

**TONY RICHARDSON**

***One Review***

**The Cinema of Tony Richardson: essays and interviews.** ed. by James M. Welsh and John C. Tibbetts. State University of New York, 1999. 297p bibl filmography index afp ISBN 0-79144249-7, \$71.50. Reviewed in 2000jan

*Choice.*

Because most of Richardson's films were translations from stage or page, his own inventiveness, recurrent themes, and humanist concerns have not been sufficiently recognized. This volume provides a valuable corrective, encouraging a fresh, closer look at Richardson. Although these 13 essays could have been funeral eulogies for the director (1928-91)—so laudatory, apologetic, and repetitious are the obsequies—they amply rebut the director's detractors and lay a strong claim for him as a major British auteur and for his historical importance in cranking up the realism and formal invention of the British cinema. All the contributors enliven the films with detailed analyses: Kenneth Nolley delimits the social concerns of Richardson's early adaptations and finds their thematic extension in *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews*; other contributors look at Richardson's French and American "periods" and at his *Hamlet*. Of course, the best funerals acknowledge the subject's failures (thus, essays by Rebecca Pauly and Gene Phillips), admit scandal (Richardson's enviable love life), and embrace the subject for all that. But one wishes that Welch and Tibbetts had wielded the mortal scythe and cleared space for *Laughter in the Dark* and *Ned Kelly*, the only major Richardson films not treated here. Undergraduate, graduate, and research collections.

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