanish

THE MAN WHO LOST HIS SHADOW



| 1991 | 35mm | colour | 100' | L'homme qui a perdu son ombre

When you no longer have any ideas, when you have forgotten why you are doing things, you are like a man who has lost his shadow, Antonio tells Paul. Antonio believes that Paul has lost his shadow. An old Andalusian communist back home after a long exile in France, Antonio provides shelter for Paul, who turned to him for help after getting himself sacked by the newspaper he was working for. According to Antonio, Paul is someone who believes everything can be set right – what goes on in the mind and in real life with other people. Paul embarks on a journey of the mind, but life catches up with him. Or rather, women catch up with him: Anne, his present partner, and Marie, an earlier one, are on his trail. Farce or tragedy? Neither, says Paul: there's no need for anyone to get killed in this story. But it does end with a death. When Antonio disappears, he takes with him a whole historical era, that of social utopias. Paul has lost his shadow, but not the way Antonio thought: Antonio himself was Paul's shadow.

"A director as physical as Tanner cannot just swallow and accept Jean Baudrillard's proposition in *L'Echange symbolique* et la mort: the presence of death as a segregated and neutralised phenomenon which gives our period its obsession with and illusion of immortality. It is because he himself is haunted by a sense of absence that Tanner wants to restore a presence to what is human. The subject of **The Man Who Lost His Shadow** is based on an *idée fixe* closely associated with the feeling of exile and travel. Nothing is more beautiful than to see his camera physically embracing people, the sea, the passing of time, in the passion that starts singing in the streets with the gusts of wind and brown dust that carry Antonio away. This song might, if further amplified, give us a film that has nothing more to prove." Amina Danton, *Cahiers du cinéma* 1992, No. 451

Script: Myriam Mézières
Camera: Denis Jutzeler
Sound: Henri Maïkoff
Editing: Monica Goux

Music: Arié Dzierlatka
Credits: Myriam Mézières, Juanjo
Uigcorbe, Félicité Wouassi

Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,
Nomad Films, Brussels, Messidor
Film, Barcelona

World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French

THE DIARY OF LADY M.



| 1992 | 35mm | colour | 108' | Le Journal de lady M.

Lady M. gives up everything in order to follow a man, Diego, who takes her on a journey without destination. The journey begins in Barcelona, his home town. On the way, she learns that he is married to a black woman and has a child. M. cannot cope with the subsequent parting and invites Diego, his wife and their child to share her life in Paris. In this unconventional and difficult set-up, M. strikes up a tentative rapport with Diego's wife. Diego eventually leaves both women, who themselves later part company. M. ends up alone again.

"**The Diary of Lady M.** is an unfettered film, untrammelled by any set rules except the rules of a game which changes as desire enlarges its territory. The events enacted are really to do with risk, with putting oneself and others in danger, forcing a way through, living on the edge or beyond it. The person who makes the story happen is also the one by whom it is dragged to its bitter end. Her name is Myriam Mézières, but she officiates under the name of Lady M., as mistress, leading show girl, oriental dancer, amorous woman. She has an accomplice who is watching her, Alain Tanner. (...) He films this story as if he were keeping a log-book. He films the diary of the Diary. He maintains a distance in photographing his actress-scriptwriter-heroine, and he carries it off, while remaining absolutely free to follow his characters as he sees fit, thanks no doubt to his lightness of touch, filming sparingly with a reduced camera crew." Thierry Jousse, Cahiers du cinéma 1993, No. 478

Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard
Comment
Camera: Denis Jutzeler

Sound: Henri Maïkof
Editing: Monika Goux
Music: Michel Wintsch

Cast: Karin Viard, Cécile Tanner,
Jean Quentin Châtelain, Antoine
Basler

Production: Filmograph SA, Noë Films
World Rights: CAB Productions SA
Original Version: French

FOURBI



| 1995 | 35mm | colour | 120'

Rosemonde has sold her story to a large Swiss private channel which buys the rights to crime victims' stories and turns them into film material. Eight years earlier, when she was 20, Rosemonde killed a man who tried to rape her. As there was no witness, the case was dismissed for lack of evidence. Kevin, a film producer, charges Paul, a young writer, with the task of writing the script relating Rosemonde's life at the time. However, she appears to be incapable of recalling her past and remains silent when Paul approaches her with the questions he needs to ask. Marie, a young actress, is then asked to visit Rosemonde and promised the role in the film if she can make her talk.

