The short story “An Outpost of Progress” is set on an outpost in Congo. On this outpost two new agents arrive, Kayerts and Carlier who get the supervision of the outpost. The director who comes with them predicts the failure of their work within the next six months.

At the outpost Kayerts and Carlier actually don’t do any work. The supervision is done by Makola, a “Sierra Leone nigger” who is better educated than the other stationmen and who lives at the Outpost with his wife and his three children. The food for the Outpost is provided by a tribe near it, leaded by “Goblia”.

Later a group of black strangers arrive. Makola organizes a (forbidden) slave trade with those strangers. He exchanges the ten stationmen with six valuable tusks. The two white agents don’t know anything about the deal. They recognize it, when seeing that the stationmen aren’t there anymore at the next morning.

Caused by this forbidden trade the tribe of Goblia stopped the food supplies for the Outpost. As result Kayerts and Carlier get morally ill and they suffer from their loneliness, what leads them to a (senseless) discussion about sugar which escalates that far that Kayerts shoots Carlier dead.

The day after the steamer arrives who should bring the agents back. But when the director sees Kayerts he already had hanged himself on a cross with his outstretched tongue.

The Author: Joseph Conrad
Joseph Conrad was born in Poland and grew up there with his father (a translator and poet) and his mother. But both his parents died early, so he became an orphan. Later he joined the French and the British Marines and realized his life dream, to travel around the world on a ship. So he sailed across the oceans with the “Otago”. He visits Africa, Australia and as well Congo Free State on his trip.

On his trip he was shocked by the colonists and how they trade the native population, and he left his believes in enlightenment. Furthermore he got seriously ill in Africa, so that he wasn’t able to go to sea furthermore. That’s why he started writing books and short stories in which he often reflects scenes or events out of his own life.
The Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kayerts</th>
<th>Carlier</th>
<th>Makola</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Has a daughter</td>
<td>● Worked as a cavalry officer, was forced to this job because his brother-in-law didn’t want to provide him with money anymore</td>
<td>● Has three children and a wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Worked at a telegraph administration but left it cause id didn’t provided enough money</td>
<td>● Tall</td>
<td>● Civilized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Fat and short</td>
<td>● Assistant of Kayerts</td>
<td>● Well-educated (speaks two languages, bookkeeping skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Chief of the Outpost</td>
<td>● Weak moral: accept slave deal</td>
<td>● Two names (Makola, Henry Price) → two identities (criminal slave-trader, bookkeeper and supervisor) → two cultural systems (African, Europe/western)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Weak moral: accept slave deal</td>
<td>● In the beginning: lazy</td>
<td>● Tidy, organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● In the beginning: lazy</td>
<td>Later: aggressive, ready to kill somebody, mental breakdown, caused by the loss of food</td>
<td>● Betrays his own race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later: aggressive, ready to kill somebody, mental breakdown, caused by the loss of food</td>
<td>● In the beginning good relation to Kayerts, later not anymore</td>
<td>● Morally ill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● In the beginning good relation to Carlier, later he shoots him and hangs himself.</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Seems to be without problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Topics

Civilization

Civilization is one of the most important topics in the short story. Makola is for example introduced as a “civilized nigger”. Civilization is in Western view a kind of Progress for a society. In the short story Civilization is a support for morally weak characters like Kayerts and Carlier who both need someone who’s superior to them (you see this when looking at their earlier jobs in the army or the administration). They fail when being themselves on the top of hierarchy.

Furthermore even civilized people behave morally wrong, for example Makola who organizes the slave deal without telling the two agents about this.

Racial differences (black & white)

In this short story the two white men are superior to the black persons. The agents actually don’t do the work, but they enjoy good meals in opposition to the stationmen. But the short story shows as well, that even if the black persons are officially behind the whites, they have the power to destroy the lives of the white men. And Makola for example acts as well (criminal) without the permission of Kayerts and Carlier, so he seems to have more power than the two agents.

Colonization as a Failure

The two white colonists, Kayerts and Carlier, fail economically and morally when trying to live and “reign” in another country. The colonization leads the two into death, as well as the agent who died of fewer (the one who build up the outpost).

Furthermore the colonists have much bad character traits which can be referred to colonization itself. They are untidy and lazy and have a very weak moral.
The Force of Circumstance

by W. Somerset Maugham

Content

The Force of Circumstances is about Doris and Guy. Doris fell in love with Guy, who isn’t good-looking, but who is kind of funny. Doris sometimes jokes about why she had married a person like him.

