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The Making of Papuaphobia

Colonial Genealogy, Racial Formation, and Psycho-Cosmocide

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Abstract

Contemporary Indonesian racism against Papuans is often treated as a spontaneous or purely local prejudice. This paper argues instead that it reproduces a symbolic vocabulary developed across European travel writing, racial taxonomy, missionary discourse, and physical anthropology, and subsequently adapted within Indonesian nationalist, developmental and security institutions. Using a genealogical and interpretive method, and drawing on the Psycho-Cosmocide framework, this paper traces this grammar — which I call *Papuaphobia* — through the colonial racialisation of "Papua," the colonial conflation of Negro Africa and the Pacific, the making of the Papuan "pygmy," the theological logic of the Curse of Ham, the scientific racism of craniometry and doomed-race theory, and the well-documented contemporary racism against Papuans in Indonesia. The essay closes by situating this genealogy within the Psycho-Cosmocide account of the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV), arguing that Papuaphobia is best understood not as an attitude but as an inherited cosmological infrastructure, repeatedly adapted and reauthorised rather than transmitted intact, that reproduces itself across empires.

Keywords: Papuaphobia, Psycho-Cosmocide, West Papua, scientific racism, colonial genealogy, decolonisation, Indonesia, cosmocide

Introduction: Naming as the First Violence

Today, Indigenous Papuans continue to experience some of the most persistent and overt forms of racial discrimination within the Republic of Indonesia. Across political discourse, public institutions, everyday interactions, and social media, Papuans are repeatedly represented as primitive, backward, uncivilised, unintelligent, violent, lazy, cannibalistic, and incapable of governing themselves. Their dark skin and tightly curled hair are frequently invoked as visible markers of inferiority, while racial slurs such as *monyet* (monkey), *kera* (ape), and other dehumanising labels continue to circulate in public discourse. These are not isolated incidents but recurring patterns documented by journalists, scholars, and human rights organisations.

One of the most visible examples occurred in Surabaya in August 2019, when Indonesian security personnel and nationalist groups directed racist abuse at Papuan students before forcibly entering their dormitory. The incident triggered widespread protests throughout Papua and Indonesia and inspired the #PapuanLivesMatter movement, drawing international attention to the persistence of anti-Papuan racism.

Yet these expressions of racism point to something deeper than individual prejudice. They reveal a broader civilisational imagination in which Papua is repeatedly portrayed as a dangerous, uncivilised, and perpetually underdeveloped frontier, while Papuans are represented as its human embodiment: primitive, irrational, violent, and in need of discipline, development, or salvation. In this sense, Papuans occupy the paradoxical position of being citizens of the Indonesian nation-state while simultaneously functioning as its internal racial and civilisational "other."

This essay argues that contemporary anti-Papuan racism did not originate within modern Indonesia alone. Rather, it belongs to a much older historical archive assembled through centuries of European exploration, colonial racial taxonomy, missionary discourse, scientific racism, and imperial anthropology before being inherited, adapted, and reproduced within postcolonial Indonesia. To describe this historical formation, I introduce the concept of Papuaphobia: the enduring racial and civilisational imagination through which Papua and its peoples have been repeatedly constructed as humanity's internal frontier and perpetual "other."

Papuaphobia is not simply hostility towards Papuans. It is the cumulative production of a symbolic figure through which conquest, conversion, development, and administration become morally intelligible. Long before colonial governments established administrative control in New Guinea, European knowledge traditions had already imagined the Papuan as wild, primitive, irrational, cannibalistic, spiritually deficient, and permanently incomplete. Colonial rule did not invent this figure so much as inherit, institutionalise, and continually reproduce it.

This essay interprets that historical process through the framework of Psycho-Cosmocide, which examines how colonial domination operates not only through political control or physical violence but also through the systematic reorganisation of perception itself. Within this framework, Papuaphobia represents one regional manifestation of the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV): a self-reproducing structure of meaning through which inherited classifications are

transmitted across successive civilisational formations. Instead of destroying peoples only through military conquest or economic exploitation, the CPCV first reorganises how a people is imagined, classified, and understood, making subsequent forms of domination appear natural, necessary, or benevolent.

The method adopted here is genealogical and interpretive. It does not argue that every contemporary expression of anti-Papuan racism descends through a single, uninterrupted institutional chain from sixteenth-century Europe. Instead, it traces the recurrence, adaptation, and reauthorisation of a representational grammar through which Papuan bodies, cultures, and cosmologies have repeatedly been coded as deficient, primitive, or administratively incomplete. Where documentary evidence permits, specific historical channels of transmission are identified; elsewhere, the argument remains one of genealogical continuity rather than direct institutional succession.

This approach builds upon scholarship examining the persistence of colonial structures beyond formal empire. Patrick Wolfe's (2006) analysis of settler colonialism as a continuing structure, Ann Laura Stoler's (2009) work on colonial afterlives, Nicholas Thomas's (1994) studies of the local circulation of colonial categories, Walter Mignolo's (2011) account of the colonality of knowledge, and Achille Mbembe's (2001) analysis of sovereignty and racialised power together provide the broader intellectual context within which the Psycho-Cosmocide framework is presented as a regional theoretical contribution.

Four concepts organise the analysis. Papuaphobia refers to the historically accumulated symbolic order through which Papuan existence is rendered threatening, backward, deficient, or incapable of autonomous political and cosmological authority. Psycho-Cosmocide names the simultaneous destruction of a people's symbolic world and the reorganisation of their consciousness through externally imposed systems of meaning. The CPCV denotes the portable network of classifications, narratives, institutions, and symbolic codes through which this process is reproduced across successive historical formations. Finally, cosmological infrastructure refers to the linguistic, theological, scientific, administrative, and visual systems through which some peoples are recognised as fully human while others are rendered permanently deficient.

The discussion proceeds across nine interconnected stages before closing with a concluding synthesis. It begins with the colonial racialisation of the name "Papua," before examining the invention of Melanesia as a racial category, the making of the Papuan pygmy, missionary representations of cannibalism and paganism, the scientific authority of physical anthropology, the semiotic circulation of these representations through colonial texts and images, their inheritance and adaptation within postcolonial Indonesia, their psychological and cosmological consequences as interpreted through Fanon, Biko, and Narokobi, and finally the theoretical synthesis through which the Psycho-Cosmocide framework accounts for this history as the operation of the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus.

The central argument developed throughout this essay is that Papuaphobia is neither an accidental prejudice nor a uniquely Indonesian invention. It is the latest historical expression of a much older

civilisational grammar through which Indigenous peoples have repeatedly been transformed into symbolic figures requiring conquest, conversion, administration, or improvement. Understanding this genealogy is therefore not simply an exercise in colonial history. It is a necessary step towards understanding how inherited systems of perception continue to shape the political and moral realities of contemporary Papua.

I. The Colonial Racialisation of "Papua": Naming as Taxonomy of Value

Although the precise etymology of *Papua* remains contested, there is broad agreement that European navigators adopted and racialised an existing regional term. Early European travellers borrowed the Malay word *papuwah*, commonly glossed as "woolly" or "frizzy," to describe the hair of the people they encountered. Over time, the term migrated from describing a physical characteristic to naming an entire people and, eventually, an entire island. As one early twentieth-century expedition account explained, "the name Papua... comes from the Malay word *papuwah*, meaning 'woolly' or 'fuzzy,' and was first applied to the natives on account of their mops of hair; later the name was applied to the island itself" (Wollaston, 1912, p. 25). What began as a descriptive reference to hair gradually became the externally imposed name of a people, carrying within it a racialised marker of difference from the moment of its adoption.

