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The Last Animal: Cosmopolitanism in *The Last Man*
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This essay reads Mary Shelley's apocalyptic novel, *The Last Man*, as a case study in two varieties of Romantic cosmopolitanism: the progressivist (associated with historical perfectibility and a federated Europe) and the Cynic (associated with animal life and radical freedom). It suggests that progressivist cosmopolitanism characterizes the novel's depiction of political improvement at home and abroad, while Cynic cosmopolitanism shapes its treatment of life once states and their populations have disappeared. Not only does Cynic cosmopolitanism offer a way to understand the novel's focus on animal life as Verney becomes the last man, but it also holds potential for discussions of Romantic cosmopolitanism more generally. Because Cynic cosmopolitanism is compatible with political pessimism and contests state-based communities and forms of belonging, it challenges the assumption that cosmopolitanism is affirmative and collective. As such, it opens new avenues of inquiry into Romantic cosmopolitanism that uncouple cosmopolitanism from narratives of progress and improvement and highlight instead the importance of the cosmopolitan as critic.

Mary Shelley's novel, *The Last Man* (1826), begins by announcing where it will end: with the end of the human race and the end of history. But this disclosure does not explain how or why this will come to pass, and the interest of the novel lies in the way it uses disaster to unravel the very forms that structure modern life. Shelley's narrative offers a thought experiment about what the world would be like without humans and without their institutions: strip away the nation-state, put an end to commerce, dissolve the family, and what's left? In part, the novel's answer to its own rhetorical question is a flourishing world of nonhuman animals; the depopulation that the novel depicts affects humans alone, leaving other life forms untouched. This specific targeting of humans distinguishes Shelley's novel from other apocalyptic narratives of the period, and it also raises questions about what is at stake in the choice to preserve nonhuman animals as humans go extinct. A global pandemic is the cause of human extinction in *The Last Man*, and its spread is the consequence of particular political and economic conjunctures; the international mobility and

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freedom the novel so valorizes in its first volume later leads to the communication of disease and finally comes to characterize the homelessness of the last man, Lionel Verney. By the time that Verney is the last man, governments, states, and human populations have disappeared, and animals are his only companions. The argument I present here offers a new reading of *The Last Man*'s global political trajectory of improvement and deterioration as a case study in two of the varieties of cosmopolitanism circulating in the late Romantic period. One variety—which I term progressivist—is relatively familiar; the other—the Cynic—is less so. In discussing *The Last Man* as a cosmopolitan text, my aim is not only to detail Shelley's engagement with cosmopolitanism in her novel, a topic that has received relatively little treatment to date, but also to demonstrate the importance of Cynic cosmopolitanism within cosmopolitanism thought during the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹

Cosmopolitanism can encompass such a range of stances and behaviors, and is associated with so many different intellectual traditions, as well as social and political agendas, that any discussion of it must specify it further.² The imperative to think more carefully about the different varieties of cosmopolitanism comes out of recent work on Enlightenment and Romantic cosmopolitanism as well as the so-called new cosmopolitan thought, now nearly two decades old.³ In part, it is motivated by the need to describe the full range of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century cosmopolitanism in finer detail, and to account for the interactions between older and newer varieties of cosmopolitanism more carefully. In part, it is a product of considering how certain topics central to our understanding of the Romantic era, notably nationalism and imperialism, interact with cosmopolitanism and nuance what Romantic cosmopolitanism can be taken to mean.⁴ The very term Romantic cosmopolitanism, in its singularity and apparent neatness, belies its multiplicity: it spans topics including travel, exile,

war, and friendship, among many others, and is not reducible to a single position or belief. Jillian Heydt Stevenson and Jeffrey Cox enumerate potential approaches to the study of Romantic cosmopolitanism: one might examine the history of cosmopolitanism, its “philosophical project,” or what the term has meant to various people at various times (131). One might analyze its potential as “a particular form of self-cultivation,” as well as its liability to shade into “imperialism and the spread of global capitalism” (131). This essay draws on all of these considerations and adds one more, asking what the role of cosmopolitanism is in times of pessimism. In discussing Cynic cosmopolitanism in particular, I am not only making a claim for its circulation within Romantic cosmopolitanism, but also suggesting that it opens a further angle on how we think about cosmopolitanism within the period. Though it is commonly held that the post-Napoleonic moment is associated with a turn away from cosmopolitanism or at the very least a thoroughgoing skepticism about it, Cynic cosmopolitanism is compatible with the pessimism of the post-Napoleonic moment and with the shape this pessimism takes in Shelley’s apocalyptic novel, for it is a negative rather than positive cosmopolitanism, which is to say that it disavows attachments and encourages its practitioners to adopt a critical distance on the societies of which they are a part. Of the many ways we might read the statelessness of the last man—as an erasure of the nation, as a commentary on failed revolutions, as an expression of the difficulty of reconciling individualism with radical politics, as an undoing of cause and effect—I add: as an indication of the importance of Cynic cosmopolitanism, particularly as it enables critical thought and reflection.⁵

Cynic cosmopolitanism is notable not only because it offers one account of what cosmopolitanism might look like in the face of an uncertain (or a certainly terrible) future, but also because it takes the nonhuman animal as its model for how to live. These two aspects of

Cynicism are deeply, rather than merely coincidentally, related: the Cynic way of life equips one for an uncertain future precisely by encouraging one to develop the sort of self-sufficiency nonhuman animals possess. To say that the nonhuman animal is the model for the Cynic way of life is not to collapse the distinction between human and nonhuman animals but to reconsider the role of animal life within theories of cosmopolitanism. If most forms of cosmopolitanism disregard nonhuman animals as creatures of instinct, unconnected with the pursuit of freedom or truth, Cynic cosmopolitanism takes the opposite approach, basing its pursuit of freedom and truth on the cultivation of animal life. Animal life, that is, living as an animal, as simply as possible, without any excess needs or desires, provides “the condition of possibility of freedom” within Cynic cosmopolitanism (Shea 14). It enables the Cynic to stand at some distance from surrounding communities and to engage with them without fully being a part of them. This in turn facilitates a form of truth-telling which the Cynic is able to access precisely because of his or her freedom: the Cynic is often described as a watchdog or as a scout, who “runs ahead of humanity” to warn it of coming dangers.⁶

Such a figure of the cosmopolitan as critic set apart from the masses holds substantial interest for Shelley’s novel in particular and for Romanticism more generally. It can begin to account for why Shelley’s apocalypse places the last man alongside flourishing communities of animals and plants, while suggesting that the novel is in dialogue with yet another community, that of its readers. As Verney lives among animals and as an animal, he becomes a Cynic, however unwittingly; as he writes back to the England of the 1820s, he embodies the Cynic as critic. The representation of animal life as cosmopolitan, and the representation of the cosmopolitan as cultural critic, offer further resources for how we think about cosmopolitanism in the early decades of the nineteenth century. This has two ramifications in particular that are

worth highlighting: first, it separates cosmopolitanism from an attitude of affirmation or from an assumption of belonging and allows for negativity and disavowal. Second, it reconfigures the cosmopolitan's relation to broader communities: it suggests that the cosmopolitan can express ambivalence about the communities (elective or not) of which he or she is a part. This ambivalence takes the form of standing apart from the community rather than seamlessly participating in it; it is oppositional and does not take for granted the idea that cosmopolitanism requires the cultivation of ever better and broader alliances or groups, or the deepening of national and international state powers.

