

Veranstalter	Dr. Philipp Hunnekuhl
Thema	Hazlitt [ENG-6/a, AA-V3ab, ENG-12, AA7, AA-10, LAA9, LAA12, AA-MA1, AA-MA2, AA-MA6, AA-W, AA-WB]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-550
Zeit	Di., 10-12
Raum	Phil 1250
Beginn	Dienstag, 18.10.2016

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was an English journalist, essayist, critic, philosopher, and painter. On 10 April 2003, Michael Foot, the former Leader of the Labour Party, unswerving adversary of Margaret Thatcher, and fellow journalist, unveiled the new headstone for Hazlitt's long-neglected grave in St Anne's churchyard, Soho, London. This public occasion, which also marked the beginning of the Hazlitt Society, reflects what Kevin Gilmartin (California Institute of Technology) calls the 'striking revival of interest' in Hazlitt – an interest that still prevails. Terry Eagleton (Lancaster University), today one of the world's most prominent literary critics, relishes the 'swashbuckling stuff' that is Hazlitt's prose. Tom Paulin (Oxford), in a similar vein, labels Hazlitt 'one of the very greatest masters of English prose'. Uttara Natarajan (Goldsmiths, London), the founder and editor of *The Hazlitt Review*, has dedicated the better part of her career to exploring the depth of Hazlitt's philosophy, and Roy Park (Oxford) sees in Hazlitt a metaphysician whose approach to art anticipates Wittgenstein. A.C. Grayling (New College, London) emphasises Hazlitt's role as a 'hard-hitting political polemicist and journalist' defying contemporary reactionism amid what Grayling terms the 'quarrel of the age'. And Duncan Wu (Georgetown) calls Hazlitt 'the first modern man', arguing that Hazlitt '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 [the aforementioned] Michael Foot'. In other words, to understand the most sophisticated journalism across English-speaking countries in our time, we need to understand Hazlitt.

This course aims to familiarise students with Hazlitt's 'radical style' (Paulin) while simultaneously exploring Hazlitt's times and cultural environment through his eyes. After all, as Wu and Grayling agree, no other writer knew the political, artistic, and philosophical spheres of London and Britain quite as well as Hazlitt. In order to achieve both of the above objectives comprehensibly and cohesively – to be able to trace developments in Hazlitt as well as his surroundings – we shall adopt a largely chronological approach. After our introductory meeting, we shall spend weeks 2 and 3 discussing extracts from Hazlitt's treatise *On the Principles of Human Action* (1805), the *Reply to Malthus's Essay on Population* (1807), and his *Lectures on English Philosophy* (1813). This should help us come to grips with the philosophical substratum of the pieces to follow. Thereafter, we will turn towards a variety of Hazlittian subjects through time, such as theatre, literary, and art criticism, as well as social commentary and political journalism. Each week's selected reading will consist of some 50-60 pages, and will be taken from the following volumes: week 4) *The Round Table* (1817); week 5) *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817); week 6) *A View of the English Stage* (1818); week 7) *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818); week 8) *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (1819); weeks 9 and 10) *Political Essays* (1819); weeks 11 and 12) *Table-Talk* (1820); week 13) *The Spirit of the Age* (1825); and week 14) *The Plain Speaker* (1826). You will not need to purchase any books for this course: all reading materials will either be provided, or can be downloaded for free.

Requirements for successful completion: regular attendance, detailed knowledge of assigned texts, a presentation, and a final 3,000–4,000 word essay.

Introductory reading: Duncan Wu, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

* Please note: if you cannot register for this course through Stine, please send me an email *before* the first seminar. Otherwise I may not be able to guarantee you a place on this course.