This transformation illustrates what the Psycho-Cosmocide framework describes as naming as taxonomy of value rather than neutral description. Peoples who identified themselves through clan, kinship, language, and cosmological relationships to land and ancestry were absorbed into a single external category derived from a bodily characteristic. As Bronwen Douglas (2008) demonstrates, Portuguese and Spanish navigators extended the term *Papua* from islands west of New Guinea to the "black" inhabitants of those islands and the New Guinea mainland. Naming therefore became more than geographical classification. It fused people and place into a racial category, such that origin itself became associated with an emerging hierarchy of human difference. This racialised naming proceeded largely unopposed by any counter-authority: for centuries before formal colonial partition, West New Guinea occupied an ambiguous position within international law, treated as an object of competing and overlapping imperial claims rather than as a polity with recognised international standing (Bone, 1964), leaving the work of naming and classification effectively uncontested.

The process reached a new stage in 1832 when the French naval officer Jules Dumont d'Urville proposed the now-familiar tripartite division of Oceania into Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia in *Sur les îles du Grand Océan* (*On the Islands of the Great Ocean*). Unlike Polynesia and Micronesia, whose names referred primarily to geography, Melanesia alone was defined through the presumed racial identity of its inhabitants. As Kabutaulaka (2019) observes, it became the region of the "black-skinned people" or the "black islands." Bronwen Douglas (2008) further argues that this formed part of a broader European project of dividing Oceania "by race of men,"

a logic visibly reproduced in commercial maps that overlaid geographical divisions with racial classifications.

Seen in this light, naming was never merely descriptive. It reorganised how an entire region could be imagined before it was politically governed. Once embedded in maps, atlases, missionary literature, and scientific writing, these classifications acquired the appearance of objective knowledge and travelled across generations of explorers, missionaries, colonial administrators, and anthropologists. From the perspective of Psycho-Cosmocide, this marks the first stage of cosmocidal transformation: the displacement of Indigenous systems of self-identification by externally imposed racial classifications that progressively become accepted as natural descriptions of reality. Long before colonial administration, missionary evangelisation, or anthropological investigation reached the interior of New Guinea, the symbolic architecture through which Papua would be understood had already begun to take shape.

II. The Colonial Conflation of Negro Africa and the "Negro Pacific"

The naming of Melanesia did more than describe skin colour. It established a colonial classificatory relationship between Papuans and enslaved and colonised Africans, transferring an existing racial vocabulary from the Atlantic world into the Pacific. In 1825, Jules Dumont d'Urville's colleague Jean-Baptiste Bory de Saint-Vincent introduced the term *Mélaniens*, derived from the Greek *melas* ("black"), rather than the Romance root *negro*. Although this distinction appeared to separate Pacific Islanders from Africans, it nevertheless embedded Melanesians within the same racial imagination that had long structured European representations of Blackness (Shilliam, 2021).

Dumont d'Urville reinforced this association by describing Melanesians through explicit comparison with Africans. He characterised them "phenotypically by imperfect analogy to 'Kaffirs'" and observed as much "variety in skin colour, build and features" among Melanesians as among the peoples of Africa (Shilliam, 2021). The analogy extended beyond physical appearance. He portrayed Melanesian societies as tribal rather than national, barbaric rather than civilised, lacking government, law, and organised religion, while describing their leaders as ruling "just as tyrannically as any African despot" (Shilliam, 2021). These descriptions reproduced, almost verbatim, the language through which European writers had represented sub-Saharan Africa for centuries.

This classificatory logic was subsequently incorporated into nineteenth-century racial science. One influential taxonomy divided humanity's "Black" race into separate branches, including a "Caffro-Madagascan" branch containing a "Papou variety inhabiting the New Guinea coast" alongside African populations (Douglas, 2008). Papuans were therefore not classified as a distinct people but as a Pacific extension of an already established "Negro" category. The significance of this classification lay not simply in its scientific inaccuracy but in its historical consequences. Once incorporated into an existing racial taxonomy, Papuans inherited a representational framework that

had already been used to legitimise the enslavement, domination, and civilisational inferiority of African peoples. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau pushed this logic further by describing the "Oceanic Negroes" as providing the "most ugly, and degraded and repulsive specimens of the race" (as cited in Kabutaulaka, 2019), positioning Papuans at the lowest extreme of nineteenth-century racial hierarchy. A comparable move can be found closer to the source: Robert Armit's *The History of New Guinea and the Origin of the Negroid Race* (1876) organised its entire account of the territory around Papuans' presumed place within the "Negroid race," illustrating that the Negro-Pacific analogy was not a passing rhetorical flourish but the structuring premise of an entire contemporary text (Armit, 1876). By mid-century, this reduction of an entire people to a pair of bodily traits had become a settled convention of the genre. An anonymous reviewer of 1854 distilled it into a single sentence: "A black skin and a frizzly head of hair make the Papuan" (as cited in Ballard, 2008). Naming, phenotype, and race had by then fully collapsed into one another.

The importance of this colonial conflation lies not in any claim of kinship between Africans and Papuans but in the transfer of a pre-existing structure of racial meaning. The category "Negro" functioned as a portable classificatory framework through which newly encountered dark-skinned peoples could be immediately interpreted without constructing an entirely new racial ideology. This illustrates how, within the Psycho-Cosmocide framework, civilisational classifications travel across time and space: colonial power repeatedly adapted existing symbolic architectures instead of inventing new systems of dehumanisation for each colonised people, allowing inherited representations to acquire new geographical targets while preserving their underlying logic.

III. The Making of the Papuan Pygmy

If the colonial analogy with "Negro" Africa positioned Papuans near the bottom of a global racial hierarchy, the invention of the Papuan "pygmy" pushed some of them even further—to the margins of humanity itself. Highland New Guinea communities of comparatively short stature became the focus of an intensive taxonomic project in which colonial ethnographers divided Indigenous peoples into supposedly distinct racial "types": "Papuans" and "Pygmies." These categories reflected neither Indigenous identities nor social realities, but the classificatory ambitions of European racial science.

This logic is evident in A. F. R. Wollaston's *Pygmies and Papuans: The Stone Age To-day in Dutch New Guinea* (1912). Even its title announced New Guinea as a living museum of human evolution. Wollaston described the peoples he encountered as existing in "so primitive a state that the second title of this book is literally true," adding that "the pygmies are indeed one of the most primitive peoples now in existence" (Wollaston, 1912, p. vii). New Guinea's mountain interior was thus transformed into a "Stone Age" landscape whose inhabitants were presented not as contemporaries of the European observer but as surviving representatives of an earlier stage of human development.

The same classificatory impulse appears in Matthew Stirling's work during the 1926 Dutch-American expedition to Western New Guinea. Stirling sorted individuals into idealised "Pygmy" and "Papuan" racial types according to stature and presumed ancestry, despite later scholarship demonstrating that these categories bore little relationship to Indigenous self-identification (Taylor, 2006). In one field note describing people photographed at Damuneru, Stirling remarked that a man was "apparently mixed with Papuan blood, although culturally and linguistically he is in every way a pigmy," inviting readers to "note the contrast in stature with the other pigmy men" (Taylor, 2006). The individual ceased to be a self-defining person and instead became an object of racial measurement and comparison. Colonial commentators readily supplied the adjectives such measurement seemed to demand. The explorer and administrator Sir Harry Johnston, writing of pygmy populations more broadly, described them as "primordial" and "pre-cultural" (as cited in Ballard, 2006), language that travelled easily into New Guinea's own pygmy discourse and fixed Highland communities at the furthest imaginable remove from civilisation. This vocabulary proved durable well into the mid-twentieth-century sovereignty debates. Writing on the eve of the Dutch-Indonesian dispute, Bruno Lasker (1952) described the territory's Papuan and "Negrito" populations in the same idiom of small, technologically primitive communities requiring a large "civilising task," showing that the pygmy/primitive framework had migrated from the ethnographic monograph into the language of postwar development policy.

