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On the Pleasure of Hating

Willim Hazlitt (1778-1830)

Read by: D. S. Harvey
Length: 37 minutes
Language: English

Genre: Essays
Style: Solo

Product Formats and Options				
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“On the Pleasure of Hating” is an essay by William Hazlitt, published in 1826. The essay discusses the human tendency to experience pleasure from feeling hatred or dislike towards others. Hazlitt argues that this emotion is not just negative, but can also provide satisfaction and enjoyment. He provides examples from everyday life and politics, and reflects on the role of hatred in shaping personal and social relationships. In conclusion, Hazlitt suggests that hatred should be tempered with understanding and compassion, to avoid causing harm to others.

Some representative quotations:

“We grow tired of everything but turning others into ridicule, and congratulating ourselves on their defects.”

“We hate old friends: we hate old books: we hate old opinions; and at last we come to hate ourselves.”

“I bear the creature no ill-will, but still I hate the very sight of it.”

“The pleasure of hating, like a poisonous mineral, eats into the heart of religion, and turns it to rankling spleen and bigotry; it makes patriotism an excuse for carrying fire, pestilence, and famine into other lands: it leaves to virtue nothing but the spirit of censoriousness, and a narrow, jealous, inquisitorial watchfulness over the actions and motives of others.”

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was an English essayist, critic, and philosopher. He was born in Maidstone, Kent, and grew up in a family of intellectuals. Hazlitt initially trained as a painter, but later found success as a writer and speaker. He is best known for his witty and insightful essays on a wide range of subjects, including politics, literature, and human nature. Hazlitt’s writing style was characterized by its clear and concise prose, as well as its insightful commentary on contemporary issues. He was also known for his philosophical works, including “The Spirit of the Age” and “Table Talk”, which explored his views on the human condition and the role of the individual in society. Hazlitt was a vocal advocate of freedom of speech and expression, and his writing continues to be widely read and highly regarded to this day. Despite his great influence, Hazlitt lived much of his life in poverty, and died at the age of 52. Nevertheless, his legacy as one of the greatest essayists in English literary history lives on.