

**The Beasts and the Beastly: Colonial Discourse and the (Non-)human
Animals of Pantisocracy**

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Abstract

In 1794 Coleridge and Southey made a plan to set up a utopian community on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania; the proposed society was christened Pantisocracy. The project, however, did not materialize. The differences between Coleridge and Southey regarding the place of servants in Pantisocracy and an uncertainty over the role of women in the community have often been cited as the key issues that led to the failure of the project. However, a close attention to Coleridge and Southey's writings on Pantisocracy reveals that a third reason for the abandonment was the anxiety of the two poets over the non-human animals and native humans of America. Considering critical theory's interest in posthuman issues, the present paper revolves around the question of the non-human animals in Pantisocracy. It contends that the non-human animals are central to an understanding of the utopian scheme and aims to discuss the role of non-human animals in the construction of racial other and in the formation of colonial discourse. Further, it proffers the argument that the human-non-human entanglement that is witnessed in issues regarding Pantisocracy underscores the fact that human agency is an assemblage of the human and the nonhuman actors.

Keywords: colonialism, humanism, non-human animals, Pantisocracy, race

In June 1794 on his first walking tour to Oxford, S. T. Coleridge met Robert Southey in his room at Balliol College and soon they became good friends. Their friendship thrived as both were inspired by the radical politics of the time and had a shared sense of disillusionment with the contemporary socio-political order of Britain. The scheme to set up a utopian community on banks of Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania was born out of this common discontent with the corrupting climate and oppressive socio-political order of Britain. The proposed egalitarian community was christened Pantisocracy by Coleridge. However, this project to build an ideal community did not materialize. It failed for several reasons. Some practical causes behind the failure have been identified as lack of funds, Southey's journey to Portugal (1795), Coleridge's marriage and loss of enthusiasm, and so forth. However, the major issues leading to the abandonment of the project was ideological in nature: The disagreement between Coleridge and Southey regarding the place of servants in Pantisocracy and their uncertainty over the role of women in their proposed society were two main issues that led to the abandonment of the project.

Another less highlighted but important matter that forced them pull out was their fear of the non-human animals and “savage” native tribes of the American wilderness. Coleridge and Southey were deeply troubled by the possible threat to their proposed community from the beasts and the “bestly” natives of the Americas. Although much has been written on the Pantisocracy as a major example of Romantic radicalism and utopianism (Roe 1988, p. 113–115, 211–212) and the project has been criticised for its colonial implications (McQusick 1998, p. 107–128), the non-human animals of this utopian scheme have received little attention. The present article aims to address this research gap taking into account the posthuman turn in critical thinking and the rising demand for paying attention to the non-human animals for a better appreciation of colonial history and colonial discourse formation (Deb Roy and Sivasundaram 2015).

The article is influenced by Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2021) thesis that the “planetary” (as opposed to the “global”) is a “dynamic ensemble of relationship” (p. 70), and Bruno Latour's (1999) view that agency is a property of the collective, an assemblage of the human and non-human actors.¹ More specifically, this article follows the methodology and critical perspectives developed in the special section of the journal *South Africa and the Middle East* (Vol. 35, No. 1, 2015), “Nonhuman Empires,” dedicated to the consideration of non-humans in colonial and imperial spaces. The editors of the section underscore the urgent need to bring the animals in colonial spaces into the domain of critical discourse because, they argue, neither animal studies scholars nor postcolonial critics have given adequate attention to non-human life in the colonies. The present article brings the animals of Pantisocracy into the ambit of (postcolonial/posthuman) criticism and argues that an analysis of the animals of Pantisocracy can provide important insights into the mechanism of violence in the colonies. Secondly, by locating the connection between speciesism and racism in Pantisocracy, it lays bare the important role non-human animals played in the formation of racial and colonial discourses.

The Pennsylvanian Utopia

Inspired by the radical thinkers of the time and the post-French revolution political ardour in England,² Coleridge and Southey considered the banks of Susquehanna in Pennsylvania an

¹ It is a basic theme in Latour's writings. See Latour, “A Collective of Humans and Nonhumans,” *Pandora's Hope*, 174–93.

