

Every Coloniser Must Be Reborn Into John Brown

A Manifesto for the Coloniser Who Is Reborn



The Sentence

1 Every Indonesian and every white person who robs, enslaves, tortures, or profits from Papuans must be reborn as John Brown.

2 Not every Indonesian, not every white person. This manifesto declares no race guilty by birth. It names the hand on the trigger, the hand on the mining contract, the hand raised in the rigged vote of 1969, and the hand that signs the order for the next military operation. And it names the millions of hands folded in comfortable silence, because in the presence of genocide, silence is also a hand at work.

3 To every one of them, this manifesto says: you were born into the empire. You do not have to die in it.

4 There is a second birth available to the coloniser. It is not given. It is chosen. Its name is John Brown.

White Skin, One Mind, One Spirit

5 John Brown had one skin: white, the colour of the masters.

6 One mind: the mind of the enslaved Black human being, refusing the chain.

7 One spirit: free humanity.

8 His skin placed him among the masters. His mind placed him among the enslaved. His spirit placed him beyond both, in a country where no human being owns another. He did not deny his skin. He betrayed everything his skin had been promised.

9 Here is the paradigm shift. The coloniser is not condemned to remain a coloniser. Skin is a fact. Side is a choice. And every single day, knowingly or not, the coloniser makes that choice again.

The Vow

10 In November 1837, a pro-slavery mob in Alton, Illinois, murdered the abolitionist printer Elijah Lovejoy. At a memorial meeting in a church in Hudson, Ohio, a thirty-seven-year-old man stood up at the back of the room, raised his right hand, and spoke the words that would govern the rest of his life:

“Here, before God, in the presence of these witnesses, from this time, I consecrate my life to the destruction of slavery!”

11 He did not consecrate his life to understanding slavery, debating slavery, or praying about slavery. He consecrated it to the destruction of slavery. Not its reform. Not its softening. Its destruction.

12 Twenty-two years later, he kept that vow on the gallows.

The Man of Action

13 John Brown was not a thinker who only thought, a worshipper who only prayed, a talker who only talked, a watcher who only watched, or a complainer who only complained. He was a doer: the one who decides, and by deciding, determines which world will exist.

14 Around him, the abolitionist meetings of the North overflowed with speeches. Resolutions were passed. Pamphlets were printed. Hands were wrung. And every year the slave markets stayed open. Brown looked at the eloquent men of his own movement and passed judgement on them:

“These men are all talk. What we need is action — action!”

15 He was a decision-maker in a world of postponers. He understood what the comfortable never understand: when two realities are possible, only action decides which one is born. Every day of inaction is a vote for the reality that already exists, and in Papua the reality that already exists is a slow genocide.

16 Papua has been drowned in talk. Statements of concern. Expressions of regret. Calls for dialogue. Thoughts and prayers. Seminar after seminar, report after report. And every year the soldiers stay, the settlers arrive, the forests fall, and the graves multiply.

17 Papua does not need more people who care. It needs people who act.

The Script of Reality

18 Every empire writes a script for human reality. It decides who rules and who serves, who owns and who is owned, whose land is sacred and whose is empty, whose death is a tragedy and whose death is a statistic.

19 In the script of Brown’s America, the white man was master and the Black man was property. In the script of Papua today, the Indonesian is the civiliser and the Papuan the savage; the settler is the future and the Papuan the past; Jakarta is the nation and Papua is a resource to be dug, logged, and drained.

20 Most people live their whole lives reciting the lines the empire wrote for them. The soldier recites his. The official recites hers. The settler, the miner, the tourist, and the preacher each perform the role handed to them at birth, and call it reality.

21 John Brown tore up his script. He was handed the role of master and refused to play it. In refusing, he did more than change his own life. He cracked the script itself, and through that crack the future poured in.

22 That is what it means to make history: not to watch it, study it, or regret it, but to rewrite the script of human reality with your own life as the pen.

The Radical Lineage

23 John Brown was a radical Socrates, who chose death rather than unsay the truth.

24 He was a radical Jesus, who overturned the tables of those who made a market out of human beings.

25 He was a radical prophet, a Moses standing before Pharaoh with a single demand: let my people go.

26 He was a radical Buddha, who saw suffering and walked out of the palace of privilege to end it.

27 He was a radical Euripides. After Athens massacred the men of Melos and enslaved its women and children, Euripides put the grief of conquered women on the stage of Athens itself and made the conquerors watch. Brown did the same with his own body: he carried the suffering of the enslaved into the heart of the empire and forced it to look.

28 Each of these figures broke with the world that had made him. Brown is what that break looks like when it leaves the temple, the stage, and the lecture hall and walks into history.

29 White skin. Black mind. Human soul.

The New Human Being of Empire

30 Every empire produces two kinds of people. The first is the ordinary citizen of empire: the soldier who obeys, the official who signs, the settler who takes, the merchant who profits, the believer who looks away. This is the civilisational savage, who murders in the name of order and calls the murder civilisation.

