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EUROPEAN TEMPEST: COLONIALISM AND MIGRATION IN "AMY FOSTER" BY JOSEPH CONRAD

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Abstract. *The literary motif of a tempest experienced at sea has permeated Western literature since antiquity, with Horace's* Ode I.14*, Shakespeare's* The Tempest*, and Joseph Conrad's* Typhoon and Other Stories *constituting major literary examples. Whereas both Horace's and Shakespeare's tempests may be situated within the broader context of the colonising attempts performed by the Roman and British empires, respectively, Conrad's works feature several attempts of crossing wild sea while engaging with colonisation in an ambiguous manner, a manner that questions the morale of the colonising party rather than accepts the claims perpetuating the ideology of improvement. Examined against Adams' notion of "colonial odysseys," Conrad's "Amy Foster" is here explored as a narrative thematising mass movements performed within rather than outside European space. As the story unfolds, the familiarity and inner coherence of European space disintegrate. It is argued that, initially framed within the colonial discourse, "Amy Foster" ultimately transforms into a tale of failed migration and miscommunication rather than colonisation. The subsequent analysis is aimed at revealing that the narrative may be viewed as an anticipatory commentary upon mass movement processes that have grown ever more pronounced in the contemporary world.*

Key words: *colonisation, migration, shipwreck, empire, Joseph Conrad, "Amy Foster"*

INTRODUCTION: LITERARY TEMPESTS

The motif of storm at sea has belonged to the Western literary canon since antiquity. This is natural since, for ancient Greeks and Romans, the immensity of the *thalassa* (the sea) must have been overcome in the explorations of their *oikumene,* that is the inhabited space of the Mediterranean. Engaged with the cross-sea expansion, ancient sailors regularly experienced storms and tempests while traversing the sea, which has become a major topos in the arts. At first, oral epic poems such as the *Odyssey,* in which Odysseus and his

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crew are facing a heavy storm following the release of the Aeolian winds, or Beowulf's journey to Denmark shaped the literary tastes of the readers. Subsequently, written literature followed and deployed the motif of the storm, with Act 1 in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* providing a major matrix for the featuring of the loss and despair of people in mortal danger. Faced with the danger of perishing, the mariners exclaim: "Mercy on us/ We split, we split, farewell my wife, and children/ Farewell brother: we split, we split, we split" (1.1.12–14). As Tadeusz Sławek pertinently observes (2022: 19), paradoxically, this near-death experience in Act 1, Scene 1 pre-conditions the discovery of a *terra incognita* – Prospero's island. Hence, catastrophe is closely intertwined with the discovery of the new world. It is perhaps a still greater paradox that, in this case, the closeness of safe ground initially means peril as "all [seems] lost" to the Shakespearean mariners (1.1.30). This puzzling interlinking of loss and discovery, or, the near-loss of one's life and the gain and subsequent exploration of an unknown island, is the focus of the present paper. It first argues that, to a certain extent, "Amy Foster" (1901), a short story written by a renowned Polish-born British novelist, Joseph Conrad, endorses a story model known as the robinsonade "where the beach is constructed as a site of rescue as well as a horrid place, a site of deprivation and solitude" (Richter in Breidenbach et al. 2020: 78). As such, it opens as an inverted tale of colonisation in which the colonised and the coloniser exchange their usual places, with the English coast assigned the status of the *terra incognita* and the poor emigrant from the Carpathian region, Yanko Goorall, acting as an explorer. As the story unfolds, however, it evolves into a story of migration rather than colonisation.

1. "Amy Foster" and "the Essential Difference of the Races"

Following a masterpiece, *Lord Jim* (1900) and published shortly after "Heart of Darkness" (1899), "Amy Foster" may appear somewhat insignificant in the literary legacy of the famous writer, Joseph Conrad. Numbering around three dozen pages and an estimated "11,000 words" (a letter to H.-D.Davray, Pent Farm, 2 Avril 1902 in *CL2* 401–402), it was initially categorised as a simple tale composed out of an impulse that was found in autobiographical (Morf 1956: 90–91; Chomiuk 2023: 135). However, the assumed simplicity was gradually dismissed by various scholars who re-discovered the text as a narrative engaging with transcultural encounters (Hampson 2020; Zulli 2019). As is usual with Conrad's prose, the encounters are nothing but ambiguous in the appraisals of those involved in them, both the newcomers and the hosting party.

