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“O HAPPY EARTH! REALITY OF HEAVEN!”:

Melancholy and Utopia in Romantic Climatology

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ABSTRACT

This essay responds to Jonathan Bate’s call for a “Global Warming Criticism” by reconsidering strains of Romantic utopianism in relation to current perspectives on a changing climate. The relation between melancholy and utopian literature—exemplified in the “poeticall commonwealth” of social engineering offered by “Democritus to the Reader” in Robert Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy—assumes a new form in the Romantic era by incorporating both a historiography of human perfectibility and a Hippocratic climatology of collective temperaments. A renewed emphasis on the relation between physical environment and moral character (inherited most directly from Montesquieu) conjoins with a scientifically endorsed historical optimism (articulated most completely by Condorcet) to give new life to the perennial utopian dream of the banishment of melancholy. In the medical writings of Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis and in the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley, climate change is coordinate with social harmony and moral perfection, a tragically misguided vision stemming from an emphasis on humanity’s liberation from contingency. But dissenting views from Thomas Malthus and John Keats use the language of melancholy itself to critique dreams of absolute felicity and climatic engineering. They thus provide a more useful model of Romantic climatology for current environmental concerns.



Let the fish philosophise the ice away from the Rivers in winter time and they shall be at continual play in the tepid delight of summer. Look at the Poles and at the sands of Africa, Whirlpools and volcanoes—Let men exterminate them and I will say that they may arrive at earthly Happiness.

— John Keats, Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 21 April 1819

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Near the culmination of *Queen Mab* (1813), Percy Bysshe Shelley's cosmic fantasia of conjectural history and philosophical optimism, the poet offers a paean to a future Earth renovated and redeemed by a fortuitous combination of climate change and rational progress:

O happy Earth! reality of Heaven!
 To which those restless souls that ceaselessly
 Throng through the human universe, aspire;
 Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
 Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!
 Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
 Verge to one point and blend for ever there:
 Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!
 Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,
 Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:
 O happy Earth, reality of Heaven! (9.1-11)¹

Shelley's utopian vision imagines both human society and the natural world as purged of illness and vice, a state of heaven on Earth manifested not simply by the liberation from tyranny and superstition—those bugbears of Enlightenment—but by the melting of the polar ice caps and the greening of the deserts consequent upon a shift of Earth's rotational axis to a perpendicular with its ecliptic. Shelley derives this astronomical vision of progressive precession from earlier cosmologies that attributed shifts in Earth's rotation to causes ranging from geological eruptions and solar rays to human sin and the biblical flood. These cosmologies attracted Shelley both for their mechanisms of analogical causation and for their predictions of comprehensive reform.² Today's readers may or may not sympathize with the political and aesthetic motivations that caused a usually skeptical poet to adopt such far-reaching theories. But Shelley's association of climate change with earthly happiness offers us a tragically misguided vision that should raise questions about Romantic affiliations with modern environmental imperatives. Shelley's fascination with a world remade reveals an imaginative hubris that, for all of his evocations of sublime abjection as a catalyst to virtuous action, may prove more an extension than a repudiation of technological domination and self-destructive exploitation.

Jonathan Bate has called for new models of literary criticism to respond to the environmental crises now facing the planet, a "Global Warming Criticism" that would affirm the art of poetry as a vital link between human

cultures and the natural ecosystems in which they have thrived. In so doing, criticism might valorize and assist an “ecopoetics” that helps to create as well as to reveal the dwelling-place of the human spirit and that “regards poetic language as a special kind of expression which may effect an imaginative reunification of mind and nature, though it also has a melancholy awareness of the illusoriness of its own utopian vision” (Bate 245). This melancholy awareness provides a critical check, in Bate’s view, lest our modern reassertion of cultural “organicism” slide into familiar patterns of nationalist aggression and racialized totalitarianism. While recognizing these concerns, Bate maintains that Romanticism as an aesthetic ideology and a poetic practice helps to sustain our ethical obligations to each other and to the environment. Following Rousseau, he acknowledges humanity’s irrevocable severance from a primordial state of nature and, following Schiller, emphasizes Romantic poetry’s sentimental gestures as instantiating a formal and thematic awareness of this disruption. Timothy Morton has recently valorized melancholy in similar terms as the proper ethical response to environmental catastrophe, emphasizing not acquiescent despair, but a situation of grief within an ecological context. Understanding melancholy less as a failure to reintegrate within human society and more as a potentially constructive marker of our relation to a wider environmental condition, Morton advocates a “dark ecology” that refuses to deny the extent of the disaster while also refusing compensatory consolations of retroactive nostalgia or providential resolution. Climate, in such an ethics, is not to be understood as an organic predetermination of our passions and their cultural expression, nor as a medium of signification, divine or otherwise, but as an inherently unstable and chaotic environment challenging humanity to respond with caution and due humility.

How Shelley’s poetry and prose accords with such imperatives is uncertain. Alan Bewell has characterized Shelley’s association of corporeal and ideological corruption as an “ideopathology,” one based on an identification of the philosopher with the physician as a healer of the social body (Bewell 207). Shelley’s assertion in the notes to *Queen Mab* that “wisdom is not compatible with disease” (*Poems* 1: 374) not only maintains a relation of mutual causation between the ills of the body and of the mind but also endorses a doctrine of perfectibility that aligns social and environmental engineering in the pursuit of utopian happiness. Shelley’s faith in science to alter the inhospitable climates of the globe, to make the deserts bloom and the arctic regions melt, emerges out of a broader faith in the human imagination to

