Joseph Conrad and Aleksandr Grin (Александр Грин) – it seems that these two writers do not have anything in common, except the fact that they both had Polish ancestors. Their literary works belong to two completely different genres. The naturalistic prose of Conrad, filled with darkness and terror, has an entirely different feeling to it than the romantic writing of Grin, which is full of light and hope. If we look only on the surface we will not perceive any similarities, but if we start to seek a bit deeper, we spot a number of common elements in both writers’ stories. The most significant one is the sea, which occupies the central place of the authors most widely known stories Heart of Darkness and Scarlet Sails (Алые паруса).

Life on the sea is something both Conrad and Grin longed for. They were spellbound by the beauty and mightiness of the ocean. Additionally, they perceived it as an embodiment of freedom. The vastness of the ocean allows people to roam freely wherever they like and escape the trivial problems of the mainland. As Conrad observes in The Mirror of the Sea: “Nowhere else than upon the sea do the days, weeks and months fall away quicker into the past. They seem to be left astern as easily as the light air-bubbles in the swirls of the ship’s wake, and vanish into a great silence in which your ship moves on with a sort of magical effect” [Conrad, Mirror...: 8]. Out at sea, a man is connected to nature like nowhere else; he is surrounded by it, carried by it. Without the rush of the city but a slow, even pace of the drift, no urban noise but soft murmur of waves, man is able to recognise the beat of his own heart and synchronise it with the pulse of the universe.
The ocean is a powerful element, a spiritual guide and a place of wonders. When one is boarding a ship, he cannot know what he will find when he sets his foot on mainland again; maybe a chest full of gold, maybe an extraordinary land full of unique animals and plants, maybe the love of his life. Those possibilities have historically kindled people’s imagination and encouraged young boys to become sailors. The tempting song of the ocean got hold of Conrad and Grin’s hearts. And, though, only the former was able to establish a career as a seaman, the sea was always close to the hearts of both throughout their lives. The influence their attachment of the ocean had on the writers is clearly visible in their works, which are centred on the motif of a sea voyage.

*Heart of Darkness* as well as *Scarlet Sails* are directly connected with the theme of the sea. Though they are completely different stories, the sound of the ocean waves resounds from their pages in the same way, it grabs the reader and carries him to unknown shores where people toil to live their lives as best they can. As powerless and fragile as human beings are in comparison with the power and might of the sea, they still possess something grander and much more powerful than the force of nature – their dreams. Human dreams are very different – some are pure and some contaminated, some are grand and some humble, some are individual and some collective – and they can lead to different outcomes, but they make us human and move the world forward against the mighty force of elements. People are part of nature, but when their biological life comes to an end, they do not merely become a part of the soil, because their dreams continue living even after humans pass away, and they will continue to live until the end of humanity.

The sea in both *Heart of Darkness* and *Scarlet Sails* represents a path or a distance the protagonists have to cover in order to reach their destinations, but also the inner journey that they undergo. Neither Marlow nor Grej (Грэй) return from their voyages the same as they were before setting on their journeys. Their expeditions are diametrically different and, accordingly, the influence they have on the sailors, differs. However, it is an indisputable truth that they have a great influence on them, later on in life. The fate comes to them in the sound of the sea, which they could hear constantly resounding in their souls.

Conrad and Grin do not glorify life on the sea. In their works, they present the whole truth about the difficulties of being a sailor. However, in their opinion, the game is worth the candle. If one is able to overcome the hardships of a mariner’s profession he receives a pass to a new and fascinating world. The sea not only reveals to man a commonly unknown and staggering reality but also teaches him humility, a quality that has a great influence on a person’s spiritual development.

The psychical growth of the protagonists constitutes an important part in both of the stories. During their expeditions, the protagonists learn things, which help them better understand themselves and the world around them. During his journey to Congo, Marlow starts to comprehend that real life often does not coincide with our expectations. Africa is completely different than he imagined – it is not a land of adventures and discoveries but of madness and pain. Also Marlow’s perception of humans changes. He realises that the colour of skin and level of civilisation should not
put barriers between people, because all human beings have the same hearts, capable of experiencing both the pain and the joy of life.