The outline of the story seems simple. Conrad thus describes "Amy Foster" to his French French translator, H.-D. Davray, in 1902:

> *Story of an Austro-Polish highlander emigrating to America who is shipwrecked on the English coast. He roams around the countryside. No one understands him. He is tracked down like a wild beast. A farmer takes him in. He marries a good fool of a girl, a villager. But he persists in speaking his language to her and their child. That annoys his wife. She begins to fear him. He falls ill. She watches over him. He is thirsty and asks for a drink – but in his own language rather than hers. She doesn't understand. He can no longer understand why she doesn't stir. He becomes angry, he gets up – his alien noises frighten her and she runs away, carrying the child. He dies without understanding. 11,000 words. Idea: the essential difference of the races. (Pent Farm, 2 Avril 1902 in CL2 401–402)*

Though often received as an indirect autobiographical confession (Retinger 1945: 112; Meyers 1991: 145–147),[1] which is an obvious over-interpretation, "Amy Foster" is a text addressing things universal: in the eyes of its author, its major idea was that of "the essential difference of the races." Moreover, the national attachment of its protagonist, Yanko, is not even directly stated in the narrative, which gave rise to a range of misinterpretations: it was only after a century of research upon "Amy Foster" that Wiesław Krajka, after Anna Brzozowska-Krajka, finally refused Andrzej Busza's claim that, racially, Yanko represented the region of the Tatra mountains (Brzozowska-Krajka in Krajka 2020: 141). Instead, the scholars posited that Yanko was a representative of another cultural community living in the Carpathian Mountains, namely that of the Hucul highlanders (Brzozowska-Krajka in Krajka 2020: 141–142). It was the latter that, in the first half of the 19th century, became acknowledged as the cultural embodiment of the eastern borderlands of Poland, that is a territory associated with the primeval Slavic soul (Brzozowska-Krajka in Krajka 2020: 141–142). A representative of the Slavic spirit, Yanko encounters the West when halted mid-way on his journey to America and it is on the coast of Cornwall that "the essential difference of the races" surfaces as an insuperable obstacle to intercultural communication and understanding between fellow Europeans.

2. The Coast of Cornwall: Liminal Space

Perhaps characteristically, the exploration of European space in "Amy Foster" begins with a landscape description. Even though the opening half-line reads: "Kennedy is a country doctor" (1998: 203), it continues with the mention that "he lives in Colebrook, on the shores of Eastbay" (1998: 203), and the next few sentences depict the West-Country seashore rather than its inhabitants. With its fleeting presentation of Dr. Kennedy – a figure acting as a link between all the parties involved and, in narratological terms, the intradiegetic narrator – as portrayed against the coastline landscape, the initial paragraph seems carefully constructed as a proper introduction to the narrative of a shipwreck and the near-death experience of its major protagonist, Yanko. Indeed, the opening paragraph re-constructs the inferences which a potential newcomer traversing the sea might formulate upon their approach to the shore: they would notice both "the high ground rising abruptly" alongside the "clump of trees" and the outlines of man-made constructions such as "the perpendicular column of a lighthouse," "a dilapidated windmill" (1998: 203), or "the square tower of the Colebrook Church" (1998: 203). Considering the plot of the story that engages with a shipwreck, the selection of objects noticed is barely random: while the lighthouse and the Coastguard cottages directly connote tempestuous weather at sea, the tower of the church is associated with the re-assuring cultivation of Christian values ashore. However, misleading the latter turns out to be in "Amy Foster."