transform the very conditions of its own emergence. This broader faith alters our view of nature, as Karl Kroeber has noted, from a stable cycle of recurrence to a progressive development of perfection. Kate Rigby has likewise questioned Shelley's Promethean ambitions, finding in his promotion of poetic imagination to harmonize the social and natural environment an uncomfortable refrain of the domineering ambition so famously critiqued by Horkheimer and Adorno as the "dialectic of enlightenment." In their account of the Enlightenment project, Francis Bacon's utopian desire to align "the mind of man and the nature of things" contains the seed of a totalitarian perspective that duplicates the very domination it would claim to surmount: "Myth turns into enlightenment, and nature into mere objectivity. Men pay for the increase of their power with alienation from that over which they exercise their power. Enlightenment behaves toward things as a dictator toward men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them" (Horkheimer and Adorno 9). Rigby defends Shelley by discriminating his revolutionary goal of liberation from the will to power that characterizes a more Faustian model of Romantic defiance. His critique of technological and political authority in the *Defence of Poetry* seems to Rigby more an anticipation than an example of Horkheimer and Adorno's critique insofar as he too aligns the exploitation of the natural world with the impoverishment of the spirit so that "man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave" (*Works* 696). Shelley promotes the "poetical faculty" to counter "the selfish and calculating principle," correcting patterns of debilitating conquest by expanding knowledge with an eye toward "the beautiful and the good" (*Works* 696). Yet Shelley's "poetical faculty" expands not only knowledge but also power, and it is the crux of Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis to demonstrate how the aim of liberation repeatedly leads to the establishment of sovereignty while "the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant" (Horkheimer and Adorno 3). The aptness of their critique to Shelley's own work suggests that a bit more caution may be in order before enlisting Romantic utopianism in the environmentalist cause. For when we turn to Shelley's writings on climate, we find a persistent conjunction of liberation and domination common to utopian poetics, one in which "the beautiful and the good" supplants the awful and the sublime, eradicating misery and corruption along with any planetary diversity found disharmonious to the mind of man. Alternative models of Romanticism are available for reflecting on the environment and the question of climate change in particular, and much of the difference, I will suggest, concerns the question of

melancholy and its relationship to the airs, waters, and places in which we make our home.

The utopian imperatives in *Queen Mab* are premised upon a division between the material and the spiritual mapped onto a temporal schism between a corrupted present and an idealized future. The separation of the sleeping Ianthe's body and soul initiates the celestial visions that follow by abandoning a careworn material existence—"the unwilling sport/ Of circumstance and passion" (1.152-53)—for an identity that "aspires to Heaven" and "Pants for its sempiternal heritage" (1.148-49). The spirit of Ianthe must leave the earth entirely for a cosmic voyage where the spirit of Nature, though immanent, we are assured, within the quivering leaves and graveyard worms of our terrestrial life, finds its most "fitting temple" (1.268) in the "interminable wilderness/ Of worlds" (1.265-66). Ianthe is there instructed by the fairy Queen Mab in "the great chain of nature" (2.108) so that she understands that "there's not one atom of yon earth/ But once was living man" (2.211-12). The primary intent of Mab's instruction is not environmental, but historical and political, surveying a conjectural landscape of human society's past, present, and future. From a celestial perspective, Earth is a "thorny wilderness" (3.125), polluted by the "desolating pestilence" of power and vice (3.176) and here nature functions in its common role as an analogue to truth and reason and a counterpoint to human corruption:

Look on yonder earth:

The golden harvests spring; the unfailing sun
Sheds light and life; the fruits, the flowers, the trees,
Arise in due succession; all things speak
Peace, harmony, and love. The universe,
In nature's silent eloquence, declares
That all fulfil the works of love and joy, –
All but the outcast, man. He fabricates
The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth
The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up
The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch,
Than on the dome of kings? (3.192-206)

As so often in Shelley's poetry, nature is deployed as allegory, a paradoxically "silent eloquence" whose "golden harvests" provide a cultivated standard of "due succession" and joyous fulfillment. In full Godwinian fervor, Shelley repeatedly emphasizes corrupted institutions as responsible for human misery in the face of an essentially benevolent natural order. "Nature's soul" (4.89) is exonerated from responsibility for all man's "ruin, vice, and slavery" (4.99) and his distance from "the meteor—happiness, that shuns his grasp" (4.101). The blame instead is firmly placed at the feet of "Kings, priests, and statesmen" (4.104), who "blast the human flower/ Even in its tender bud; their influence darts/ Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins/ Of desolate society" (4.104–07).

While natural cycles of decay and regeneration provide a compelling metaphor for Shelley's hope for a future bliss,³ nature is as frequently utilized as a wilderness counter to human interests, particularly in the form of turbulent weather and climatic extremes. The unusual cold of the winter of 1812 when Shelley was writing the poem provided him with the setting for the opening of the fourth canto in which the peaceful calm of a winter night's sky contrasts with the paralleled discords of a storm in the southern seas and Napoleon's burning of Moscow. By contrast, Shelley imagines a future state free of such tribulations, as the "wild and miserable world" (6.12) that "contains at once the evil and the cure" (6.32) produces the select few "eminent in virtue" (6.33) whose truth-bearing lips "shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath/ Of ever-living flame,/ Until the monster sting itself to death" (6.36–38):

How sweet a scene will earth become!
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
When man, with changeless nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
 To the red and baleful sun
 That faintly twinkles there. (6.39–46)

The fantasy here expressed of a "changeless nature" in which the moral and material climates are conjointly purified of disease emerges out of a heady broth of astronomical poetics. In Paradise, as Milton has it, "spring and autumn here/ Danced hand in hand" (5.394–95); but after the fall God shifted the sun, moon, planets, and stars "as might affect the earth with cold and

heat/ Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call/ Decrepit winter, from the south to bring/ Solstitial summer's heat" (10.653–56). Milton finesses between helio- and geo-centric explanations for this transformation, but the results are clear: "These changes in the heav'ns, though slow, produced/ Like change on sea and land, sideral blast,/ Vapor, and mist, and exhalation hot,/ Corrupt and pestilent" (10.692–95). But in the narrative of Christian salvation revealed by Michael to Adam the poem concludes with Jesus's rewarding of the faithful, when he will "receive them into bliss,/ Whether in heav'n or earth, for then the earth/ Shall all be paradise, far happier place/ Than this of Eden, and far happier days" (12.462–65). Likewise conjoining earthly happiness and climate change, Thomas Burnet's *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681–89), that "grand Miltonic Romance" as Coleridge termed it,⁴ reads the present Earth as a jumbled mass of sinful distortion, a world of sublime ruination awaiting a return to the beautiful regularity of the original, "a Paradaisical World . . . of an even, entire, uniform, and regular Surface" (2: 182), its rotational axis restored to a right angle with the ecliptic.⁵ Burnet's vision inspired Joseph Addison to exult in the scene of "a re-level'd Orb" where "a constant Equinox maintains/ Perpetual Spring,/ And virtuous Minds Ideas/ Of Contentment sing" (14). And James Thomson, that bard of climatic variation, concludes *The Seasons* with a vision of "the second Birth/ Of Heaven, and Earth!" (1042–43) when "The Storms of WINTERY TIME will quickly pass,/ And one unbounded SPRING encircle All" (1068–69). If Shelley's poetry fits uneasily within this doctrinal tradition, he positions it more directly in relation to medical and astronomical theories, asserting in his note to this passage:

There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. (*Poems* 1.374)

This vision of a happy Earth purged of climatic extremes combines earlier Christian doctrines of cosmic sin and redemption with Hippocratic climatology under the mantle of a revolutionary faith in human progress and social engineering. The natural world offers both model and metaphor for the human condition, so that our alienation from the harmonious interchanges instantiated in ecological cycles is perceived as both cause and expression of

our collective miseries. Political justice and moral happiness are therefore predicated not simply upon a realignment *with* the natural order, but a realignment *of* the natural order, healing the planet of our own misbegotten crimes. This utopian poetics, premised as it is upon the pursuit of terrestrial perfectibility and the banishment of melancholy, reveals limitations and even pitfalls for conceptualizing an environmental ethics in relation to the challenges of climate change.