The film tells of the strange relationship between the two women – whose social and educational backgrounds are entirely different – and the friendship which gradually develops. As they get to know each other better, they realise that they are unwilling and unable to play the game proposed to them. It is the story of one person rescuing another, who in turn delivers the rescuer.

"**Fourbi** not only takes up characters and motives from **The Salamander**, 25 years on, but tentatively, in a more detached way, recaptures some of the vitality of earlier films. Once again, Tanner places his hope in those who have been wounded by life. Because he himself is a wounded child. (...) **Fourbi** is a summer ballad that unites a handful of young people whose paths – under normal circumstances – would never have crossed. Together they develop a culture of resistance."

Martin Schaub, Filmbulletin 1996

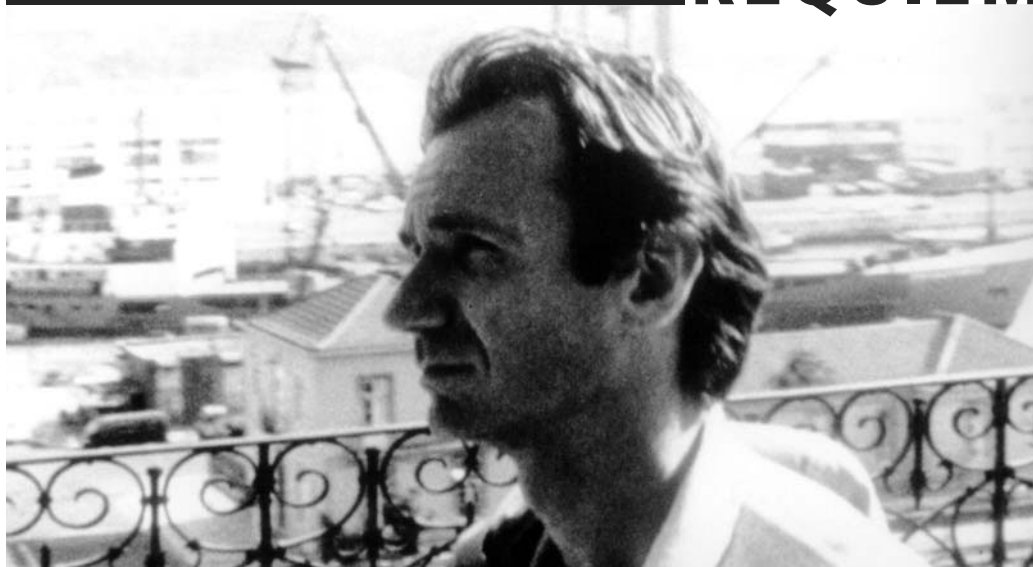
Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard
Comment, Antonio Tabucchi
Camera: Hugues Ryffel

Sound: Henri Maïkoff
Editing: Monica Goux
Music: Michel Wintsch

Cast: Francis Frappa, André Marcon
Production: CAB Productions SA,
Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: CAB Productions SA
Original Version: French, Portuguese

REQUIEM



| 1998 | 35mm | colour | 100'

This story is set in Lisbon on the last Sunday in July, between midday and midnight. That Sunday was apparently the hottest day of the year. It was also a very unusual day, engendering hallucinations and the most amazing encounters.

Time has unravelled, dissolved in the oppressive heat. Past and present merge into one. The living and the dead meet and settle accounts. In the footsteps of the poet Fernando Pessoa, in a desolate Lisbon, between dream and reality, people from the present and ghosts from the past converse in a manner both grave and light-hearted, and shrug off their burden of regret between midday and midnight of the last Sunday in July...

