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0521773482 - Romanticism and the Human Sciences: Poetry, Population, and the Discourse of the Species

Maureen N. McLane

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This book explores Romantic poetry, and the concept of poetry in the Romantic period, as a locus of debate, defense, and discursive reconfiguration. Maureen McLane shows how the discourse around poetry involved itself intimately with the problem of the human and thus with contemporary discussions and theorizations of Man proposed by such writers as Malthus, Godwin, and Burke. Reading romanticism in relation to moral philosophy, political economy, and anthropology, McLane reveals how Romantic writers explored the possibilities and limits of human being, language, and historicity; she argues further that poetry acquired a new and vexed status as the discourse of both humanization and imagination. This book offers extended readings of canonical works, including *Lyrical Ballads*, *Biographia Literaria*, *Frankenstein*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and *The Triumph of Life*, together with considerations of Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* and Godwin's *Political Justice*. Each chapter of this book maps a discursive constellation through which these poets and writers linked, re-worked, and re-imagined such categories as poetry, the human, species, population, imagination, and futurity.

MAUREEN MCLANE is a Junior Fellow in Harvard University's Society of Fellows. She has written numerous articles and book reviews for both the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Review*. Her article, "Literate Species: Populations, 'Humanities,' and Frankenstein" (*ELH* 63), won the Keats-Shelley Association of America Essay Award in 1997.

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