

## Is Shakespeare any good? : and other questions on how to evaluate literature

Bradford, Richard, 1957-, author

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### Abstrak

Is Shakespeare Any Good? is refreshingly honest and controversial, a lucid and sometimes startling assessment of what makes literature, as well as a much-needed breath of fresh air within the locked room of literary study. This volume constitutes a vital contribution to the ongoing debate on literary aesthetics and proposes an entirely new methodology for the study of literature as well as a convincing apology for English as a subject. Bradford has a gift for making complex ideas simple and shining light into dark corners." --

Madelena Gonzalez, University of Avignon --

"Richard Bradford has produced a pugnacious and carefully constructed critique of modern attitudes to the vexed question of how we should set about evaluating literary texts. Its insistence on the desirability of that much maligned abstract 'taste' is thoroughly to be applauded." --

D.J. Taylor, Author of Orwell: The Life, winner of the Whitbread Biography Prize --

After reading a few pages of a book, you might find yourself gripped, moved, bored, or -- in the case of far too many literary "classics" -- somewhat astonished that it ever got into print at all. While initial impressions are often influenced by personal literary tastes, one may also be reacting to writing that is very good -- or genuinely bad. But who decides what constitutes "good" literature? If you wish to know the reasons why a book is considered good or bad, you'd be hard-pressed to find the answers in a university literature course. Exploring issues that academics have studiously avoided for years, Is Shakespeare Any Good? reveals why certain literary works and authors are treated as superior to others, and boldly questions the literary establishment's criteria for creating an imperium of "great" writers. --

Author Richard Bradford shows us how to articulate our own informed opinions on the qualities or deficiencies of a literary work -- whether the author in question is James Joyce, Jeffrey Archer, or the Bard of Avon himself. Also covered are: self-appointed arbiters of taste in the literary world; academia's wretched influence in shaping literary merit (or to be more accurate its failure to say anything relevant); whether popular literature's bad rap is warranted; does reading and studying literature do us any good?; the dreadful legacy of modernism; and more. It also asks this frank question of one of literature's greatest sacred cows -- who says we can't dislike Shakespeare? Lively and provocative, Is Shakespeare Any Good? is certain to raise a few eyebrows while elevating the level of debate about the true nature of literary merit. --Book Jacket