



# British Short Fiction in the Early Nineteenth Century

*Tim Killick*

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In spite of the importance of the idea of the 'tale' within Romantic-era literature, short fiction of the period has received little attention from critics. Contextualizing British short fiction within the broader framework of early nineteenth-century print culture, Tim Killick argues that authors and publishers sought to present short fiction in book-length volumes as a way of competing with the novel as a legitimate and prestigious genre. Beginning with an overview of the development of short fiction through the late eighteenth century and analysis of the publishing conditions for the genre, including its appearance in magazines and annuals, Killick shows how Washington Irving's hugely popular collections set the stage for British writers. Subsequent chapters consider the stories and sketches of writers as diverse as Mary Russell Mitford and James Hogg, as well as didactic short fiction by authors such as Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Amelia Opie. His book makes a convincing case for the evolution of short fiction into a self-conscious, intentionally modern form, with its own techniques and imperatives, separate from those of the novel.

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