



ALFONSO CUÁRON ON ALAIN TANNER

Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000

+ intro by Alfonso Cuarón

Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000
(Jonas qui aura 25 ans en l'an 2000)

Director: Alain Tanner

Production Companies: Action Films, Citel Films,
Société Française de Production,
SSR Télévision Suisse

Executive Producer: Yves Peyrot

Producer: Yves Gasser

Production Executive: Roland Jouby

Production Supervisor: Bernard Lorain

Production Manager: Guy Michaud

Assistant Directors: Laurent Ferrier, Anita Peyrot,
Alain Klarer

Script Girl: Anne-Marie Fallot

Screenplay/Dialogue: Alain Tanner, John Berger

Adaptation: Alain Tanner

Quotations: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Octavio Paz,
Samuel Butler, Pablo Neruda, Adrian Mitchell,
Jean Piaget

Director of Photography: Renato Berta

1st Camera Assistant: Carlo Varini

2nd Camera Assistant: Paule Muret

Grips: Jean-Pierre Goillard, Robert Peyramaure

Electricians: Robert Boner, Benjamin Lehmann

Stills Photography: Luc Chessex

Editor: Brigitte Sousselier

Assistant Editor: Marc Blavet

Art Director: Yanko Hodjisi

Assistant Art Director: Olivier Bierer

Make-up: Michèle Pissanchi

Music: Jean-Marie Sénia

Sound Recordist: Pierre Gamet

Boom Operator: Luc Yersin

Sound Re-recording: Christian Londe

Cast:

Jean-Luc Bideau (*Max Satigny*)

Rufus (*Mathieu Vernier*)

Miou-Miou (*Marie*)

Jacques Denis (*Marco Perly*)

Dominique Labourier (*Marguerite Certoux*)

Roger Jendly (*Marcel Certoux*)

Myriam Mézières (*Madeleine*)

Myriam Boyer (*Mathilde Vernier*)

Raymond Bussièrès (*Charles*)

Nicolas (*Jonas*)

Pierre Holdener

Maurice Auffer

Jean Schlegel

Gilbert Costa

Christine Wipf

Guillaume Chenevière

Robert Schmid

Daniel Stuffel

Francis Reusser

Michel Fidanza

Nicole Dié

Domingo Semedo

Mady Deluz

Jiairo Daghini

Groupe Théâtral du Collège Calvin

Albino Palumbo *

Cécile *

Coralie *

Nathalie *

David *

Lionel *

Sten *

Switzerland-France 1976

116 mins Digital (restoration)

* Uncredited

Intelligent without being cerebral, political without being dogmatic, cloaking its epic view of history in a wealth of burlesque domestic details, *Jonah* is perhaps the most unpretentiously accomplished film yet to describe the revolutionary cultural changes and conservative economic forces that convergently define Western man's social possibilities.

An octet of characters, themselves approximately 25 in the year 1968, emerge shakily from eight years of defeatist retreat to take stock of the kind of society that awaits the generation which will be 25 in the year 2000. Part of the stocktaking is the recognition, new to Tanner's work, of the validity of false starts and of the fact that history develops more slowly than human desires. Where *Return from Africa* posited the somewhat Panglossian moral that the proper testing ground for revolutionary politics was not some exotic and dramatically undemocratic elsewhere but the drab familiarity of one's own backyard, *Jonah* takes the *Candide* parallel one stage further and builds outwards from the attempts of its principal characters literally to cultivate their garden.

Yet it is not only through the occasional chink in the garden wall that the larger forces at work in the outside world (unemployment, inflation, speculation) peep through: in their individual histories and their well-salted wounds from '68, the characters bring some variegated slices of the outside world with them into the garden ('I'm Labour,' says Mathieu to Marguerite, 'but you don't look much like Capital'), and it's only a matter of time – which is itself very much the matter of the film – before the utopian nature of private solutions breaks through the wall upon which the children's brightly coloured life-sized paintings of the ephemeral 'family' stand preserved as on a battle monument. Significantly, it is Mathieu, the proletarian, who finds the strength to build a new dream on the disintegration of the old one: cycling into the grey and smoky city, it's as if he leaves behind him a group still frozen in their makeshift private retreats – Marcel, in his ecological fairyland, Max in his bewildered cynicism, Madeleine in the mixed metaphors of her gastro-erotic confusion.

