



Shakespeare: The Sonnets (Analysing Texts)

John Blades

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The appearance in 1609 of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* is cloaked in mystery and controversy, while the poems themselves are masterpieces of silence and deception. The intervening four centuries have done little to diminish either their mystique or their appeal, and recent years have witnessed an upsurge in interest in these brilliant and contentious lyrics.

John Blades' penetrating study of the *Sonnets* is a highly lucid introduction to Shakespeare's subjects and poetic craft, involving detailed insights on the major themes, together with a comprehensive exploration of the Rival Poet and Dark Mistress sequences.

Shakespeare: The Sonnets:

- draws on an extensive range of sonnets, offering a line-by-line analysis that engages with the poems as masterworks in their own right, as well as registering their relationship with Shakespeare's dramas
- locates the *Sonnets* in their Elizabethan and humanist framework, with a survey of the history of the sonnet form and rhetorical conventions within the context of the early modern period
- concludes with a brief assessment of critical attitudes towards the *Sonnets* over the four centuries since their publication and an indepth examination of four important critics.

Providing students with the critical and analytical skills with which to approach the *Sonnets*, and featuring a helpful glossary and suggestions for further study, this fascinating book is an indispensable guide.

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