APOCALYPTIC AND COSMOPOLITAN BACKGROUNDS

While *The Last Man* is often read in the context of other apocalyptic works from the period, and rightly so, it is important to distinguish it from them.⁷ Even if Shelley's novel may share the pessimism of these texts, what Fiona Stafford describes as a feeling of "[being] left stranded in an uncongenial age," it substantially transforms the apocalyptic tradition by representing the natural world as flourishing, rather than disappearing (199). John Martin's painting, "The Last Man," produced as a sketch in 1826 and a completed painting in 1849, helps to clarify the difference between Shelley's novel and other apocalyptic works in which the earth is "[s]easonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless" (Byron 17). In Martin's image, we see a man wrapped in dun-colored clothing with his arm outstretched. He is gesturing toward the sun, which is burning out, and is one of two light sources in the painting; the other illuminates the last man and the corpse of a woman lying beside him. The surrounding landscape is brown and featureless, and there appears to be a town in the distance. With the exception of the last man, nothing is alive in the painting: the dead woman, who nearly blends into the rock, signals the end

of human reproduction, and the leafless trees in the middle distance will never again turn green.

Martin's painting positions the last man as a prophet who witnesses the end of all life.

Apocalypse extinguishes *bios*: with the sun goes the light of faith and of life processes, of human as well as nonhuman animals and plants. The logic here, inasmuch as there is any, is of wholesale destruction that leaves the earth barren and uninhabitable: apocalypse does not merely strike humans but all living things.

Shelley's apocalypse, by contrast, does not destroy the earth. In fact, the natural world flourishes as the human population dwindles, and as buildings and towns are emptied of humans, they remain full of animals and plants. This raises questions about history (Are we moving forwards or backwards in time?) as well as the future (Who or what will inhabit the earth?). Though it might be tempting to see the novel's erasure of human institutions like government and commerce as a return to a distant past, the novel sets these changes in the future, in the twenty-first century, and depicts them as consequences of imperial entanglements and global travel and trade. This is no mere reversal of historical progress; instead, it is a projection of the future that reflects on the present and questions it. Shelley's depiction of an earth that not only lives on, but positively thrives, in the face of human extinction, uses the prospect of human absence to focus the question of survival as one for which nonhuman animals are exemplars and guides.

Shelley's major innovation with the apocalyptic novel, in turning our attention toward the material world rather than away from it, and toward *bios* rather than away from it, is not merely to reframe the apocalyptic novel as a political novel, but to reframe it as a cosmopolitan novel, even a cosmopolitical novel. By calling *The Last Man* a cosmopolitan novel, I do not mean to suggest that it is cosmopolitan in the loose sense of the word, but instead that it contains two

distinct cosmopolitan formations, the first concerned with the pursuit of political improvement at home and abroad, the second with the maintenance of life in the face of a plague that is erasing human populations as well as states themselves.⁸ *The Last Man*, this argument suggests, engages progressivist cosmopolitanism as it examines the best forms of government and the state, and then turns to Cynic cosmopolitanism to consider life after government and life outside or beyond the state. By progressivist cosmopolitanism I mean a variety of cosmopolitanism based on a belief in historical perfectibility, guided by a teleological unfolding of history, and associated with a specific vision of a future government (often a federated Europe). The movement from progressivist to Cynic cosmopolitanism occurs as the novel's trajectory of improvement is interrupted by an outbreak of the plague. Cosmopolitanism first allows the novel to investigate what appears to be a utopian commitment to the spread of freedom and justice at home and abroad, and then, in its Cynic form, brings human activity back into contact with animal life, as the plague—and therefore the maintenance of life in the face of its eradication—becomes the primary global concern.

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of these two cosmopolitan formations in Shelley's novel, I want to provide a brief overview of the cosmopolitan texts that would have been available to Shelley in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The philosophers writing about cosmopolitanism during this period included Immanuel Kant as well as Christoph Martin Wieland and Johann Gottlieb Fichte; of these three, Kant was and remains the best known.⁹ His two major essays on cosmopolitanism, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" (1784) and "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (1795), were translated into English in 1798-99 and 1796, respectively (Micheli 12, 72, 105). A further translation of Kant's universal history essay, by Thomas de Quincey, appeared in the *London Magazine* in October,

1824, just months after Shelley had published several pieces there, including “The Bride of Modern Italy.” Both de Quincey and Robert Southey were important disseminators of Kantian ideas of historical progress; de Quincey was, in addition, “the first historian of Kant’s introduction into England” (Wellek 171-72).¹⁰ Though there is no record of Mary Shelley reading Kant’s writings, many of Kant’s major claims about universal history and historical progress were well known by the middle of the 1820s, when there was a resurgence of interest in his thought (Micheli 12). Furthermore, the ideas of perfectibility and progress that historians of cosmopolitanism typically think of as characteristically Kantian echo other writings Shelley was familiar with, notably William Godwin’s *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793).¹¹ By calling the first cosmopolitan formation I discuss progressivist rather than simply Kantian, I register the multiple possible sources for *The Last Man*’s treatment of political improvement and historical perfectibility.

Of course, the historically available cosmopolitanisms in the early nineteenth century were not limited to those that offered teleological narratives of improvement and halcyon visions of a future without war, illness, or strife. A further strand of early nineteenth century cosmopolitanism, equally important but less sanguine, is Cynic cosmopolitanism, which encompasses the ideas and teachings of Diogenes the Cynic as they come down to us, not only in the writings of Diogenes Laertius, but also in the work of later authors who engage Cynic ideals. There is a range of evidence documenting the circulation of Cynic cosmopolitan ideas during the eighteen teens and twenties. We know that both Mary and Percy Shelley came into contact with the major source text for Diogenes the Cynic’s ideas and teachings, Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives of the Philosophers*: she sent him a copy of this book in 1814. In a letter dated 25 October, she writes, “I send you Diogenes as you have no books—Hookham was so ill tempered as not to

send the books I asked for” (*Letters* 1: 1). This copy of *Lives of the Philosophers* is preserved with Percy Shelley’s annotations; it is a translation of the Greek into Latin.¹² Among the many annotations is a note, “To read Diogenes again and again,” and a mark alongside the statement that the “only true commonwealth...[is] as wide as the universe” (Male and Notopoulos 13). Though Mary Shelley did not learn Greek until several years later, she may have been exposed to Diogenes the Cynic’s thought in conversation with Percy Shelley. Even if not, Diogenes was a well known figure beyond *Lives of the Philosophers* before the composition of *The Last Man*: discussions of his philosophy appear in a range of eighteenth-century texts, including Ephraim Chambers’ *Cyclopaedia*, an essay of David Hume’s, and a dialogue of Henry Fielding’s.¹³ More proximately, Byron’s epigraph to *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, a poem that both Percy and Mary Shelley knew well, is taken from Fougeret de Monbron’s *Le Cosmopolite*, a text that encapsulates Cynic detachment and is crucial to the transmission of Cynic ideas across the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century. As with progressivist cosmopolitanism, Cynic cosmopolitanism was circulating sufficiently widely during the early decades of the nineteenth century to be an influence on Shelley’s novel and on cosmopolitan thought more generally during the period.