Hilary Howes (2012), in her study of Adolf Bernhard Meyer's 1873 expedition to New Guinea, demonstrates that such classifications were not neutral discoveries but products of prior intellectual expectations. Meyer's understanding of Papuan peoples had already been shaped by earlier writers such as Alfred Russel Wallace and Theodor Waitz before he ever reached New Guinea. What he believed he discovered was therefore deeply conditioned by what he had already been taught to recognise. As later expeditions reproduced similar classifications, colonial knowledge increasingly appeared to confirm itself.

The consequences of these classifications extended beyond anthropology. Ballard (2006) shows that the "pygmy" discourse became intertwined with colonial "doomed-race theory," the belief that certain Indigenous populations were naturally destined to disappear upon contact with civilisation. Applied in both New Guinea and Aboriginal Australia, this doctrine transformed racial classification into administrative expectation. To classify a people as primitive did more than describe them: it situated their demographic decline within an apparently natural and inevitable historical process. This classificatory move had a parallel just beyond anthropology proper. Sysling (2015) shows that early twentieth-century conservationists and colonial anthropologists sometimes proposed protected reserves for Papuan highlanders on grounds barely distinguishable from wildlife conservation, treating Indigenous peoples as an endangered natural population rather than an autonomous political community—a humanitarian idiom resting on the same paternalistic assumptions that underwrote doomed-race theory itself.

The pygmy category also performed an important ideological function within the broader architecture of Papuaphobia. By distinguishing between the supposedly "true Papuan stock" and

an even more archaic pygmy substratum (Wollaston, 1912, p. 25), colonial writers created internal hierarchies of primitiveness within Papua itself. Difference was endlessly subdivided, allowing colonial knowledge to generate increasingly refined gradations of inferiority. This illustrates an important feature of the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus: once a population has been classified as inferior, the classificatory process does not stop. It continually reproduces new internal distinctions, ensuring that the symbolic order of deficiency becomes progressively more elaborate while remaining fundamentally intact.

IV. Religious Literature: Cannibals, Pagans, and the Theology of the Curse

Missionary literature performed a function distinct from, yet complementary to, colonial ethnography. Whereas scientific discourse classified Papuans as racially primitive, missionary writing cast them as theologically deficient, locating them outside the community of the saved and, in many early representations, beyond the boundaries of full humanity. Two theological traditions proved especially influential: the long history of the Curse of Ham and the missionary construction of New Guinea as a land of cannibals, pagans, and spiritual darkness.

The first tradition emerged from the biblical account of Noah's curse upon Canaan (Genesis 9:25). Although the text itself says nothing about race or skin colour, later Jewish, Christian, and Islamic interpretations progressively extended the curse to Ham and eventually to Black peoples more generally. As David Goldenberg (2003) demonstrates, this reinterpretation became deeply embedded within Abrahamic religious traditions, while Stephen Haynes (2002) traces its role in providing one of the principal theological justifications for the enslavement of Africans. Over several centuries, Blackness became associated not simply with difference but with divinely sanctioned servitude and spiritual inferiority. This afterlife of the Genesis narrative has continued to attract scrutiny in more recent commentary examining how people of faith invoked the story to justify slavery (Ham, 2024).

When missionaries entered the Pacific, this theological grammar travelled with them. If Africans had been interpreted through the language of providential servitude, Papuans were increasingly represented through the language of paganism, cannibalism, and spiritual darkness. New Guinea became a frontier awaiting redemption, and its peoples were portrayed as requiring salvation before they could participate fully in civilisation. The logic is visible even in missionary publications themselves. Samuel McFarlane's *Among the Cannibals of New Guinea* (1888), for example, presents the mission field through recurring descriptions of "savage tribes" whose transformation into Christians justified the missionary enterprise. This representational strategy was not confined to a single denomination. Charles Abel's *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods* (1902), written for the London Missionary Society, and Charlotte Kelly's (1944) survey of Catholic missions in New Guinea show that both Protestant and Catholic missionary literature routinely described Papuan societies through the vocabulary of cannibalism, paganism, and savagery as the precondition for a narrative of Christian rescue (Abel, 1902; Kelly, 1944).

Such representations did more than describe. They provided the theological conditions that made the civilising mission appear morally necessary. A people recognised as possessing coherent systems of law, spirituality, and cosmology could not easily be represented as passive recipients of civilisation. Their worlds therefore had to be redescribed as paganism, cannibalism, superstition, or moral disorder so that conversion could be narrated as salvation rather than as the displacement of an existing cosmology.

William Arens' *The Man-Eating Myth* (1979) casts further doubt on the reliability of many colonial accounts of cannibalism, arguing that much of the historical evidence functioned less as direct ethnographic observation than as a recurring literary device through which conquest and missionary intervention could be retrospectively justified. The cannibal, like the colonial "pygmy," became a symbolic figure whose existence legitimised domination before domination had even begun.

Psycho-Cosmocide interprets theology and racial science as complementary rather than independent systems of classification. Theology supplied the moral justification for hierarchy, while nineteenth-century racial science supplied its biological rationale. Together they produced a unified symbolic order in which Papuans could be represented simultaneously as racially primitive, spiritually deficient, and therefore legitimate objects of conquest, conversion, and civilisational transformation.

V. Physical Anthropology and the Science of the Skull

By the mid-nineteenth century, theological justifications for racial hierarchy were increasingly supplemented—and eventually overshadowed—by a new source of authority: physical anthropology. Craniometry, the measurement of the human skull as a supposed indicator of intelligence, morality, and civilisational capacity, became one of the discipline's principal methods. As *Encyclopaedia Britannica* notes, cranial measurements were central to the now-discredited racial hierarchies constructed by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientists (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2026). Samuel George Morton's *Crania Americana* (1839) and *Crania Aegyptiaca* (1844) ranked human populations according to skull volume (Morton, 1839, 1844, as cited in Gould, 1981), while Paul Broca similarly refined craniometric methods through increasingly elaborate comparisons of cranial capacity and brain weight. Presented as objective science, these measurements transformed pre-existing racial assumptions into apparently empirical fact. As one historian observes, the accumulation of numerical data gave racial hierarchy "the objectivity of numbers," even though it merely quantified prejudices that already existed (Smith, 2025).

This scientific apparatus was applied directly to New Guinea. Dutch expeditions in the early twentieth century produced extensive anthropometric studies of Papuan and so-called "pygmy" populations. H. J. T. Bijlmer's studies of the Dutch Scientific Central New Guinea Expedition (1922) and the Tapiro pygmies and Pania Mountain Papuans (1939), together with Martin

Gusinde's later somatological research on the Ayom pygmies (1961), measured stature, cranial indices, and bodily proportions as part of a wider programme of racial classification (Bijlmer, 1922, 1939; Gusinde, 1961, as cited in Tommaseo-Ponzetta et al., 2013). Although expressed in the technical language of scientific observation, these investigations performed the same classificatory work as earlier travel narratives. Papuan bodies became objects of measurement, comparison, photography, and cataloguing within a global project of racial taxonomy that bore little relationship to Indigenous understandings of identity.

The most enduring legacy of physical anthropology, however, was not any individual measurement but the typological model upon which the discipline rested. Humanity was assumed to consist of discrete biological races—"Caucasoid," "Mongoloid," "Negroid," and "Australoid"—distinguished by supposedly stable physical characteristics such as skull shape, skin colour, hair texture, stature, and body form (Stocking, 1968). Lorimer (1988) shows that even competing schools of late-Victorian anthropology, despite their disagreements over monogenesis and polygenesis, converged on a shared assumption of racial hierarchy with Europeans at its summit—evidence that craniometry expressed the discipline's institutional mainstream rather than a marginal aberration. Modern genetics has comprehensively rejected this framework. Richard Lewontin's landmark study demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of human genetic variation exists within populations rather than between the racial groups traditionally recognised by physical anthropology (Lewontin, 1972). Yet the collapse of the biological theory did not erase its symbolic legacy. The language of race continued to circulate long after its scientific foundations had been abandoned.

