

# The Consecration of the Writer, 1750-1830 (European Horizons)

Paul Benichou

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The Consecration of the Writer is the definitive study of the first stages of a phenomenon that has profoundly affected world literature: the process by which modern writers ceased to speak as representatives of some religious or political power and instead seized the mantle of spiritual authority in their own right, speaking directly to and in the name of humanity.

Paul Bénichou identifies three great moments in this process: the advent of the Enlightenment faith in philosophy and the rise of its literary concomitant, the man of letters; the literary creations of the counterrevolution and their surprising involvement in the elevation of the status of poetry; and, finally, the fusion of these tendencies in the early phases of romanticism in France.

Bénichou deepens our understanding of romanticism by showing that it was a revision of the Enlightenment faith rather than a reaction against it. The extraordinary depth of Bénichou's research, the originality of his conclusions, and the importance of his methodological reflections make this study an essential reference in the contemporary return to literary history.



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