

## CARL JUNG, “TAOS PUEBLO”

On New Year's Day, 1925, Carl Jung was at the rim of the Grand Canyon. He was on his way to Taos, where he arrived a week later. There, he spent time discussing life and the cosmos with Ochwiay Biano (Mountain Lake), who he always described as a chief but was, in fact, the member of the Pueblo with the best English. “There for the first time I had the good fortune to talk with a non-European, that is, to a non-white,” Jung wrote in a piece that remained unpublished until he added it to *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* in 1962.

“See,” Ochwiay Biano said, “how cruel the whites look. Their lips are thin, their noses sharp, their faces furrowed and distorted by folds. Their eyes have a staring expression; they are always seeking something. What are they seeking? The whites always want something; they are always uneasy and restless. We do not know what they want. We do not understand them. We think that they are mad.”

I fell into a long meditation. For the first time in my life, so it seemed to me, someone had drawn for me a picture of the real white man. It was as though until now I had seen nothing but sentimental, prettified color prints. This Indian had struck our vulnerable spot, unveiled a truth to which we are blind.

Jung thought about European invaders, the Crusades, the Conquistadors, the spread of syphilis and scarlet fever in the

Pacific Islands. The Indians were unwilling to talk to him directly about their religion, which is what he wanted, but were more than happy to talk about the Americans. “Why,” Mountain Lake asked, “do the Americans not let us alone? Why do they want to forbid our dances? Why do they make difficulties when we want to take our young people from school in order to lead them to the kiva, and instruct them in our religion? We do nothing to harm the Americans!”

In talking to him, Jung got a new sense of what it meant to live with a meaningful cosmology and saw the “poverty” of the secular European revealed. “Out of sheer envy we are obliged to smile at the Indians’ naivete and to plume ourselves on our cleverness; for otherwise we would discover how impoverished and down at the heels we are,” he wrote. “Knowledge does not enrich us; it removes us more and more from the mythic world in which we were once at home by right of birth.”

He left with what his biographer Frank McLynn called “a deep hatred of colonialism, whether of the formal type practiced in the British Empire, or the informal ‘internal’ type practiced in the USA, where whites subdued and bullied Native Americans.” On August 15 he sailed for Mombassa, and from there made his way into Uganda to stay with the Elongyi people, or the people on Mount Elgon, and then through Sudan and down the Nile to Cairo. The whole trip confirmed his loathing for colonialism. McLynn writes:

The white man in Africa seemed to him a worse animal than the man-eating beasts in the jungle, and the very worst products of colonialism were the corrupt, venal and cynical missionaries. The return home via the Mediterranean strengthened the “reverse culture shock” of approaching Europe from Africa. For the first time he saw Europeans from the viewpoint of what would now be called the Third World and he came to see why the Chinese referred to “foreign devils” and the Japanese to “barbarians.” Even the approach to the coast of Europe, with its bays and snowcapped peaks, made him feel he was entering the land of the pirates.

Jung considered these two trips to New Mexico and Africa in 1925 to be among the most transformative experiences of his life.