PROGRESSIVIST DISASTERS, OR THE FUTURE THAT NEVER CAME TO PASS

The Last Man’s narrative arc of making and unmaking, of perfectibility and decomposition, begins with an era of national and international progress, which is cut short as a global pandemic spreads and depopulates Europe and then England. In the novel’s first volume, which is set in twenty-first century England, after the monarchy has been abolished and a protectorate has been established in its place, the main concerns are twofold: affection (between friends as well as

lovers) and political improvement. The intense optimism of the first portion of the novel is odd given the certainty of the coming disaster, but it continues unchecked for some time. The novel's opening sequence details the sentimental education of its protagonist, Lionel Verney, who, along with his sister, Perdita, gets tutored out of his rural wildness as they become friends with Adrian, Earl of Windsor, son of the last king of England. Adrian teaches Lionel the "cold truths of history and philosophy" as well as the warmer truths of "the living page of his [Adrian's] own heart," and Verney describes this experience as elevating him above his previously animal nature: "I now began to be human. I was admitted within that sacred boundary which divides the intellectual and moral nature of man from that which characterizes animals" (32, 29). Politics, as well as philosophy, is an improving force here: Verney is sent to Vienna as the private secretary to the ambassador. When he returns to England, "the scene of all [his] hopes," Lionel's "happy circle" expands to include Lord Raymond, an English nobleman who marries Perdita and is elected Lord Protector of England (41, 91).¹⁴

Cosmopolitanism first appears in *The Last Man* as the novel begins to negotiate Britain's national and international commitments during Lord Raymond's protectorate. It arises as a consequence of the novel's experiments with different forms of government and is associated with the pursuit of improvement at home and abroad. As Protector, Raymond's attentions are initially trained on perfecting England: he oversees "a thousand beneficial schemes" with the hope that poverty and disease will be eradicated, "labour [will be] lightened of its heaviest burden," and England will become "one scene of fertility and magnificence....the mechanism of society, once systematized according to faultless rules, would never again swerve into disorder" (106). However, before Raymond is able to implement many of his planned improvements, his term as Protector is cut short: he becomes estranged from his wife, Perdita, and he resigns his

protectorate, leaving England for Greece, where he joins the Greek War of Independence on the side of the Greeks. This departure for Greece does not substitute a foreign cause for a domestic one so much as it overlays them, bringing a crucial threshold of Romantic cosmopolitanism, the intersection of the national and the international, into focus. Raymond's move to Greece is in fact a return: before his term as Protector, he was "an adventurer in the Greek wars," and even orchestrated a peace treaty between the Greeks and the Turks (39). His participation in the Greek cause before and after his protectorate, like his domestic policies while Protector, is motivated by an underlying belief in historical improvement, even perfectibility (107). The horizon of such perfectibility shifts from Greece to England and later back to Greece, making it impossible to understand Raymond's domestic policies without reference to his international involvement, or to see his time as a soldier as separate from the novel's investigation of England's political trajectory and its fate as a nation.

Raymond's vision of the future as an impressive upward trajectory of well-administered flourishing echoes, to some extent, William Godwin's prediction, in the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, of an England in which "There will be no war, no crimes, no administration of justice, as it is called, and no government....Every man will seek, with ineffable ardour, the good of all" (465 [8.7]). But it also recalls another contemporary account of historical perfectibility, set out by Immanuel Kant in his "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose." In that essay, Kant describes human history moving through war towards peace, such that present generations lay the groundwork for future generations' greater flourishing, even if at great expense to themselves. "[A]fter many revolutions," Kant suggests, "the highest purpose of nature, a universal *cosmopolitan existence*, will at last be realized as the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop" (51). Two points are worth emphasizing

here: first, revolution is a necessary component of Kant's teleological history, and second, within such a history, perfectibility is guaranteed thanks to the fact that history is governed by nature, which guides the species as a whole to realize its highest potential.¹⁵ Therefore, the concern that violent conflict might not in fact ultimately lead to greater freedom and justice is mooted. To the extent that it is possible to see Raymond as a Kantian cosmopolitan along the lines of the 1784 essay, this connection is evident in Raymond's commitment to conflict and his belief in historical improvement. There is a Kantian bent to Raymond's expectation that Greece will prosper "when Constantinople should become its capital" and that its future generations will "be made happier by our present acts" (185, 194). However, whereas Kant, writing in 1784, envisions a federated Europe as the inevitable outcome of "many revolutions," Shelley, writing forty years later, has no such view. Inasmuch as progressivist cosmopolitanism enters the novel by way of Raymond's commitment to the Greek cause, it is complicated by the suggestion that the pursuit of Greek freedom might be an alibi for imperial pursuits. Though the novel's engagement with perfectibility endures even after Raymond's death in the character of Adrian, who continues to hope that "the forces, never before united, of liberty and peace" will bring an end to "poverty," "sickness," and "the iron yoke of servitude," the association between progressivist cosmopolitanism and imperialism, forged so strongly by Raymond's actions, overshadows any further discussions of peace (219).

Recent critical discussions of cosmopolitanism have examined the degree to which it may be "imperialism under another guise" (Pagden 4).¹⁶ *The Last Man* raises just such a question in its depiction of Raymond's destructive, fatal commitment to the Greek cause. When Raymond says that he will be "a soldier, perhaps a conqueror" in Greece, his phrase conjures two ways of understanding what it means for England's ex-leader to fight for the Greeks (153). On the one

hand, it suggests a plausibly cosmopolitan endeavor to combine the good of the nation (England as well as Greece) with the good of a broader collective (Europe and the West, though not the entire world) by pursuing the cause of freedom abroad. On the other hand, it presents an opportunity not merely for securing the return of invaded territory but for playing out a triumph of West over East that takes as its battleground a site that represents a classical origin of European culture as well as a present-day boundary of Europe.¹⁷ There is very little room afforded the former interpretation, as Raymond's obsession with heroism and drive toward violence increasingly frame the conflict as a "conquest" (163). The Greeks are said to "look at Constantinople as their own," but it is Raymond who most does this, desiring "to eradicate from Europe a power which, while every other nation advanced in civilization, stood still, a monument of antique barbarism" (163, 175). Comparing himself to Alexander the Great and to Napoleon, whose name, he hopes "shall vail to mine," Raymond aligns himself with world-historical figures who prize imperial expansion (57). Perhaps somewhat predictably, his ambitions have wide reaching, virulent consequences, for they lead to not only to his death but also to the eventual death of the entire population of Europe save one. In the crucible of Raymond's will to power, liberty turns to despotism turns to death.