In his dynamic study of melancholy and society, Wolf Lepenies identifies the foundational connections between melancholy and order in attempts to construct human society as “an intermediate domain” between the macrocosmic harmonies of medieval astrology and the microcosmic humoralism of Hippocratic and Galenic medicine. The perfection of society, as much if not more a task or a dream as an accomplished fact, consoles the melancholic writer by affording imaginative compensation for an immedicable condition. Thomas More offers a blueprint for political liberty and material equality in his 1516 *Utopia*, but in conclusion resigns himself to the imperfections of the world and despairs of ever viewing such a society in his native England. Himself a long-time sufferer of the black disease, More, in his later days as a defender of the true faith, would repudiate utopian thinking and celebrate sorrow and the necessity of the vale of tears: “if we get so weary of pain and grief that we perversely attempt to change the world, this place of labor and penance, into a joyful haven of rest, if we seek heaven on earth, we cut ourselves off forever from true happiness.”⁶ The utopian impulse knows no such resignation to a fallen world, insisting upon institutional reform and social engineering as means of banishing melancholy and perfecting the human condition. As Judith Shklar argued, utopian literature is characterized first and foremost by its denial of original sin.⁷

Climate has provided a critical nexus for this tension between melancholy and faith in utopian literature at least since Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621–51), whose “poeticall commonwealth” offered by “Democritus to the Reader” engages in a fit of land reclamation, urban planning, and social eugenics to counter the environmental and moral corruptions delineated at such length throughout the work. Having opened his *Anatomy* with a confession of his own disease (“I writ of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy”), Burton begins the first partition of the *Anatomy* with a lament for humanity’s postlapsarian degradation (“O pittifull change!”) and our exile from a climate now turned against us:

The Heavens threaten us with their Comets, Starres, Planets, with their great conjunctions, Ecclipses, Oppositions, Quartiles, and such unfriendly Aspects. The Aire with his Meteors, Thunder and Lightning, in-temperate heat and cold, mighty windes, tempests, unseasonable weather; from which proceed dearth, famine, plague, and all sorts of Epidemicall diseases; consuming infinite myriads of men.⁸

Burton's conjunction of religious, environmental, and medical reflections on melancholy and its ameliorations constructs humanity as both the victim and the cause of terrestrial and climatic degradations even as he holds out hope for their possible restoration.⁹ In the section "Bad Aire a Cause of Melancholy," he emphasizes the debilitating effects of a poor climate and cautions against excesses of heat and cold, and above all "a thicke, cloudy, misty, foggy Ayre, or such as come from fennes, Moorish grounds, lakes, muckhils, draughts, sinkes, where any filthy carcasses or carrion lies, or from whence any stinking fulsome smell comes" (1: 235). Thus in the extensive "Ayre Rectified. With a Digression of the Ayre," he follows a Galenic calling to "teach them what temper of ambient Aire they shall make choice of, what winde, what countries they shall chuse" (2: 58), adding recommendations for strategic architecture and urban design, proper ventilation and frequent travel. In "Democritus to the Reader," Burton expresses admiration for Dutch reclamations from the sea and contrasts them unfavorably with his native land where "so many thousand acres of our Fens lye drowned, our Cities thin, and those vile, poore, and ugly to behold in respect of theirs, our trades decayed, our still running rivers stopped, and that beneficiall use of transportation, wholly neglected" (1: 75). He extends this contrast of proper drainage and stagnant waters to Ireland and the Virginia colonies, where he imagines the transformations of the former as a model for the latter, the landscapes offering an active symbol for wise or corrupt rule: "where good government is, prudent and wise Princes, there all things thrive and prosper, peace and happiness is in that Land, where it is otherwise, all things are ugly to behold, incult, barbarous, uncivill, a Paradise is turned to a wilderness" (1: 74).

The dichotomy between paradise and wilderness firmly in place, Burton proceeds to put such precepts into practice in the guise of a meticulously planned and regulated society. "Let the State cough and choke, the world be corrupt," Burton quips, "I give them full permission to be fools." He will, "yet to satisfie & please my selfe, make an Utopia of mine owne, a new Atlantis, a poetick commonwealth of mine owne, in which I will freely domineere, build Citties, make Lawes, Statutes, as I list my selfe" (1: 85), all in an

imaginary land in the temperate zone where he gives elaborate expression to a baroque fantasia of economic supervision, urban planning, and social reform. Rhapsodically enumerating a host of regulations and improvements, Burton delineates governmental, educational, commercial, religious, and economic institutions that emphasize utilitarian planning and centralized administration.¹⁰ His conjunction of social engineering and medical therapy suggests a fundamentally material basis for political happiness and leads inevitably to questions of climate. He locates his commonwealth in the temperate zone of the forty-fifth latitude “or perhaps under the Æquator, that Paradise of the world, *ubi semper virens laurus*, &c., where is a perpetuall Spring,” while planning an ambitious project of land reclamation and economic reform:

I will have no boggs, fennes, marishes, vast woods, deserts, heaths, commons, but all inclosed; (yet not depopulated, and therefore take heed you mistake mee not) for that which is common, and every mans, is no mans . . . I will not have a barren acre in all my Territories, not so much as the tops of mountaines, where nature failes, it shall be supplied by art: lakes and rivers shall not be left desolate . . . no depopulations, ingrossings, alterations of wood, arable, but by the consent of some supervisors, that shall be appointed for that purpose, to see what reformation ought to be had in all places, what is amisse, how to helpe it. (1: 88)