Psycho-Cosmocide locates the significance of physical anthropology precisely in this transformation of prejudice into apparent objectivity. Scientific measurement did not replace earlier theological classifications; it translated them into the language of empirical observation. The authority once claimed through scripture was now claimed through statistics, anatomical measurements, and laboratory methods. In Papua, this shift helped convert inherited colonial stereotypes into scientific "knowledge," enabling racial hierarchy to survive the decline of overtly theological explanations while preserving the same underlying symbolic order. The phenotypic language that continues to appear in contemporary anti-Papuan racism—dark skin, tightly curled hair, bodily appearance, and presumed evolutionary inferiority—demonstrates that although craniometry has disappeared as a scientific discipline, its classificatory imagination continues to shape how Papuan bodies are perceived and represented (Human Rights Watch, 2024a).

VI. The Semiotics of Empire: How Words, Images, and Signs Shaped a Worldview

What unites colonial naming, the invention of the Papuan "pygmy," missionary theology, and physical anthropology lies less in their shared racial content than in their common semiotic function. Each operated as a technology for producing, organising, and circulating meaning about

Papuans. Through maps, expedition reports, missionary publications, anthropological monographs, museum collections, photographs, and later film, these representations were reproduced across generations until "Papua" and "New Guinea" ceased to function simply as geographical names and became saturated colonial signifiers. By the twentieth century, they evoked an entire symbolic vocabulary of primitivity, savagery, paganism, and civilisational deficiency without requiring further explanation. Even ostensibly progressive international institutions reproduced this vocabulary: a 1954 UNESCO Courier issue devoted to the world's "primitive peoples," featuring Margaret Mead's contribution on Melanesia among others, cast the region as one of the "last frontiers of civilisation," showing that this representational grammar could survive translation from colonial administration into the humanistic register of postwar international institutions (UNESCO, 1954).

This process closely resembles what Edward Said (1978) identified in *Orientalism*. Colonial domination depended not only upon military or political power but upon the production of a durable symbolic archive: recurring images, classifications, narratives, and vocabularies that shaped perception before any direct encounter occurred. The archive became self-reinforcing. Later observers inherited the representations of earlier writers, often mistaking inherited descriptions for independent observations. Colonial knowledge therefore reproduced itself through repetition as much as through empirical investigation. The coloniser did not simply encounter the Papuan; the Papuan had already been symbolically constructed in advance.

The consequences for Indigenous self-understanding were profound. Papuan societies understood themselves through relationships to land, kinship, ancestors, reciprocal exchange, ritual, and oral traditions extending back tens of thousands of years. Archaeological evidence indicates that Papuan-speaking peoples have occupied New Guinea for at least forty thousand years, making it one of the world's longest continuous centres of human habitation (Summerhayes et al., 2010). Yet these cosmological worlds were largely absent from the colonial archive. Instead, Papua appeared repeatedly through a narrow repertoire of images: cannibals, pagans, pygmies, primitive tribes, and biologically inferior races.

This marks the transition from representation to cosmocide. The central violence was not simply the production of false descriptions but the progressive displacement of Indigenous systems of meaning by externally imposed symbolic orders. As colonial representations accumulated and circulated, they increasingly acquired the status of common sense, shaping how outsiders imagined Papua long before meeting Papuans themselves. In time, these representations also became available for internalisation by the colonised. Cosmocide therefore operates not only through the destruction of bodies or territories but through the reorganisation of perception itself, whereby inherited colonial signs gradually replace a people's own cosmological understanding of who they are and how they exist in the world.

VII. Inheritance: How Indonesia Received the Virus

The central argument of this paper is straightforward: Indonesia did not invent anti-Papuan racism. Rather, it entered, inherited, and further institutionalised a representational environment that had already been shaped through centuries of European colonial classification. When Indonesia assumed administrative control of West New Guinea in 1963 following the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority, and its sovereignty claim was internationally consolidated after the deeply contested 1969 "Act of Free Choice," it inherited not only a territory but also a pre-existing symbolic order through which Papuans had long been represented as racially and civilisationally different. Pieter Drooglever's comprehensive study concluded that the 1969 process was fundamentally flawed, reinforcing the contested character of Indonesia's incorporation of West Papua (Drooglever, as cited in Human Rights Watch, 2024b). Pouwer (1999) develops this parallel at length, arguing that Indonesian developmental ideology—organised around narratives of progress, national unity, and a transition from a "dark age" to a "light" one—reproduces the same civilising logic that had earlier organised Dutch colonial rule, to the point that he characterises the post-1962 period as a recolonisation rather than a decolonisation of West New Guinea.

The pre-1963 Dutch administration that Indonesia succeeded was itself organised around an explicitly racialised justification for continued colonial rule. Contemporary policy analysts observed that the Netherlands defended its retention of West New Guinea partly on the ground that Papuans were "not yet ready" for self-determination and were ethnically distinct from Indonesians (Khan, 1957), while surveys of the territory on the eve of transfer documented a persistent "colonial mentality" and bureaucratic paternalism within Dutch administration, notwithstanding genuine but limited investment in education and local government (van der Kroef, 1960). This administrative culture did not originate with New Guinea; it extended a longer Dutch imperial tradition of hierarchically ordering colonised, enslaved, and Indigenous populations that had already taken shape in the eighteenth-century Dutch East Indies (Oostindie & Paasman, 1998). What Indonesia inherited in 1963, in other words, was not a neutral administrative apparatus but one already structured by more than a century of racialised colonial governance.

The inheritance traced here should not be understood as a claim that Indonesian officials consciously reproduced specific colonial texts or deliberately adopted European racial doctrines. Rather, colonial representations had already become embedded within administrative institutions, legal systems, educational materials, popular culture, missionary discourse, and international understandings of New Guinea. The Negro-Pacific analogy, the Papuan "pygmy," the missionary image of cannibalism, and the anthropological hierarchy of primitive and civilised peoples formed a durable symbolic archive that preceded Indonesian administration. Later actors could therefore inherit these representations without necessarily recognising their colonial genealogy.

In some domains, this inheritance was institutional as well as symbolic. As Ploeg (1999, as cited in Ballard, 2002) observes, Indonesian land administration in Papua retained significant elements of Dutch colonial land regulation, including legal assumptions developed without Indigenous

participation and based upon limited recognition of Papuan customary tenure. Indonesia subsequently overlaid this inherited legal architecture with the language of national integration and economic development. The continuity therefore extended beyond discourse into administrative practice, illustrating one concrete pathway through which colonial structures survived political decolonisation. A comparable pattern is evident in youth and civic formation. Zondag (2017) shows that the Dutch Scouting movement in Netherlands New Guinea (1950–1962) functioned as a technology of colonial governmentality designed to produce disciplined and governable Papuan citizens, even as Papuan participants adapted it for their own political purposes—an early instance of the tension between imposed institutional form and Indigenous agency that recurs throughout this history. Visser's (2012) oral histories of Papuan administrators who served under Dutch, UNTEA, and Indonesian governments between 1950 and 1990 document this agency directly, showing that Papuans navigated, and at times redirected, the very administrative structures through which colonial and postcolonial racial hierarchies were reproduced.

The symbolic inheritance remains visible in contemporary racial discourse. Human Rights Watch reports that Papuans are frequently mocked as "monkeys" and stereotyped as lazy, primitive, foul-smelling, and evolutionarily backward because of their darker skin and tightly curled hair, concluding that entrenched racism remains a central feature of the conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2024b). Indonesian and Papuan scholarship converges on this conclusion. Drawing on long-term anthropological fieldwork, Munro (2019) argues that racism is deeply embedded within Indonesian social and political life yet rarely openly acknowledged, while Kusumasomantri (2021) contends that any genuine dialogue about Papua's place within Indonesia must confront this racism directly rather than treating the conflict solely as a matter of security or separatism. These insults reproduce the same phenotypic logic through which nineteenth-century racial anthropology transformed bodily appearance into presumed civilisational inferiority.