When Raymond rides into Constantinople to plant a Greek standard, what might be taken as the moment of victory is immediately overlaid with death and destruction, the consequences of which continue to compound for the remainder of the novel.¹⁸ Raymond sets off stores of explosives as he moves through the city, the dome of St. Sophia collapses, and he is killed by "some falling ruin" (206). Only the cries of Raymond's dog lead Verney and the others to his corpse, which shortly thereafter appears to Verney in a dream as "a giant phantom" bearing a plague spot on its brow (202).¹⁹ The indelible association of Raymond with the plague presents a

further repudiation of the progressivist cosmopolitanism he represents. It refuses any claim that war leads to peace or to greater liberty, transforming the narratives of historical improvement with which Raymond is associated into narratives of contagion, illness, and death.²⁰ Given that the plague, rather like the visions of progress that precede it, is presented as inevitable, as a force that will sweep the earth no matter what measures are taken against it, we might ask what the status of teleological history is at this point in the novel. Esther Wohlgenut reads *The Last Man* as “a universal history [in which] the realization of Kant’s ‘cosmopolitan purpose’ is coterminous not with enlightenment, but with the end of the world” (154). The suggestion that *The Last Man* redirects teleological history toward extinction is compelling. However, to see death as the primary cosmopolitan force in the novel is to take an overly limited view of what cosmopolitanism can mean and do. My assertion, by contrast, is that Raymond’s death, and the spread of plague that follows it, does not define the novel’s engagement with cosmopolitanism so much as shift its terms. While Raymond’s cosmopolitanism is concerned with schemes of improvement that we might associate with Enlightenment perfectibility as well as with the Napoleonic attempt to build a European state, the cosmopolitanism that succeeds it is not about progressivism or improvement, but instead about the conditions under which life might continue. No longer a question of a military campaign to further the spread of liberty in Greece and across Europe, cosmopolitanism—in the face of a diminishing future—becomes a question of community and survival, both at home and abroad. This does not make the entire world a single community so much as it connects cosmopolitanism to life itself. This connection between cosmopolitanism and life matters not only because it introduces a Cynic strand of cosmopolitanism into the novel, but also because it associates survival with nonhuman animals,

in the process imagining an earth without humans and developing a model of cosmopolitan existence that uses the nonhuman animal as its guide.

PLAGUE STATES AND ANIMAL LIFE

As the plague begins to spread, *The Last Man* draws on the nation as well as the broader expanse of Europe in defining the scope of its community of political and moral obligation, which expands and contracts at turns. At moments, it seems that the novel experiments with the possibility of making the nation portable; at others, it presents England as a global commonwealth. Even after the plague has appeared in Europe, England's borders remain open. Numberless emigrants flood into the country; English citizens return from abroad, and foreigners seek refuge in "[o]ur little island, [which] was filled even to bursting" (236). The nation finds itself taxed with a swelling population and dwindling resources, and the plague becomes "the first question in the state" (233). There is a shortage of "the necessaries of life"; trade slows; bankers, merchants, and manufacturers go bankrupt; and wealthy families become beggars (233). Ryland, the Lord Protector, levies taxes from the rent-rolls, and Adrian petitions Parliament to get the aristocrats to allow their land to be used as a public resource. The gardens of stately homes are plowed to make room for crops, and surrounding woods cut down to allow emigrants to camp. This temporary class leveling coincides with a return to agrarian life and an emphasis on the family.

Though the plague initially generates a sense of collective obligation, such that all of humankind (or, rather, all of Britain and western Europe—the elision matters) unites against a shared enemy, the plague's continued progress forces survivors to seek refuge in more and more

remote locales, and winnows large social formations into small groups.²¹ As the population shrinks further and further, there is no longer a political body to speak of, but rather a collection of individuals who are attempting to survive as best they can. Survival, rather than peace or perfectibility or universal freedom, has become the primary concern. Survival is at odds with collectivity (whether political, economic, or otherwise) and focuses the novel's questions about the disappearance of political optimism once life itself cannot be taken for granted.

Whereas from a Kantian point of view, the entire enterprise of politics, whether cosmopolitan or otherwise, elevates the human above the animal and relies on the human not being animal, the plague powerfully undermines this assumption. It does so by threatening the human species—the collective entity that is the subject of politics—and by focusing a tremendous amount of attention on the life processes of human bodies. Though Shelley's novel is not especially concerned with quarantine or etiology, it does take on the basic issue of the extent to which the human is an animal. This has obvious connections to Kant, who bases man's capacity to be political on the qualities that distinguish him from animals, and who remarks that if men were like the "sheep they tended," they would live happy but unimproved and unexceptional lives (49). For Kant, it is clear that the human, if he is to be a political subject, cannot be an animal.²² Though we reach the vanishing point of Kant's concept of cosmopolitan politics when the human lives like a sheep, we do not necessarily step outside of other forms of cosmopolitanism.

The plague forces the admission that humans are animals. It does so by making it impossible to ignore what the novel calls "life," which is the continued existence of a particular organism. Verney remarks that the plague has made "life—the continuation of our animal mechanism—...the Alpha and Omega of the desires, the prayers, the prostrate ambition of the

human race” (294). This marks an end to the elevation of humans as reasoning creatures who are in some sense able to distance themselves from their bodies. In plague-ridden England, the human is no longer able to claim exception from the world of animals by taking the healthy operation of the body for granted: “Our minds, late spread abroad through countless spheres and endless combinations of thought, now retrenched themselves behind this wall of flesh, eager to preserve its well-being only” (316).²³ Much as this passage may seem to draw on an opposition between the human as mind and the animal as unreasoning flesh, the turn to life—the emphasis on animal mechanism—in *The Last Man* does not perpetuate such a view. To the contrary, the turn to life and to the animal brings freedom, the possibility of flourishing, and a radically different conception of what the human’s relation to the animal might be.

As the plague cleaves through economic and political forms—through mercantile capitalism and republicanism—animal life becomes an increasingly prevalent figure for what healthy life might look like. Once the plague has reached London, Verney becomes especially concerned about protecting his family: rural retreats seem to offer the only promise of safety, so he wants his family to remain at Windsor, to subsist on food from the garden, and to “establish the shaken throne of health” (262). In addition to considering rural self-sufficiency, he also imagines a more radical solution, in which he scours the earth for a place of safety:

I would walk barefoot through the world, to find an uninfected spot; I would build my home on some wave-tossed plank...I would betake me with them to some wild beast’s den...I would seek the mountain eagle’s eirie, and live years suspended in some inaccessible recess of a sea-bounding cliff—no labour too great, no scheme too wild, if it promised life to them. (249)

Verney’s vision of a barefoot journey “through the world” yokes the cosmopolitan idea of being at home in the universe with a sense of returning to a wild state. The homes Verney considers for his family are not abandoned human domiciles, but animal habitats. Verney and his family will

not become wild beasts or eagles, of course, but the wild beast's den and the mountain eagle's eirie promise life precisely because they are removed from human traffic and from human practices. The life these places promise is animal life.

