

# Metaphysics of a hero: Egianus Kogoya

## Is he a Papuan hero or villain?



Yamin Kogoya

After the West Papua National Liberation Army, the armed wing of OPM (Free Papua movement), burned a small plane and kidnapped its New Zealand pilot on February 7, 2023. The dark clouds that sealed this frontier war opened to the outside world. Across the globe, media outlets shared this information, causing people to condemn this act as evil terrorism, while others view it as stratagem used by OPM fighters to open deaf ears of the world's communities. But at least this incident exposed a half-century-old war waged by the Indonesian military government against the original Papuans.

After the kidnapping, Egianus Kogoya, OPM TPNPB, and foreign intruders living off this ancient land's lifeblood became embroiled in a world of contradictory morality, ethics, and justice. There are those who regard Egianus Kogoya as a hero for the Papuans and on the other hand, there are those who view him as a criminal, depending on who is telling the story and why.

*'Metaphysics of a hero'* is a topic I wish to discuss in the following paragraphs. It may challenge your morals and ethical comfort zone and perhaps allow you to see the larger picture of human suffering that you may not have been aware of. It may help us to understand whether and how such suffering can be caused by or linked to global civilisational greed and power structures - sucking up the innocent blood of the oppressed; justified by its unconscious pathological notions of justice, morality, and peace. In a world like this (oppressor and oppressed), how can we distinguish between good and bad morality and virtue? Who defines their meaning and value and who determines how they apply to a society that is divided by racism, hatred, and injustice?

It is, therefore, essential that we understand how and why concepts of 'morality, justice, and peace' function in a world where one group of society oppresses another, and how and why someone like Egianus Kogoya emerges and responds to such conditions in the manner he does, and the actions condoned by some and praised by others.

The following paragraphs will be a brief discussion of how morality and virtue operate (within or apply) to human beings between the oppressors and oppressed. The kind of morality and virtue a hero must possess to meet these challenges, and what it costs to be a hero. As a conclusion, I will resolve whether Egianus Kogoya is a hero or villain in West Papua's National Liberation story, and how innocent individuals like Philip became an academic, Camellia Webb-Gannon describes as a 'pawn' in a conflict that can only be resolved by international engagement.

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### **The tragedy of morality and virtue**

Being a moral person does not imply being a good human, being a good human does not imply being a moral person, being a harmless, humble person does not imply being a virtuous human being, and being virtuous does not imply being a harmless human. A good person is not necessarily right, and the person who is right is not necessarily good. A hero is a person who, by virtue of his or her heroic qualities, transcends the boundaries of human dogmatic morality beyond the realm of heaven and hell – reconciling both dimensions to redeem the torments of both worlds through their sacrifice. It is for this reason that a hero's journey is always filled with betrayal, rejection, error, tragedy, and compassion. A young Papuan figure like Egianus Kogoya would make a compelling candidate for a misunderstood, tragic, and yet a heroic figure in a liberation story. Whenever a figure such as he emerges, we suddenly become a kind of judge, ready to convey moral judgment without understanding the larger story of what factors led to the development of such a particular character.

### **Tragic soul of a hero**

The soul of a hero transcends human made dogmatic morals and virtues protected by institutionalised religions and governmentality of the police, military, and administrations. The heroic figure is the one brake that all these stagnated, moral boundaries create to give new life to the old and the dead. Heroic figures have their own notions of morality and virtue, which are not always accepted by societal institutionalised moralities. The hero has a distinct self-definition, but often this definition is not clear within the standardised boundaries of societal morality. The hero is constantly at a crossroads between the joy of heaven and the sorrow of hell – he fights his war at the crossroads, on the path of this dualistic cosmic war of light and darkness. His spirit is the most joyful yet tormented of all people. He sees both the ideal of the heavenly dimension above him and the tragedy of hell below him. He is the anguished soul in these two dimensions whose life is full of episodes of error and tragedy as he continues his quest to manifest both dimensions to the realm of celestial heaven and earthly creatures.