² Pantisocracy, as summarised by Edmund White, “may be described as a fusion of ideas from Paine, Priestley, Hartley, Godwin, and Dyer concerning human rights, the perfectibility of mankind, civil liberty, religious

ideal place to escape from “terrors and dilemmas of European history” and materialize their revolutionary dream (McKusick 1998, p. 113; Carol Bolton 2006, p. 108). The structures of inequality existing in the English society troubled both the poets. As related in a letter to Grosvenor Charles Bedford (Feb., 1793), Southey nurtured the idea of fleeing from the “artificial distinctions” in England and find a new home “where all should be convenient without luxury all satisfied without profusion” (CLRS 1791-1797, No. 42).³ In Coleridge, he found a perfect companion to explore the possibility of migrating to some virgin land and establish a utopian social order. In two small verses on Pantisocracy written in 1794, Coleridge explored his despondency and shame of living in England and his wish to travel beyond the Atlantic in search of peace:

No more endure to weigh
The Shame and Anguish of the evil Day,
Wisely forgetful! O'er the Ocean swell
Sublime of Hope I seek the cottag'd Dell.
(“Pantisocracy” *The Complete Poems*, p.57, ll.2-5)

The other verse titled “On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America” (*The Complete Poems*, p. 57) also harps on the “pale anxiety” and “sad Despair” at home. He wished to leave claustrophobic Britain for the “Bliss on Transatlantic shore” (l. 14). Coleridge and Southey shared the same sense of anguish that in the years of 1794 and 1795 most of the young English radicals felt, and it was this agony that spurred them on to their exit plan.

By August-September 1794, the two men started working on the theoretical foundation of the project and planned to write a Book of Pantisocracy (left unwritten) to guide them in their new life. Simultaneously, they also started addressing practical issues like raising funds, contacting land agents, and gathering members for the society. In September 1794, Southey wrote to his brother Thomas that they were “getting our [their] plan & principles ready for printing to distribute privately.” Two basic principles of the society were to be Pantisocracy and Aspheterism, “the first signifying the equal government of all — & the other — the generalization of individual property.” They preached these principles in Bristol and Southey was happy that the “words [were] well understood now in the city...” (CLRS 1791-1797, No. 110). The common ownership of property and equal participation in the government, thus, were to be the central pillars on which they thought to build their society. Southey hoped that by March next year they would “depart for America,” and also mentioned in the letter names of people who were willing to join the party. He wrote a letter to Horace Walpole Bedford around this time and illustrated the scheme of Pantisocracy further. Southey wrote:

...every man laboured two hours a day at some useful employment. where all were equally educated — where the common ground was cultivated by common toil, & its produce laid in common granaries. where none were rich because none should be poor. where every motive for vice should be annihilated & every motive for virtue

freedom, benevolence, and similar concepts flowing in that “stream of Utopian thought” (73). In his article “‘Wisely forgetful’: Coleridge and the Politics of Pantisocracy,” James McKusick (1998) considers the project as “grounded at a more unconscious level in an economics of colonial exploitation,” but his survey of the project also locates its origin in the radical politics of the time and a desire to “escape from British tyranny” (p.113).

³ The scholarly web edition of Southey’s letters published in the website *Romantic Circles* (<http://www.rc.umd.edu/>) in four parts is cited all through this article. The general editors for the project are Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford and Ian Packer. In the parenthesis, the years covered in each volume cited is mentioned along with the letter numbers, for example, *CLRS 1791-1797*, No. 159.

strengthened? such a system we go to establish in America.” Once again the principle of equality is underlined and private property is blamed for the “various vices & misfortunes.” (CLRS 1791-1797, No. 99)

However, as we read through the letter, we start doubting Southey’s declared principle of equality because he also writes about “hiring labourers” for clearing the land for cultivation. This provokes several questions: Will there be labourers in Pantisocracy and if so what about the declared principle of equality? Is Southey thinking of employing labourers from outside their community? What will be the racial identity of these labourers? Read retrospectively with reference to the letter that Southey wrote to Grosvenor Bedford in December 1793, the labourers, in all probability, would be of African origin former slaves. Southey wanted Bedford to imagine him in America: “Fancy only me in America...three rooms in my cottage, and my only companion some poor negro whom I have brought on purpose to emancipate” (CLRS 1791-1797, No. 73). Following Southey’s letter, it becomes apparent that the former African slaves would constitute an underclass in Pantisocracy. Thus, the idea of hiring labourers betrays critical contradictions in the Pantisocracy concept.

