



You Lied to Me, You Colonial Beast

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A monster seeking labour, set sail did you
Skin coloured like night, chained, conquered in 1492
Enslaved they were ripped from their beds
Man, child, and woman with values on their heads
Yet their lives had no ticket price, according to you
For their purpose was to please the masters, who view
Their lives as worthless, one penny or not.
For these creatures were not equal, so could be shot
Like animals, their features say your science did match
Brains small, hands large, strong bodies attached.

To the master, who's breath broke the cold of the night
Determined their fate with hate, vengeance and spite
Free was the purpose, plain and quite clear
Labour for your fortune, a life one cannot bear.
Objects of desire and work were they
Lives changed in a second when you came that day

Their beings kept in squalor, but minds still adrift
To their lands, their people, to a time that they missed
 For longing to return to their homes in the sun
 Africa is calling. Africa their one Love taken by you,
 Along with India and Asia
Your arrogance to control man, mind, being, and nature.

 You are the monster who across the seas did take
 Their bodies, to build an empire, to make
 That globalised plan, across the earth went you
 To steal, pillage and kill, imperialist mind askew.
Your patriarchy present when the 16th came along
 The witches you burned, for they were wrong.
That monster whose power made out her to blame
 For what knowledge she knew, you had no name
 Therefore, your mind most intelligent and right
Knew such knowledge unproven, therefore not white.

 Opinion that dominated the science and splits
 Cartesian in the lap of the white man sits
 All control and result, no wrong answer or care
 For white is right and white is something to fear!
 A further 200, the monsters' plan got bigger
For your posse of slaves needed a pacific-type nigger
 Expanding across the ocean, your vessel set sail
Dragging behind you, destruction, and your devil's tail
 In the distance you saw, a land with white clouds
Flowing streams and lush forests, abundant and proud.

 Natives to civilise. Natives you see
 A heavy White man's burden to fix a Native like me.
Disembarked from your ship, your murderous vessel,
 Cook and his minions. Into our beds you did nestle,
Upon our shores landed filth and forced power did come
 Bringing blankets and muskets and smelling of rum

These settlers and whalers, who raped, pillaged, and fought
Lawlessness not peace. Agreement was sought.
To protect us poor Natives, from these peoples who's white
Skin gave them a pass to be drunk day and night.

So, Queen and her helpers, drew up a wee note
At Waitangi first, then by land and by boat
To sign this Treaty in 1840 was needed
Yet one party's intent believed we had conceded
All rights to our own occupation of lands
Our sovereignty dismissed in lieu of white mans'
Ways of thought and of being.
Salute to the Queen you say, for we will be seeing
Our lives changed for the better, see take a look
Here come the Missionaries, with their big black book
To remove the idea that our story is true
Whakapapa from Ranginui and Papatūānuku.

All cultural views, beliefs, and assumptions to take
Jesus Christ and the missionaries their word we should make
As the truth from now on is white, don't forget
Jailed disbelievers and tohunga become cast in the net
Of deceit and dishonesty, the laws of the state
Don't ignore all you criminals. You'll determine our fate
If our name is Te Whiti or Rua the prophet
You will chase us all over so that your profit
Is not affected by grabbing our water and land
And killing us with disease as we raise our hand
To acknowledge some being that to you doesn't exist.

This treaty, Queens note. The wording's amiss
The white man's deceit with pockets all full
Sign here, we are friends. Oh yes, I'm a dumb bull
Sit down, being naïve, my Native words poor
And that monster has come. The devil walked through our door.

That night kissed coloured man, that King that you stole back in 1492
Remains generations lost because of a monster like you.
You lied to me, you colonial beast. Our body and minds torn
Your hand on my head pushing me down. Both knees worn
Disrupting the balance as quick as the beating heart
Let's consider the damage that keeps us apart.

We come from the land, and all is provided
Your colonisation brings binaries to keep us divided
So that we cannot hit the goal or reach our destination
You are the reason we are in such a shitty situation.
Two faced are we, as we toil with our genes
From the white man we come and the land, which then means
We are fighting you and ourselves
To remember the ways, you put up on the shelves
Before burning the Wharenui that stood proud on that day
For white is right, and white is the way!

Forward you said, progress is what you need
Be good you Natives. Your hungry children's mouths we feed
For we are the state and our word is true
Our laws and our orders, we are good to you
We provide you with schooling for your kids for free
You have to do your best, there's no such thing as we
Your job is to continue to work and remember
We saved you, head down, you're a member
Of gangs and the poor, low income and labour
You just have to try. We are doing you a favour.

Of housing that's damp and low paid labour force
Be successful, work hard. Be like us, yes of course
Assimilate, behave, leave those myths all behind
White privilege doesn't exist. But being white-like you will find
That your life will be easy. Just don't rock the boat.

Those principles aren't real from the Queen's wee note.
White privilege is a myth. Real is that tall steeple
Upon the church, white man stands, dominating the people
Casting spells of modernity, and spreading your lies
That confuses the Natives and blinding our eyes
From our truth of our technology non-existent in books
Our sense sensing ways of knowing, flashed by disapproving looks
Unbelievable you say, liars and storyteller you are
Multi-modal type learning won't get you too far.

Get a piece of paper, certificate, degree or PhD
For then you will have a place in our meritocracy.
Be classed a little higher, home and income is stable
Be the invited few to come to eat at your table
A menu of greed and post settlement fund
And maybe a suited monkey who then wants to run
For a political party, but don't talk too much
The pay is too good. You are so out of touch
With those poor relations whose benefits are due
Those ones who are forgotten by people like you.