This nuanced handling of the reader's presentments and sympathies is guided by the rhetoric deployed in the landscape description. The choice of "the barren beach of shingle" (1998: 203) for the initial setting portrayed in the narrative is significant in view of both the literary *topoi* engaging with liminal spaces and as a symbol of the safe ground first

[1] Retinger described Conrad's autobiographical inspiration in "Amy Foster" as follows: "He spoke English in the same way as his Polish castaway in *Amy Foster;* he spoke English with great fluency, but always with that singing, soft, and at the same time vibrating intonation that instilled a strangely penetrating power into the sound of the most familiar English words, as if they had been the words of an unearthly language" – Retinger 1945: 112.

encountered by a castaway in foreign parts. As regards the former, Conrad's "barren beach" evokes Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Gonzalo's featuring of a sailor in peril who "would (…) give a thousand furlongs of sea,/ for acre of barren ground: long heath, brown furze,/ anything…" (1.1.46–48). Little wonder that, saved from death at sea, that same Gonzalo observes that "few in millions /Can speak like us" (1.1.29–30) and be saved. However, a fellow castaway, Adrian, finds a desert island, "Uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible –" (2.1.39). Denoting safe ground, Adrian's unfriendly and "barren" coastline in *The Tempest* signifies liminal space that, contingent on both land and sea, connotes both safety and menace. A similar ambivalent evaluation of the coastline of Cornwall becomes discernible in "Amy Foster": while "the bay is fairly well sheltered from the seas" and may thus become an "anchoring ground" (1998: 203), the beach is barren and has an unwelcoming aspect. It nevertheless gives access to "the village of Brenzett [which] stand[s] out darkly," and perhaps somewhat menacingly, to the eyes of a newcomer (1998: 203). On the one hand, such an ambivalent representation of the seaside in "Amy Foster" agrees with Virginia Richter's observation that the beach generally designates space with a "constantly shifting line," usually informed with a "peculiarly generative and transformative quality, in topographical, evolutionary and cultural terms" (in Breidenbach et al. 2020: 58). On the other hand, however, the beach of Eastbay in "Amy Foster" falls short of the claims of transformation: the Eastbay coastline is ambivalent in a manner evocative of the Shakespearean desert island which, though safe ground, appears "Uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible –" (*The Tempest* 2.1.39), and as such it becomes "a very unpoetic bit of seashore" (Richter in Breidenbach et al. 2020: 64). As argued further, "the barren beach of shingle" (1998: 203) appears unwelcoming in both the aesthetic terms and also as a liminal space in which the old and traditional is frozen into a crust, and the new and transformative is shunned and repelled.

3. Conrad's European Races

In its author's opinion, "Amy Foster" was a tale addressing "the essential difference of the races." To Conrad's contemporaries familiar with his Malay fiction, the statement might have suggested yet another modernist story engaging with an expedition to the (far) East. However, "Amy Foster" is set in England and the races involved are the Slavs, or, their single representative, Yanko, and the British community in rural Cornwall. Albeit a fictional location, Brenzett evokes south-east Kent, or "the Kent-Sussex border (…) within a 13-mile radius of Dungeness. This area has its expanse of flat land, its long beaches of shingle, its Martello towers, and coastguard stations" (Conrad 1998: 305).

In the case of a writer known for his anti-colonial novels,[2] such a repositioning of the setting to the familiar British context bespeaks more than a mere inclination of its author to feature the space of his chosen home[3] rather than that depicting far and exotic places. To

[2] Today considered a major tale critiquing colonialism, "Heart of Darkness" was also received as a narrative allegedly authored by a "bloody racist" – see Watts on Achebe's "An Image of Africa" (1983). For a nuanced reading of Conrad's handling of colonialism, see Romanick Baldwin 2024: 86–106. For a reading interlacing "Heart of Darkness" with "Amy Foster," see Ruppel 1996.

[3] The notion of home is a complicate issue with Joseph Conrad who, born to Polish parents living in the Polish borderland that now belongs to Ukraine, initially had a Russian passport. It was only in 1888 that he was accepted as a British subject. More information in Najder, *Joseph Conrad. A Chronicle,* 1983: 94–122. On the typology of the *unstable* home spaces, that is the spaces of *home* as internalised in one's subsequent life stages, see Note 338