"In **Requiem**, Tanner's classic frontier assumes an exclusively temporal, inner connotation. Nothing in the Portuguese city inhabited solely by symbolic figures distinguishes reality from dream, and the only demarcation line that stands out with any clarity is that between past and present. This Lisbon is a city of the soul (not of the unconscious because, as a lottery-ticket seller points out: 'We have nothing to do with "Mitteleuropa", we have soul'), but still a last landfall, a place on the edge, a land projecting into the 'beyond', on account of the ancient finis terrae imprinted on its DNA." Paola Malanga in *Filmmaker*, 1998

Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard Comment
Camera: Denis Jutzeler
Sound: François Musy

Editing: Monica Goux
Music: Michel Wintsch
Cast: Jérôme Robart, Aïssa Maïga,
Natalie Dontcheva, Jean-Pierre Gos,

Cécile Tanner, Philippe Demarle,
Heinz Bennent
Production: Filmograph SA, CAB
Productions SA, Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: CAB Productions SA
Original Version: French

JONAH AND LILA, TILL TOMORROW



| 1999 | 35mm | colour | 120' | Jonas et Lila à demain

Tanner was never keen on the idea of making a follow-up to the first **Jonah**, on summoning up the “huit Ma” (the eight principal characters in the earlier film) to see what had become of them. Apart from its commercial aspect (repeating the recipe of a past success!), it would be based on the stupid, naturalist idea that “film time” and “life time” are one and the same thing. But the whole purpose of Tanner’s cinema is to shatter this mirror effect, which lies behind so many of the films made nowadays. **Jonah and Lila, till tomorrow** is therefore not a sequel, but rather a musical coda, a way for the director to return to the past, not to churn it out all over again in a complacent sort of way, but to restore it to life. The film tells the story of a modern young couple at the dawn of the millennium. Jonah, just under thirty, is an apprentice film director, while Lila is a sales assistant in a music shop. At the heart of their daily life, recounted in voice-off by Lila, is the special relationship Jonah has with Anziano, an elderly film-maker who has become a writer – possibly Tanner’s alter ego. It is through Anziano that the first Jonah returns to life, his insights punctuating the film like clues, signs of the past that provide landmarks in the contemporary world, and a way of rediscovering its meaning and beauty. When Anziano dies, Jonah is left with this tenuous but rich heritage. He now has to avoid compromise with the prevailing mendacity and work out his own way of living and making films. Frédéric Bas

Co-directors: Alain Tanner,
Myriam Mézières
Script: Myriam Mézières
Camera: Denis Jutzeler

Sound: Christian Monheim
Editing: Monica Goux
Music: Matthew Russel
Cast: Myriam Mézières, Tess Barthes,

Bruno Todeschini, Louise Szpindel,
Luis Régo
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,
Gemini Films, Paris, Messor Films,

Barcelona, CAB Productions SA,
Lausanne
World Rights: Gemini Films
Original Version: French