The 2019 events in Surabaya demonstrated how readily these inherited representations continue to surface. Indonesian security personnel and militia members surrounded a Papuan student dormitory, repeatedly calling the students "monkeys" before arresting 43 of them following allegations of flag desecration. The incident triggered widespread protests across Indonesia and Papua and prompted the government to impose internet restrictions throughout the territory (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In response, the Governor of Papua publicly declared, "Papuans are not a monkey race, they are members of the human race" (Yoga, 2019). The necessity of such a statement in the twenty-first century illustrates how recognisable the categories of nineteenth-century colonial racial thought remain within contemporary public discourse.

Commentary on these events situated them within wider currents of international debate. Observers drew connections between the global #BlackLivesMatter movement and the persistence of complicity in racism against West Papuans (Indonesia at Melbourne, 2020a), while others noted the reluctance of many Indonesians and outside observers alike to name the problem as racism at all, preferring euphemisms that obscured the underlying pattern (Indonesia at Melbourne, 2020b).

Human Rights Watch's report *If It's Not Racism, What Is It?* documents that these events form part of a broader pattern rather than isolated incidents. During the February 2024 arrest of Definus Kogoya, Indonesian soldiers were filmed beating him while repeatedly calling him "dog," "stupid," and "ape" (Human Rights Watch, 2024a). The same report records soldiers taunting Papuan children as "monkeys," mocking their dark skin and curly hair, while parents described school environments in which Papuan children were routinely portrayed as dirty, lazy, unintelligent, or animal-like because of their cultural practices (Human Rights Watch, 2024a). These examples demonstrate the continuing circulation of symbolic categories that originated long before Indonesian administration but remain active within contemporary institutions.

Papuan responses reveal the psychological consequences of this inherited symbolic order. Reflecting on the assault against Definus Kogoya, the Papuan human rights researcher Ambrosius Mulait asked:

Why did you hit me, and then tell me to love you? ... You call me monkey, but if I protest because I have self-respect, you will jail me, right? (as cited in Human Rights Watch, 2024a)

His words capture the contradiction at the heart of Indonesia's relationship with Papua. Development, national integration, and modernisation are presented as emancipatory projects while racial degradation and coercive violence continue to accompany them.

Read through *Psycho-Cosmocide*, this continuity should not be understood as evidence that Indonesian racism is merely a continuation of European colonialism. Rather, it demonstrates how the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus reproduces itself across changing political regimes. Colonial empires, nation-states, churches, scientific institutions, and development bureaucracies differ in ideology, yet they can inherit and reactivate the same symbolic architecture. The vocabulary changes—from empire to nationalism, from civilisation to development—but the underlying representational order remains remarkably stable. What survives is not colonial rule itself but the inherited structure through which Papuans continue to be perceived, classified, and governed.

The pattern extends beyond militias and individual soldiers to sections of Indonesia's political, military, and intelligence elite. The United Liberation Movement for West Papua has documented statements by senior Indonesian figures proposing the demographic dissolution of the Papuan people. According to the ULMWP, one retired general reportedly proposed forcibly relocating two million West Papuans and separating them from their Melanesian kin in the Pacific, while other officials suggested that Papuans should be "transferred to the moon" or "transferred to the Pacific" (ULMWP, 2021). Whatever degree of rhetorical exaggeration these statements may contain, they reveal that the imagined removal of Papuans from their homeland has at times entered public discourse at the highest levels of state power.

Such statements should not, by themselves, be treated as legal evidence of genocidal intent. Their significance lies in the broader political and ideological environment in which they are made. That wider context has been examined by scholars of West Papua, most notably Jim Elmslie and

Camellia Webb-Gannon. In *A Slow-Motion Genocide: Indonesian Rule in West Papua*, they argue that the cumulative evidence meets the legal threshold of intent required under the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention. Building on Elmslie's earlier demographic analysis of the 2010 Indonesian census, they identify killings, the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to destroy the group, and systematic demographic transformation through transmigration as evidence that, contrary to earlier scholarship, "such intent exists" (Elmslie, 2010; Elmslie & Webb-Gannon, 2013).

Whether or not one accepts that legal conclusion, the argument developed here concerns a different but related question. The political rhetoric documented above, together with the historical and demographic analyses offered by Elmslie and Webb-Gannon, illustrates how Papuans continue to be represented not simply as citizens requiring protection or development but as a population whose demographic, territorial, and political presence is repeatedly imagined as a problem to be managed, dispersed, or transformed. From the perspective of Psycho-Cosmocide, this represents more than racial prejudice: the continuing operation of an inherited civilisational grammar through which the Papuan is constituted as an obstacle to the realisation of the state's political and developmental project.

The argument advanced by Elmslie and Webb-Gannon is a scholarly legal interpretation rather than a judicial finding, and it is presented here in that spirit. No international tribunal has determined that genocide has occurred in West Papua. Accordingly, the claim advanced in this essay is narrower. It is not that genocide has been legally established, but that the discourse legitimating transmigration reproduces a representational logic strikingly similar to the colonial doctrine of the "doomed-race," in which Indigenous demographic decline is rendered natural, inevitable, or even desirable.

Indonesia's own transmigration policy illustrates this continuity. In 1985, the Minister for Transmigration articulated the policy's assimilationist objective with remarkable candour:

"By way of transmigration... we will try to integrate all the ethnic groups into one nation, the Indonesian nation... The different ethnic groups will in the long run disappear because of integration... and there will be one kind of man." (as cited in Elmslie & Webb-Gannon, 2013)

Read through the framework developed in this essay, the significance of this statement lies less in its advocacy of national integration than in the representational logic it reproduces. Expressed in the language of postcolonial development rather than nineteenth-century racial science, it nevertheless echoes the same assumption that Indigenous peoples should ultimately disappear through incorporation into a supposedly higher civilisational order. In this respect, the assimilationist aspirations of the transmigration programme reproduce, in a new historical vocabulary, the underlying logic of the colonial "doomed-race" doctrine that once justified indifference to Indigenous demographic decline.

VIII. Papuaphobia as Psycho-Cosmocide

Psycho-Cosmocide does not treat Papuaphobia as prejudice alone. It is a cosmocidal system: a historical architecture of meaning that reorganises how people are perceived before it reorganises how they are governed. It does not emerge from isolated acts of hatred or ignorance; instead, it accumulates across successive civilisational formations, each inheriting and adapting the classificatory structures of its predecessors. Iberian navigators, Enlightenment taxonomists, colonial administrators, missionary theologians, physical anthropologists, and, later, the Indonesian state did not each invent a new image of the Papuan. They inherited an existing representational order, modified it to suit new political circumstances, and transmitted it to the next historical formation. Each epoch supplied a new language of legitimacy—linguistic, theological, scientific, administrative, or developmental—while leaving the underlying structure largely intact.

This accumulated architecture explains why Papuaphobia proves remarkably resistant to correction through evidence or moral appeal alone. It does not depend upon a single false proposition that can simply be disproved. It operates instead as a self-reinforcing cosmology in which every layer legitimates the next. Missionary narratives invoked racial hierarchies to justify conversion; colonial administrators cited missionary descriptions of cannibalism to legitimate pacification; physical anthropologists treated colonial travel literature as empirical evidence requiring further scientific investigation; and contemporary state institutions continue to draw, often implicitly, upon generations of accumulated representations of Papua as primitive, backward, violent, or administratively deficient. Each generation therefore inherits what appears to be objective knowledge rather than recognising it as the historical residue of earlier systems of power.