Marlow returns from his voyage deprived of his dreams but enriched in knowledge, which caused him suffering but made him a better man. Artur Grej also undergoes a noteworthy metamorphosis during his life on the sea. Grej comes from a wealthy home and his first encounter with physical labour is when he starts a sailman carrier. At first it is very difficult for him – the labour is hard and the other members of the crew, instead of supporting him, laugh at his lack of endurance – but he does not give up and finally becomes so skilled that he is able to become a captain of his own ship. This is a great achievement but not the most significant one. The biggest change in Grej’s life takes place when, during one of his voyages, he meets Assol (Ассоль). After hearing the girl’s story, he understands that the most wonderful thing in a person’s life is to help those in need, to create little miracles for them with one’s own hands. This incident not only makes Grej find the love of his life but also helps him climb one step higher on the ladder of personal development.

The stories written by Joseph Conrad and Aleksandr Grin contain many biographical elements. The figure of Artur Grej, in many aspects, resembles Grin himself. The two are similar in their fascination with the sea and longing for true love. Also the loneliness and social exclusion, from which Assol suffers, are not unfamiliar to Grin. In his works, Conrad describes situations, which had taken place in his real life or about which he heard from his acquaintances. Heart of Darkness is based on his own experiences during his journey up the Congo River.

The two writers draw inspiration from their past, but they realize their ideas in completely different ways. Conrad portrays the world he sees in front of his eyes. He presents the good and the bad features of it without embellishing or hiding anything. He shows his experiences, thoughts and feelings connected with certain aspects of reality by making use of his protagonists. Conrad does not want to comfort his readers or make their lives happier and brighter. He has a message to pass on and he cannot afford to deform it in any way, because it would lose its meaning. No matter how dark, painful and depressing the information, he must deliver it in the exact way it is. In the course of the story, Conrad makes comments on the events that happen but, at the same time, he leaves place for the reader to make his own judgements. He wants to draw people’s attention to a problem and its essence but he does not impose his own opinions on them; rather, he encourages them to give it some thought on their own.

Heart of Darkness is a story plunged in shadows. It begins in the darkness and ends in the darkness. Everything is immersed in it. At first we notice the dark night during which Marlow tells his tale, the darkness of the African jungle, the dark complexion of the native inhabitants of Africa. However, this specific darkness is not the most important part of the novella. Its main focus is the dark force that attacks human hearts and destroys in them everything that is good, bright and pure. People who let the darkness penetrate into their souls slowly lose their humanity and become hollow. Such a thing happens to Kurtz. He once was a skilled journalist, a talented painter, a great orator and an open-minded person with sympathy towards others. Africa awakens the darkness hidden in his heart. He cannot stand ‘the horror’ of his own soul and starts to fade both mentally and physically.
Conrad’s writing encourages people to analyse the deeper side of things, instead of judging their surface. In *Heart of Darkness*, the native inhabitants of Africa are seemingly the antagonists. They are perceived as dangerous and uncivilised by the Europeans who cannot understand their way of thinking and traditions. However, if like Marlow, somebody pays a bit more attention to the demeanour of the natives, he starts to understand that they are not wild animals but simply people who try to live their lives. The Blacks are good workers, they do not break the principles they believe in and they do not kill others just for pure fun. The situation is completely different with the arrivals from Europe. They slack off with their duties, abuse the natives and are capable of doing anything to get hold of the ivory. Most Europeans who come to Africa forget about genuine human feelings and become obsessed with the vision of becoming rich. As the reader of the book notices, it is the hearts of the white people that are pitch black, and not those of the black people.

Grin’s approach to writing is different than Conrad’s. He does not want to write about the inhospitable and depressing reality. His dream is to create a better world in which people are compensated for their sufferings with a bright, happy future. And he creates such a world in his stories. Writing is, for him, a remedy for all the sorrows he faces. Because of it, he is able to escape from reality and experience all kinds of adventures in fascinating and colourful lands. He wishes the same for his readers. He wants them to forget, even if only for a little while, about their problems, and to set out on an adventure with his protagonists. But that is not his only goal. In his works, Grin tries to convey a message to society. He believes that if people will apply the advice he incorporates in his tales, the world can become a much better place.

In *Scarlet Sails* the message is simple – one should always pay attention to the needs of the others and help those in need. Grin knew well that living only for himself would never make one truly happy because real happiness can only be shared with others. Many people pray for miracles and they do not understand that they are capable of creating them themselves. Every aid rendered to another person is a miracle. It does not have to be anything grand. A simple smile passed to a stranger on the street often can make that person’s day much more joyful. Another thing that Grin wants to convey to his readers in the novella is the plea to never lose hope even if the situation seems desperate. He urges them to be like little Assol who, against all odds, believed that her dream will come through. Grin tries to convince people that strong fate is a huge power, which is essential in making people’s wishes fulfilled.