FLOWERS OF BLOOD



| 2002 | 35mm | colour | 110' | Fleurs de sang

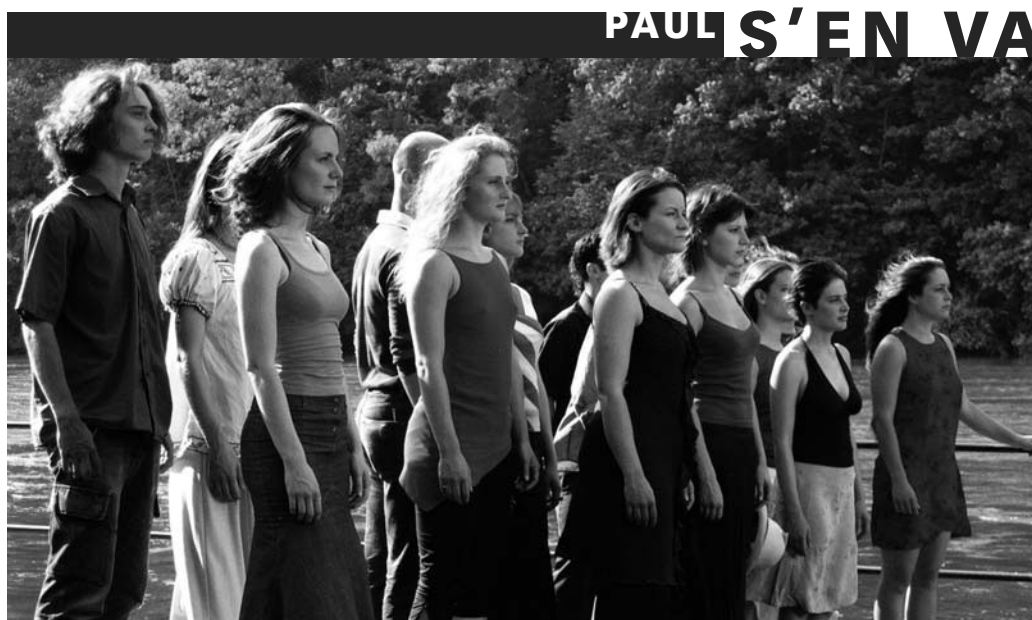
As its title suggests, **Flowers of Blood** belongs entirely to the physical and sensual dimension of Tanner's œuvre – a dimension contributed by Myriam Mézières in **A Flame in My Heart** and **The Diary of Lady M**. The script in this case was written by Mézières herself, based on her own memories, and she actually co-directed the film with Tanner. Again, it is a portrait of a woman and it gives us another glimpse of an exceptional figure. Mézières comes across as an outstanding actress, offering her body and her sufferings with a rare and profoundly moving abandon. Although the action of the film unfolds over five years, charting the development of a painful relationship between a mother and her daughter, the basic principle is to draw it all together rather than follow a psychological chronology. The relationship is apprehended as a single entity: the cracks are evident, but there is not too much emphasis on the process of disintegration. The story divides into two distinct time periods, first with mother and daughter together in the same bohemian setting, then separated by society, each facing her own choices and wanderings. However, the purpose of this time division is not so much to answer the predictable question "What will become of them?" in preparation for a pointless debate on "How can a girl live without her mother?" (and vice versa), as to show the metamorphosis of a single body, a dual mother-daughter identity, which is treated in the film less as a social couple going through ups and downs than as a single female figure with two faces. The beauty of the film lies in this constant blending of the two personalities, an on-going role-play in mother/daughter boundaries resulting in a disturbing tension between incestuous bond and transfer of identity. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard
Comment
Camera: Denis Jutzeler
Sound: Christophe Giovannoni

Editing: Max Karli
Music: Michel Wintsch
Cast: Madeleine Piguet, Julien
Tsangas, Lucie Zelger,

Pauline le Comte, Julia Batinova
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,
TSR, CAB Productions SA, Lausanne,
Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: Gemini Films
Original Version: French



| 2004 | 35mm | colour | 85'

Speaking of **Paul s'en va**, Alain Tanner has said that the film ploughs a "furrow long marked out" in his film-making: "the work of witness, the handing on of knowledge from one generation to the next (...), not in an educational sense, but to keep alive memory, the living thread which runs through our life-times, and which is so threatened today." The result of an encounter between the director and the 17 actor-pupils of the Ecole Supérieure d'Art Dramatique, Tanner's most recent film re-activates with a sure touch the theme of transmission, which has nourished his films since the first **Jonah**. The background is the crisis of meaning affecting the modern world, of which **Paul s'en va** makes an accurate and lucid assessment. Alain Tanner and his scriptwriter Bernard Comment plunge 17 young people into the drama of a disappearance: that of Paul B., their semiology lecturer. This philosopher/teacher has left them a few clues, some mirror exercises intended to help them gain a knowledge of themselves: following the signs in a shopping centre, going to interview a former brigadista from the Spanish Civil War, writing a theatrical farce on tower psychosis in Manhattan inspired by Alfred Jarry and his *Père Ubu*. But Paul's presence/absence in the midst of his pupils is not expressed only in these academic exercises. **Paul s'en va** is punctuated with timeless moments in which each of the 17 students reads and recites texts by authors whose names come up on the screen: Pasolini, Césaire, Céline, Guyotat... This is Paul's superego making itself heard and, through him, the desire of Alain Tanner to counter the ugliness of the world and the pessimism it inspires by calling on poetry and intelligence. Frédéric Bas

NICE TIME

| 1957 | 16mm | b/w | 19' | Piccadilly La Nuit

In any big town, the search for amusement and escape brings people together in one place, where all the different means of satisfying their needs are concentrated. In London the phenomenon is particularly striking because the area in which the amusements are centred is so restricted: Piccadilly Circus and the surrounding streets.