The durability of Papuaphobia lies precisely in this process of inheritance. Each historical actor imagines itself to be observing reality objectively, while unknowingly reproducing classifications fashioned by previous generations. What survives is therefore not simply racism as an attitude but an entire cosmological infrastructure that continually regenerates itself by presenting inherited representations as empirical truth. The CPCV names this capacity of civilisational systems to preserve, renew, and naturalise classificatory orders long after the institutions that first created them have disappeared. Papuaphobia is one regional manifestation of that broader process: the cumulative production of a symbolic world in which Papuan existence is repeatedly interpreted through categories of deficiency before Papuans themselves are ever encountered.

How, then, does the CPCV reproduce itself across successive civilisational hosts without requiring conscious coordination or direct institutional continuity? The framework proposed here identifies not a single mechanism but a recurring pathway of transmission. Civilisations inherit classifications that have already acquired the appearance of truth. Each generation receives, adapts, and reauthorises those classifications rather than creating new systems of perception from scratch; they are already embedded within the symbolic architecture of society.

The process begins when a classification is codified into law, policy, or administrative practice. Education then presents that classification to successive generations as established knowledge rather than contested interpretation. Maps translate it into seemingly objective geography, while

textbooks and curricula normalise it as historical fact. Religious institutions invest it with moral and cosmological authority, bureaucracies reproduce it in categories, procedures, and official records, and popular culture circulates it through language, images, stories, humour, entertainment, and everyday social practice. By the time these classifications reach individual consciousness, they no longer appear as inherited ideological constructions but as ordinary common sense—as intuitive descriptions of reality itself.

This reproduction requires neither conspiracy nor central coordination. Each institution simply inherits classifications that already possess social legitimacy because earlier institutions have normalised them. Once embedded within one domain of social life, a classification acquires the authority needed to justify its adoption by the next. Law legitimates education, education legitimates bureaucracy, bureaucracy legitimates public discourse, and public discourse reinforces law. Through this recursive process, the classification becomes increasingly self-evident while its historical origins gradually disappear from view.

The CPCV therefore spreads less like an instruction issued from a single centre than like an inherited architecture of perception. Its greatest power lies not in persuading people to believe something demonstrably false, but in making historically contingent classifications appear timeless, objective, and self-evident. What is transmitted across generations is more than prejudice: an entire symbolic infrastructure through which reality itself is interpreted. In this sense, the virus persists because every new civilisational host mistakes inheritance for observation and reproduction for independent discovery.

The colonised subject is, in this sense, diagnosed with the very illness that colonial power first manufactures. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework describes this as the closed loop of colonial pathology. Colonial power first produces the deficiency it claims merely to discover—savagery, backwardness, irrationality, criminality, or underdevelopment—and then presents itself as uniquely capable of curing those very conditions through civilisation, education, development, integration, or security. The relationship therefore becomes self-perpetuating. The colonised subject can never fully escape it because recognition by the colonial order depends upon remaining, in some measure, the deficient figure that order presupposes. The diagnosis and the cure originate from the same system of power.

Frantz Fanon identified the psychological interior of this process in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Colonial domination, he argued, produces more than political subjugation or economic exploitation; it reorganises consciousness itself. The colonised person comes to perceive themselves through the gaze of a coloniser who has already determined, prior to any encounter, that Blackness signifies inferiority (Fanon, 1952/2021). The injury therefore penetrates beyond institutions into the architecture of selfhood, where external classifications gradually become internal forms of self-understanding.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon extended this analysis from individual psychology to the structure of colonial society itself. Colonialism, he argued, creates two antagonistic worlds—that of the coloniser and that of the colonised—held together through systemic domination and

sustained by what he described as "unlawful and unjust treatment." Such a relationship cannot be resolved by reform alone because the inequality is not incidental to the colonial order; it is constitutive of it. Only a fundamental reorganisation of power can dismantle the conditions that continually reproduce colonial subjectivity (Fanon, 1961/2004).

Read through the Psycho-Cosmocide framework, Fanon's analysis reveals more than the psychology of colonialism. It illustrates how the CPCV operates within consciousness itself. A civilisation first constructs symbolic categories of deficiency. It institutionalises them in law, education, religion, and administration, and it ultimately induces the colonised to interpret themselves through those inherited classifications. The greatest success of colonial power is therefore not simply governing colonised peoples, but transforming the colonised into participants in the reproduction of the very symbolic order that diminishes them.

South Africa's Steve Biko, writing from within the Black Consciousness movement, offered perhaps the most concise formulation of the psychological logic of colonial domination: "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed" (Biko, 1978). Biko's insight was not simply rhetorical. The greatest success of colonial power is achieved not when it imposes external domination, but when the symbolic classifications through which domination operates are internalised by those subjected to it. At that point, external coercion increasingly gives way to self-regulation. The colonised begin to perceive themselves through categories they did not create, measuring their own humanity against standards established by the very system that denied it.

This marks, within the Psycho-Cosmocide framework, the point at which Papuaphobia reaches its highest level of operation. It is not when Indonesian soldiers call Papuan children *monyet* ("monkeys"), devastating as that violence is. It is when a Papuan child begins to believe that the insult reveals something true about themselves. At that moment, five centuries of colonial classification—racial taxonomy, missionary theology, scientific racism, administrative discourse, and developmental ideology—complete their migration from external representation to internal self-perception. The symbolic architecture constructed across generations is no longer sustained only by institutions; it is reproduced within consciousness itself.

My own experience of racialisation illustrates this process. Growing up in my village, I did not know myself as a racial problem. I knew myself through family, clan, land, language, and the cosmological relationships that organised everyday life. I learned that I was "Black" and "Papuan," and that these identities had already been assigned inferior value, only after entering colonial towns and institutions.

This experience is not presented as universal proof but as philosophically significant lived evidence of the process described throughout this essay: the migration of inherited civilisational classifications from the external world into the inner architecture of consciousness. Colonial ideology rarely presents itself as ideology. It arrives instead as ordinary reality—embedded in schools, towns, markets, churches, bureaucracies, and everyday language—until the child who

once simply existed within an Indigenous cosmology gradually learns to perceive themselves as a problem requiring explanation, improvement, or correction.

Bernard Narokobi's philosophy of the *Melanesian Way* offers a profound counterpoint to this colonial architecture. Narokobi argued that Melanesian societies possessed, prior to and independent of colonial intervention, their own coherent systems of law, morality, social organisation, and cosmological meaning. The task of decolonisation, therefore, is not to secure acceptance within the coloniser's civilisational narrative, but to recover the authority of Indigenous worlds to define themselves on their own terms (Narokobi, 1980).

Narokobi's enduring question—*"Will we see ourselves in the long shadows of the dwindling light... or will we see ourselves in the long and radiant rays of the rising sun?"* (Narokobi, 1980)—captures the central philosophical question of Psycho-Cosmocide. Every colonised people eventually confronts the same choice: will reality continue to be interpreted through classifications inherited from colonial civilisation, or will meaning once again be authored from within their own cosmological traditions? The struggle against Psycho-Cosmocide therefore begins not only with political liberation but with the recovery of the authority to name, interpret, and inhabit one's own world.

IX. The Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus: Fracturing Reality and Manufacturing Hierarchies

The genealogy reconstructed throughout this paper reveals something deeper than the history of Papuaphobia. It reveals one of the defining characteristics of what the Psycho-Cosmocide paradigm identifies as the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV). The virus colonises more than land, labour, wealth, or territory. Its first and most enduring conquest occurs within the architecture of perception itself. Before civilisation can organise the external world, it must first reorganise the internal world through which reality is perceived.