As Leonard S. Marcus observed: “Fantasy is storytelling with the beguiling power to transform the impossible into the imaginable, and to reveal our own ‘real’ world in a fresh and truth-bearing light” [Lehr 2008: 290]. This statement can illustrate Aleksandr Grin’s way of thinking about creating stories. Through his writings, the author expresses himself; his dreams, views, emotions. He can see himself in his books like in a mirror. His works are ‘living’ photographs for the readers. ‘Living’ because they do not present the physical appearance of the writer but his soul, which will forever dwell among the pages of his narratives. Being a writer is, in a way, mimicking God. In his works, an artist brings characters into being, gives them a goal to accomplish, puts obstacles on their way and decides about the characters’ successes and failures, life and death. In his Grinlandia, Grin is a kind of god, who
controls everything and every being. He is a benevolent god, though. He lets misfortunes happen but he instantly takes action to restore harmony. He creates a world in which he himself would like to live, believing that, as Hans Christian Andersen used to say, “Every man’s life is a fairy tale written by God’s fingers”.

For writing their greatest works, both Conrad and Grin use the form of novella; its moderate size seems to be perfect for stating what they have to say. However, the narrative methods they use differ. Conrad gives his story the form of a tale, which Marlow presents to the other members of the crew. As Anna Băniceru observes: “In Heart of Darkness, Conrad recreates the archetypal storytelling scene; the storyteller is surrounded by his listeners and the time is «ripe» for telling stories full of adventures” [Băniceru 2014]. Introduced like this, the yourn seems more real and believable to the reader. Grin has a completely different approach. He writes his novella in a style resembling that of a fairy tale. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, he wants to write a pleasant narrative, which will bring to the reader’s mind the fables of childhood. Secondly, he wishes to convince them, that miracles can happen not only in children’s tales but also in real life.

The novellas differ also in level of complexity. Conrad’s work requires from the reader a constant analysis of the facts that are given. The narrative contains layers of which the reader must be aware in order to understand the true meaning of it. He is required to make his own judgement of the described situation by comparing the actual events and Marlow’s perceptions. Also the subject of the story – connected with human psyche and the darkness that exists in every man’s heart – is very serious and demanding in reception. On the contrary, Grin’s narrative is very simple. The plot is straightforward and does not need a deeper analysis to be fully understood. Like in typical fairy tale, there is no ambiguity – black is black and white is white. Likewise, the main theme around which the story circulates – the love between two young people – is very enjoyable and universal.

Consequently the atmosphere of both literary works is quite dissimilar. In Conrad’s novella, everything is dark and gloomy. Danger lurks everywhere, not only in the figures of the black man but in the white man as well. An individual is completely alone there because the natives are so remote from him, in terms of civilisation, that dialogue is impossible and all white people are mad. The lust of becoming rich unleashes the darkness existing in all man’s hearts, which starts to devour their souls. The ‘ivory fever’ sooner or later attacks all comers to Africa and slowly kills their humanity. The Black Land is full of inhuman humans. The horror of that sight is too much for a person to take; he will either run away from there as fast as he can or lose his sanity and become yet another ghostly shadow threading that godforsaken land. The land of darkness, the land of despair, the land of death – that is how Conrad saw Africa during his journey up the Congo River and that is how he portrayed it in his novella.

Grin’s tale is completely different. It is full of light and miracles. Its protagonists have problems to face, and those problems are not at all petty and insignificant, but the characters stubbornly fight for the realisation of their dreams and they succeed. They believe in the fulfilment of their goals, though for a long time their efforts do not bring any result. However, as an English actor Tom Hiddleston noticed: “You never know what’s around the corner. It could be everything. Or it could be nothing. You keep put-
ting one foot in front of the other, and then one day you look back and you’ve climbed a mountain”. Grej and Assol managed to climb their mountains and from the top they saw a breathtaking view of a bright happy future. That was the fate Grin wanted for them and also for himself. Grinlandia (Гринландия) is Grin’s Neverland in which he seeks asylum from the problems of the factual world, because of that he created it as a land of miracles and happy endings.

