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Sommario/riassunto

The Dramatic Imagination of Robert Browning offers an accessible and authoritative guide to the essentials of Robert Browning's life and poetry. Drawing from his personal letters and from the diaries and memoirs of his contemporaries, this literary biography provides a wealth of information about the main events of his life, including the social, political, religious, and aesthetic issues that concerned him; it offers critical commentary defining the central characteristics of his poetry; and it tracks the changes in his reputation through contemporary reviews and the growth of the Browning societies. An English poet who was deeply responsive to European culture and affairs, Robert Browning has sometimes been dismissed by modern readers for his obscurity or roughness of language. Now two distinguished scholars of Browning's work trace the arc of his development as an artist and thinker from his earliest poems to the last in his long and remarkably productive career. The authors illustrate how Browning moved from describing "incidents in the development of a soul," to developing his reader's soul as collaborator in the artistic process, to the development of his own soul in the making of poetry. Through a fresh reading of not only his poetry but also the letters of both Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, they have garnered details that situate the two in historical context, provide a vivid sense of Robert's personality, and also correct biases against Elizabeth's influence. Their critical commentary focuses on the poet's dramatic imagination and argues that his extensive body of work after *The Ring and the Book* often dismissed as evidencing a decline in his poetic powers represented new directions in his poetry marked by inventive dialogue, verbal puzzles, and virtuoso rhyming. Written to appeal to both general readers and scholars, the book will enable anyone to read Browning's poems with a firm sense of the subjects and practices that are central to his texts, along with a knowledge of their context in the poet's life and thought. *The Dramatic Imagination of Robert Browning* invites readers of a singular body of poetry to achieve a new understanding of Browning's work and a greater appreciation of his life.

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