Ian Haywood explores the ‘Golden Age’ of caricature through the close reading of key, iconic prints by artists including James Gillray, George and Robert Cruikshank and Thomas Rowlandson. This approach both illuminates the visual and ideological complexity of graphic satire and demonstrates how this art form transformed Romantic-era politics into a unique and compelling spectacle of corruption, monstrosity and resistance. New light is cast on major Romantic controversies including the ‘revolution debate’ of the 1790s, the impact of Thomas Paine’s ‘indefatigable’ Age of Reason, the introduction of paper money and the resulting explosion of executions for forgery, the propaganda campaign against Napoleon, the revolution in Spain, the Peterloo massacre, the Queen Caroline scandal and the Reform Bill crisis. Overall, the volume offers important new insights into the relationship between art, satire and politics in a key period of history.

IAN HAYWOOD is Professor of English and Co-Director of the Centre for Research in Romanticism at the University of Roehampton. He co-edited, with John Seed, The Gordon Riots: Politics, Culture and Insurrection in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain (Cambridge, 2012).
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 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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ROMANTICISM AND CARICATURE

IAN HAYWOOD
To Sara and Ana
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