In Grinlandia everything is possible: men can fly, young girls walk on water and the prophecies of nomadic storytellers come true. However, in real life, fate is rarely as generous. It is often the case that people give their best to achieve something but the odds on their way are just too great to overcome. In such situations, the darkness within one’s heart begins to rise and feast on the soul of that person. Both Conrad and Grin know that human beings are fragile, it is not so hard to destroy their mental balance. The former shows it clearly in his narrative, the latter is silent about that fact. Such a picture of a human being does not fit in his wonderland. He wants to believe that a pure soul can never be destroyed and he wants to convince his readers to have faith in it.

Though Conrad and Grin’s stories are diametrically different they have the same origin – a dream. Marlow would have never set on a journey to Africa if not for his childhood dream. As a little boy, Marlow used to look on the blank spot on the map of the world which represented Africa and fantasize that one day he will go there and discover all of its secrets. His desire was so strong that even after many years had passed and he became an adult, Marlow could not free himself from it. Though, at that time, the Black Continent was already explored and its territory on the world’s map was filled with geographical information he still felt an irresistible urge to go there. He was particularly fascinated by the Congo River, which reminded him of the body of a huge snake. He was ready to move heaven and earth to achieve his goal, and so he did. At first there were no results, but due to his patience and connections he finally got an appointment on the ship travelling to Congo.

Marlow was very excited about his voyage to Africa. He had great expectations. However, after arriving at his destination, he quickly understood that his vision of the continent does not correspond with reality. The land was not filled with discoveries and adventures but with miserable people with dark skin and light complexioned people with pitch-black hearts. However, the most disturbing thing about Africa was not its darkness but the madness, which this darkness induced. Madness, which destroyed all humanity making human beings “hollow at the core” [Conrad, Heart…: 83]. Madness, which consumed human hearts and souls. Madness, which even the wisest, and purest man could not resist for long. Marlow was able to escape from its influence but it left its mark on him. Until the end of his days, he was unable to forget ‘the horror’ he experienced in Congo, the horror of the human soul, which was driven up to its limits. The journey he had so longed for had taught him a lot about himself and other human beings but it was certainly not the realisation of his childhood dream.

In Grin’s narrative both protagonists have their own dreams to fulfil. Little Assol longs for a miracle to happen; she waits for a prince who will come from a faraway land and take her to a place where they will live happily ever after. The girl is very lonely. The people from her village treat her like an outcast though she has not done them any harm. Despite the fact that she is treated really badly by others, she is a very
sweet and gentle creature. The dream she preserves in her heart gives her strength to remain herself and not to become miserable and embittered. Assol does not give heed that nobody, except for herself, believes in the prophecy she has heard as a child. She has faith in the foretelling of an old man she meets on the seashore and does not pay attention to the fact that it is precisely because of this that the villagers perceive her as crazy. She has no doubt that the day of her happiness will finally come so she waits patiently and endures the abuse of her neighbours.

Artur Grej, from his childhood days, feels a strong passion for the sea. As a child, he read every book on maritime that he could lay his hands on. Finally, at the age of fifteen, he left home to become a sailor. Life on a ship proved to be harder than he expected. The theoretical knowledge he had gathered from books turned out to be useless without physical endurance and practice. During his first months out at sea, the boy faced a really hard time. Work was taking all the strength out of him and the other crew members laughed at him and urged him to return home. Despite all these difficulties, Grej did not give up. He was determined to make his dream come true and nothing could stop him from achieving that goal. After some time, he got used to hard work and started to make progress in the sailing craft. The captain of the ship on which Grej worked spotted his untold talent and decided to teach him everything he knew. After a few years, Grin became a captain himself and began to roam the ocean on his own vessel.

Grej fulfilled his dream, but that was not the end of his journey. He had yet to make somebody else’s dream come true. Assol was still waiting on the shore of Kaperna (Каперна) for her prince on a ship with scarlet sails. While Grej knew nothing of this, he had a distinct feeling that something important was lacking in his life. When he saw the young lass sleeping in the forest he instantly understood what he should do. He knew that he must do anything to make her happy because her happiness was inseparably connected with his own. The miracle happened or, more accurately, Grej created the miracle with his own hands. The villagers could not believe their eyes when they saw a ship with scarlet sails heading towards the harbour. The only person who was not shocked by the sight was Assol. She never doubted that sooner or later this day would come. She believed so strongly and waited so patiently that her wish just could not have been left unfulfilled. Grej gave Assol a new and better life but in return he also achieved a gift of a kind loving wife. And the story came to the point of ‘happy ever after’.