The fact that the principal characters represent a set of archetypal attitudes is underlined by Tanner's anti-realist device of giving them each a name beginning with Ma..., and by his non-naturalist commuting between colour for the narrative's present tense and black-and-white for the characters' dreams, memories and fantasies. Yet despite the film's quite wilfully signalled schematism, its characters, overflowing with a positively palpable humanity, are never reduced to abstractions. Tanner and John Berger (who receives first credit for the film's admirable script) achieve a miraculous balance between a generalised pessimism and a heart-warming, and not too sentimental philanthropy. Where Fassbinder deals with what he describes as the manifestations of 'everyday fascism', they might be said to describe the healthier signs of everyday socialism, or at least of resistance. If the focus of the film remains firmly on its eight somewhat eccentric misfits, *Jonah* sketches a portrait of the smugly conformist society which has relegated them to marginal, precarious lives – from the fact of their displacement as much as from their rare contacts with the world beyond their secret garden. The cautionary words of Jean-Jacques (a statue of Rousseau presides over the opening and closing sequences) envelop the lives of characters enchained by their institutions from the cradle to the grave; but their resistance is, in human terms at least, quite irresistible.

ALFONSO CUÁRON ON ALAIN TANNER

Charles, Dead or Alive Charles mort ou vif

+ intro by Alfonso Cuarón

Sat 25 Jan 15:00

The Salamander La salamander

Sat 25 Jan 17:50

Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000

Jonas qui aura 25 ans en l'an 2000

+ intro by Alfonso Cuarón

Sun 26 Jan 15:40

In the White City Dans la ville blanche

Sun 26 Jan 18:35

These films have been restored and digitized by the Association Alain Tanner in collaboration with Cinémathèque Suisse and Association Filmo

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If the film, like Mathieu, ultimately rests its hopes for a better future in the traditional tactic of class struggle, it also attests throughout the indomitable individuality of the combatants who will make up the collective force. By showing literacy, intelligence and social concern cutting across the traditional class barriers, it offers an appealing foretaste of a possible future world. Although each of the characters' lives provides evidence of things going from bad to worse, the final note is one of optimism. A thoughtless society, as Marcel so indignantly explains, may be killing off all the whales in order to manufacture lipstick, but from the belly of the dying race will emerge Jonas, and perhaps a happier race of men. Certainly, one emerges from the film with faith in mankind uncloyingly restored: from eight faultless, and clown-like, performances, one achieves the sense of having found eight new friends – the small beginnings, in fact, of a mass movement.

Jan Dawson, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, January 1978

Alain Tanner on 'Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000'

I have always tried to reject realistic writing and reading. It's true by contrast that I call on certain relevant elements from the 'classical' code of representation: a feeling of the real, for example recognisable characters. But these elements only appear within the strict limits assigned to them – in the guise of reference points for the audience. They are precisely circumscribed within the little 'pieces' of the film, inside the scenes, but they never operate at the level of total structure. Looking a little closer, despite the eruption of 'realism', of the 'lived', of recognisable characters (but with whom one can't identify), if finally everything rings false in *Jonah* it's because the filming effects a distortion of the representational mode. It dismantles the mechanism and plays with it even when it issues from it. This derives not only from the non-linearity of the story, but above all from the internal structure of each scene. If the redefinition of realism did proceed that way, through what you call the 'realism of desire', I would feel I had moved a step forward.

When you say 'that one has the feeling of being there, in reality, in fiction', you put your finger precisely on the question. To me it's obvious, but it's the first time a critic has said it. This push-pull movement between the attraction of the real and the uncoupling from the real, between the 'true' and the 'false', is the basis of my work on writing and fiction. To disengage each time the fiction gets into gear permits the spectator to catch the ball on the first bounce and prohibits him from burying himself in his semiconscious state. It gives him back his place and establishes the dialogue.

The actors: the starting point of the film, beyond simply beginning to pay real attention, was the definitive and radical choice of eight actors (who only learned of it six months later). Eight because ten was too many and six not enough. Pairs because men and women. The actors 'inspire' the film more than they make it. With this method there is, upstream from the film, a whole background which results in the fact that the actors' work at the moment of filming is nothing more than a kind of 'precipitate'. The 'direction of the actors' becomes a mould, part of a procedure which traces back to a year of filming. The characters no longer elude me, except through the accident of imponderable factors or moods. Moreover, it's evident that in *Jonah* the actors belong to a kind of 'family'. If I'm not mistaken, it's François Truffaut who distinguished between 'poetic' actors and 'psychological' actors. By instinct I'm drawn to the former. The rest is a matter of work and sometimes patience, but there is no 'method' to impose, insofar as they already have their own, which sometimes consists of not having one, but which in any case is never the same from one to another.

Alain Tanner interviewed by N. Heinic, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, January 1977