Two characteristics shape animal life as it is represented in *The Last Man*: first, the undoing of domestication, and second, a sense of radical freedom that follows from this undomestication, and that is connected to the end of labor. Animal life is initially displayed solely by nonhuman animals, of which there are many, but ultimately becomes a model for Verney. As Verney travels through deserted areas of England, seeing Eton empty of students, fields left to rot, and a farmer fallen dead by the plough, he mentions, time and time again, the animals he meets: “troops of dogs,” tame chickens that have become wild, lambs born in gardens, cattle “wander[ing]...through the lanes,” and “oxen and horses [that had] strayed from their unguarded stables” (332, 319, 276). These animals bear the marks of domestication but are no longer domesticated. Their presence in human spaces is a reminder of an order that no longer obtains—animals are no longer out of place in cottages, because these cottages are simply shelters for them, places where they carry on their life. These animals—the “troops of horses, herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, wandering at will; here throwing down a hayrick, and nestling from cold in its heart, which afforded them shelter and food—there having taken possession of a vacant cottage”—are simply living, even if in doing so they kick up the residue of their past use (310). They embody the freedom of living according to their needs and desires, a freedom, as we will see, that defines Cynic cosmopolitanism.

On the eve of departing England for good, Verney describes encountering a horse without a saddle or bridle, which “trotted towards us, and tried to attract the attention of those which we rode, as if to allure them to seek like liberty” (332). The unbridled horse, like the unharnessed ox

and the newly wild chickens, has been released from the forms of productive labor that bound it: these free animals return to what we might call their natural state, inasmuch as the lives they lead are self-directed, and are ordered by their own needs and desires for food, shelter, and so on. Their existence as wild creatures offers a contrast, if not a corrective, to their previous domestic existence. Animal freedom, as it is represented in *The Last Man*, is often a collective, social form—there are “troops” and “herds” and “flocks” of nonhuman animals—but it can also be an individual practice, as it is with Lionel Verney, who can be seen to adopt his own sort of animal freedom as he becomes the last man.²⁴ By the time that Verney leaves England with Adrian and the other survivors, numbered around one hundred, he has already lost his wife and one of his sons. When he reaches Rome, his destination, there are no living females with whom to reproduce. As Verney becomes the last man, animals become not simply his only living companions but also exemplars for his own life.

Looking back, we see that in certain regards Verney has been depicted as an animal from the beginning.²⁵ The novel begins by describing Verney as an animal: as he tends sheep, walking in the hills with his dog, he is “as rough as the elements, and unlearned as the animals I tended” (18). Verney even compares himself, in his early years, to Romulus, the “wolf-bred savage.” His animality, as he formulates it, accounts for his contested relation to civilization; he wages a “war against civilization” but also “entertain[s] a wish to belong to it” (19). He earns this belonging through his friendship with Adrian and others, but ultimately returns to his roots at the novel’s close. Verney is, from the beginning, set up to be the last man; he is, in the early as well as the late pages of the novel, figured as an animal. This return to animal life toward the novel’s conclusion substantially develops what animal life means to the novel: if in its initial use, it

describes Verney's wildness in his untutored youth, in its later use, it denotes a way of being that enables survival.

CYNIC COSMOPOLITANISM, OR LIFE AS AN ANIMAL

Verney's return to a life among animals, and as an animal, introduces Cynic cosmopolitanism into the novel. Unlike progressivist cosmopolitanism, Cynic cosmopolitanism is not linked to a specific vision of the future or to a particular philosophy of history, nor to the pursuit of international ties between states. It places the burden of cosmopolitan practice almost entirely on the individual, because it is highly skeptical of state-based improvements or pursuits. One can be a Cynic in any place and at any time: doing so requires living according to Cynic principles, which demand that one minimize one's attachments and question established truths. Cynicism is a way of life that embodies the values it seeks to espouse and admits no separation between the concepts to which it is committed and the behaviors of its practitioners; it is what is called a practical philosophy. Perhaps the most important consequence of this concerns the Cynic view of freedom: to the Cynic, freedom is not something that is protected or administered by the state, but instead that is sought by the individual and his or her way of being in the world.²⁶

The term Cynic comes from the Greek word for dog, and many images of Diogenes depict him alongside a dog: the dog in particular and the animal in general is Diogenes' model for living according to nature, which is to say living as simply as possible, in a way that meets basic needs and desires but does not invite excess. Because the dog has no excessive desires and does not feel shame, it experiences greater self-sufficiency and freedom than humans do. Diogenes seeks the condition of animal life not as an end in itself but as the grounds for the pursuit of freedom. In pursuit of this freedom, he eschews comforts and possessions as well as

social ties: he is said to have slept outdoors in a barrel, to have conditioned his body to heat and cold, and to have been opposed to social bonds which generate too much dependence on others.²⁷ One anecdote relates how he, seeing a boy cupping his hands to drink from a pump, threw down the cup he was waiting to fill, declaring, “A child has beat me in plainness of living” (Diogenes Laertius 39).

Physically, Cynicism involves reducing one’s needs and acclimating oneself to the elements; mentally, it demands the constant use of one’s reason to question established truths and ways of living; and politically, it requires contestation of the state. Diogenes remarks that man needs “right reason or a halter,” and it is clear that he understands “right reason” to encompass vigorous interrogation of Athenian laws, practices, and beliefs (27). One cannot take for granted that socially prescribed or politically sanctioned norms have the good of the populace or of oneself in mind, not least because one must be free to determine one’s own good. Diogenes’ cosmopolitanism, therefore, is in defiance of public bonds rather than in pursuit of them; it is conducted on the borders of Athenian society and it disavows membership in the state. In calling himself a cosmopolitan, Diogenes is suggesting something very different from what the term later comes to mean. To be a citizen of the world in the Cynic sense is to belong nowhere permanently, to have no home in particular. Though such a condition is related to exile, it is not synonymous with it: instead, it describes the deliberate choice to place oneself on the periphery of a society and a state.²⁸

When Diogenes declares himself a cosmopolitan, then, he is using the term to do two things: first, to describe his freedom, and second, to emphasize that this freedom is something he has sought out for himself. Cosmopolitanism, for Diogenes, entails a refusal to belong to any political entity, be it a particular society or nation or even an international collective. Raymond

Geuss puts the point as follows: “When the Cynic claims not to be a citizen of *this* or *that* particular city, it is not because he envisages an all-encompassing city of which he *is* a citizen; it is because he thinks there is no such thing as a form of political organization concretely embodied anywhere, or even imaginable, of which one could even in principle rationally wish to be a citizen” (28-29). The Cynic may define himself as anti-political, but it is hard to understand the Cynic’s self-definition without reference to the society or the state the Cynic opposes, and it would hardly be sustainable if all Athenians were to start living as Diogenes does. Cynic life may disavow politics but it also requires them, for it cannot exist in a vacuum. In conceiving of world citizenship as being a citizen of no place rather than a citizen of all places, Cynic cosmopolitanism positions the Cynic on the edges of society, in a position to offer more powerful and reasoned contestation than those at its center.