The draining of wetlands and the cultivation of waste and marginal regions go hand in hand in Burton’s utopia with economic reforms in seeking to re-fashion the physical as well as the social environment. The elimination of bogs, fens, and marshes in particular offers us a telling conjunction of agrarian reform and medical therapy as their disappearance both symbolizes and actualizes the elimination of melancholy upon which Burton predicates his utopian project, improving the climate as an integral element of the social order. But his rigorous attention to resource management, the efficiency of labor, the standardization of professional training, the simplification of the legal code, the direction of matrimony, and the provision of institutions provide just as totalizing an expression of despair. “Utopian parity is a kinde of government, to be wished for, rather then [sic] effected” (1: 89), Burton quips, and, like More, his plans for a commonwealth serve primarily to highlight the fallen condition of humanity, his fanatical devotion to social engineering declining almost imperceptibly into a catalog of the griefs and follies of the great and powerful, concluding “that all the World is melancholy, or mad . . . I can but wish my selfe, and them a good Physitian, and all of us a

better mind" (1: 109). Burton's Hippocratic extension of melancholy to the air, water, and land ultimately naturalizes human sorrow and emphasizes adaptation rather than emendation. The air may be "rectified" rather than altered, the difficult climates of the world recognized as an inherent feature of our fallen existence. For climate is as much symptom as cause, both sign and instrument of humanity's degradation, corrupting body and soul from without as a consequence of the degenerate habits and passions that corrupt us from within. Adapting to and improving the environment becomes both an expression and a promotion of virtue, a curative to melancholy and a model of salvation.

Hippocratic speculations on climate since Burton have reproduced in various forms this tension between melancholy and utopia.¹¹ The vast collection of sources amassed and assessed by Clarence J. Glacken provides a view of this tradition as dominated by uneasy combinations of beliefs in climatic determinism, providential design, and human stewardship, representing climate as both the limit and the catalyst of human agency. Likewise, Jan Golinski has recently assessed climate in the eighteenth century as signifying both the natural limitations upon philosophical reform and the material premises for triumphal national and providential historiographies. And Richard H. Grove has extensively demonstrated that even as observers both in Europe and the colonies began to perceive the negative climatic effects of extensive cultivation, most writers in this period viewed climate change in primarily positive terms as a progressive and beneficial consequence of human dominion, a victory over what Montesquieu called "the empire of climate" (Montesquieu 316). Deforestation and the drainage of wetlands, so necessary for the colonial expansion of agriculture and trade, were valorized by many writers as improvements over the land, their consequences for rainfall and temperature fluctuations phrased in medical terms of emending humoral imbalance and achieving an idealized state of temperate equilibrium.

John Evelyn's *Silva: or, a discourse of forest-trees, and the propagation of timber in his Majesty's dominions* (1664) supports the strategic clearing of forests for precisely these reasons, suggesting that England's expansion of power beyond its insular confines has emended the environmental pathologies of a wild nature. Echoing Burton, Evelyn argues that both American plantations and Irish lands before them have been "so much improved by felling and clearing these spacious shades, and letting in the air and sun, and making the earth fit for tillage and pasture, that those gloomy tracts are

now become healthy and habitable” (*Silva* 1: 32). In England itself, “some groves, or hedge-rows of antiquated dotard trees” may be “filling the air with musty and noxious exhalations, which being ventilated by glades cut through them, for passage of the stagnant vapours, have been cured of this evil, and recovered their reputation” (*Silva* 1: 33–34). No friend to rampant clear-cutting, Evelyn advocates a forestry practice of judicious management to bring about landscapes both pleasing and healthy. Correlatively, he argues in his *Fumifugium: or, the inconvenience of the aer, and smoake of London dissipated* (1661) for measures aimed at reducing the coal smoke of London, reasoning that a more benevolent atmosphere might produce a more benevolent temperament in the population:

What a new Spirit would these easie Remedies create among the Inhabitants of London? what another Genius infuse in the face of things? and, there is none but observes, and feels in himself the Change which a serene and clear day produces; how heavy and lesse dispos’d to motion, yea, even to good humour and friendly inclinations, we many times find our selves when the Heavens are clouded, and discompos’d, when the South-winds blow, and the humours are fluid, for what we are when the Skie is fair, and the Aer in good temper? And there is reason, that we, who are compos’d of the Elements, should participate of their qualities: For as the Humours have their source from the Elements; so have our Passions from the Humours, and the Soul which is united to this Body of ours, cannot but be affected with its Inclinations. (43–44)

Atmospheric engineering in both forestry and urban management offer Evelyn a means toward collective happiness through the dissipation of melancholy airs and humors.

These sentiments are echoed more ambitiously a century later by William Robertson, in his *History of America* (1777). In that work he argues that the European cultivation of the American wilderness has brought “fertility and beauty” to the land and health to the climate:

The labour and operations of man not only improve and embellish the earth, but render it more wholesome, and friendly to life. When any region lies neglected and destitute of cultivation, the air stagnates in the woods, putrid exhalations arise from the waters; the surface of the earth, loaded with rank vegetation, feels not the purifying influence of the sun; the malignity of the distempers natural to the climate increases, and new maladies no less noxious are engendered. (1: 258)

Robertson is pleased to note the cultivation of the new world, proudly boasting that “when we survey the face of the habitable globe, no small part of that fertility and beauty, which we ascribe to the hand of Nature, is the work of man” (1: 256). His views are echoed by other eighteenth-century proponents of climatic determinism including Montesquieu himself who, in admiring the engineering accomplishments of the Chinese, the Egyptians, and the Dutch, concluded that “men, by their care and their good laws, have made the earth more fit to be their home” (289).