The CPCV therefore begins by fracturing reality into hierarchies. It divides existence into superior and inferior beings, civilised and uncivilised peoples, chosen and abandoned nations, believers and unbelievers, enlightened and primitive minds, rulers and subjects, kings and slaves, priests and pagans, developed and underdeveloped societies, pure and impure bodies, worthy and unworthy lives. The hierarchy extends beyond human institutions into the symbolic universe itself.

Gods are ranked above humans, humans above animals, races above races, languages above languages, cultures above cultures, religions above religions, knowledge above knowledge, colours above colours, landscapes above landscapes, until reality itself appears naturally stratified into unequal orders of value.

Within this symbolic architecture, the Cosmobian world occupies a structurally impossible position. It cannot be recognised on its own terms because it exists outside the classificatory grammar through which civilisation organises existence. A Cosmobian people does not primarily

understand itself through civilisation's categories of race, nation, development, progress, productivity, or economic value. It understands itself through reciprocal relationships between land, ancestors, language, ecology, memory, ritual, and the living cosmos. Yet the CPCV cannot tolerate realities that escape its own symbolic order.

What cannot be classified cannot be governed. What cannot be governed must first be redescribed. The Cosmobian world is therefore translated into the language of *deficiency* before it can be transformed into the language of development.

Viewed through the framework developed in *The Eight Existential Atlases of Human Reality* (Kogoya, 2026a), the illusion of civilisational superiority begins to dissolve. Every human being, every civilisation, every religion, every empire, every philosophy, every species, and every living organism confronts exactly the same existential conditions. We all inhabit the same physical universe. We all remain confined within the same biological limitations. We all inherit cultures rather than choosing them. We all confront mortality without certainty. We all struggle to understand consciousness, time, matter, existence, and whatever lies beyond them. Across all eight atlases, no civilisation has escaped the deepest mysteries of existence. None has solved death. None has solved suffering. None has transcended uncertainty. None stands outside reality itself.

The same conclusion emerges from *The Seven Existential Cages* (Kogoya, 2026b) and *We Are All Inmates of Different Cages* (Kogoya, 2026c). Civilisation persuades itself that some cages are superior to others. It teaches that some peoples are more evolved, more rational, more enlightened, more moral, more developed, or more fully human than others. Yet these distinctions exist only within civilisation's symbolic architecture. Outside that architecture, every human being remains imprisoned within the same existential conditions of birth, embodiment, uncertainty, dependence, vulnerability, mortality, and ultimate ignorance. No civilisation has escaped these prisons. It has merely decorated its own cage more elaborately than others.

The deepest pathology of the CPCV is therefore not simply domination but *misrecognition*. It mistakes symbolic hierarchy for ontological reality. Like the prisoners in Plato's cave, civilisation eventually forgets that it is looking at its own projections. It repaints reality until its classifications appear to be nature itself. Categories become truths. Symbols become facts. Hierarchies become destiny. Representation replaces reality.

From this perspective, Papuaphobia is not an isolated prejudice directed against one Cosmobian people. It is one regional manifestation of a much older civilisational pathology. Throughout history, the same symbolic mechanism has repeatedly declared certain human beings to be less than fully human, insufficiently civilised, insufficiently rational, insufficiently moral, or insufficiently worthy of existence. Once such classifications become accepted, they provide the moral, legal, political, scientific, and theological justification for conquest, dispossession, forced conversion, enslavement, exploitation, imprisonment, displacement, and extermination. The violence appears legitimate because the victim has already been symbolically expelled from the community of equal humanity.

For Papuans, this process has produced a profound existential layering of captivity. Like every human being, Papuans inhabit the universal ontological conditions of existence described throughout the Psycho-Cosmocide corpus. Like many colonised peoples, they have also been enclosed within the civilisational structures of domination imposed by empire, state, development, and modernity. But Papuaphobia introduces a third enclosure. It seeks to deny Papuans recognition even within civilisation's own definition of humanity. They are not simply placed beneath others within the hierarchy; they are repeatedly represented as existing beyond its moral boundaries—as primitive, savage, backward, animal-like, or evolutionarily incomplete. The struggle is therefore no longer only political or territorial. It becomes ontological. One must first reclaim one's humanity before one can reclaim one's land.

The Psycho-Cosmocide paradigm therefore reaches a conclusion that extends far beyond Papua. The greatest danger confronting humanity is not colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, nationalism, racism, or technological civilisation considered separately, but the deeper civilisational virus that continually reorganises reality into systems of unequal worth while concealing the shared existential condition that unites all life. Every civilisation has inherited this temptation. Every civilisation remains vulnerable to it.

The task of Psycho-Cosmocide is therefore not simply to expose oppression, but to *recover reality itself*. It seeks to recover the forgotten truth that beneath every civilisation, every religion, every philosophy, every ideology, every race, every nation, every language, every economy, and every empire, humanity remains exactly what it has always been: finite beings sharing the same fragile existence on the same small planet, imprisoned within the same existential mystery, and dependent upon the same living Earth for survival. Everything else is the symbolic architecture civilisation has painted over reality.

X. Conclusion: From Diagnosis to Decolonisation of Perception

The genealogy reconstructed throughout this essay demonstrates that Papuaphobia is not a recent Indonesian invention but the latest historical expression of a representational order more than five centuries in the making. From the Malay word *papuwah*, through European racial cartography, missionary theology, physical anthropology, and into the documented racial language of contemporary Indonesian state actors, the classifications through which Papuans have been imagined have not disappeared. They have been repeatedly inherited, adapted, and institutionalised within new political formations. Indonesia entered a representational environment already profoundly shaped by Dutch, British, and German colonial knowledge and subsequently redeployed much of that inherited vocabulary through the language of national development, territorial integrity, security, and modernisation, without ever being required to dismantle the deeper symbolic architecture that made such redeployment appear legitimate. It is therefore possible for state institutions to deny racism while continuing to reproduce classificatory traditions whose historical origins long predate the Indonesian republic itself. That continuity is reflected in

the recurring documentation of racialised language—including references to monkeys, primitivity, and animality—in contemporary human rights reporting (Human Rights Watch, 2024a, 2024b).

The Psycho-Cosmocide framework suggests that the response to such a civilisational inheritance cannot be exclusively legal, political, or administrative, necessary though those responses remain. The destruction of a people's symbolic world cannot ultimately be addressed without also confronting the symbolic order through which that destruction is continually reproduced. As long as Papuan self-understanding is mediated primarily through inherited colonial classifications—primitive or developed, savage or civilised, backward or modern—Papuan remain confined within the very conceptual architecture that first denied the legitimacy of their own world. They are compelled to argue for their humanity within categories established by the civilisation that questioned it.

The alternative, anticipated by Bernard Narokobi's *Melanesian Way* and echoed in the work of contemporary Papuan philosophers, poets, artists, and human rights defenders, is the recovery of an autonomous cosmological ground: a way of understanding existence rooted in land, ancestry, memory, language, and relationships of reciprocity rather than in externally imposed classifications. Decolonisation, in this sense, is more than the transfer of political authority or administrative control: it is the restoration of the authority to name reality from within one's own cosmology.

If Papuaphobia represents the historical operation of Psycho-Cosmocide in Papua, then decolonisation begins with the recovery of the conditions under which Papuan worlds may once again author themselves. Only from that ground can a people cease answering the classifications inherited from empire and instead render them historically obsolete. The deepest victory over a cosmocidal order is therefore not to reverse its judgments but to outgrow the symbolic world that made those judgments appear possible in the first place. Before a people lose their land, they are first taught to lose the authority to name themselves; Papuaphobia ends the day that authority is reclaimed.