"Nice Time is a series of impressions of the reality of Saturday night – a reality which we have interpreted to extract from it a meaning, to present what Jean Vigo called: un point de vue documenté."



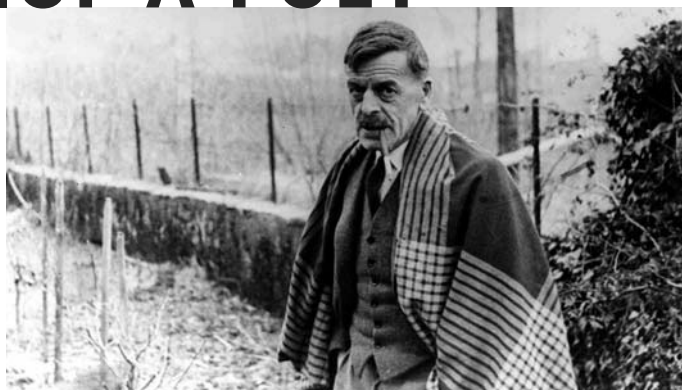
Script: Alain Tanner, Claude Goretta
Camera: John Fletcher
Sound: John Fletcher
Editing: Alain Tanner, Claude Goretta

Music: Chas. McDevitt Skiffle Group
Production: British Film Institute
World Rights: BFI
Original Version: IT

RAMUZ, PASSAGE OF A POET

| 1961 | 35mm | b/w | 27' | Ramuz, passage d'un poète

Poetic tribute to Swiss author Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (1878-1947), whose works have a universal dimension. Tanner and Jotterand reconstruct the writer's life phases by means of texts and visual documents.



Script: Frank Jotterand
Camera: Fernand Reymond and Adrien Pochet
Music: Jacques Olivier

Commentary and texts by Ramuz spoken by André Pache
Production: Actua Films
World Rights: Alain Tanner
Original Version: French

THE APPRENTICES

| 1964 | 35' | b/w | 80' | Les apprentis

The film depicts the lives of apprentices. The youths recount their experiences, their personal background, why they embarked on their apprenticeship, their relations to their home town, their parents and their occupation.



Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Ernest Artaria
Editing: Alain Tanner

Music: Victor Fenigstein
Production: Téléproduction
Original Version: French

A CITY AT CHANDIGARH

1966 | 16mm | colour | 52' | Une ville à Chandigarh

When India and Pakistan became two separate nations in 1947, the state of Punjab was split in two, with its capital, Lahore, on the Pakistani side. The architect Le Corbusier was tasked with designing a new capital, Chandigarh, on a plain bordering on the Himalayan foothills. The film strives to show not only the architectural and city-building aspects, but also the solutions found in answer to human needs, and how people settled in their new surroundings. A poetic and intellectual essay on how progress is achieved under precisely defined economic and social conditions.



Script: Alain Tanner and John Berger
Camera: Ernest Artaria
Music: Chander Kanta Khosla (sitar), Gopal Das Garg (tabla), Sharda Bhargava (vocals), Devendra Murdeshwar,

Parma Lal Gosh and Prakash Wadhera (flutes)
Commentary: John Berger
Production: Alain Tanner and Ernest Artaria