Specifically, it was this question of keeping former slaves as servants in Pantisocracy that led to the breakdown of the friendship between Coleridge and Southey and to the abandonment of the project. Southey’s aunt Miss Tyler had two African origin servants, Shad and Sally. Southey proposed to take them to America. Coleridge readily agreed to it and wrote, “SHAD GOES WITH US. HE IS MY BROTHER!” (LSTC, Vol. 1. p. 77).⁴ Coleridge, however, was outraged when he learned that Southey wanted them to continue as servants and “perform that part of labour for which their education has [had] fitted them.” He unequivocally expressed his displeasure: “I was vexed too and alarmed by your letter concerning Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, Shad, and little Sally. I was wrong, very wrong, in the affair of Shad, and have given you reason to suppose that I should assent to the innovation” (LSTC, Vol. 1. p. 82). “The leading idea of pantisocracy” Coleridge wrote, “is to make men necessarily virtuous by removing all motives to evil—all possible temptation” (LSTC, Vol. 1. p.82). For Coleridge, Southey’s thoughts on keeping servants was a temptation to evil. Coleridge reprimanded Southey for the same issue in another letter written in November. He wrote:

My feeble and exhausted heart regards with a criminal indifference the introduction of servitude into our society; but my judgment is not asleep, nor can I suffer your reason, Southey, to be entangled in the web which your feelings have woven. Oxen and horses possess not intellectual appetites, nor the powers of acquiring them. We are therefore justified in employing their labour to our own benefit: mind hath a divine right of sovereignty over body. But who shall dare to transfer “from man to brute” to “from man to man”? To be employed in the toil of the field, while we are pursuing philosophical studies—can earldoms or emperorships boast so huge an inequality? Is there a human being of so torpid a nature as that placed in our society he would not feel it? A willing slave is the worst of slaves! His soul is a slave.

(LSTC, Vol. 1. p.89)

⁴ See *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Coleridge, Ernest Hartley. Vol. 1. Project Gutenberg, 2014. 2 vols. Henceforth will be referred to as *LSTC*.

The Question of the Non-human Animals

While Coleridge's condemnation of Southey is central to the passage, what is truly problematic is the contrast drawn by Coleridge between humans and animals: that animals are brute creatures, all body without any intellect, and therefore, humans enjoy sovereignty over the animals. The logic that nonhuman animals can be exploited because they are inferior in intellect has further implications and was also used to justify slavery and colonialization. This anthropocentric conception of nonhuman animal as the inferior other of the human runs parallel to the racial othering of the native Americans. However, before turning to the point of human-animal parallelism in Coleridge and Southey's writings on Pantisocracy, it might be appropriate to focus on the human-animal difference and how they conceived the animals of Pantisocracy in the first place.

A close look at Coleridge and Southey's writings around the project reveals their three interconnected positions on the animals of Pantisocracy: firstly, they completely disregarded the nonhuman life forms which would be displaced as result of their colonial settlement; secondly, they emphasized on the brute nature of the animals when acknowledged their presence; and thirdly, they thought of subjugating and decimating non-human animals if confronted.

In 1794 Coleridge spent several evenings with a land agent discussing the prospects of settling on the banks of the Susquehanna. Narrating the subtleties of the conversations, Coleridge wrote to Southey that the agent praised the exquisite beauty of the place and confirmed that it enjoyed a "security from hostile Indians" and "he never saw a Byson his life" and the "mosquitoes are[were] not as bad as our gnats."⁵ The references to animals and insects indicate Coleridge's sustained anxiety over possible encounter with wild animals in Pantisocracy. The same anxiety can be seen in Southey's December 1793 letter to Grosvenor Bedford, where he imagines himself in America toiling hard: cutting down the "tree & now the snakes that nestled in it" or "building a nice snug little dairy," until an "ill looking Indian with a tomahawk & scalps me" (CLRS, 1791–1797, No. 73). Southey feared that he "will [would] either be cookd for a Cherokee or oysterized by a tyger" (CLRS, 1791–1797, No. 73).

This imagery returned to haunt Southey in 1794 when the two poets had been trying hard to realize their dream of settling in America. In his letter to Horace Walpole Bedford, Southey jokingly wrote, "either [they] will find repose in the Indian wig-wam—or form an Indian tomahawk" (CLRS, 1791–1797, No. 99). Both, the humans and the non-human animals are presented as violent and threat to their community, but to continue with the discussion on demonization of the non-human animals, it is pertinent to recall that such a representation sits very incongruously with the more sympathetic treatment of non-human animals by Coleridge and Southey in several of their poems.