When Verney leaves England with the last remaining survivors and travels to Rome, he belongs nowhere and is a member of no nation or state: he experiences the kind of homelessness that we might call cosmopolitan in the Cynic sense. Though he has not chosen to reject the state, as Diogenes did, but has simply outlived it—though he appears not so much anti-political as post-political—his displacement generates a Cynic way of life, and, within the broader context of the novel’s address to its readers, a Cynic comment on the early nineteenth century. Once the human population has dwindled so much that it is no longer possible to think about mankind as a collective entity, Verney remarks: “Man existed by twos and threes; man, the individual who might sleep, and wake, and perform the animal functions; but man, in himself weak, yet more powerful in congregated numbers than wind or ocean: man, the queller of the elements, the lord of created nature, the peer of demi-gods, existed no longer” (320).²⁹ In light of this shift from man as species (and lord of created nature) to man as individual (performing the animal

functions), it is hard to mistake Verney's subsequent statement that "the world is our country now, and we will choose for our residence its most fertile spot...perhaps, in some secluded nook, amidst eternal spring, and waving trees, and purling streams, we may find Life" (326). This is Cynic rather than progressivist cosmopolitanism. It takes the world as "our country" in an attempt to preserve human life, however unlikely this looks.

Cynic cosmopolitanism rejects man as citizen but not man as animal; in doing so, it moves away from national modes of belonging to a life that is rooted nowhere permanently. Shelley sets the stage for Cynic cosmopolitanism by dissolving the bonds offered by the state and reconstituting them as animal life. Though for Kant the animal represents everything the rational human wants to move away from, for Diogenes, it represents what the rational human will move toward. Like animal life in Shelley's novel, Cynic cosmopolitanism suggests that true freedom, the freedom of self-sufficiency, can only be arrived at by casting off the dependencies we have on everything but ourselves and our most basic needs.

Verney embodies the Cynic cosmopolitan's physical practices particularly clearly once he is the last man. This occurs in Italy, where he travels through the countryside and finally on to Rome. In Ravenna, he eats "like a wild beast, which seizes its food only when stung by intolerable hunger," and sleeps outdoors, not "seek[ing] the shelter of a roof" (453). Later, walking through the Apennines, he spends "many nights...under an ilex...[and] supped on arbutus berries and chestnuts, making a fire, gypsy-like, on the ground" (457). Verney stops changing his clothes and takes on a wild look; when he catches his reflection in a mirror in an abandoned palace in Forli, he sees "My long and tangled hair hung in elf locks on my brow—my dark eyes, now hollow and wild, gleamed from under them" (455). Though Verney is predisposed to a solitary existence as a forager and a wanderer because of the "habits" of his

“lawless” youth, his experience as the last man is less a return to his rural roots than a radical reorientation of his life as the life of a stateless man who lives in many regards as an animal (464).

As Verney becomes the last man, he is increasingly surrounded by nonhuman animals, who are icons of liberty as well as his only companions. These creatures are reminders of the human institutions which have disappeared as well as proof that the earth’s wellbeing does not depend the continued existence of humans (459). Buildings which used to house humans now shelter animals, who “in new found liberty, rambled through the gorgeous palaces”: “The dove-coloured oxen...paced slowly by; a startling throng of silly sheep, with pattering feet, would start up in some chamber, formerly dedicated to the repose of beauty, and rush...down the marble staircase into the street” (430). Though Verney is living like an animal, his response to the animals around him is initially one of resistance. They seem a cruel reminder that Verney is, as he calls himself, the “sole survivor of my species,” and as such is not only stateless but also unable to claim membership in a biological collective of similar bodies (449). Animal life presents an agon for Verney, who continues to search out a companion with human form. In a famous scene, Verney embraces marble statues in the Vatican, “reproach[ing] them for their supreme indifference”: these statues are the last remainders of human form, beyond Verney’s own, and their “supreme indifference” underlines how Verney must give up the logic of form, which is the logic of loving and belonging to creatures who look like he does (465).

Verney begins to think about animal life as shared in common between himself and the creatures around him once he turns his attention back to the life processes of organic bodies. When he apostrophizes these nonhuman animals, his language emphasizes the formal similarities between his body and theirs, but here form is not synonymous with species, and is not about

surface but instead about the matter of the body: “Live on, ye innocents, nature’s selected darlings; I am not much unlike to you. Nerves, pulse, brain, joint, and flesh, of such am I composed, and ye are organized by the same laws. I am something beyond this, but I will call it a defect, not an endowment, if it leads me to misery, while ye are happy” (459). The distance between animal life and human life is the distance between companionship and solitude, between being happy as an animal and being unhappy as an animal. To be happy as an animal, as we have seen, is something Verney desires but has not achieved; it is the Cynic’s condition.

At the novel’s conclusion, Verney is side-by-side with the Cynic namesake, a dog, who is his last companion. This “shaggy fellow, half water and half shepherd’s dog, whom I found tending sheep in the Campagna,” immediately abandons his habitual labor when he sees Verney, leaving “his fold to follow me” and “shewing boisterous gratitude whenever I caressed or talked to him” (467, 468). That this dog is still working, as it was taught to do by its now-dead master, appears to Verney indicative of how “lessons learned from man [are] now useless, though unforgotten” (468). In the last pages of *The Last Man*, as Verney and his dog set sail in a small boat, the companionship each can offer the other is the last community the novel depicts. However, it gestures to two others—Africa and its readers—in closing. I want to turn briefly to the implied presence of both of these communities to discuss some of the further implications of the novel’s treatment of cosmopolitanism.

When Verney leaves Rome, he sails south in search of a human companion. He heads for the shores of Africa: his departure from Europe offers, if only in the barest way, a more global vision of the world through which the cosmopolitan travels. For the first time, the novel conceptualizes the world beyond Europe as a desirable destination.³⁰ Until the last pages of the novel, Europe is metonymically equated with the world, and the human species that is in the

process of going extinct is, predictably, in fact more like the population of Europe. The reintroduction of Africa—first mentioned as the source of the plague, now the respite from it—moves the novel’s terminus from Rome through the Pillars of Hercules and beyond. In traveling down “the tawny shore of Africa...[and even to] the odorous islands of the far Indian ocean,” Verney hopes to find survivors of the plague: “it was still possible, that...I should find in some part of the wide extent [of earth] a survivor” (469, 468). Only once the entire population of the West has disappeared can Verney in particular and the novel in general conceive of a non-European companion as possible; to the extent that we get a truly global cosmopolitanism here, it is a last resort. Verney’s arrival in Africa, if it happens at all, happens beyond the scope of the novel: it is off the page and off the map. Nevertheless, in this final moment, Verney and his dog are finally citizens of no place. It is fitting that the novel ends at sea, beyond the boundaries of the nation and in international waters.

