What did it mean to be British, and more specifically to feel British, in the century following the Parliamentary Union of Scotland and England? Juliet Shields departs from recent accounts of the Romantic emergence of nationalism by recovering the terms in which eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writers understood nationhood. She argues that, in the wake of the turmoil surrounding the Union, Scottish writers appealed to sentiment, or refined feeling, to imagine the nation as a community. They sought to transform a Great Britain united by political and economic interests into one united by shared sympathies, even while they used the gendered and racial connotations of sentiment to differentiate sharply between Scottish, English, and British identities. By moving Scotland from the margins to the center of literary history, the book explores how sentiment shaped both the development of British identity and the literature within which writers responded creatively to the idea of nationhood.

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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 Lakes 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.

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SENTIMENTAL LITERATURE 
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