Surveying the texts and discourses on animal rights in Romanticism and Animal Rights, David Perkins has noted that there was a steady growth of concern for the animals in the eighteenth century. Numerous books and pamphlets, sermons were published that highlighted the plight of the animals and human cruelty against them.⁶ Most of the late eighteenth century writers

⁵ See *Collected Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs, v. 1, (6vols), p. 113. Henceforth to be mentioned as *Letters* when cited.

⁶ John Hildrop's *Free thoughts Upon Brute Creation* (1742), *Clemency Against Brutes* (1761), and Humphry Primatt's *Duty of Mercy and Sin of Cruelty to Beast* (1776) were some important books. This protective tendency

and poets shared this concern for non-human animals and they were sensitive to the animals, be it the beasts of burden, the little insects, the field mice, or birds (e.g. Robert Burns' "To a Mouse" and "To a Louse," Letitia Barbauld's "The Mouse's Petition"). A poem like "To a Mouse" by Robert Burns not only reveals the sympathy for animals but also testifies to the fact that the Romantics were not unaware of displacement of non-human animals due to human activities.

This compassionate attitude to non-human life also characterises much of Coleridge and Southey's poetry. For instance, in Southey's "To a Spider" (1797), the speaker of the poem refuses to "crush thy [spider's] bowels out" and assures it that "thou need'st not run in fear about." The speaker finds the spider's work as valuable as that of the humans: "And is not thy weak work like human schemes/And care on earth employ'd?" However, the kindness shown towards the spider in the poem is completely missing when it comes to the animals of Pantisocracy and he was oblivious to the fact that the very settlement by deforesting an area would kill thousands of spider-like species. Moreover, he thought of hunting animals in the American wild.⁷ This goes against the animal rights discourse in the eighteenth century England as hunting was widely condemned by animal rights advocates.

Similar self-contradictory positions can be noted in Coleridge as well. Coleridge wrote his play *Osorio* in 1796-97 (revised and staged as *Remorse* in 1813). In the play, he celebrates the Oneness of human and non-human life and condemns the killing of even an insect. The protagonist of the play *Alvar* would not allow even an "insect on the wall" to be killed because "it has life, ... life and thought;/ And by the power of its miraculous will/ Wiends all the complex movements of its frame /Unerringly, to pleasurable ends! (Act IV, p. 147).

A more interesting example in the present context is Coleridge's well-known poem "To a Young Ass." In 1794, the young poet befriended an ass at Jesus College. He often fed it and thought of taking it to the "Dell of Peace" (i.e. Pantisocracy). The poem begins with gestures of love for the ass and a description of its innocence and meekness and goes on to trace the mother of the young foal engaged in hard labour by its owner. Extending the narrative further, Coleridge connects the ass's mother to its owner who lives in an impoverished state and is as oppressed as the ass is. Afterwards the poet reflects upon his friendship with the young ass and the animal is humanized to the point of brotherhood: "I hail thee Brother spite of the fool's scorn!"

What we see in the poems discussed above is a celebration of "Fraternity of the universal Nature", but no such attempt is made to humanize and harmonize human and non-human life in Pantisocracy; on the contrary, the recurring image is that of beastly violence. This difference is understandable because Pantisocracy was "grounded at a more unconscious level in an economics of colonial exploitation" (McKusick 1998, p. 108). It was premised upon the colonial imaginary of vast empty spaces ready to be occupied by the European settlers. In his December 1793 letter to Charles Bedford, Southey imagined himself in an Edenic America whose ground, Southey remarked, had been "uncultivated since creation" (CLRS 1791-1793, No. 73). Such an imaginary tended to overlook both humans and nonhumans living in the area to be colonized, and it is illustrative of the fact that the human and non-human population in

toward the non-human animals has been interpreted as an extension of the effort to protect humans from cruelty and violence that was witnessed emerging in the late eighteenth century (Elias 162-163).

⁷ See Robert Southey's letter to Horace Walpole Bedford, 22 August–3 September, 1794: "when Coleridge & I are sawing down a tree we shall discuss metaphysics, criticise poetry when hunting a buffalo... ."

colonial settlements were subject to a form of discursive violence prior to their physical displacement and subjugation. This clarifies why Coleridge and Southey were largely oblivious to the existence of numerous species of animals that were part of the ecology of the forest and were neglectful of the violence their settlement would unleash on non-human animals.