A hero's pain is the corridor through which the heavenly realm feels the pain of earthly matters. In other words, a hero's pain connects humans to God. A hero reveals what is uncharacteristic of God, such as suffering. This is why a hero's soul is regarded as God's tears.

Since God is dispassionate, serene, eternal, and with nothing that bothers him; man is passionate, in pain, suffering, tormented, and suffers destitution, humiliation, weakness, and doubt. Without the presence of his own heroic son or daughter, who will allow God to have that deep and profound experience of the nightmare, horror, and depths of destitution and deprivation inherent to the human being? God is not able to comprehend passion, pain, and loss, and he cannot understand the essence of man. God is not interested in prosperous and successful people, and their accomplishments are nothing compared to the successes of God himself.

Yet, the sufferings of man, the anguish he endures, the skirmish with the fate he faces, remains an enigma to God. Despite this, God may wish to transcend himself, his own dispassion, his own bliss, and taste destitution – i.e., to transcend the absence of bliss to experience suffering and affliction.

A hero is one who allows God to experience pain, and thereby allows the human being to experience bliss, greatness, immortality, and glory.

Consequently, heroism can be seen as an ontological and simultaneously anthropological instance, a vertical line along which the divine and the human (or heavenly and earthly) can engage in a dialogue.

Wherever there is a hero, there is always tragedy. To be a hero, one must carry within oneself misery, agony, rupture, and tragedy. There are no such things as happy, fortunate heroes, because all heroes are necessarily unhappy and unfortunate in some way. It is unfortunate misfortune that befalls the hero. Why? To be both eternal and temporal, dispassionate and suffering, heavenly and earthly, is an unbearable experience for anyone, a condition that no one would wish upon their enemy. Consider the heroic journeys of the Biblical patriarchs and matriarchs, as well as those of Jesus and all his martyred disciples. In one way or another, Abraham, Moses, famous King David, Solomon, Daniel, Nehemiah, and Samson have all fallen and yet risen through pain and suffering from their shortcomings.

It is these contradictory personalities and characters, and the enigma of heavenly ascetics and earthly demons that keeps God awake at night. In a strange and deep metaphysical realm beyond the comprehension of earthly minds, God speaks to them, and they speak to God. There is something very uniquely special about them, as if a piece of heaven is instilled in their hearts that longs to restore God's order on earth.

Likewise, there are no happy monks or saints, nor are there any revolutionary leaders who have joined the camp of heroism, such as Patrice Émery Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Ho Chi Minh, Marcus Garvey, Steve Biko, Arnold Aap and so on. They are all deeply unfortunate on a human level. They have all fallen and risen in different ways, depending on what they stood for, how they fell, rose and why. Nevertheless, they are blessed according to another heavenly account. In the sermon on the Mount, there are those who mourn the persecuted, those who suffer slander, and those who are hungry and thirsty. It is the unfortunate one who are blessed.

A hero's body contains thousands of scars, and bruises. Thousands of traps are always placed by his earthly enemies to obstruct his path, and thousands of times the life of the hero is always at risk. They faced tens of thousands of problems, thousands of enemies marching towards them, thousands of demons trying to destroy them, and tens of thousands plots designed against them. His life is spent on the thin line between the living and the dead. He has nothing to lose, and that makes him more dangerous than ordinary souls.

Mostly, heroes never think of themselves; they live for something else and someone else, everything else and everyone else – always something greater than themselves. A hero's aura is like the gravity of a tornado, swirling everything in his path into a vortex of crisis, decision, choice, tragedy, and death, whilst simultaneously creating new hope and a new life. As he stands alone in the vortex, thousands of tears of fallen human children cling to his soul. At the moment of solitude, the hero cries out for heartfelt suffering and injustice and elevates the heavenly ideals that he pursues.

A hero does not reside in a comfortable home, he is always on the move to confront the unknown, shedding light into the darkness of taboo and fear, for that is where the hero confronts the shadows, the villains and his enemies. A hero's essence is interwoven with the chemistry of heaven and earth, making it difficult for the children of earth to comprehend. This has led to misunderstandings and misjudgement of his heroism, ultimately resulting in his tragic end. In one moment, the hero is celebrated with honour and glory by thousands and in the next moment the same mob cheers for his execution. That is why Jesus was welcomed at the gate of Jerusalem as a King with the song, Hosanna – Hosanna, but then a few days later was executed.

