



# Political Affairs of the Heart

Female Travel Writers, the Sentimental Travelogue, and Revolution, 1775-1800

by Linda Van Netten Blimke

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## DESCRIPTION

Richly researched and engagingly written, *Political Affairs of the Heart* traces the emergence of female sentimental travel writing in late eighteenth-century Britain, and posits its centrality to women's engagement with national and gender politics. This study examines four travel narratives written by women between 1774 and 1795, convincingly arguing that they effectively deploy the discourse of sensibility to engage with debates around Britain's national identity during the French and American Revolutions. Van Netten Blimke contends that Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768)—which first introduced sentimental discourse to the travelogue—facilitated women's gradual inclusion into this previously male-dominated genre, effectively paving the way for women to influence the country's sociopolitical transformation. These four previously understudied works successfully combine eyewitness authority with the language of sensibility to mount impassioned interventions in their nation's perception and practice of revolutionary politics, at a time when its national identity was most in flux.

### Paperback

9781684484058, \$37.95

### Hardback

9781684484065, \$150.00

### eBook

9781684484072, \$37.95

### PDF

9781684484096, \$37.95

**Date:** July 2022

**Pages:** 272



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**LINDA VAN NETTEN BLIMKE** is an associate professor of English at Concordia University of Edmonton in Alberta, Canada, where she teaches eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature. She is the coeditor of *Crossing Canada, 1907: Hope Hook's Diary*.

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