The coordination between climate change and the banishment of melancholy in this literature is brought to a utopian apex in the historical optimism consequent upon the French Revolution. While climatology served Montesquieu as a critical distinction between natural and positive law, in the revolutionary era it served as a moral imperative to unite the two. The physician and *Idéologue* Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis could thus suggest in his study *On the Relations Between the Physical and Moral Aspects of Man* (1802) that “the illnesses of the black bile . . . used to be much more common than they are today” due to advances in sanitary conditions, diet, and “the increase in general ease in modern peoples,” as well as the modification of climate:

The state of the soil and of some of its products, the direction and even the use of a certain part of its waters, their nature insofar as it depends on their direction, the nature of the vapors that rise from the earth or from the waters and, consequently, also the state of the air—in a word, the climate itself—can, at least in some respects, and in the above-mentioned limits, be modified by the hand of man. This is what an active and wise industry has truly created in some regions whose inhospitable nature seemed to make living conditions impossible both for the human race and for the species of docile animals that we have made into the instruments of our needs; but where courage, persistence, and that kind of energy that is consonant only with liberty have created for themselves artificial sources of wealth and happiness. (2: 478–79)

Reformulating the traditional association of inhospitable climates and melancholic liberty, Cabanis suggests that the very courage and energy such climates produce leads to their eventual moderation and the gradual diminishment of atrabilious ills. “And here again,” he concludes, “is what makes so important the study of the effects of all types that can be produced by the various purely physical, local circumstances; so that from these causes . . . one can either find or perfect the means of improving the favorable circum-

stances and of remedying as much as possible those whose results are harmful” (2: 479). Cabanis’s reflections are particularly significant as they offer a wholesale and explicit adoption of Hippocrates and Galen to the expansive ambitions of the *Idéologues* to advance not simply individual alleviation but social perfectibility. His aim is to promote the physician as, in Martin Staum’s words, “a technician of temperament” (*Minerva’s Message* 98) who can aid government policy in a project of social engineering through an adjustment of the Galenic non-naturals so that the very character of a nation may be modified toward sanguine sociability and civic harmony. Cabanis sought not simply to restore a healthy equilibrium in the general population, but to promote a more perfect future through the elimination of disease and the perfection of human society. “It will easily be felt,” he concludes his First Memoir, citing Condorcet “to what extent the progress in the science of physical man can contribute to the general perfecting of the human species” (1: 71). Mariana Saad has recently argued that melancholy plays a prominent role in Cabanis’s theories due to its traditional status as a malady of the soul and hence a test case for the material basis of cognition and health. But we may also perceive how its medical elimination unites the Hippocratic connection of climate and the humors with the sociological dream of human perfectibility.

Condorcet himself resisted what he viewed as the inherently conservative implications of Montesquieu’s climatology and linked his dreams of human perfectibility through statistical analysis to proposed research among diverse populations of the “relationship among the physical constitution of man, his mental attributes, the social order, and the nature of the climate,” so as to bring about the perfection of temperament envisioned in the Tenth Epoch of his *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795).¹² Aspiring toward “the destruction of inequality between different nations; the progress of equality in one and the same nation; and lastly, the real improvement of man,” Condorcet took as a central premise that “nature has fixed no limits to our hopes” (317–19). Much as Burton is pleased in his poetic fancy, Condorcet offers his vision of the final epoch of humanity as consolation for the philosopher “lamenting the errors, the flagrant acts of injustice, the crimes with which the earth is still polluted[.] It is the contemplation of this prospect that rewards him for all his efforts to assist the progress of reason and the establishment of liberty” (371). But the transformation of space to time in the utopian vision recasts the relationship between the melancholic philosopher and his dream, for what was a

segregated counter-vision to a corrupted and diseased body politic in Burton is now a promise of the elimination of misfortune, motivating by way of consolation the very proscription of melancholy it seeks to effect. Likewise, William Godwin in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) rejects climatic restraints and envisions a future predicated upon the emancipation of the mind from the ills and passions of the body. Taking his cue from Benjamin Franklin's conjecture that "mind will one day become omnipotent over matter," Godwin places the blame for physical decay upon the vexations and cares "that rise out of our mistaken institutions" and argues that "the first habit favourable to corporeal vigour is cheerfulness":

Every time that our mind becomes morbid, vacant and melancholy, a certain period is cut off from the length of our lives. Listlessness of thought is the brother of death. But cheerfulness gives new life to our frame and circulation to our juices. Nothing can long be stagnant in the frame of him, whose heart is tranquil, and his imagination active. (2: 393–95)¹³

Cheerfulness is a coordinate of benevolence and virtue, and hence "the soul that perpetually overflows with kindness and sympathy, will always be cheerful. The man who is perpetually busied in contemplations of public good, will always be active" (2: 396). If "contemplations of public good" produce cheerfulness, and cheerfulness improves "corporeal vigour," then utopian optimism becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading humanity toward a condition of perfectibility that Godwin calls immortality. "We have called the principle of immortality in man cheerfulness, clearness of conception and benevolence" (2: 397), he explains, thus fulfilling the promise of his work's title to conjoin political justice, general virtue, and happiness. Maureen McLane and Siobhan Ni Chonaill have noted the asymptotic logic of Godwinian immortality, functioning as it does as a limit case for human perfectibility. "The term perfectible," Godwin would explain in response to his critics, "not only does not imply the capacity of being brought to perfection, but stands in express opposition to it. If we could arrive at perfection, there would be an end to our improvement."¹⁴ Both Condorcet and Godwin use the question of immortality both to identify the limits to human happiness and by the very mechanisms of utopian aspirations, to surmount them. The denial of death and the banishment of melancholy at the telos of their historical visions reveal a fundamental rejection of natural limitations.

For it is not death itself that compels their meditations on immortality but rather the prospect of excessive population and its deleterious effects upon the planet. Responding to Robert Wallace, who, in his *Various Pros-*

pects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence (1761), had used the argument of overpopulation to systematically critique utopian projections as “altogether inconsistent with the present frame of nature, and with a limited extent of earth” (114), Godwin simultaneously recognizes and dismisses this concern. “Three fourths of the habitable globe is now uncultivated,” he objects, and “the parts already cultivated are capable of immeasurable improvement. Myriads of centuries of still increasing population may probably pass away, and the earth still be found sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants” (2: 392). Two centuries, to be more precise. From our current perspective, Godwin’s expansive ambitions seem less an instance of naïve optimism than of willful denial, a denial essential to his utopian aspirations not because it obscures the ecological limits to human domination, but because it makes approaching those limits the central mechanism of expanding justice, virtue, and above all happiness: “It would be truly absurd for us,” he writes, “to shrink from a scheme of essential benefit to mankind, lest they should be too happy, and by necessary consequence at some distant period too populous” (2: 392). Condorcet deploys immortality in an analogous fashion, using the historical extrapolation of philosophical enlightenment over a mathematically sufficient length of time to sidestep environmental concerns. His vision of ever-progressing agricultural and manufacturing reforms by which ever more provisions, commodities, and conveniences are produced using ever fewer resources and “without demanding the sacrifice of one enjoyment by the consumer” (344) epitomizes the destructive logic of such consolations. Reconciling a faith in endless progress with a recognition of natural limits by deferring their resolution to an indefinite future, Condorcet and Godwin anticipate current defenders of expansive industry in the face of global warming. The utopian impulse cannot by definition place a limit upon human happiness and therefore must surmount material limitation as much as institutional restraint and ideological error. Climate, in this discourse, is either negated as unimportant to human society or perceived as susceptible to benevolent engineering.