MEN OF THE PORT

1995 | 35mm | colour | 64' | Les hommes du port

After 40 years Alain Tanner again travels to the port of Genoa, where he worked for a shipping company as a 22-year-old. On the back of his own memories he depicts the rough world of the dockworkers, another of those trades that has undergone fundamental changes as a result of recessions, modernisation and liberalisation. "The visual impression of the harbour and the city has changed very little, but what goes on there nowadays is completely different. The city is still as beautiful and alien and somewhat sad as before. But the port is dying, like so many other major ports. In Genoa, as elsewhere in Italy, the economic, social and political climate is highly explosive. But you also feel that things are in flow and the country is on the verge of some far-reaching changes. (...) In this film I wanted to explore my own memories of Genoa, uncover its present and guess at its future. Genoa, this beautiful, this sad, this alien town has become for me a metaphor for society in change." Alain Tanner

"**Men of the Port** wonderfully demonstrates the parallels between the sense of time in Tanner's film oeuvre and the rhythm of the sea. It is a tribute to an age when the quality of work, in its full sense, mattered more than the quantity."

Walter Ruggle, Tages-Anzeiger



Script: Alain Tanner
Camera: Denis Jutzeler
Sound: Henri Maikoff
Editing: Monika Goux
Music: Arvo Pärt

Production: Thelma Film AG, Zurich, Les films du Cyclone, Paris, TSR
World Rights: Thelma Film AG
Original Version: French, Italian

FILMS FOR TELEVISION

All productions made for Société suisse de radiodiffusion et télévision

1958 **Living with Danger**, Alain Tanner works as assistant director on the TV series produced by BBC London

1964 Assistant to Dickinson in a film on the UN for American TV

Four portraits filmed for the "Aujourd'hui" show (SSR-TV)

1968 **Mike and the Use of Science** Mike et l'usage de la science Reportage Alain Tanner with the participation of John Berger Production: Claude Goretta, André Gazut and Science & Culture, 55'

Dr. B., Country Doctor Docteur B., médecin de campagne. Production: Claude Goretta, André Gazut and Science & Culture, 61'

1969 **The Buffet, the Hours and the Days**, Le buffet, les heures et les jours. Production: Claude Goretta, André Gazut, 46'

1970 **Life as It Comes**, La vie comme ça. With the journalist Michel Boujut. Production: Claude Goretta and André Gazut, 59'

Television films made for «Continent sans visa» and "Temps présent" for the SSR-Geneva.

1965 **The Right to Housing**, Le droit au logement. With the journalist Claude Torracinta, 21'

Diary of a Murderer, Journal d'un assassin. With the journalist François Enderlin, 5'

To Be a Gaul, Être Gallois, 18'

The Bernese Jura, Le Jura Bernois. With the journalist Jean-François Nicod, 18'

1966 **The Soldiers of God**, Les soldats du Bon Dieu. With the journalist Jean-Pierre Goretta, 23'

A Worker's Day, La journée d'un ouvrier. With the journalist Claude Torracinta, 72'

The Last Square Metre of the Empire, Le dernier carré de l'empire. With the journalist François Enderlin, 28'

The 100 Days Of Ongania Les 100 Jours d'Ongania. With the journalist François Enderlin, 28'

1966 Years after Jesus Christ, 1966 ans après Jésus-Christ. With the journalist Guy Ackermann, 19'

1967 **The Siege of Grenoble**, Le siège de Grenoble. With the journalist Claude Torracinta, 42'

The Tailors of the Rue Téléphérique, Les Tailleurs de la rue du Téléphérique. With the journalist Jean-Pierre Goretta 23'

The New Greeks, Les Nouveaux Grecs. With the journalist François Enderlin, 10'

Only Too Much to Choose L'embarras du choix. With the journalist Guy Ackermann, 23'

Fleet Street. With the journalist Guy Ackermann, 27'

1968 **The Trough of the Wave** Le creux de la vague. With the journalists François Enderlin and Guy Ackermann, 53'

The Belgium Three, Les trois Belges. With the journalist Michel Croce-Spinelli, 24'

Power Is in the Streets Le pouvoir dans la rue. With the journalist Jean-Pierre Goretta 47'

Dancing on a Volcano Danser sur un volcan, 35'

Are Your Really That Ugly? Êtes-vous vraiment si laid? 21'

The Defregger Affair L'affaire defregger, 21'

1970 **The Administrators and Article 42**, Les administratifs et l'article 42, 53'