The Pantisocracy scheme, therefore, stands as a telling example of the fact that the colonial contact zones were not only marked by a racial conflict, but was also characterized by a sharp contest between the colonizers and the non-human animals. Further, it proves that animals played a key role in colonial discourse formation: the colonial strategy of othering the colonized by presenting them as violent, savage or uncivilized to justify their exploitation is comparable to Coleridge and Southey's tactic of locating violence in the animals of Pantisocracy. The colonial desire to exercise dominance over the non-human animals is also reflected in Southey imagining themselves in the role of hunters: "when Coleridge & I are sawing down a tree we shall discuss metaphysics, criticise poetry when hunting a buffalo," wrote Southey (CLRS 1791-1797, No. 99). Naïve as it may look but, as McKusick (1998) has pointed out, the fantasy of hunting wild animals was created by them as a mechanism in their mind to counter the anxiety generated by the wild animals (122). This hunter/hunted binary is also very important to an understanding of the difference between their thoughts on animals in general and the animals of the Pantisocracy. In the domestic context, they could be very sympathetic to animals or insects because their dominance over non-human animals remained unchallenged, but in Pantisocracy their hierarchical position is tested and the pantisocrats find themselves in the place of the hunted. This unsettles their familiar perspective on non-human animals.

However, to concentrate only on the human-animal difference and hostility between animals and colonizers in Pantisocracy, means dealing with the one half of the problem only. A close look at the passages cited from Coleridge and Southey to illustrate their positions on the non-human animals show that there is an easy transition in these from the animal to the human and a clubbing together of the two in terms of bestiality. A typically condensed expression of this comes from Southey when expressing his fear, he writes either he will be "cookd for a Cherokee or oysterized by a tyger." Both, the non-human animals and native humans are defined in terms of violence and considered a threat to their utopia. Thus, the love and sympathy shown to the racial other (for Shad and Sally or the slaves), totally evaporates when it comes to the human others of Pantisocracy. Coleridge and Southey's writings in the European context is characterized by a clear attempt at humanizing the animals, the racial others and the working class. The poem "To an Ass" constitutes an example of how the animal and its working class owner become a part of the humanizing rhetoric. Similarly, cruelty on slaves is unequivocally condemned in Coleridge and Southey's writings on slavery and slave trade.

The Bestial "Other"

In Pantisocracy, however, things take a reverse turn. A process of bestialisation becomes central here: the beast and the beastly humans are the violent other who must be subjugated or annihilated to assert dominance of the human settlers from Europe. In the domestic space, the humanity of the animals is central to the project of drawing sympathy to the animals, but in Pantisocracy the animality of the humans is the principal point emphasized. Thus, the brute beasts and savage Indians form part of the same equation and this stands in complete opposition to the human animal divide that Coleridge charted when he replied to Southey's plan of having servants in Pantisocracy. The two incongruous positions on the animal other demonstrate the

colonial strategy of exploitation by displacing violence on to the native human and the non-human population of Pantisocracy.

The parallels drawn between humans and non-human animals by Coleridge and Southey in their writings around Pantisocracy also reminds readers of numerous such analogies in eighteenth and nineteenth century discourses on race and slavery, where the racial other was often equated with the animal other. A primary argument that was used to justify slavery, for instance, was the inferiority and bestiality of the Africans. Edward Long in *History of Jamaica* (1774) and Charles White in *Account of the Regular Gradation of Man 1799* argued that the whites and blacks were two distinct species (White 42). Coleridge's negative analogy carried the load of this popular rhetoric, even though he had refused to equate Shad and Sally with animals. Paradoxically, therefore, Coleridge's construction of the human-animal binary becomes complicit in the project of colonialism as "brute" humans of the colonies were often pitted against the "civilized" Europeans. What emerges from the writings on Pantisocracy, therefore, is more than one category of humans: humans who are different from the animals as clearly demarcated by Coleridge while criticizing Southey, and humans resembling the animal that populates much of their writings on the project. The first category humans are the male Europeans, and the second, the indigenous Americans, who are closer to the animal. Thus, irrespective of whether one considers the human-animal equation in terms of difference or similarity between the two, an analysis of the Pantisocracy project reveals a human-nonhuman entanglement and affirms the fact that human agency is an assemblage of human and non-human actors. It indicates that animals and discourses on animality were key factors in constructing the idea of the human.