Shelley erroneously cites Cabanis in the notes to *Queen Mab* regarding fossilized evidence of previous climate change; the influence of Condorcet and Godwin on his projections are everywhere, including the banishment of melancholy, which figures as a leitmotif throughout the poem. Contrasted with the “thorny wilderness” created out of “all that genders misery” (3.124–25), Queen Mab presents Ianthe with a restoration of a natural order created in reason’s image where “virtue/ Is peace, and happiness and harmony”

(3.129–30). The vision of futurity she presents fulfills the promise of “the joys which mingled sense and spirit yield” (4.158) resulting in global atmospheric transformation:

Joy to the Spirit came
Through the wide rent in Time’s eternal veil,
Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear:
Earth was no longer hell;
Love, freedom, health, had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime (8.11–16)

While the vision of a future bliss suggests the elimination of sorrow, its function, like Condorcet’s Tenth Epoch, is more consolatory. “Let the sight/Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope” (8.51–52) Queen Mab instructs Ianthe, and the subsequent proclamation that “the habitable world is full of bliss” (8.58) offers more promise than fulfillment. Precisely this logic of consolation drives the utopian vision of global climate change:

Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate or live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet
To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves
And melodize with man’s blessed nature there. (8.59–69)

This vision of “unloosed” glaciers and the “broad, bright surges” of a revitalized ocean, like the vision of the “deserts of immeasurable sand” (8.70) that “now teem with countless rills and shady woods” (8.75), construe climate change as liberation, humanity as “blessed” (8.69), and “all things” as “re-created” (8.107) in “pure perfectness” (8.111). “Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere” (8.114) as humanity has been released from humoral imbalance, whether the phlegmatic insensibility of the northern climes (8.145–65) or the choleric bloodlust of the south (8.166–86). Even in the “favoured clime” (8.193) of the temperate zone, humanity had been plague to a host of

social ills—slavery, ambition, and religious zeal—construed as external nemeses. But in this future vision, all is changed:

Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;
Blessed from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires. (8.198-202)

Universal vegetarianism reigns throughout the animal kingdom and humanity “with self-enshrined eternity, that mocks/ The unprevailing hoariness of age” (8.207–08) now “stands/ Immortal upon earth” (8.210–11):

[. . .] happiness
And science dawn though late upon the earth;
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
Reason and passion cease to combat there;
Whilst each unfettered o’er the earth extend
Their all-subduing energies, and wield
The scepter of a vast dominion there;
Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth
To decorate its paradise of peace. (8.227–238)

The language of “taintless” purity deploys the mantle of “happiness” to unite “unfettered” liberation with “all-subduing” domination. The purification of reason from passion, disease from pleasure, “cheers the mind” and “renovates the frame” to ensure “a vast dominion” for “the omnipotence of mind.” Christopher Miller has recently suggested that Shelley’s use of heaven as a denominative of progress moving toward perfection purges the term of what Shelley viewed as its pernicious deployment as a reward for piety and submission, but it is difficult to sustain such a discrimination when it is yoked to such a megalomaniacal insistence upon normative hegemony that reduces all desires to bland and gentle forms. Indeed, if *Queen Mab* suggests anything, it is the pernicious consequences of transforming utopian discourse into historical optimism. For this transformation rids utopia of its most salient feature—namely its dialectical tension with melancholy. If the utopias of More and Burton imagine a world purged of sorrow, they do so in full

recognition of the illusory nature of such a dream. Only by supplanting their utopian skepticism with ambitions for a future state can Shelley condone the passage from this world to another and the environmental engineering such a passage demands.

Queen Mab is an early poem for Shelley, though among his most influential, and its schematic divisions of body and spirit, present and future, lack the subtleties of his later work. The poet who would reflect that “nought may endure but Mutability” (“Mutability” 16) and who would evoke “the awful shadow of some unseen Power” that “floats though unseen amongst us,—visiting/ This various world with as inconstant wing/ As summer winds that creep from flower to flower” (“Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” 1–4) cannot be dismissed summarily as indifferent to the essential dynamism of natural systems. And the poet who celebrated the glaciated Mont Blanc as the abode of “the secret strength of things/ Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome/ Of heaven is as a law” (“Mont Blanc” 139–41) cannot be condemned as blind to the catastrophic changes wrought by global warming. But throughout Shelley’s Neoplatonic poetics of intellectual beauties there is a persistent longing for permanence and uniformity that expresses a melancholic yearning for felicitous order. “Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,/ This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?” (“Hymn” 16–17) he asks of the “Spirit of BEAUTY” (“Hymn” 13), “Man were immortal, and omnipotent/ Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,/ Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart” (“Hymn” 39–40). In the “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” he checks such desires as unnatural folly, but dreams of immortality and omnipotence prevail in his poetry and return again and again to climate change as a potent symbol of universal liberation. His revisionist mythos of the French Revolution, *Laon and Cythna* (1818), is offered as “an experiment on the temper of the public mind, as to how far a thirst for a happier condition of moral and political society survives, among the enlightened and refined, the tempests which have shaken the age in which we live” (*Poems* 2: 32). It evokes by way of Pindar the temperate northern domain of the mythical Hyperboreans as a spatial metaphor for a redemptive futurity. The poet progresses from “visions of despair” (3) to a “Temple of the Spirit” (4815) where he hears celebrated a narrative of “the dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion/ Borne, swift as sunrise, far illumines space,/ And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace” (2239–41).

