Real Money and Romanticism interprets poetry and fiction by Sir Walter Scott, John Keats, and Charles Dickens in the context of changes in the British monetary system and in the broader economy during the early nineteenth century. In this period, modern systems of paper money and intellectual property became established; Matthew Rowlinson describes the consequent changes in relations between writers and publishers and shows how a new conception of material artifacts as the bearers of abstract value shaped Romantic conceptions of character, material culture, and labor.

A fresh and radically different contribution to the growing field of inquiry into the economics of literature, this is an ingenious and challenging reading of Romantic discourse from the point of view of monetary theory and history.

Matthew Rowlinson is an associate professor at the University of Western Ontario, where he teaches in the Department of English and the Centre for Theory and Criticism.
This series aims to foster the best new work in one of the most challenging fields within English literary studies. From the early 1780s to the early 1830s a formidable array of talented men and women took to literary composition, not just in poetry, which some of them famously transformed, but in many modes of writing. The expansion of publishing created new opportunities for writers, and the political stakes of what they wrote were raised again by what Wordsworth called those “great national events” that were “almost daily taking place”: the French Revolution, the Napoleonic and American wars, urbanization, industrialization, religious revival, an expanded empire abroad and the reform movement at home. This was an enormous ambition, even when it pretended otherwise. The relations between science, philosophy, religion, and literature were reworked in texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Biographia Literaria*; gender relations in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *Don Juan*; journalism by Cobbett and Hazlitt; poetic form, content and style by the Lake School and the Cockney School. Outside Shakespeare studies, probably no body of writing has produced such a wealth of comment or done so much to shape the responses of modern criticism. This indeed is the period that saw the emergence of those notions of “literature” and of literary history, especially national literary history, on which modern scholarship in English has been founded.

The categories produced by Romanticism have also been challenged by recent historicist arguments. The task of the series is to engage both with a challenging corpus of Romantic writings and with the changing field of criticism they have helped to shape. As with other literary series published by Cambridge, this one will represent the work of both younger and more established scholars, on either side of the Atlantic and elsewhere.

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REAL MONEY
AND ROMANTICISM

MATTHEW ROWLINSON
For Sasha, who knows that a book should have an argument, and for my parents.
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“A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you’re talking real money.”
Attributed to US Senator Everett L. Dirksen

“How the price of goods in each case is arrived at can never quite be foreseen, neither in the course of their production nor later when they enter the market. It is exactly the same with the object in its allegorical existence. At no point is it written in the stars that the allegorist’s profundity will lead it to one meaning rather than another.”

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, Convolut J.