31 *The second kind is rare. Born inside the empire, raised on its myths, and offered its rewards, this person refuses them. They turn from the master's table towards the slave quarters and say: your freedom is my freedom, and your chains are my shame.*

32 *John Brown is the example of what this new human being looks like. He is what courage looks like when it has nothing personal to gain and everything to lose.*

33 *The empire fears its rebels, but it fears its traitors more. A rebel from among the colonised can be branded a terrorist, a savage, a separatist. A traitor from the coloniser's own house cannot be dismissed so easily. Their very existence proves that the empire's story is a lie.*

The Price

34 *Brown paid for his vow with everything he had. In Kansas he lost his son Frederick. At Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in October 1859, he led about twenty men, Black and white, in a raid on a federal armoury, hoping to arm the enslaved and break slavery from within. The raid failed. Two more of his sons, Watson and Oliver, died beside him. United States Marines stormed the engine house where the last of the raiders held out.*

35 *Let it be said honestly: his war was not bloodless. In Kansas in 1856, men under his command killed five pro-slavery settlers. History still argues over him: hero, martyr, terrorist, madman, saint. This manifesto does not ask anyone to take up his sword. It asks them to take up his decision.*

36 *He was convicted of treason against the state of Virginia and hanged on 2 December 1859. Before he was sentenced, he told the court that if he had done what he did on behalf of the rich and the powerful, every man in that room would have called it worthy of reward.*

37 *On the morning of his execution, he handed a guard a final note. The crimes of this guilty land, he wrote, would never be purged away except with blood. Within eighteen months the American Civil War had begun. Only after hundreds of thousands lay dead was slavery abolished.*

38 *Frederick Douglass, who had escaped slavery himself, measured the man in one sentence: "I could live for the slave, but he could die for him."*

39 *Indonesia and the West must hear the warning inside that final note. When a nation refuses to purge its crimes through conscience, history purges them some other way. There is still time to choose conscience, but that time will not last forever.*

The Papuan Mirror

40 *Now hold up the mirror.*

41 *Look at the Indonesian soldier in Nduga, burning village gardens and driving families into the forest. The police officer who beats a Papuan for raising a flag. The official in Jakarta who signs the operation order. The transmigrant farming land taken from a Papuan clan. The businessman shipping out timber, palm oil, and gold. The crowd in Surabaya that, in August 2019, surrounded a Papuan student dormitory and called the students inside monkeys.*

42 *Look at the white world too. The Dutch, who held Papua as a colony and then handed it away. The United States, which brokered the 1962 New York Agreement to please Jakarta, and whose mining giant has carved one of the largest gold and copper mines on earth out of Amungme land. The United Nations, which observed the 1969 vote by just over a thousand hand-picked men and then took note of it. Australia, which trades with, trains, and shields the occupier, and keeps its face turned away from its nearest neighbour.*

43 *Each of these is a place where a John Brown could be born.*

44 *Imagine an Indonesian soldier who refuses the order to fire. An officer who testifies. A journalist from Java who travels into the highlands and writes what she sees. A teacher in Jakarta who teaches the true history of 1969. A transmigrant family that returns the land to its owners and helps them plant it. An Australian politician who breaks the bipartisan silence. A shareholder who sells every share in the mine. A white church that confesses what its missions helped to do.*

45 *Each would be a John Brown, not with a rifle, but with a refusal that costs them something real. And each refusal would tear one more page from the empire's script.*

Heaven and Earth

46 *John Brown could not look at heaven with one eye and at the earth with another. He could not sing hymns on Sunday and accept the auction block on Monday. For him, a faith that tolerated slavery was not faith at all. It was blasphemy.*

47 *Papua is surrounded by people who look at heaven and earth with two different eyes: officials who pray and then sign the operation orders; preachers who speak of love and stay silent about the bullets; governments that champion human rights abroad and look away from Papua.*

48 *Brown's single eye is the cure for this double vision. Whatever you claim to worship, look at Papua with the same eye.*

The Critical Choice of the Coloniser

49 *Psycho-Cosmocide does not infect only the colonised. It infects the coloniser too. It teaches the soldier that the Papuan is less than human, the settler that the land was empty, and the citizen that it is all happening somewhere far away. The Synthobian mind of empire is itself a prison: a cage of comfort, privilege, and silence, built on the ruins of a Cosmobian world.*

50 *The coloniser therefore faces a radical choice, as existential as the one facing the colonised.*

51 *They can remain what the empire made them: the parasite that feeds, the civilisational savage who kills and calls it order, the comfortable citizen who will one day say, "We did not know."*

52 *Or they can be born again into John Brown: the one who breaks rank, crosses over, and stands with the host against the parasite. For the coloniser, this is where Wonesis begins: in the return from the master's artificial house to the shared ground of humanity.*

53 *There is no neutral ground. Every Indonesian who benefits from Papua, and every white citizen of a nation that arms or trades with the occupier, is already standing on the occupier's side. The only question is whether they will stay there.*

54 *History will not ask them what they felt. It will ask them what they did.*

John Brown's Body

55 *They hanged John Brown and buried him at North Elba, on his farm in the Adirondack Mountains, near the Black families he had lived among.*

56 *Within two years, Union soldiers marching south were singing about him: John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on.*

57 *That is what this manifesto calls for. Not the return of the body, but the marching of the soul: through Jakarta, Canberra, Washington, The Hague, and New York; through every barracks, boardroom, parliament, church, and mosque that profits from the destruction of Papua.*

The Vow Renewed

58 *Let every Indonesian and every white person who has robbed, enslaved, tortured, or profited from Papuans stand up at the back of the room, as John Brown did, raise a hand, and speak:*

Here, before the mountains and rivers of Papua, in the presence of its living and its dead, from this time, I consecrate my life to the destruction of the colonisation of Papua.

59 *Do not think it. Do not pray it. Do not post it. Do it.*

60 *One skin, whatever its colour. One mind: the mind of the free Papuan. One spirit: free humanity.*

61 That is John Brown. That is the coloniser reborn. And that is the only future in which both the coloniser and the colonised survive the ruin of the world they share.

62 The script of Papua is not yet finished. The pen is in your hand. Decide.

The words, views, and ideas expressed in this manifesto are personal, reflective, and diagnostic rather than declarations of settled truth — a reading of the human condition through the Psycho-Cosmocide lens, offered to provoke thought and questioning rather than to close it.

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