

Culture

Business



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In literature conflict can be anything from a clash of sensibilities between two races to a world war. In either case, conflict is what drives the story forward, providing interest to readers and insights into the characters of those affected by it. Isak Dinesen's 'Out of Africa' contains many stories of strife, but the conflict which reveals the most about both the colonial habitation and the land of Africa itself is that of the shooting accident on the author's farm. Late one night the miller had had a party. All was going smoothly until a boy named Kabero shot off a gun, injuring several people, and killing one. The story of the accident is, while sad, fairly common place; However, the conflict itself is not truly significant.

What is important to the story is how the complications ensued by it are dealt with. One of Dinesen's first moves after the accident is to find a colonial policeman to deal with the emergency. When the policeman comes, but is not able to do anything about it except hang the Kabero, an offer which is declined. In sharp contrast to this the seemingly powerless and even foolish Kyama, a gathering of the elders of the Kikuyu tribe effectively resolves the matter utilizing the ancient laws of Africa. This shows that despite the fact that Europe believes that they are colonizing Africa it does not mean that they are in any non-superficial way influencing the culture of the land.

Even Dinesen, who spent 17 years almost entirely with the natives, must admit that "when...(the colonials) really did break into the native's existence, they behaved like ants, when you poke a stick into their ant hill ; they wiped out the damage with unwearied energy , swiftly and silently,- as if obliterating an unseemly action.' (page 18. Kamante and Lulu) This quote

also gives us an idea as to why the colonials are unable to simply thrust themselves into the Africa culture as they have with other cultures. The world-view and laws of Africa were founded across the patience of millions making it impossible for one to ' expect the Natives to jump joyfully from the stone age to the age of motor cars (the modern age full of the inventions of the colonials)...We can make motor cars and air planes and teach the natives to use them... but the true love of motorcars cannot be made in human hearts in the turn of a hand.' (280, From an Immigrant's Notebook)