In *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), shifting atmospherics provide a consistent metaphor for progressive social reform as Shelley moves the action

through a range of climates from the chill air of the Atlas mountains to the volcanic vapors of Demogorgon's realm, each representing a different condition of the human spirit. The springtime that accompanies Prometheus's liberation alters the climate in the most capacious sense of the word, granting Panthea "an atmosphere/ Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,/ As the warm ether of the morning sun/ Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew" (2.1.75–78). As the somnolent masses awaken to a new day, Earth reveals her transformed state:

In mild variety the seasons mild
 With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
 And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
 And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
 All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
 Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
 Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even
 The crag-build deserts of the barren deep,
 With ever-living leaves, and fruit, and flowers. (3.3.115–23)

More than a rudimentary poetic conceit or an expansive version of the pathetic fallacy, as Timothy Morton has astutely observed, Shelley's affiliation of social and climatic restoration deploys a utopian poetics that checks the seasonal mutability celebrated in his shorter lyrics with an idealized future of climatic stability. Far from the ever-shifting winds and clouds that "[give] grace and truth to life's unquiet dream," these visions of temperate equilibrium are hard to discriminate from those "frail spells" (36) Shelley condemns in the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" "whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,/ From all we hear and all we see/ Doubt, chance, and mutability" (29–31).

Shelley cast *Laon and Cythna* in part as a rebuke to the "gloom and misanthropy" of Thomas Malthus, "the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the willful exaggeration of its own despair" (*Poems 2*: 37), and in the preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, he recasts Satan's defiant rebuke from *Paradise Lost*, claiming "I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus." (*Poems 2*: 475). If we can admire Shelley's "passion for reforming the world" (*Poems 2*: 475), it may nonetheless be worth revisiting Malthus by way of conclusion for his reflections on climate, melancholy, and the utopian enthusiasms of his age. Malthus entitled his famous repudiation of Condorcet and Godwin *An*

essay on the principle of population, but it might as well have been entitled “In Praise of Melancholy,” for it is the unbridled pursuit of happiness itself that most concerns him due to the destruction he conceives it as harboring both for the formation of moral character and for the health of the planet itself.¹⁵ Though he elaborates upon his argument at great length, both in the original 1798 essay and in the subsequent expansions and revisions of the next three decades, its parameters are reasonably straightforward and consistent, defined by the inevitable contention between population growth and natural resources. Malthus argues that human population will always be held in check by limited food supplies, regardless of progress in agriculture, and that this limitation will by necessity be accompanied by misery and often by vice. The unavoidable tension between human needs and the laws of nature create certain unhappiness that will resist all attempts at social harmony and satisfaction. He engages in a conjectural history of his own, demonstrating in short order how the principle of scarcity has informed and delimited humanity’s social development from hunters to farmers to modern civilizations and their colonial expansions, and always it is necessity, not virtue, that motivates humanity to better its condition. While Malthus admires human progress, he refutes the goal of perfectibility, not only because it seems incompatible with the real limitations of the earth’s resources but because it is not worthy in and of itself. “The sorrows and distresses of life,” he concludes in the final chapter of the 1798 essay, “form another class of excitements, which seem to be necessary, by a peculiar train of impressions, to soften and humanize the heart, to awaken social sympathy, to generate all the Christian virtues, and to afford scope for the ample exertion of benevolence” (372). Far from degrading human character, Malthus argues, the miseries of our earthly existence sharpen and develop them and bring us into nearer consort with the divinity of nature:

The infinite variety of the forms and operations of nature, besides tending immediately to awaken and improve the mind by the variety of impressions that it creates, opens other fertile sources of improvement, by offering so wide and extensive a field for investigation and research. Uniform, undiversified perfection, could not possess the same awakening powers. When we endeavour then to contemplate the system of the universe; when we think of the stars as the suns of other systems, scattered throughout infinite space; when we reflect, that we do not probably see a millionth part of those bright orbs, that are beaming light and life to unnumbered worlds; when our minds, unable to grasp the immeasurable conception, sink, lost and confounded, in admiration at the mighty incomprehensible

power of the Creator; let us not querulously complain that all climates are not equally genial; that perpetual spring does not reign throughout the year; that all God's creatures do not possess the same advantages; that clouds and tempests sometimes darken the natural world, and vice and misery, the moral world; and that all the works of the creation are not formed with equal perfection. (378–79)

This evocation of the sublime experience of wonder in the contemplation of the universe offers a telling contrast to Shelley's vision of beautiful order in the cosmic voyage that opens *Queen Mab*. Malthus stresses a melancholy awe that responds to the limits of human power with neither utopian resistance nor gloomy complacency but with authentic moral commitment both to the human condition and to the natural world.

Shelley, Hazlitt, and other radical sympathizers repudiated Malthus in vituperative rhetoric; they maintained, along with Godwin, a faith in humanity's moral capacity to transcend all aspects of our material existence.¹⁶ Modern criticism has adopted a similar stance, casting Malthus as a cold-hearted utilitarian whose methods and conclusions are anathemas to poetry's sounding of the infinite possibilities of the human spirit.¹⁷ But to adopt such conclusions, particularly in light of current environmental concerns, is to fail both to see the prophetic veracity of Malthus's observations for a global ecosystem in collapse and to appreciate alternative strains of progressive Romanticism that resist dreams of perfectibility as themselves counter to the poetic truths of our human condition. Increasingly, Malthusian principles are being applied to forecasts concerning climate change, and the results are not encouraging.¹⁸ Given the advanced susceptibility of third-world countries to the deleterious effects of global warming, Malthus's focus on the poor as bearing the burden for the excesses of the wealthy is looking less like the ideology of oppression that Shelley and Hazlitt claimed and more as a pure statement of fact.

Thus from our current perspective, it may be John Keats, whose famous letter on the "vale of Soul-making" provides the epigraph to this essay, who offers a more constructive Romantic ethos for a Malthusian age. Like Malthus, Keats mocks Godwinian dreams of perfectibility from a decidedly environmentalist perspective for, he holds, "the nature of the world will not admit of it—the inhabitants of the world will correspond to itself" (*Letters* 232). Fresh from a reading of Robertson's *History of America*, Keats is motivated to conclude "that Man is originally 'a poor forked creature' subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and

disquietude of some kind or other" (*Letters* 231). All attempts to move toward perfectibility are in error, not simply because, barring true immortality, such a state would make death even harder a burden to bear, but more so because human nature is inextricable from the climate of its dwelling. It is therefore subject, like a summer rose, to all of the inclement weather its environment may produce: "it cannot escape it, it cannot destroy its annoyances—they are as native to the world as itself: no more can man be happy in spite, the world[1]y elements will prey upon his nature" (*Letters* 232). For this world, in Keats's brilliant phrasing is "the vale of Soul-making," in which intelligences, those "pure" sparks of God, achieve "a bliss peculiar to each ones individual existence . . . by the medium of a world like this" (*Letters* 232). Karl Kroeber has observed the affiliations between Malthus and Keats's understandings of environmental determinism in the development of moral consciousness, and we may see that Keats's "system of Spirit-creation" offers an individualized climatology consisting of "the *Intelligence*—the *human heart* (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the *World or Elemental space* suited for the proper action of *Mind and Heart* on each other for the purpose of forming the *Soul or Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity*" (*Letters* 233). Configuring the world as a school for the emergent soul and the heart as its primer, Keats concludes, echoing Thomas More three centuries earlier, "Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul?" (*Letters* 233).