But even though Doris moves into Guy’s home in Malaysia. When arriving there he changes the whole decoration of the home, she makes it habitable.

After that a new person appears, the Malay woman. She has children and Doris and Guy often meet her. Doris kind of likes the woman (says she’s attractive and beautiful), but Guy seems to be troubled by her presence (remember the scene when he plays tennis worse than usual).

Later on Guy is so morally ill that he had a relationship with the woman and that her children are his children. Doris is shocked, but wants to forgive Guy. She sets one bed out of the bedroom, so that they sleep in separate rooms.

But even if Doris tries to get on with guy, she can’t forget and forgive Guy’s relationship with the Malay woman, so she finally moves out.

Guy is disappointed by this, but he lets the Malay woman move into his house with the children.

The Author: W. Somerset Maugham

William Somerset Maugham was born 1874 in Paris. He learned English in school as second language. He had an unhappy youth (caused by his homosexual setting). He became a full-time writer already in the age of 23, when his first novel got a huge success.

Later he wrote as well theater plays (which were often comedies) and a few Novels and short stories.

About 20 years later he started to travel around the world. He visited the Colonies of the British Empire and he seems to be opposed to the colonial system, when reading his short stories, even though he had never confirmed it.

In 1928 he settled down in France where he died in 1965 after a lot of trips through the world.
The Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doris</th>
<th>Guy</th>
<th>Malay woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Decent</td>
<td>• Humerous and ironic, cheerful</td>
<td>• Beautiful and attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Superior to Guy (contrast to “usual” gender roles)</td>
<td>• Moves between two cultures (Western and Malaysian)</td>
<td>• Seductive (=verführerisch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Later: desperate (=verzweifelt), calm and quiet</td>
<td>• Noisy</td>
<td>• Inferior to Guy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes guy think, that they will get together later.</td>
<td>• Not that good-looking</td>
<td>• Makes Guy a bad conscience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tidy</td>
<td>• Untidy</td>
<td>• Doesn’t talk that much, rather quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the beginning very happy, later very sad</td>
<td>• Isn’t honest to Doris in the beginning</td>
<td>• Powerful (she’s the trigger for Guy to tell the truth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dislikes “going native” attitude</td>
<td>• Went native (seems to be kind of morally ill and ignorant)</td>
<td>• Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prejudices against natives</td>
<td>• Thinks natives to be inferior</td>
<td>• Has a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is in an relationship with Guy, moved to him</td>
<td>• Had a relationship with the malay women, is in a relationship with Doris</td>
<td>• Had a relationship with guy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Topics

Going native
In the British colonies were very few British women. That and the fact that the natives didn’t have a real use for wives caused the development that more often relationships between British men and native women came up. The natives were often not treated as inferior to the British.

Anyhow the children of a British and a native (called Half-Castes) were a kind of reprehensible (=verwerflich) and so it wasn’t good if you had to admit that you had a relationship with a native woman.

The term “going native” describe exactly this action, to build up a relationship with a native woman and to treat her inferior. Those relationships often broke up quite early, mostly caused by the superior British men.

If you relate this to the short story, you can see that Guy went native with the Malay women and that he has half-caste children. He’s afraid that Doris will leave her, when she finds out that he did such a reprehensible thing.

Colonization as a Failure
Just like in “An Outpost of Progress” the colonizers fail while acting with the natives. The foreign person (Doris) can’t live with the moral settings and has to leave the country. She tried to change Guy (she e.g. rearranged his room) but in the end she leaves without have changed anything, because Guy and the Malay woman live again together in the house.
Besser spät als nie kommt sie noch die Englisch Zusammenfassung. Ich hab mich einmal
daran versucht auf zwei Seiten pro short story jeweils das wichtigste zusammenzufassen. Da
Englisch nicht gerade mein Paradefach ist, und da ich ehrlichgesagt mit den beiden Short
Stories so meine Probleme hatte ist vermutlich der ein oder andere Satz nicht ganz so
verständlich wie er sein sollte. Ich hoffe mal es hilft trotzdem ein bisschen.
Wenn ihr gröbere Fehler findet bzw. eigene Zusammenfassungen/Ideen/Anregungen oder
sonst irgendetwas habt könnt ihr mir wieder eine Mail schreiben (fsure@web.de). Ansonsten
wünsch ich euch viel Glück bei der Klausur morgen und bei allen andern die in den nächsten
Wochen noch kommen.

Gruß,
Florian