Mike Goode challenges received accounts of the development of modern historical thought, arguing that, in Romantic and Victorian Britain, struggles over historical authority were as much disputes over the nature of proper masculinity as they were contests over ideas and interpretations.

Drawing on primary materials from such diverse fields as political economy, moral philosophy, medicine, antiquarian study, and visual satire, Goode uncovers a Romantic historical tradition — one most influentially realized by historical novels — which held that historians must be manly and sentimental in order to understand history properly. Goode further shows how and why, by later in the nineteenth century, the bodies and feelings — but not the gender — of historians came to be regarded as irrelevant to their scholarly projects. The result is an unconventional account of the rise of history, one that focuses more on novelists, political philosophers, and caricaturists than on historians.

Mike Goode is Assistant Professor in the English Department, Syracuse University.
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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A  Walter Scott, The Antiquary
H  The Complete Works of William Hazlitt
I  Walter Scott, Ivanhoe
N  Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey
R  Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France
RM Thomas Paine, The Rights of Man
RR Walter Scott, Rob Roy
S  Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments
W  Walter Scott, Waverley
Welcome financial support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University of Chicago, Reed College, and Syracuse University kept me out of financial debt while I worked on this book. My intellectual, personal, and professional debts, however, never stopped mounting. The oldest of these debts is to James Chandler, who, while I was in graduate school, first piqued my interest in and challenged my thinking about the subjects at the heart of this book—historical novels, sentimentality, gender, historical epistemology, and Romantic historicism. Jim enthusiastically stayed with this project from start to finish, and his incisive advice and helpful suggestions at every point along the way ensured that it turned into a far better book than I ever could have produced on my own. Lauren Berlant, another early mentor when this project was in a different form, always reframed its arguments in ways that inevitably brought out what was, or should be, most interesting and significant about them. Our conversations certainly continue to frame the ways that I think about gender, sexuality, and the sublime. Other early readers and interlocutors for different parts of the book who pushed my thinking in new directions and challenged claims that needed challenging include: Beth Helsinger, Saree Makdisi, Larry Rothfield, Jen Adams, Garth Bond, Christine Haynes, Neil Robinson, Mark Wilson, Ellen Stauder, and Lisa Steinman, as well as the faculty and graduate student members of the University of Chicago’s Nineteenth-Century Literature and Cultures Workshop from 1998 to 2001, especially Elaine Hadley, Zarena Aslami, Sam Baker, Laura Demanski, and Jon Sachs.

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