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The First Quarto of Hamlet in Film: The Revenge Tragedies of Tony Richardson and Franco Zeffirelli

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Abstract:

In 1969, Tony Richardson released a filmed version of his acclaimed theatrical production of Hamlet. Twenty-one years, and many staged productions of Hamlet later, Franco Zeffirelli filmed yet another, and very different, Hamlet. Whereas Richardson's is darkly minimal, Zeffirelli's colourful and star-studded production is lavish in set and setting. Nicol Williamson's intense portrayal of Hamlet is a far cry from that of Mel Gibson's Hollywood-esque revenger. But together, these films, and other daring productions like them, demonstrated the

actability of the first quarto of Hamlet as a performance text thereby helping to change its status among textual scholars as well, prompting them to reevaluate the 1603 quarto.

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