Keats, of course, was no stranger to the effects of climate on health and sought to alter his own environment in an effort to stave off his consumption. But neither was he a stranger to "the wakeful anguish of the soul," the melancholy that might "fall/ Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,/ That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,/ And hides the green hill in an April shroud" ("Ode to Melancholy" 10–14).¹⁹ The atmospherics of melancholy are present in Keats's poetry in a way that eludes the more utopian-minded Shelley. "Four seasons fill the measure of the year;/ Four seasons are there in the mind of man," ("Four seasons" 1–2) Keats wrote, and a large part of the pathos of his verse is its insistence upon the rich and productive combination of joy and melancholy in our earthly existence. Shelley's resistance to doctrinal models of heavenly salvation caused him to transpose its narrative to the earth itself; a gesture that while effective in articulating radical political goals of material liberation has disastrous consequences for the actual planet that has had to bear the consequences of such Promethean ambitions. Keats's equally emphatic refutation of heavenly salvation in his letter

(“What a little circumscribe[d] straightened notion!” [*Letters* 232]) returns to Earth itself, not as a template for philosophical transformation, but as a vale of strife and tribulation whose redemption comes in the rich palimpsest of life and death that make up a truly nurturing ecosystem. Keats’s poetry imagines a connection with the climate that emphasizes neither utopian perfectibility nor fatalistic acquiescence, but one in which mortality and redemption are the nurturing materials of the airs, waters, and places in which we make our home:

After dark vapours have oppressed our plains
 For a long dreary season, comes a day
 Born of the gentle south, and clears away
 From the sick heavens all unseemly stains.
 The anxious month, relieving from its pains,
 Takes as a long lost right the feel of May,
 The eyelids with the passing coolness play,
 Like rose-leaves with the drip of summer rains.
 And calmest thoughts come round us—as, of leaves
 Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—autumn suns
 Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves—
 Sweet Sappho’s cheek—a sleeping infant’s breath—
 The gradual sand that through an hour glass runs—
 A woodland rivulet—a poet’s death.²⁰

NOTES

1. All quotations from Shelley’s poetry are taken from Shelley, *Poems*.
2. Shelley cites Pierre-Simon Laplace’s *Exposition du Système du Monde* (1796), Pierre-Jean-George Cabanis’s *Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l’Homme* (1802), and Jean Sylvain Bailly’s *Lettres sur l’Origine des Sciences* (1777), although Laplace actually disproved theories of progressive precession, and the citation of Cabanis is in error, as Geoffrey Matthews and Kelvin Everest observe in their annotations to Shelley’s notes. Kapstein notes Thomas Burnet’s *The Theory of the Earth* (1681–89), Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1674), Thomson’s *Spring* (1729), and John Frank Newton’s *Return to Nature* (1811) as other possible sources for Shelley’s vision of climate change. Cameron adds Adam Walker’s *A System of Familiar Philosophy in Twelve Lectures* (1812) and discusses the aesthetic and political reasons for their attraction for Shelley (260–62).
3. See, for example, 5.1–21.
4. Qtd. in Abrams 99. See *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*. Ed. Roberta Florence Brinkley. Durham: Duke UP, 1955.

5. For Burnet's influence on the British Romantics, see M. H. Abrams 99–106.

6. Qtd. in Trevor 58. Thomas More. *De Tristitia Christi*. Ed. and trans. Clarence H. Miller. *The Complete Prose Works of St. Thomas More*. Executive ed. Richard S. Sylvester. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976. 14: 19–21. For an overview of More's melancholy in relation to *Utopia*, see Manuel and Manuel 117–49. Schleiner also addresses the persistent connection of melancholy and utopia in Renaissance thought.

7. See also Shklar's foreword to LePenies vii–xvi.

8. Burton 1: 125. Reed offers a thematic comparison between Burton, weather, and melancholic themes in Coleridge and Baudelaire.

9. Gowland has most recently demonstrated how Burton derives his language directly from Stoic and humanist doctrines of moral psychology that align the individual and the state through parallel discourses of ethics, politics, and economics, but the language is equally medical and environmental, aligning both the individual and the state with the vexations of the body and the degradations of the surrounding air, water, and land.

10. As Patrick argued some time ago, Burton's commonwealth, with its application of comparative diagnoses toward commercial efficiency, institutional transparency, and agricultural productivity anticipates the utilitarian social reforms of the nineteenth century.

11. Palmer has argued for recognizing a paradigm shifting "utopian moment" in Renaissance climatology when writers such as More, Francis Bacon, and Gerard Winstanley began to promote a vision of human agency as capable of transforming the very environmental conditions that had both nurtured and restricted its development.

12. Qtd. in Staum, *Cabanis* 209. Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat de Condorcet. "Discours lus à l'Académie des sciences lorsque la comtesse et le comte du nord (depuis Paul I^{re}) y vinrent prendre séance, le 6 juin 1782." *Oeuvres de Condorcet*. Ed. A. Condorcet O'Connor and M. François Arago. Paris, 1847–49. 1: 422.

13. All quotations from Godwin, save where noted, are from the first edition of 1793.

14. This justification was added to the third edition of 1796 (1: 115). For a comparative discussion of Godwin and Condorcet's asymptotic visions of perfectibility, see Sowell 17–19.

15. Here I echo the subtitle of Wilson's recent Romantic critique of our modern culture of happiness.

16. See Pulos for an assessment of Malthusian references in Shelley's writings.

17. McLane, in her chapter on "Poetry, population, futurity" (109–58), extends the dichotomies of Ferguson's analysis of Malthus, Godwin, and Wordsworth that relegate Malthus to an impoverished utilitarian viewpoint to be redeemed by the imaginative ambitions of Romantic poetry.

18. See Kelly and Kolstad.

19. All quotations from Keats's poetry are taken from Keats, *Complete Poems*.

20. "After dark vapours have oppressed our plains" (Keats, *Complete Poems*).

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