

Report of the Mission to Colony B

It had been 15 millenia since Colony A and B departed from Earth, just 18 months before The Unfortuante Event – a large asteroid collision with earth – wiped out all human life on the planet. Both colonies found hospitable planets with earth-like atmospheres, soil, and water. Colony A’s planet was uninhabited, so the colonists enjoyed unrivaled access to resources. Many of the native plants were edible and the food technologies brought from earth survived the journey and helped Colony A thrive. Eventually they developed the capacity for further space travel and located Colony B. This report presents a summary of their major findings and recommendations.

Colony B had a less fortunate arrival at their new home. They crashed into Zeta 25 and lost most of their technology and weaponry. The colonists managed to establish productive and sustainable communities on the edges of some forests and plains that had arable soil and some edible plants and animals. But after three centuries, the colonists encountered the other principle occupants of the planet, the Grocks, who were an advanced species with a long history and a sophisticated civilization. Grocks were also physically imposing; averaging ten feet in height with muscular bodies. Grocks were so much smarter than humans that they had trouble seeing humans as intelligent. They had actually migrated to Zeta 25 as colonists themselves about 25 millennia before Colony B to escape the destruction of their own planet. While Grocks were far more numerous, organized, and prosperous than B-colonists, they had some challenges of their own in meeting their nutritional needs. Because of their size and active lifestyle, they needed a lot of protein. They could survive on a plant based diet, but they, like the colonists, found it hard to keep soil from eroding and many of the forests of Zeta25 were full of game of various kinds. Meat was a preferred source of protein among Grocks because Grock brains felt pleasure consuming animal fat and, like humans, Grocks felt better when they had a lot of protein in their diets. Hunting provided important sources of meat and protein to both groups, but as

Grocks continued to expand, they depleted their natural supplies of edible prey. At that point they encountered the colonists and it seemed natural to hunt them along with other animals. And humans tasted especially good to Grocks.

The colonists defended themselves as well as they could, but they were no match for the Grocks. Eventually, Grocks managed to disrupt human life on Zeta25 so much that the colonists were in danger of starvation. Two responses to this situation developed. Some colonists went deep into the forest and found more remote places to live; places less congenial to Grocks, who had trouble tolerating the cold and could not swim. Other colonists, out of desperation, stayed near Grock towns and villages to raid fields and food stores of the Grocks. Over time many colonists were captured and either immediately eaten or fed and cared for until they became ready for slaughter. Through artificial selection and breeding, Grocks developed varieties and strains of humans that were progressively less intelligent and more docile than wild humans. Some descendants of the original colonists became domesticated in this way and were even preferred as pets. Some Grocks ate their human pets when they reached the end of their life, while others found the practice revolting. The colonists that avoided Grocks eventually perished.

In recent centuries, Grocks have started to have second thoughts about having domesticated humans and even about eating them. While Grocks were orders of magnitude more intelligent than humans, and for this reason found it hard to credit humans were more than rudimentary intelligence, Grock scientists had started to study human consciousness – even the degraded form that existed among domesticated humans – and they were surprised at their findings. Domesticated humans were sentient and could use language to some extent (something that had been totally obscure until then), but had no ability to entertain abstract ideas like “having a life” or “valuing” things in the abstract, like “interests”. They had nothing like real syntax, nor could they have a conversation about ontology. Grock animal husbandry had selected for traits like large meat to body weight ratios, docility, and low

brain to body ratios. The literature on domesticated humans showed clearly that humans still had natural behaviors related to mating and nesting (they paired bonded and were roughly monogamous), were aware that other humans were being killed and eaten, and felt fear at the prospect. It was well known, for example, that slaughtering a human in a state of fear tainted the flavor of the meat due to the chemicals released by the fear reaction.

Colony A's delegation to the Grocks was received with great anticipation and fanfare. Grocks considered the A-colonists a similarly advanced species, both groups were omnivores, and both groups possessed technology that could have led to each other's destruction; a circumstance which led to some mutual respect. The A-colonists looked awkwardly similar to the domesticated humans (who were much fatter and less intelligent or self-aware) and none of the visiting colonists could bring themselves to eat human meat, but they also did not immediately recognize the domesticated humans as their equals, though there was no doubt that the two groups of humans were still the same species. (During the visit a few romances had developed and live births attested to the common descent and similarity of the two human groups.) But their languages had diverged so much and the domesticated human's cognitive capacities had diminished so dramatically from their ancestors, that there was little sustained contact or relationship. From what the visiting humans could determine, their conversations had a child-like quality and never really stayed on one thing very long, mostly expressing emotional reactions to food or others' behaviors, with flashes of playful behavior. They seemed, to the A-colonists, to have many of the characteristics of the original primates from which humans descended.

Not surprisingly, the A-colonists were somewhat divided in their report regarding what, if anything to do about the condition of the remaining B-colonists. One group argued that nothing needed to be done. Among them, some said the domesticated humans weren't really humans anymore and while some thought the original enslavement and breeding of humans was a moral abomination, the situation now was similar to the animal agriculture practices of the A-colonists themselves. The A-

colony ethicists in this camp argued that the humans Grocks ate did not have an awareness of their own lives or themselves as selves. They were sentient, but “lacked the sort of self one needs to be the bearer of rights.” (Citation needed). Others suggested that the relative difference between Grocks and humans was similar to the difference between humans and cows, therefore we have to allow that Grocks see B-colonists’ interests pretty much the way A-colonists see a cow’s interests.

A second group was morally outraged at the condition of the B-colonists and shocked that anyone who cared about human rights could seriously advance a “do nothing” position. This was the worst form of slavery and violation. It recalled the case of the monstrous geneticist who was found to have created aberrant forms of humans that had shocked Colony A so much that they destroyed all of the “humanimals” along with the evil scientist and his lab. The fact that Grocks had been treating humans this way for 10,000 years or that their agriculture had changed humans from their “natural” state was either irrelevant or aggravated the offense. Some called for war on the Grocks and repatriation of the domesticated humans to environments in which they could continue to breed and be cared for. Others agreed that Grock treatment of humans was immoral, but simply called on the Grocks to stop eating the descendants of humans. Some pointed out that this course of action had the paradoxical effect of dooming the victims of Grock exploitation to extinction.

Finally, a small group suggested that the only conclusion a thinking person could come to, Grock or otherwise, is that being eaten can never be compatible with a sentient creature’s interests, cow or human. Citing relative differences in intelligence between Grocks and humans might help *explain* their thinking, but certainly could not *justify* it. Having created domesticated humans who cannot now live in the wild, Grocks may have obligations to their continued existence, but it has to be recognized, so this group claimed, that the existence of all domesticated animal agriculture is premised on a moral flaw, whether one regards the agents of the original process of domestication as culpable or not.

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