If Shelley’s novel does indeed end on a note of Cynic cosmopolitanism, what is the broader significance of this observation, beyond offering one way of reading the importance of animal life to Verney’s survival? And given the historical roots of Cynicism, what might we make of the fact that Shelley brings it into the year 2100, the date Verney scrawls on St. Peter’s before leaving Rome? I want to resist the idea that the movement toward Cynic cosmopolitanism is simply a movement back in time: to the contrary, it reflects the continued relevance of Cynic cosmopolitanism to the late Romantic moment. A turn to Cynicism is consistent not only with a desire to imagine forms of community not organized by national belonging or racial or cultural identity, but also with a post-Napoleonic wariness of political federations generated by warfare. Cynic cosmopolitanism does not traffic in perfectibility or in predictions of an ever-improving future; it does not depend on a particular view of history or of historical improvement. As such,

it offers an alternative to cosmopolitanisms like Kant's that assume a teleological unfolding of history. But it is not merely that Cynic cosmopolitanism is non-teleological: what makes it particularly appealing, during an era of tremendous political pessimism, is its conception of the cosmopolitan as standing apart from the masses. Cynic cosmopolitanism combines detachment with attachment; it positions the Cynic at the periphery of the community, but nevertheless as part of it. Even if *The Last Man* dissolves government and the human population, the novel ends on a note of possibility, as the last man and his dog sail south in search of companionship. At the final moment, Verney's apparent lastness is folded back into a larger community. This community, as it is depicted at the end of *The Last Man*, is a world in which European nations no longer exist: Shelley's novel presents a fantasy about the end of the European nation, and yet addresses itself to Britain and to the world at large. Before setting off, Verney remarks that he is leaving the novel as a "monument" of the vanished human species, in fact, this "world's sole monument" (466).³¹ But as we have seen, the novel, by virtue of addressing itself to Britain and to the broader world, qualifies its claim that humans have disappeared: its address to a reader assumes the continuance of the very species it imagines going extinct. In doing so, it situates Verney within a community of readers, rather like the Cynic himself has an audience even as he remains at the borders of the community.³²

Nevertheless, the novel's depiction of the gradual and inevitable erasure of governments, states, commerce, private property, families, and the human population, bespeaks an interest in what it would mean for humans to disappear. Shelley's apocalyptic cosmopolitanism can be seen as a profound, even perverse, reversal of historical progress—running the show in reverse, as it were—but the novel's dilation on what the world would look like without us begins to offer another kind of history. This history is a universal history in which the subjects in question are

not humans, but instead nonhuman animals and plants. In such a universal history, it is not the human species whose capacities unfold (as is the case in Kant, for example), but instead nonhuman species. *The Last Man* describes grass growing tall on untravelled roads, birds nesting in “consecrated spots,” mildew, damp, and dirt gradually eating away at abandoned buildings, “weed-grown flower beds” where deer “repose”: it imagines in great detail the erasure of the distinction between human and animal homes, the decomposition of dwellings and bodies, and the fecundity of the natural world that will, over time, swallow up the evidence of human habitation (332, 257). Such a prospect provokes melancholy reflections in Verney, but does not curtail his recognition that nonhuman life will continue uninterrupted by the cessation of human life. Verney at turns takes solace in this prospect and cannot bear it; he is consoled by birdsong, which “spoke to me of life,” but is unable to countenance “the torrents freed from the boundaries which he [man] imposed...the vegetation liberated from the laws which he enforced” because it is evidence “that his power is lost, his race annihilated for ever” (459, 460). The novel’s ambivalence about whether there is anything good in a world without us does not undo its radical act of imagining a universal history of the earth which “continues to wheel round and round, with alternate night and day, through the sky, though man is not her adorer or inhabitant” (459).

Where, then, does this leave us in terms of cosmopolitanism? In Shelley’s novel, it is possible to uncover a late Romantic reevaluation of cosmopolitanism that thinks seriously about the life of the body as an end in itself and that conceives of animal life as an explicitly cosmopolitan formation. I do not mean to suggest that Shelley’s cosmopolitanism is one in which nonhuman animals inherit the earth—it is clear that the novel’s investment lies on the side of human survival—but that the nonhuman animal becomes an icon of the freedom the cosmopolitan seeks. This freedom is the grounds not only for survival but for rational thought

and truth-seeking. Michel Foucault, who lectured about Cynicism in the last year of his life, describes the link between the life and the philosophical practice of the Cynic as follows:

“Cynicism is the form of philosophy which constantly raises the question: what can the form of life be such that it practices truth-telling?” (234). Cynicism, in other words, refuses a separation between the form of life, on the one hand, and truth-telling, on the other; it understands freedom as something the individual seeks out and demonstrates in her own life and thought, rather than as a condition that is guaranteed or secured by the state or another governmental body. Cynic freedom, in other words, is the freedom of thought that is possible when one is set apart from a particular community. So while Romantic cosmopolitanism has been overwhelmingly understood as a problem of national and international conjunctures, which come into relief at moments of war as well as of peace, it is also possible to see it as a stepping back from war and peace and the explicitly state-based pursuit of freedoms, rights, and duties. In other words, it is possible to see a strand of Romantic cosmopolitanism that is avowedly negative, that is, not committed to a particular course of events as the best possible future and certainly not to the pursuit of peace through war. Cynic cosmopolitanism offers one answer to the question of how cosmopolitanism can continue in the face of an uncertain future and following on the heels of political disappointment. It is not in danger of licensing imperialism and in fact is used in *The Last Man* to object to the imperialist campaigns that attempt to justify violence under the banner of the spread of liberty and justice. Doubtless, the influence of Cynic cosmopolitanism has been overshadowed by more triumphalist versions of cosmopolitanism, whose visions of a world community have proved unattainable. But cosmopolitanism’s attachment to pessimism, as well as optimism, dates back to its earliest moments, and is clearly evident in the period of uncertainty—present and future—*The Last Man* conjures.

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¹ The only treatment of cosmopolitanism in *The Last Man*, which occurs in the context of a broader argument about the continuity between Enlightenment and Romantic cosmopolitanism, appears in Esther Wohlgenut's *Romantic Cosmopolitanism*. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no mention of Cynic cosmopolitanism within discussions of cosmopolitanism during the Romantic period. Louise Shea's book on the importance of Cynicism within the French Enlightenment, *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon*, is a notable exception to the general trend of overlooking Cynicism. Cynicism is also typically left out of the accounts of cosmopolitanism set out by the new cosmopolitan thought, though Bruce Robbins discusses negative cosmopolitanism more generally in *Cosmopolitics* 250.

² For a helpfully concise list of six major theories of cosmopolitanism, see Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, "Introduction: Conceiving Cosmopolitanism," 9. For an overview of the intellectual genealogy of cosmopolitanism, see James D. Ingram, *Radical Cosmopolitics*. One of the clearest accounts of different varieties of cosmopolitanism in the late eighteenth century remains Pauline Kleingeld's "Six Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany."

³ Though the new cosmopolitan thought, which designates itself as such in opposition what it deems the old cosmopolitan thought (typically Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, as articulated by Kant), raises important concerns about empty universalism and about how older models of cosmopolitanism have been exploded by global capitalism, its account of the earlier cosmopolitanisms it opposes is not as nuanced as it might be. On this point, see Mary Helen McMurrin, "The New Cosmopolitanism and the Eighteenth Century." On the need for further specification of different varieties of cosmopolitanism, see Kleingeld, "Six Varieties," 505-06 and McMurrin 20-21, 32.