my mind, it negotiates the conceptualisation of Europe in the "Western" context and may testify to a certain transformation of the idealisation of the West which had become ever clearer at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Christopher GoGwilt explains, the transformation involves a "shift from a European to a Western identity" discernible in the image of the colonising party, i.e., the Europeans (1995: 1). In other words, what Edward Said once uncovered as an ideological myth (mis)representing the European space and mind as "a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (1979: 7), was modified toward the end of Queen Victoria's reign into a re-constructed idea of "the West," the latter constituting yet another powerful rhetorical invention (GoGwilt 1995). It seems to me that "Amy Foster" may be received within this debate as a narrative questioning the assumed uniformity and coherence of "the West" as promoted by the Western party at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: neither is Conrad's picture of Cornwall uniform nor founded upon the Western ideals of altruism, hospitality, and openness towards the Other as propagated by the Christian ethics of *agape*.[4] Indeed, as Stephen G. Post asserts, Western moral thought has been influenced by both the spirit of beneficence and the concepts of *agape* or charity (2003: 57), both of which are thematised and, finally, questioned in "Amy Foster." The subsequent discussion investigates the ruptures visible within the idea of Europe as explored, and indeed subverted, in Conrad's narrative.

As already indicated, the overall narrator describes the beach of Eastbay as an unwelcoming sight.[5] Prominent in the opening few paragraphs as the major sight a sea traveller might first embrace with his/her eyes, "the barren beach of shingle" (1998: 203) functions as a topographical backdrop in the subsequent story. The frame narration subsequently delivered by Dr. Kennedy features the beach in the following fragment:

> *The Hamburg ship, filling all at once, capsized as she sank, and at daylight there was not even the end of a spar to be seen above water. (…) after the tide turned, the wreck must have shifted a little and released some of the bodies, because a child – a little fair-haired child in a red frock – came ashore abreast of the Martello tower. By the afternoon you could see along three miles of beach dark figures with bare legs dashing in and out of the tumbling foam, and rough-looking men, women with hard faces, children, mostly fair-haired, were being carried, stiff and dripping (…) in a long procession past the door of the "Ship Inn," to be laid out in a row under the north wall of Brenzett Church. (1998: 220–221)*

In the fragment narrated by Dr. Kennedy, the beach becomes a site where the living inhabitants of Brenzett come and meet the dead travellers to America. Both parties are Europeans, which translates the established colonial paradigm into a new mental construct: the spatial allocation of the coloniser and the colonised as the representatives of Europe opens the discussion upon questions regarding the inner coherence of European space and its people. The fact that the fateful expedition from Eastern Europe comes to a tragic end

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in Wojciechowska, *Nost/algia as a Mode of Reflection in the Autobiographical Narratives of Joseph Conrad and Henry James*, 2023: 189.

[4] More on the foundations of the altruistic love in Western thought and philosophy in: Stephen G. Post et al. (2002). On ancient philosophical arguments, see Part One, in particular. On the ideal of Christian compassion as explored in "Amy Foster," see Krajka 2020: 333–334.

[5] Though consistent with the historical specificity of the site, the "unwelcoming" character of the English coast to a newcomer may perhaps be viewed as informed by real life experiences: Conrad's first encounter of English soil was on June 10 in the port of Lowestoft where he must have felt "just a lonely foreigner" who "first of all, (…) did not know the language," asserts Najder (1983: 55).

within the liminal surroundings of the English beach, with the colonising party all eventually dead and their initial sole survivor finally included within the casualties, transforms their tragic story into a case of "colonisation" within Europe, as Mary Harris terms the encounter (in Krajka 2020: 197). The inverted commas which embrace the term of "colonisation" (Harris in Crompton 2007: 71) seem indeed indispensable in a designation of an act that is both performed and suffered by the Europeans – Europeans placed upon the opposite ends of the axis as both the colonised and the colonisers. This was probably the motivation behind Richard Ruppel's pertinent reasoning to receive "Amy Foster" as "a colonisation story in reverse" (1996: 126).