A hero's life is characterised by the duality of 'love and hate', 'praise and betrayal', 'acceptance and rejection'. This duality is, in the most profound metaphysical sense, the essence of the cosmos itself – 'of light and darkness, of God and Satan, of order and chaos, of life and death'. The eternal cry and joy of heaven and hell torment the hero because he sees a cosmic war being waged while his earthly humans are blind to it.

In the deepest metaphysical sense, Egiyanus Kogoya embodies each of these heroic attributes. He carries the agony and suffering of his people and yet is one of the most misunderstood, criminalised figures in the earthly



realm. In the spiritual realm, however, he is a hero devoted to fighting deep-seated lies, deceit, betrayal, and criminality perpetrated by fallen children of the earthly dimension. Through him, from the perspective of metaphysics of heroism, God feels the pain of his tortured creation and he opens deaf ears, blind eyes, and unconscious souls of humankind.

### Egianus Kogoya: A Papuan hero or villain?



Egianus Kogoya

Egianus Kogoya and his fellow OPM soldiers are a generation born in a warzone, whose entire existence is shaped by war. Papuans of this generation, particularly from the region where Kogoya comes from are some of the most traumatised and war-torn regions in West Papua. Most people are unaware that this was a war waged by the Indonesian Government in collaboration with internment actors against the original Papuans. The UN played a key role in this tragedy.

Although Egianus Kogoya has been labelled a criminal, a terrorist, rebellious, and a sociopath, he is a hero in the West Papuan liberation story, because truth and God are infallible figureheads of the cosmic war against the darkness, often on the side of those being oppressed.

*'I took [the pilot] hostage for Papua independence, not for food or drinks,'* Egianus Kogoya said in one of the videos, in which he appears alongside Mehrtens. Here, Kogoya reveals two opposing dimensions: *Food and drinks* representing the earthly dimension, which possesses characteristics of temporary decay, material, and corruption, and on the other *Independence*, which is transcendental idea, unmaterial, noble and the eternal spirit of God that yearns for the liberation of his creation cruelty. A similar longing for freedom for the oppressed that led Moses to kill the Egyptian slave guard and flee into the desert to commune with God in a deep metaphysical realm to develop strategies for total liberation of human bondage. In the eyes of the Imperial Egyptian morality, Moses was a traitor and a murderer, but in the eyes of God, Moses was the chosen warrior and a hero who was misunderstood and rejected by his own people.

At the deepest metaphysical realm, however, Moses' heartbeat was the scared corridor through which God felt the pain of the oppressed and enslaved.

Egianus Kogoya is the resurrected spirit being of the ancient archaic spiritual warriors – the Autochthonous – fighting against the wicked spirits of fallen men. The spirits and forces that threaten to annihilate West Papua.

## Phillip Mehrtens: A tragic hero in West Papua's liberation story



Phillip Mehrtens and Egianus Kogoya

Tragically, the New Zealand pilot has now become part of Kogoya's heroic journey in West Papua's liberation story. His family and friends are traumatised, mourning, and worried. They may build resentment against Egianus, his army and the Papuan people. On an earthly level, Papuans (those on the side of West Papua's redemptive story) sympathise; they feel their pain in this tragedy, but on a transcendental level, Phillip became a hero in this tragic circumstance, by opening the door for the world to see West Papua's story. Egianus' action might be condemned or disapproved by the world, but at least Indonesia's hidden war against the original Papuans has been exposed. He has made a heroic contribution by bringing the plight of the Papuan people to the attention of the world.

Phillip is currently embroiled in this prolonged conflict, and it is not yet clear what Egianus and his OPM soldiers will do, nor what the Indonesian government and the international community will do in response. One thing we are aware of, however, is that the stakes are high, as are the demands made for his safe release by the West Papua Liberation Army.

Do you consider Egianus Kogoya to be a hero or a villain in the liberation of West Papua? I would like to leave that question to you.