Incarnations of fatal women, or *femmes fatales*, recur throughout the works of women writers in the Romantic period. Adriana Craciun demonstrates how portrayals of *femmes fatales* played an important role in the development of Romantic women’s poetic identities and informed their exploration of issues surrounding the body, sexuality, and politics. Craciun covers a wide range of writers and genres from the 1790s through the 1830s. She discusses the work of well-known figures including Mary Wollstonecraft, as well as lesser-known writers such as Anne Bannerman. By examining women writers’ fatal women in historical, political, and medical contexts, Craciun uncovers a far-ranging debate on sexual difference. She also engages with current research on the history of the body and sexuality, providing an important historical precedent for modern feminist theory’s ongoing dilemma regarding the status of “woman” as a sex.

ADRIANA CRACIUN is lecturer in English and Director of the Centre for Byron Studies at the University of Nottingham. She is the editor of *Zofloya, or the Moor* (1997) and *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on Mary Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (2002), and co-editor of *Rebellious Hearts: British Women Writers and the French Revolution* (2001).
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, urbanisation, industrialisation, 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 response 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.

For a complete list of titles published see end of book.
FATAL WOMEN OF ROMANTICISM

ADRIANA CRACIUN
for Kari E. Lokke and Jerome J. McGann
There is no knowledge but I know it.

Nick Cave, “Far from Me”
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Abbreviations


Ainsi Robinson, Mary, Ainsi va le Monde, Inscribed to Robert Merry, 2nd edn, London, 1790


Bodies Butler, Judith, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”, London: Routledge, 1993

EC Landon, Letitia, Ethel Churchill: or, the Two Brides, 3 vols. in 1 (1837), ed. F.J. Sypher, Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1992

Hours Dacre, Charlotte (King), Hours of Solitude. A Collection of original Poems, now first published, 2 vols. (1805), New York: Garland, 1978

IR Robinson, Mary, Impartial Reflections on the Present Situation of the Queen of France, by a Friend to Humanity, London: John Bell, 1791


List of abbreviations

**LF**

**LPW**

**Memoirs**

**Monody**
Robinson, Mary, *Monody to the Memory of the Late Queen of France*, London: T. Spilsbury and Son, 1793

**ND**

**NLS**
National Library of Scotland

**Nymphomania**

**Passions**

**PL**

**Reflections**

**RG**

**RPW**

**RR**

**STC**

**Tales**
Bannerman, Anne, *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry*, London: Vernor and Hood, 1802
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Zofloya  Dacre, Charlotte, *Zofloya; or, the Moor: A Romance of the Fifteenth Century* (1806), ed. Adriana Craciun, Peterborough: Broadview, 1997