As indicated, the story narrated by Dr. Kennedy seems rhetorically embedded into the discourse of British colonisation. The doctor thus encapsulates the tragic end of the passengers aboard *Herzogin Sophia-Dorothea* to his listener(s): "bound to America [they were] washed ashore here in a storm," (1998: 209). The deictic indication of space, "here," seems a paradox since, further in the paragraph, it is explained with the help of a still less accurate spatial reference that is coupled with an exact geographical name: "for him [Yanko alongside other passengers] (…) England was an undiscovered country" (1998: 209–210). The equation of England with "an undiscovered country" sounds both familiar and strange: while the English rendition of the original Latin *terra incognita* is natural for both the intradiegetic narrator and the implied reader, the *quasi* "domesticated" Latin phrase, *terra incognita,* reads strange when applied to the heart of the Empire, England. Such a deployment of the meaningful phrase seems to subvert the colonial plot which the phrase activates: the figures of Robinson Crusoe or Shakespeare's Adrian found on a desert island are bound to resonate in the background of Dr. Kennedy's narrative. After a short pause, the Doctor continues upon the colonial lines: "… The relations of shipwrecks in the olden time tell us of much suffering. Often the castaways were only saved from drowning to die miserably from starvation on a barren coast; (…) We read about these things" (1998: 211). It becomes clear that, in his rendition of Yanko's adventures in Cornwall, Dr. Kennedy situates the tragic experiences of the newcomer within the sub-genre of the so-called colonial odysseys. According to David Adams, these were "stories in which characters journey from the familiar world of the West to an alien colonial world" (Adams 2003: 1), as in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* or Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*. On the one hand, Dr. Kennedy's mention of "the olden time" (1998: 211) resonates with the established claims of Enlightenment ideology, engaging with the "epistemological ambitions (…) [that] helped shape the arrogance of Europe vis-à-vis its Others" (Adams 2003: 80). On the other hand, Dr. Kennedy ultimately subverts such conclusions by changing the respective places of the colonising and the colonised in his narrative:

> *Yet amongst all the adventurers shipwrecked in all the wild parts of the world there is not one, it seems to me, that ever had to suffer a fate so simply tragic as the man I am speaking of, the most innocent of adventurers cast out by the sea in the bight of this bay, almost within sight of this very window. (1998: 211)*

As is usual with Conrad, the intricate syntax hampers an easy absorption of the actual meaning behind Dr. Kennedy's reasoning: the sentence both connotes colonialism and defies its basic assumptions by re-writing the colonial paradigm. As with the other deictic mentioned above, "this very window" located in English Cornwall asserts the position of the colonised within the European space that has been invaded by "the most innocent of adventurers cast out by the sea in the bight of this bay." As the actual site of the meeting

of the two parties is "this bay," and indirectly "the barren beach of shingle," it might suggest a possibility of transformative implications (Richter in Breidenbach et al. 2020: 58). Sadly, the transformation never materialises: what has been introduced by Dr. Kennedy as a subversion of the colonial paradigm, with the colonising and the colonised having exchanged their usual places, is further re-written into a failure of communication between the members of the same European context; this actually translates "Amy Foster" into a modern story of failed migration. In other words, what is deliberately framed as yet another story of colonisation (Harris in Krajka 2020: 203–204; Ruppel 1996), turns out as a nuanced account of unsuccessful migration, which sounds painfully familiar today.

As formerly argued, the issue of "the essential difference of the races" was claimed to be its author's major focus. Misleadingly colonial in its suggestive phrasing, Conrad's statement formulated in the letter to the French translator of "Amy Foster" engages with the races of Europe rather than those living across the Atlantic; America is ultimately never reached by the passengers aboard *Herzogin Sophia-Dorothea*. Interestingly, as Támas Yuhász explains (2023: 12), "three distinct locations (America, Kent, and Eastern Europe)" merge into a single experience of home in "Amy Foster," with America merely constituting a projection of idealised space. Given the "near-simultaneity" of East- and West-European home places (Yuhász 2023: 12), the story ultimately portrays a failed migration within the European space rather than that outside of Europe, with the races involving East Europeans as juxtaposed with and opposed to West Europeans.