Pantisocracy's Women

Another interesting dimension of the human-animal entanglement is its concomitant mechanism of othering. It works to project certain groups of humans as less human than others, and it is within this social contrivance that the status of women in Pantisocracy is conceived. Women are represented as intellectually inferior and incapable of harbouring greater moral wisdom. They were thought to be fit for only one kind of work, that is, household duties, while metaphysics and poetry would be the primary engagement for the community's men. The "beautiful, amiable and accomplished" women of Pantisocracy, as Southey fancied, would exercise a soothing influence on the pantisocrats working in the harsh weather of their Utopia (CLRS, 1791–1797, No. 99). Coleridge repeated to Southey a "prophecy" that was made by a Cambridge acquaintance of his, that "your women [will lack] sufficient strength of mind, liberality of heart, or vigilance of Attention - They will spoil it!" (CLRS, 1791–1797, p. 119).

That Coleridge was suspicious of the ability of "their" women is revealed in his warning to Southey that they should work on "strengthening the minds of the Women and stimulating them to literary Acquirements" to make them worthy of Pantisocracy. Coleridge continued, "in the present state of their minds...the Mothers will tinge the Mind of the Infants with prejudications" (CLRS, 1791–1797, p. 119). Interestingly, animal imagery is used by Coleridge to illustrate how the women of the community were to be infused with the spirit of Pantisocracy: "The Heart should have fed upon the truth, as Insects on a Leaf - till it be tinged with the colour, and shew its food in every the minutest fibre" (CLRS, 1791–1797, p.115).

A sustained anxiety, therefore, characterizes Coleridge and Southey's conversation on their female companions and a rhetoric of control and containment forms the core of it. Besides, just like the American Indians, the women are placed at the intersection of the human and the

animal to justify the containment strategies. Of course, women are not presented as savagely violent as the native Americans, but they are not good enough not to qualify as appropriate companions of the male pantisocrats. Thus, just like the native humans and animals of Pennsylvania, the women are considered a threat to Pantisocracy and what they threaten is the pantisocratic ideals.

The Idea of Race

An analysis of the Pantisocracy project, therefore, reveals the intimacy of the human and non-human animals in the colonial encounter and how exchangeable their roles are in colonial discourse. In his article “Imperial Transgressions: The Animal and Human in the Idea of Race,” Sujit Sivasundaram (2015) has contended that “race can be seen as an idea that comes into being at the intersection of the human and animal in post-Enlightenment contexts” (p. 157).⁸ He has studied the animal and human entanglement and the construction of the racial other in the context of the Indian sub-continent to prove his thesis. The Pantisocracy scheme is another telling example of this entanglement which affirms that race as a category was born in the intersection of the human and animal. During the Enlightenment many treatises were produced on race and racial difference. While men like Edward Long (1774) and Charles White (1799) argued that the whites and blacks were two distinct species (White 1799, p. 42), monogenesis theorists like Blumenbach (*The Anthropological Treatises*) and Buffon (*Histoire Naturelle*) rejected the idea of polygenesis. However, the theory one subscribed to notwithstanding, in most of the racial discourses of the time, the notion inferiority of the coloured people compared to the whites was quite common.

A central question underlying any discussion on race was who or what constituted the human, and the idea of the human was defined in terms of the degree of progress from animal. In other words, discourses on animal and animality were crucial to the conceptualization of “Man” in the Western humanist tradition. Thus, with the emergence of the theories of race, there emerged several categories of human during the Enlightenment. Robert Southey (1828), who was interested in colonial policy making and was deeply influenced by Enlightenment humanism, once observed: “This is the order of nature: beasts give place to man, savages to civilized man” (p. 623). He made this remark in his review of the missionary effort in Africa to bring “civilization” to the “dark continent”. The expression typically embodies Enlightenment notion of progress that was predicated on a journey from animal to the “savage” human and from the human to the properly human. The equation suggests that existence of the idea of human is impossible without the non-human animals.

Conclusion

The Pantisocracy scheme is a revealing example of the inseparability of the human and the animal. Racism and speciesism, it suggests, are but two sides of the same coin. If bestialisation of the certain groups of humans helped generate and flesh out racial and colonial discourses, prior to bestialisation it was the othering of the beast itself. This inquiry of the Pantisocracy scheme keeping the non-human life forms in perspective, therefore, underscores the importance of adopting a (planetary-) posthumanist perspective for a comprehensive analysis of colonialism and its planetary implications.

⁸ Perhaps this also applies to the idea of gender.

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