Everyone has dreams. Dreaming is an inherent part of human nature. Dreams move humanity forward and influence an individual’s development. Unfortunately people do not have any influence on the effects of fulfilling their dreams. Their longings can lead them to very different places, from the gates of paradise to the abyss of hell. Life is very unpredictable and good intentions can sometimes result in unpleasant consequences. However, as Grin convinces his readers, one should not become discouraged by that fact and resign from living out his wishes because even if the outcome is different than planned it is, in any case, better than spending time sitting and idly waiting for something to happen. People should always move forward because if they do not they are, in a sense, already dead while living. Dreams are the fuel that gives the necessary power for psychical growth.
Conrad and Grin represent different approaches of story development. Joseph Conrad creates his works from the position of an adult. He portrays the world as it is, with all of its filth and horror. He wants to give an exact relation of the things he observes. Conrad’s objective is to encourage his reader to reflect on the subject. He invites him to a dialogue on important topics. Conrad is not interested in making the reader feel good after reading his story, helping him believe in his own strength and beauty of creation. His aim is rather opposite. He wants to warn people about the dangers awaiting them in an unfamiliar land and about the darkness that exists in every man’s heart.

Grin does not want to be involved in the serious world of adults and the same is the case with his protagonists. As B. Scherr notices: “At an early age [Grej] rejects his parents’ ideals, turns inward, and begins to dream of the sea. Rather than mimic the adult world, he strives to maintain the purity and freshness of child’s outlook” [Scherr 1976: 395]. Assol’s father Longren (Лонгрен), has a similar approach. Longren and Grej “both fight for the ideals of childhood in opposition to the world of adults. […] They are both attracted by childhood, by the period when one does not yet know the sobering reality faced by adults and can still believe in fairy tales” [Scherr 1976: 394-395]. Grin’s narratives are, in a way, an escape from the gloom and depressing world in which we are all forced to live, to a magical land where dreams come true and anything is possible.

An important theme in both Conrad’s and Grin’s novellas is the image of ‘the other’. ‘The other’ is a person, which stands out from the rest of the society. In *Heart of Darkness*, in this position are the native people of Africa. They differ from Europeans in the colour of their skin, culture, and level of understanding of the world. White people do not treat them as equals or even as human beings. To them, natives resemble animals more than humans. That is why they abuse them in every possible way. This situation is the result of the lack of understanding between Europeans and Africans. The Europeans in Africa do not comprehend the behaviour of natives and, because of that, they perceive them as worse than themselves. Paying a bit more attention to the ‘brutes’ behaviour would make them understand that, in reality, the natives are not as different as the white people think.

In *Scarlet Sails*, all the protagonists are a bit different from the rest of their community. Grej does not want to live according to orthodox rules and he escapes from his comfortable life to start a career of a sailor, which gives him physical and spiritual freedom. Longren is a loner who does not like the company of other people. “Lonely wanderings, quiet, and isolation – these are what comfort Longren the most. The sea takes him away from people, allows him to forget the rest of the world, and thereby puts him at ease” [Scherr 1976: 394]. Such behaviour is badly received by other people. They cannot understand how one can live in such a way and they assume that something shady must be connected with it. Assol also appears strange to others. She believes in a dream that is very unlikely to come true. Because of that, the villagers laugh at her and perceive her as crazy. They judge her without even trying to talk with her and learn her point of view.

Both Conrad and Grin depict in their novellas the problem of evil. In *Heart of Darkness* the wicked ones are the arrivals to Africa. They are people who lost their
souls due to their obsession with ivory. They think only about getting rich and they will dispose of anyone who will stand on their way of achieving that goal. The Europeans abuse the black slaves and kill the natives without any reason. In *Scarlet Sails*, the antagonists are represented by the people of Kaperna who think only of themselves and do not bother to help those in need. Moreover, they treat badly the people they do not approve of, making their lives lonely and miserable.

Both narratives deal with the evil of the human heart. They show the darkness and ugliness of a soul concentrated only on itself. Additionally, Conrad and Grin show their readers that such a situation cannot be solved. The only way of dealing with such depravity is to run away from it. Marlow can escape from the darkness of Africa only by leaving the continent. The same situation takes place in *Scarlet Sails*.

The evil of Kaperna is simply left behind. There seems no point in trying to change or defeat society, for it is too powerful. The only solution here, and in such similar stories by Grin as “The Hearth of the Wilderness” (Serce pustyni, IV, 329-36), is to escape. The ship, on which one can roam at will, allows for the creation of a new way of life, in which freedom, adventure, and ultimately the innocence of childhood replace the confirming, dull, and cruel world of adults [Scherr 1976: 395].