British Cornwall becomes the site of the hostile encounter of the races. In his description of the seashore cited above, Dr. Kennedy recalls that "[b]y the afternoon you could see along three miles of beach dark figures (…)" (1998: 220–221). At this early stage of his tale, Kennedy's single direct description of the beach is open to suggest an unbridgeable divide between the two parties involved in the encounter: while the collective "you" signifies the British appearing on the shore as the native inhabitants of the isles, the "dark figures" of the newcomers are commodified as the effigies brought to the beach by the tidal movements of the sea. The sole survivor amongst them is Yanko who, though "a real adventurer at heart" (1998: 215), is featured as a "soft and passionate adventurer (…) [and] a highly sensitive nature" (1998: 216). Dr. Kennedy's portrayal highlights his sensitivity, which is a characteristic rarely found in the explorers of the robinsonade. In terms of the race, the sole survivor of the shipwreck is a representative of Central, or Eastern, Europe, and, in effect, a migrant rather than a coloniser. The migrant's portrait seems somewhat mysterious with regard to the ties of belonging: even though his surname, Goorall, points towards an English transliteration of a Polish regional term indicating a highlander, that is "Góral" (Krajka 2020: 84; McLauchlan 1978: 7). Yanko is primarily featured as a Slav from the Carpathian region (Krajka 2020: 84), and, by the same token, a member of an ethnic group larger than that living in Poland. Thus, Yanko's ethnos is not as Polish as Carpathian (2020: 72). Anna Brzozowska-Krajka agrees with Krajka's claim and concurs with a suggestion indicating two racial spheres of belonging, interlocking the Carpathian *genius loci* of East-Carpathian region with the Polish provenance, implied by the telling ethnonym, Goorall (in Krajka 2020: 141). Both scholars actually question Andrzej Busza's assertion of Yanko's alleged categorisation within a more Central European group of the Polish Tatra Mountain people (Busza 1966: 228–230). Yanko's racial identity is thus, in fact, shifted to the easternmost periphery of Europe, and it is linked to a culture that, mysterious and foreign, seems dangerous and menacing to the native inhabitants of Cornwall.

As suggested, the other periphery is constituted by the western corner of South England and the coast near Brenzett and Colebrook. In Kennedy's tale, this West-European area is inhabited by people whose identity is essentially different from that of the newcomer: "He [Yanko] was so different from the mankind around that, with his freedom of movement, his soft – a little startled– glance, his olive complexion and graceful bearing, [and] his humanity (…)," all these features renders him a person from a far-away country (1998: 209). Apparently, Dr. Kennedy constructs his tale upon the notion of "the essential difference" discernible in the unlike characters of the European nations, a difference which seems partly shaped by the divergent lifestyles characteristic for each region: while Yanko is a highlander, the native inhabitants of Cornwall are attached to their even country. According to Harris, the strong adherence to the respective home of each party, with their divergent cultures and traditions, prevents successful communication (in Krajka 2020: 200–202). With the distance between the parties thus created, the intercultural dialogue between them is impeded, which is also implied by means of rhetoric: Yanko's mysterious home is referred to with an enigmatic assertion that reads "He came from there" (1998: 209). As with Kennedy's former descriptions, this fragment also rests upon the use of a deictic expression connoting spatial remoteness: whereas the native villagers are described as "the mankind around," Yanko is essentially situated at an indefinite distance – somewhere out "there." Such rhetoric helps picture Europe as internally divided and fragmented, with the divisions not only depicted but made felt and internalised by the readers.

Founded upon littoral topography, the coast of Cornwall presented in "Amy Foster" might have become a stage for negotiations aimed at healing the inner divisions of Europe. Instead, Conrad's tale highlights the rift between Europe's eastern and western parts reflected in both the divergent cultures and topographies, and in the mindset of the people involved. The act of migration occurring between the peripheries, or one that is performed from the eastern boundary towards the western outskirts of Europe, is featured as unsuccessful. Interestingly, though a mere tale of fiction, "Amy Foster" has long been viewed as narration foreshadowing the failure of intercultural communication in Europe, a failure that has continued to exist in twenty-first-century Europe. As Tania Zulli observes, "Amy Foster" reads differently from other works written by Conrad, and particularly those contained in the collection *Typhoon and Other Stories* within which it was first included, since it pictures an adventure of migration that "is apparently less cruel, but (…) proves equally tragic in its representation of mass movement" within Europe rather than outside its confines (2019: 92).

CONCLUSION

The shift discernible in the colonial paradigm that surfaces in the opening few pages of "Amy Foster" regards the spatial allocation of the coloniser and the colonised, both of whom are, somewhat uncharacteristically, the representatives of European space. The fact that Dr. Kennedy's framing of Yanko's adventures in "Amy Foster" initially rests upon colonial rhetoric seems characteristic of that period: a usual contextualisation adopted in the narratives concerning outward voyages in those days engaged with colonialism (Adams 2003: 1–4). Thus, Richard Ruppel is right to view Yanko as "another Robinson Crusoe, the sole survivor of a shipwreck who washes up on a hostile, alien shore" (1996: 126–127). The shore being English comes perhaps as little surprise since, as Adams observes, at the

turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the foundations of the colonial enterprise diametrically changed as "there was no more *nova terra,*" (2003: 81) or, *terra incognita,* to be discovered.