⁴ Here I am thinking in particular of David Simpson's discussion of the interrelation of cosmopolitanism and nationalism: "neither cosmopolitanism nor localism/nationalism are possible as pure positions: analysis of each reveals the presence of the other, not just as an ironic appendage but as a constitutive energy" (146).

⁵ See Sussman, Sterrenburg, Stafford, and Johnson, respectively.

⁶ Foucault 170.

⁷ Other Romantic narratives of apocalypse include Byron's "Darkness" (1816), poems titled "The Last Man" by Thomas Campbell (1823) and Thomas Hood (1826), and an unfinished dramatic work of the same title by Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1823-5).

⁸ On the topic of population, see in particular Charlotte Sussman's discussion of whether a nation can endure without citizens, and of the different ways of "registering the existence of nations," empirically and imaginatively (288).

⁹ See Ingram 14-15 and Delanty 31-32. Wieland's *Sokrates Mainomenos* was translated into English in 1771 under the title *Socrates Out of His Senses*.

¹⁰ Wellek is referring to De Quincey's "Letters to a young man whose education has been neglected," published in the *London Magazine* in 1823.

¹¹ On 25 September 1814, Mary Shelley writes in her journal: "PBS read[s] Diogenes Laertius I read Political Justice – walk out with Shelley" (*Journals* 29).

¹² Percy Shelley's copy of Diogenes Laertius is held in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, and is discussed in extensive detail in Roy R. Male, Jr. and James A. Notopoulos, "Shelley's Copy of Diogenes Laertius."

¹³ Diogenes the Cynic is also mentioned in biographical dictionaries and in the writing of Diderot, as Shea outlines in *Cynic Enlightenment*.

¹⁴ As is well known, many of the major characters are based on Shelley's intimates. Adrian is modeled on Percy Shelley, Lord Raymond on Byron, and Lionel Verney, the last man, on Mary Shelley herself, who writes the novel shortly after the death of both men.

¹⁵ Kant describes how war must lead societies to peace: "Wars...are the means by which nature drives nations to make initially imperfect attempts, but finally, after many devastations...to take the step which reason could have suggested to them...[of] entering a federation of peoples in which every state, even the smallest, could expect to derive its security and rights not from its own power or its own legal judgment, but solely from this great federation" ("Idea for a Universal History," 47). For further analysis of the universal history essay, and for a discussion of some of the complexities of Kant's cosmopolitan thought, see James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachman, eds.,

Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal; Amélie Oksenberg Rorty and James Schmidt, eds., *Kant's Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide* (particularly Kleingeld's essay, "Kant's Changing Cosmopolitanism"); and Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism: The Philosophical Ideal of World Citizenship*.

¹⁶ See also Heydt Stevenson and Cox 131, and Cheah 291.

¹⁷ As Paul Stock puts it in *The Shelley-Byron Circle and the Idea of Europe*, "[In the Romantic period] Greece is at the center of the educated European's intellectual self-definition and at the margins of modern geo-politics; both a specific locale and a source of wider, common tradition, and imagery" (36-37).

¹⁸ On the broader import of Constantinople, see Stock 60.

¹⁹ As soon as they arrive, the dog dies too. The dog's death may be an allusion to the dog in Byron's "Darkness," who starves protecting the corpse of his master: "And he was faithful to a corse, and kept / The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay, / Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead / Lur'd their lank jaws; himself sought out no food, / But with a piteous and perpetual moan, / And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand / Which answer'd not with a caress—he died" (48-54).

²⁰ On the connection between imperialism and contagion, see Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease*, esp. 298-306. Raymond's corpse-ridden body prefigures another spectral body that appears later: the plague-ridden body of the "negro half clad," who holds Verney with "a convulsive grasp" (336). Both of these bodies, Raymond's dead body and the black man's dying body, threaten contagion and associate the crossing of international borders with death rather than hospitality. For important, opposed readings of the "negro half clad," see Anne Mellor's introduction to *The Last Man* and Alan Richardson, "The Last Man and the Plague of Empire."

²¹ European history gets figured as universal history in Kant and, to a large extent, in Shelley. I want simply to note the obvious and problematic point that when Kant refers to the development of the human species, he is discussing the development of Europeans. For Shelley, the question is about Europe as well as Britain, but in both cases, there is a metonymic logic at work whereby a given nation or continent stands in for the world.

²² For more on Kant's concept of the animal, see Scrivener, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in the Age of Revolution and Reaction*, 12.

²³ Curiously, this body is described as an automaton: "Now life is all that we covet; that this automaton of flesh should, with joints and springs in order, perform its functions, that this dwelling of the soul should be capable of containing its dweller" (ibid.).

²⁴ The animal communities the novel represents are perhaps the most radical of the global collectives it imagines, and they offer a suggestion that the extinction of the human species allows for a decolonization of the earth. See also Bewell 303, 313.

²⁵ Hilary Strang makes a similar observation in "Common Life, Animal Life, Equality: *The Last Man*," 426-27. However, she suggests that Verney resists his animal nature; this is not my claim here. Animal life does not jeopardize Verney's personhood, as Strang suggests; instead, it offers a new avenue for thinking about personhood, not entirely unrelated to the "form of personhood conceived not against but as a form of animal life" Heather Keenleyside describes in relation to *Tristram Shandy*. See "The First-Person Form of Life: Locke, Sterne, and the Autobiographical Animal," 118.

²⁶ For more on Cynicism, see *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*, ed. R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé and Donald R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism from Diogenes to the Sixth Century A.D.* It is worth noting, too, that though I use the term state to describe the political body the Cynic responds to, Diogenes was of course contesting the *polis*. The *polis*, as is well known, excluded women, slaves, and foreigners from citizenship.

²⁷ If this sounds stoic or ascetic, it is not, or not yet: though the Stoics later took up many of Diogenes' beliefs, his principles predate them and are distinct from them.

²⁸ When Diogenes arrived in Athens, he was an exile from Sinope, and was already displaced; his resistance to having a fixed home, and the cosmopolitanism that this generated, might be seen as borne first out of necessity.

²⁹ Charlotte Sussman notes that this passage demonstrates the importance of a common purpose to the concept of humanity as a collective, rather than an unorganized mass of individuals. See Sussman 289.

³⁰ Northern Africa and North America get brief mentions, but the focus is on Europe and on England. The focus on Europe aligns with the Kantian imaginary, and the focus on England draws out a strong strand of exceptionalism that the plague ultimately undermines.

³¹ This is in quotation marks in the novel but I have been unable to find a source for this quote.

³² I do not mean to suggest that *The Last Man* ameliorates Verney's profound loneliness, but rather that a certain kind of Cynic community is evident in the way the novel writes back to England and the world. I am hesitant to suggest that authorship is a further form of cosmopolitanism in the novel, but it does seem worth pointing out that Verney describes himself as a "citizen of the world" when he discusses how being an author connects him to his "fellow creatures" (157).

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