Conservative culture in the romantic period should not be understood merely as an effort to preserve the old regime in Britain against the threat of revolution. Instead, conservative thinkers and writers aimed to transform British culture and society to achieve a stable future in contrast to the destructive upheavals taking place in France. Kevin Gilmartin explores the literary forms of counterrevolutionary expression in Britain, showing that while conservative movements were often inclined to treat print culture as a dangerously unstable and even subversive field, a whole range of print forms – ballads, tales, dialogues, novels, critical reviews – became central tools in the counterrevolutionary campaign. Beginning with the pamphlet campaigns of the loyalist Association movement and the Cheap Repository in the 1790s, Gilmartin analyses the role of periodical reviews and anti-Jacobin fiction in the campaign against revolution, and closes with a new account of the conservative careers of Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Kevin Gilmartin is Associate Professor of English Literature at the California Institute of Technology. He is the author of Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England (Cambridge, 1996) and the editor, with James Chandler, of Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780–1840 (Cambridge, 2005).
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 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.

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For Susan and Raymond
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List of Abbreviations


AJ The Anti-Jacobin; or, Weekly Examiner

AJR Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine


BEM Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine

BC British Critic

CG Christian Guardian


CW 7 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols., Vol. 7 of The Collected
List of Abbreviations


*DR* Mrs. Bullock, *Dorothea; or, A Ray of the New Light*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1801)

*GM* Gentleman’s Magazine

*L* The Loyalist (1803)


*QR* Quarterly Review

*RC* William Paley, *Reasons for Contentment; Addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public* (London, 1793)

*S* The Satirist, or Monthly Meteor

*S Aj* *The Spirit of Anti-Jacobinism for 1802: Being a Collection of Essays, Dissertations, and Other Pieces, in Prose and Verse, on Subjects Religious, Moral, Political and Literary; Partly Selected from the Fugitive Publications of the Day, and Partly Original* (London, 1802)


*TT* Jane West, *A Tale of the Times* (London, 1799)


*WD* *The White Dwarf*