

## Pure Intelligence: The Life of William Hyde Wollaston (Synthesis)

Melvyn C. Usselman

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William Hyde Wollaston made an astonishing number of discoveries in an astonishingly varied number of fields: platinum metallurgy, the existence of ultraviolet radiation, the chemical elements palladium and rhodium, the amino acid cystine, and the physiology of binocular vision, among others. Along with his colleagues Humphry Davy and Thomas Young, he was widely recognized during his life as one of Britain's leading scientific practitioners in the first part of the nineteenth century, and the deaths of all three within a six-month span, between 1828 and 1829, were seen by many as the end of a glorious period of British scientific supremacy. Unlike Davy and Young, however, Wollaston was not the subject of a contemporary biography, and his many impressive achievements have fallen into obscurity as a result.

Pure Intelligence is the first book-length study of Wollaston, his science, and the environment in which he thrived. Drawing on previously-unstudied laboratory records as well as historical reconstructions of chemical experiments and discoveries, and written in a highly accessible style, Pure Intelligence will help to reinstate Wollaston in the history of science, and the pantheon of its great innovators.



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