Appendix: Objections, Rival Explanations, and the Limits of the Argument

Three objections are anticipated and addressed directly here, together with the strongest rival explanation of contemporary anti-Papuan racism that this essay ultimately does not adopt. Addressing these questions explicitly is important because the genealogical argument advanced throughout this study occupies a middle position. It is stronger than a claim of superficial resemblance yet more cautious than a claim of demonstrable institutional succession. Clarifying that distinction is essential to understanding both the explanatory power and the limits of the argument.

Objection 1: This is merely generic colonial racism, not something specific to Papua.

A reasonable reader might argue that the patterns traced throughout this essay are hardly unique to Papua. Naming as taxonomy, the representation of Indigenous peoples as primitive or childlike, missionary narratives of cannibalism, scientific racism, and craniometric classification all appeared across colonial encounters in Africa, Aboriginal Australia, and much of the Pacific. From this perspective, Papuaphobia might appear to be nothing more than one regional expression of a much broader colonial archive.

The argument advanced here accepts the first part of this objection while rejecting its conclusion. The historical content of Papuaphobia is not claimed to be unique. Indeed, the discussion of the "Negro-Pacific" conflation in Section II demonstrates that many of its classificatory categories were inherited from wider anti-Black racial discourses rather than invented specifically for Papua. What distinguishes Papuaphobia is therefore not the originality of its symbolic vocabulary but the particular historical configuration through which those inherited classifications were assembled, institutionalised, and reproduced.

Several features make that trajectory distinctive. As discussed in Section III, the classification of Highland Papuans through pygmy and primitive typologies assumed an unusual intensity within New Guinea. Sections IV and VI show how missionary discourse, doomed-race assumptions, and physical anthropology converged there with exceptional density, reinforcing one another across theological, administrative, and scientific domains. Most significantly, these accumulated representations were inherited by a specific successor state and incorporated into an ongoing project of territorial integration, demographic transformation, military administration, and resource extraction, as examined in Section VII. Comparable colonial stereotypes undoubtedly existed elsewhere, yet they did not necessarily follow the same institutional trajectory or continue to perform the same contemporary political functions. What is specific to Papua is therefore not the raw material of the racism but the historical architecture through which it has been preserved, adapted, and continuously mobilised within a particular colonial and postcolonial setting.

Objection 2: Similarity of tropes is not, by itself, evidence of historical transmission.

A more substantial methodological objection concerns the relationship between similarity and transmission. As acknowledged in the methodological discussion, the recurrence of comparable vocabulary, images, or classifications across centuries and continents does not, by itself, establish a causal chain. Similar representational forms could, in principle, arise independently or reflect the wider repertoire of colonial discourse available to different imperial powers confronting different Indigenous societies.

This objection is important and cannot be dismissed. Nevertheless, three considerations strengthen the genealogical interpretation advanced in this essay, while also defining its limits.

First, several of the classificatory traditions examined here possess documented historical lineages rather than merely thematic resemblance. The etymological history of *Papua* and *papuwah* (Section I), Dumont d'Urville's and Bory de Saint-Vincent's explicit construction of *Melanesia* through analogy with Africa (Section II), and the New Guinea-specific anthropological monographs of Bijlmer and Gusinde (Section V) provide identifiable historical points through which particular representational categories can be traced. These sources do not merely resemble one another; they form part of a documented intellectual tradition.

Second, the essay identifies examples of institutional continuity in addition to discursive continuity. As discussed in Section VII, Indonesian land administration in Papua substantially retained elements of Dutch colonial land regulation rather than independently constructing an equivalent legal framework (Ploeg, 1999, as cited in Ballard, 2002). While this example concerns governance rather than racial representation, it demonstrates that colonial institutional inheritances in Papua are historically demonstrable rather than merely hypothetical. A cross-national study by Bonick and Farfán-Vallespín (2016) offers a further, empirically grounded version of this argument: societies shaped by colonial extractive institutions exhibit measurably weaker social capital and more durable racialised cultural attitudes than those that were not, suggesting that the institutional persistence documented here for Papua reflects a broader pattern of colonial inheritance rather than a case-specific coincidence.

Third, and most importantly, the argument advanced throughout this study is intentionally more modest than a claim of uninterrupted institutional succession. It does not assert that every recurring colonial trope can be connected through an unbroken documentary chain. Rather, it argues that the repeated appearance of the same representational grammar within the discourse of a successor state is more parsimoniously explained by historical inheritance than by repeated coincidence or independent invention. This is a probabilistic genealogical claim rather than a claim of exhaustive documentary proof. Recognising that distinction is essential to understanding both the explanatory scope and the methodological limits of the argument.

Rival Explanation: Indonesian Nation-Building and Resource Competition

The strongest competing explanation of contemporary anti-Papuan racism does not require a colonial genealogy at all. From this perspective, anti-Papuan prejudice can be understood primarily as a consequence of postcolonial nation-building. A state assembled from more than a thousand ethnic groups under the unifying ideal of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* possesses strong incentives to portray its most culturally distinct and politically separatist region as backward, underdeveloped, and in need of integration. When combined with decades of transmigration, demographic transformation, and competition over land, employment, and political authority, ordinary processes of nationalism, state consolidation, and intergroup conflict appear sufficient to explain contemporary hostility towards Papuans.

This explanation is both plausible and important. Nothing in this essay disputes that nation-building ideology, demographic change, and economic competition are powerful and mutually reinforcing drivers of contemporary anti-Papuan racism. These processes undoubtedly shape the intensity, persistence, and political expression of racial discrimination in present-day Indonesia.

The question addressed by this study, however, is a different one. Nation-building theory explains why a state may construct an internal "other," but it does not explain why that other is represented through this particular symbolic vocabulary. It does not account for why Papuans continue to be described in categories such as "monkeys," "Stone Age," "primitive," "backward," or through representations of dark skin and tightly curled hair as signs of a lower stage of human development (Section VII; Human Rights Watch, 2024a). Those classifications are not politically neutral inventions of the postcolonial Indonesian state. As demonstrated throughout this essay, they belong to a much older representational tradition that emerged within European colonial science, missionary discourse, and racial taxonomy before being transmitted into later political contexts.

The two explanations are therefore complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Nation-building, transmigration, and competition over resources help explain why anti-Papuan racism remains politically useful in the present. The colonial genealogy reconstructed in this essay explains why that racism assumes the particular symbolic form that it does. One addresses the contemporary conditions under which racialisation is mobilised; the other explains the historical archive from which its language, imagery, and classifications are drawn. Together, they provide a more comprehensive account than either framework can offer in isolation.

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About the Author

Yamin Kogoya is a Papuan philosopher, writer, and independent researcher from the Central Highlands of New Guinea (West Papua), currently based in Australia.

His work investigates one of humanity's oldest but least examined questions: how human worlds are created, transformed, and destroyed. He is the originator of the Psycho-Cosmocide paradigm, an interdisciplinary philosophical framework examining how worlds are dismantled not only through physical violence, occupation, or ecological devastation, but also through the systematic reorganisation of perception, memory, cosmology, and meaning. Within this framework, he introduced the concepts of the Cosmobian World and the Synthobian World as two contrasting modes through which human existence has been organised across history.

Drawing upon Indigenous cosmologies together with philosophy, anthropology, history, religion, mythology, and civilisation studies, Kogoya develops original conceptual models for interpreting the contemporary human condition. His research re-examines the world's foundational myths, epics, tragedies, and philosophical traditions as enduring civilisational archetypes through which humanity confronts power, mortality, memory, exile, homecoming, and extinction. Although grounded in the historical experience of West Papua, his work addresses broader questions concerning civilisation, consciousness, survival, and the future of humanity.

He holds a Master of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development from the Australian National University. His academic background also includes Religious Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Asia-Pacific Studies, and he undertook advanced study in epistemology at the University of Oxford. His research and commentary have appeared in *SBS News*, *RNZ Pacific*, *Asia Pacific Report*, *The Fiji Times*, and *The Jakarta Post*.

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