You pull the puppets' strings of the Bourgeoisie
For they have opportunity and of course are debt free
Free from the judgement of dependence or doing time
Justice that sees colour before it sees crime
You lied to me, you colonial beast
I now know your intention, for you want to feast
Upon the misery of brown people who come from this land
From prosperity to poverty all by your hand
A loaded gun, fist of drugs, broken families and violence
You will take our kids, so best we keep silence.

From the injustice that exists from within
The system to protect and defend that a given
Results that remain like a turning top

Reproduced ideas and punishment Althusser did cop
A fair share of conflict for calling you out
Like Bourdieu who was sick of the education clout
Your power of word tells our minds we are too slow
To keep everyone in line, and be classed as we know
Where the white man expects us to sit in this space
Being different, being gay or of varied race.

I only need help, a step up. I'm not needy
You're the boss, own the whole pie. No Sir you're not greedy
Selling our taonga to foreign nations
Pounamu waahi tapu its commodification
Of our culture it's real, our pain exists
This reality you made puts us in a twist
Your sorry is too late for our limited self-worth
Set up by this system, inflicted from birth
For we are the problem. Let's find a solution
With policy of freedom but not revolution
Or ideas that may work and move us away
From the dark places of inequality and disproportionate pay.

These ideas to adopt will be balance I'm sure
For me, the beast, and the monster next door
Don't keep us in boxes, filled with mud and with dirt
Or keep us in slavery, all buried in hurt
For all the grievances, history and war
Our land, our language, our whakapapa you tore
Instead break from these chains of blame and despair
Delink and relink for then we repair
The relationships we have with each other, let's rebuild
Take off these masks of lies, our hearts our homes our lives will be filled
With love and nurturing we may learn that it's true
All people, all colours, that's what we can do.

We adopt what our tūpuna had in place just before

These weird white ways coming crashing through our door
Where tapu and noa keep us safe and on side
With all of the freedoms and restrictions applied
Where aroha and manaakitanga brings people to stand tall
Where te reo and tikanga brought together, to fall
Upon the ears and the hearts of our people and yours
Instead of being on our knees, grovelling on all fours
In a place of balance of harmony and trust
Equal distribution of wealth, and absence of lust,
Of money, fame and power, racism and greed
Instead nature provides for what humanity needs.

For these are the principles that create innovators and dreamers
Not values that see difference, rejects and in-betweeners
We are not the problem, but part of the solution
By changing the philosophy, you change the resolution
In your mind of thinking that changes your view
Your attitude shifts and with-it behaviour that's not new
In improving the outcomes for me and for you.
So, before I consider which position, I will side
It's really important that we do not hide
Behind the veil of racism or discrimination or fear
For we all matter, and we are all here.

Glossary of words and names

Althusser (Louis) 1918-1990	French Marxist Philosopher – the capitalist economy is fundamentally structured by exploitation, to ensure the working class adhere to the system that oppresses them.
aroha	love, affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, empathy.
Bourdieu (Pierre) 1930-2002	French Sociologist – theorised 'economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital' and that ruling and intellectual social classes preserve their social privileges across generations despite myths of equality achieved through formal education.
Cartesian	Structures reality as pairs of opposites like good vs evil, or nature vs culture, rather than holistic Indigenous ways of understanding the world.
Cook (James) 1728-1779	British naval Captain and explorer who mapped New Zealand from 1769. Often cited as 'discovering' Aotearoa, ignoring Māori pre-arrival.
manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others
noa	ordinary, unrestricted,
Papatūānuku	Earth, Earth mother and wife of Rangi-nui - all living things originate from them
pounamu	greenstone, nephrite, jade
principles	referring to principles derived from Te Tiriti o Waitangi
Queen (Victoria) 1819-1901	Queen of Great Britain and Ireland from 1837. The Treaty Of Waitangi was created in her name
Ranginui	Sky Father.
Rua Kēnana Hepetipa (1869 –1937)	A Tūhoe prophet, faith healer and land rights activist
tohunga	skilled person, chosen expert, priest, healer
taonga	treasure, anything prized
tapu	sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden
te reo	the Māori language
Te Whiti o Rongomai (Erueti) (1830-1907)	A Te Āti Awa, Taranaki, leader and peace prophet who established Parihaka and a passive resistance movement against Pākehā (settler) land confiscation.
tikanga	correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule
Treaty in 1840	The Treaty Of Waitangi
tūpuna	ancestors, grandparents
waahi tapu	sacred place, sacred site

Waitangi	Location of the original signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi - The Treaty of Waitangi
whakapapa	genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent
wharehau	meeting house, large house, named after ancestors

About The Author

Janine Copeland (Ngai Tuhoe, Te Whakatohea, Ngati Awa, Ngati Manawa, Te Arawa/Whangai Kuku Airani) is an Indigenous writer whose work centres on the interwoven impacts of colonisation across generations. Her creative practice is grounded in tikanga and guided by a commitment to restoring balance, strengthening identity and honouring the resilience of our tūpuna.

This piece was submitted as part of her Bachelor of Humanities, Indigenous Studies with Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, as a response/resistance to the academic constraints of what are appropriate and markable academic submissions. It explores the intersections of history, wellbeing and lived experience, tracing the emotional and cultural landscapes shaped by Aotearoa's and global colonial past. Through a chronological lens, her writing seeks to illuminate both the wounds and the enduring strength carried forward by Indigenous communities. Through confronting discomfort comes healing of realities where secrets or dismissiveness are no longer.

Beyond her creative work, Janine contributes to Indigenous wellbeing through systems-focused consulting that supports whānau Maori and organisations to build sustainable, mana enhancing structures and practices grounded in whenua and whakapapa. Her work reflects a belief that storytelling and strong systems are both vital pathways toward collective healing and self-determination. As a facilitator and business coach, Janine works to encourage connection and remembering of Indigenous being.