It is not an overreaction to suggest that Tony Richardson is one of the most important British filmmakers of all time. So it is paradoxical to see him working so consistently in America. Richardson was described by Lindsey Anderson as the most remarkable by far of the artists battling for change in Britain. Richardson’s perspective on the British industry was never a secret, pointing out in the early 60s that it was “quite impossible of course to finance a film in England except through a distributor”. Interestingly, Richardson’s claim was that the British industry had become too caught up in American filmmaking models and attitudes had become too wrapped up in cost. And so, many were surprised when a man who has described Hollywood as horrible and claimed that if anybody had suggested he be living in LA he would’ve laughed at them, moved his production to the US.

There were early attempts at American productions with an adaptation of Faulkner’s *Sanctuary* and a misplaced attempt to make Edith Waugh’s *The Loved One* but instead, as a Francophile, with a home in France, Richardson made some films in Europe before heading to America to work on *A Delicate Balance* in 1973 with Catherine Hepburn and Joseph Cotton. With this film Richardson retained his quintessentially English sensibilities and his foundations as an ‘Angry Young Man’ in working through the theatre, this time with the American Film Theatre, an organisation which targeted films which did not tend to attract big screen attention.

He next produced a film for the television called *Death in Canaan* in 1978, which was not well received by critics but was in itsself and interesting murder thriller. Following that, Richardson released *The Border* in 1982 starring Jack Nicholson as a guard on the American and Mexican border. *Border* retains all of the characteristic tension and anxiety of Richardson’s work but with a performance by Jack Nicholson which at the time was much more subdued than audiences had come to expect from the star and ultimartely produced a much more intense film which smoulders.

Richardson recognised in the late 70s that American audiences were by this point his biggest market and went on to produce a bizarre and somewhat mad-cap comedy in *Hotel New Hampshire* (1984) with Rob Lowe and Jodie Foster but with Nastassja Kinski in a star-turn dressed as a bear. This film became a Canadian coproduction as it was a filled with omens from the start, beginning with a budget that was halved after production had begun and backers who went on to vandalise Richardson’s office in their frustration. Despite being a filmmaker who claimed that once films are finished with, they are dead to him, he once said about *Hotel New Hampshire* that “I’ve never loved a movie more”.

He went on to make more television fayre in *Penalty Phase* in 1986 and a tragically underrated segment film called *Women and Men: Stories of Seduction* alongside Frederic Raphael and Ken Russell. His last film in the US was *Blue Sky* released posthumously in 1994 which feels particularly American in the pace of the action and the context of political conflict and nuclear threat. It is nonetheless a strikingly original film that is emotionally charged in Richardson’ identifiably unique way.

As a filmmaker who’s style is of course familiar but still terribly difficult to define, Tony Richardson’s work resonated well in America. These films are as innovative and powerful as his earlier work but perhaps owing to some misplaced patriotism, were never quite as renowned as the pioneering films of British New Wave.