The redirection of interests backwards and the renewed approach to European space seems particularly engaging in "Amy Foster." In Conrad's case, the British setting rather than Asia or Malaysia not only activates the notion of the West in general, but also indicates a shift within the writer's own creative focus from maritime thematics to the topography of onshore. While "Amy Foster" clearly defies the claim of an inner unity of Europe, it also questions the assumption of the humanist mind on the part of the British – the British initially presumed as the enlightened, even though colonised, party in "Amy Foster." With some of its members knowing French and Spanish, Italian and German, the community of Colebook barely appears as a group of "uneducated barbarians (…);" nevertheless, "their approach is not humanistic," observes Le Boulicaut (in Krajka 2004: 197–8). Thus, in the narrative, the British finally feature as the "unenlightened" party. To my mind, the portrayal of the native villagers of Brenzett and Colebook appeals to the readers particularly strongly by virtue of the paradox discernible within the initial colonial framing of the story which subverts the opposing positions of the colonised and the colonisers in terms of their geographical and cultural background, while it does not subvert them in terms of certain psychological traits: the *quasi*-colonised British party turn out to be, somewhat typically, hostile towards the newcomers, however frail and forlorn the colonising expedition ultimately turns out to be. Contrary to the established claims of the Western ethics of compassion and *agape*, the British party ultimately features as both culturally primitive and morally uncommitted, which shatters a colonial reading of the tale.

After a century since its first publication, today "Amy Foster" may be received within the context of migration rather than colonisation. With such a re-adjustment of the colonial paradigm, the narrative appears as a commentary anticipating the processes that began in the twentieth century and have always continued to surface in contemporary Europe. As Zulli asserts: "The relevance of Conrad's fiction to the politics and society of our times has been widely recognised by recent critics" (2019: 99). The relevance of Conrad's works today is further asserted with the claim that "the Conradian macrotext reveals significant potential for the interpretation of current realities, by disclosing the signs of social change and anticipating their consequences" (2019: 99). In fact, "Amy Foster" comments upon the social change initiated by early-twentieth-century mass movement and progress since it challenges the established slogans of the allegedly privileged positions of the Western party, holding that "[p]rogress is with the West: with communities of the European type" (Balfour 1908: 42).

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EVROPSKA BURA: KOLONIJALIZAM I MIGRACIJA U PRIPOVECI „EJMI FOSTER” DŽOZEFA KONRADA

Motiv bure koja se odigrava na moru prožima zapadnu književnost još od antičkog perioda, o čemu svedoče istaknuti primeri kao što su Horacijeva Oda I, 14, Šekspirova Bura ili zbirka Tajfun i druge priče Džozefa Konrada. Dok se i Horacijeva i Šekspirova bura mogu smestiti u širi kontekst kolonizatorskih težnji rimske i britanske imperije, u Konradovom delu nalazimo nekoliko pokušaja da se pri prelasku burnog mora prikaže dvosmislen odnos prema kolonijalizmu, na način koji dovodi u pitanje ubeđenja kolonizatora, umesto da prihvati tvrdnje kojima se reprodukuje ideologija o napretku. Polazeći od Adamsove predstave o “kolonijalnoj odiseji”, Konradova „Ejmi Foster“ se ovde ispituje kao narativ koji tematizuje masovna kretanja unutar, a ne izvan, evropskog prostora. Kako priča teče, prepoznatljivost i unutrašnja koherentnost evropskog prostora se dezintegrišu. U radu se tvrdi da se pripovetka „Ejmi Foster“ isprva odvija u okviru kolonijalnog diskursa, ali se na kraju transformiše u pripovest o neuspešnoj migraciji i pogrešnoj komunikaciji, pre nego o kolonizaciji. Analiza koja sledi teži da pokaže da se ovaj narativ može posmatrati kao anticipacija procesa masovnih migracija koje postaju sve izraženije u savremenom svetu.

Ključne reči: *kolonizacija, migracija, brodolom, imperija, Džozef Konrad, „Ejmi Foster“*