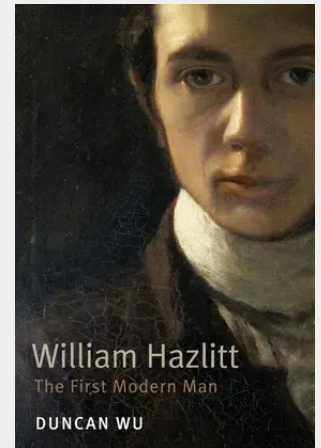


William Hazlitt

The First Modern Man. Duncan Wu

Romanticism is where the modern age begins, and Hazlitt was its most articulate spokesman. No one else had the ability to see it whole; no one else knew so many of its politicians, poets, and philosophers. By interpreting it for his contemporaries, he speaks to us of ourselves - of the culture and world we now inhabit. Perhaps the most important development of his time, the creation of a mass media, is one that now dominates our lives. Hazlitt's livelihood was dependent on it. As the biography argues, he took political sketch-writing to a new level, invented sports commentary as we know it, and created the essay-form as practised by Clive James, Gore Vidal, and Michael Foot. Duncan Wu's profile of one of the greatest journalists in the language draws on over a decade of archival research in libraries across Britain and North America, to reveal for the first time such matters as why Godwin broke with Hazlitt; how Hazlitt came to know Sir John Soane and J. M. W. Turner; the true nature of Hazlitt's dealings with Thomas Medwin, and what the likes of Joseph Farington and Sir Thomas Lawrence thought of him. In addition, it sheds new light on Hazlitt's dealings with such figures as Francis Jeffrey, Robert Stodart, John M'Creery, Henry Crabb Robinson, Joseph Parkes, John Cam Hobhouse, and Stendhal. It benefits also from Wu's New Writings of William Hazlitt, many of which make their appearance here, illuminating hitherto obscure passages of Hazlitt's life.

Duncan Wu's portrait of William Hazlitt - covering Hazlitt's entire life - reveals one of the greatest journalists in the language, and the principal spokesman of the Romantic age, interacting with every major writer and many other movers and shakers of the era.



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