

bility of more rich, complex and plural creative interactions between the Romantic writer and the Celtic other. Whereas Carruthers and Rawes present a fine volume of essays that is interesting and illuminating, Gallant's book loses its way.

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Romanticism and the Human Sciences: Poetry, Poetry, Population, and the Discourse of the Species. By MAUREEN N. MCLANE. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; paper 2006. Pp. x, 282. Cloth, \$65.00; paper, \$45.00.

This study assumes the rather ambitious task of investigating the relationship between changing paradigms and conceptions of the sciences in the nineteenth century, and literature and other products of the humanities in general. Maureen McLane's considerable knowledge and erudition on widely diverse subjects such as anthropology, natural philosophy, poetry and politics enables her to grapple with a fundamental eighteenth- and nineteenth-century concern: What does it mean to be human, and how do the humanities figure into the equation? McLane demonstrates that the sciences and humanities were in fact not consistently perceived as separate, discreet fields of inquiry. The book is prefaced with a chapter on formation of "an anthropologic" of poetry and literature (p. 10). The author emphasizes the nebulous delineation of these disciplines by her sensitive adoption and employment of scientific nomenclature, which underscores the commonalities and ambiguities of the discourse of both the sciences and the humanities.

In Chapter 2, "Do rustics think?" McLane posits that the literature of the early nineteenth century increasingly concerned itself not only with depiction of "men," but also with the definition and preserving of their lives and behaviors. As an example McLane mentions Wordsworth, who delighted in the *ur*-humanity of the simple peoples of the countryside. Thus, Wordsworth's authorship does not only describe and celebrate the fundamental humanity of rustics, but his writings also serve to document and highlight exactly what this humanity entails. Rather than critiquing the flawed premises employed by Wordsworth, McLane turns to that most qualified of his critics: Coleridge. Certainly the poet, in his "residual oral" capacity (p. 83) may document and explicate rustic humanity, but when oral narrative is translated into poetry, what remains is a severely crippled discourse which does not do justice to the original speech of "a man speaking to men" as posited by Wordsworth in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.

In Chapter 3, "Literate species," McLane returns to Mary Shelley's *Franken-*

stein (which she succinctly dealt with in “Literate Species: Populations, ‘Humanities,’ and *Frankenstein*,” *ELH* 63, no. 4 [1996]: 959–88). Victor Frankenstein, then, functions as an unnerving amalgamation of the essential Romantic poet and nineteenth-century scientist. The poet figure—as articulated by Percy Bysshe Shelley in the “Author’s Preface” to *Prometheus Unbound* and *A Defence of Poetry*—is a glorious creator, superior in passions and abilities. A creation-based concept of the poet, then, intersects perfectly—and fatally—with that of the Frankensteinian scientist, who must glory in the process of creation, and be damned by the results. In addition, McLane interrogates the still-prevalent notion of the arts as the key to human perfectibility (p. 84), which Mary Shelley had imbibed since childhood in Godwin’s household. It had apparently not been entirely convincing to her, and consequently her fictional student of literature, the Creature, waxes poetic in positively Miltonic English, while having no qualms about crushing the throats of small children who provoke his fury.

Consequently, Romantic poetry must attempt to re-imagine itself, and assumes a heavy self-imposed commitment to ethical utility, so that the poet—McLane quotes examples of Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, and P. B. Shelley—must answer to science as well as politics. McLane keeps an unbiased stance to this ambitious Romantic undertaking, but her study certainly poses questions about the importance of art and aesthetics which future generations of humanists have yet to answer.

As P. B. Shelley exerted considerable influence on Mary Shelley’s authorship, it seems fitting that Chapter 4, “The ‘arithmetic of futurity,’” and Chapter 5, “Dead poets and other romantic populations,” both deal largely with his commitment to the aesthetic and ideological imperatives of literature. Examining P. B. Shelley’s works, primarily *The Revolt of Islam*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, McLane questions the Romantic pursuit of the future as an area of exploration ready to be shaped and defined by the poetics of post-revolutionary Romanticism. Significantly, McLane, like Mary Shelley, probes the self-anointed position of the Romantic poet, or as P. B. Shelley articulated it in *A Defence of Poetry*, “Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present.” Romantic poetry, therefore, has the potential to transcend the prevailing dominion of science, and graduates to what Mark Lussier describes as a “poetics of physicality” (*Romantic Dynamics: A Poetics of Physicality* [1999], p. 20, *passim*), thus transcending above and beyond mere Malthusian prognostication. However, the concluding two chapters allow McLane finally to abandon her carefully maintained impartial position, and unreservedly endorse Romantic poetics as an implement wielded to articulate a future for mankind in which the humanities are integral to becoming human. Maureen McLane’s study of the possibility of Romantic eth-

ical aesthetics is extremely well researched and compellingly articulated. This monograph will be an important resource for scholars committed to further exploration of nineteenth-century poetry and science.

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Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge. By TIM FULFORD, DEBBIE LEE and PETER KITSON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 346. \$90.00.

Shelley and Vitality. By SHARON RUSTON. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Pp. xiii, 229. \$79.95.

Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter Kitson's *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge* and Sharon Ruston's *Shelley and Vitality* are two new additions to a recent wave of monographs that consider relationships among Romantic-era literature, science, and political culture. Both are engaging and well-written, and both focus on the biological and medical dimensions of Romantic-era science. They also represent two different approaches to our understanding of the relationship of literature and science: where *Literature, Science and Exploration* provides an extensive overview of a worldwide network that came to link British explorers, scientists, and literary figures, *Shelley and Vitality* develops an intensive reading of one author (P. B. Shelley) and one particular science (the science of vitality).

Literature, Science and Exploration is distinctive in several ways. First, while the list of authors responsible for this book might encourage readers to believe they will find "a collection of essays by different hands," Fulford, Lee and Kitson are emphatic that this is not an edited collection, but rather a coherent monograph, "conceived by all three authors" (p. xiii). This claim is indeed borne out by the text, for though the chapters range over many different topics—botanical gardens, African exploration, skull hunting and race theory, magnetism and polar exploration, and the "Jennerization" of Britain and its expanding empire, to name just a few of the subjects considered in the book's ten chapters—these seemingly disparate topics are nevertheless unified by an overarching argument. Fulford, Lee and Kitson argue that between 1768 (the year Cook set out for Tahiti, New Zealand, and Australia) and 1833 (the year the term "scientist" was coined), both literary Romanticism and modern science—the latter term taken in the sense of a specialized, professionalized, and technologized mode of knowledge gathering—came into being largely as a consequence of British global exploration. The thematic coherence of the book is echoed by its prose