Grin believes that kindness and understanding can make the world better, but he also shares Conrad’s opinion that wickedness cannot be eliminated from society and that the only way to liberate oneself from it is to move to a different place.

A significant difference between Conrad’s and Grin’s writings is the way they portray women. In *Heart of Darkness*, we do not get much of the feminine element. Female characters are present in the text but they are rather placed in the background and do not occupy a significant role in the story. They are like shadows that can interact with the world described by Conrad, and their influence can often be very powerful, but they come across as existing in a parallel dimension. In the narrative, they are described as follows: “It’s queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own, and there had never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset” [Conrad, *Heart...* : 18]. According to Conrad this is the way the things should be because, as Marlow points out: “They – the women, I mean – are out of it – should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse” [Conrad, *Heart...* : 69].

In *Scarlet Sails*, Grin makes a woman a protagonist. The figure of Assol is crucial to the story. The ‘miracle’ of the ship with scarlet sails is directly connected with her. Grin gives his reader very detailed information about Assol; he writes about the tragedy that happened to her mother, her life with her father, her problems with the people of Kaperna and about the origin of her dream. He also gives a deep description of her character. The girl is not self-sufficient, she cannot deal with problems by herself. She is not weak, though. She possesses a huge amount of inner strength, which makes it possible for her to believe in her dream despite all odds. Assol is the kind of woman that Grin admires and longs to have by his side.
For Conrad, every person is a separate being, which walks in solitude on the path of life. “We live, as we dream – alone” [Conrad, Heart...: 39], those words, uttered by Marlow in the course of the story, are the best embodiment of the author’s views on that subject. In Conrad’s opinion, it is impossible to fully understand another person. One cannot even entirely understand himself. There are things in every man’s heart whose existence he/she does not even suspect. Each one of us possesses, in his soul, a little piece of heaven and a little piece of hell. We simply do not know about their existence until we find ourselves in an extreme situation. One can never predict his reaction if such thing happens. The human heart is a mystery, a maze in which it is very easy to lose one’s way. If a person delves too deeply into it, he can witness a horror which can deprive him of his senses. For Conrad an individual is always alone and that is just the way life is.

Grin’s point of view is completely different. He believes that every person has a soul mate waiting for him or her somewhere in the world. In his opinion, people get lonely only because they sit idly in one place instead of setting off to search for their happiness. And, the best cure for lonesomeness is love. Grin knows that love has its price but the gains are much higher than losses. Love is the force that makes the world move on. It makes people kinder, more joyful, more human. For Grin, a world where one is alone would be unbearable. In his opinion, an answer for all the world’s problems is love because, as we can read in The Bible:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away [1 Corinthians 13:4-8].

As shown in this paper Conrad and Grin’s styles of writing greatly differ from one another. Firstly, Heart of Darkness is a very complex story, which enforces the reader to remain focused while reading it whereas Scarlet Sails is a simple narrative in the form of a fairy tale, straight forward and pleasant for the recipient. Secondly, the atmosphere of the works is diametrically different: if the first is dark and gloomy, the second is full of light and hope. Moreover, the writer’s depiction of women differs greatly. In Conrad’s work they exist in the background and in Grin’s become the protagonists. Additionally, Conrad claims that every human spends his life as he dreams – alone. Grin believes that everyone has a soul mate somewhere in the world waiting to be found.

Despite many differences, there are also common factors between these two writers’ narratives. The main shared and crucial feature is the central place in the stories occupied by the sea. What is more, both novellas contain autobiographical elements. Additionally, Heart of Darkness as well as Scarlet Sails begin from a dream of the main characters. And in both stories, the protagonists are confronted with evil, which cannot be defeated but only left behind and forgotten.
Bibliography

The Bible: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Summary

Joseph Conrad and Aleksander Grin – A Comparative Study
(Based on Novellas Heart of Darkness and Scarlet Sails)

The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast writings of two writers of Polish origin – Joseph Conrad and Aleksandr Grin. The study is based on novellas Heart of Darkness and Scarlet Sails. Though the styles and outlooks of the two authors greatly differ, some common features can be found in their narratives. The most representative of these shared elements is the motive of the sea. Both Conrad and Grin have a strong passion for the ocean. They perceive it as the embodiment of pureness and freedom. Therefore, it is not surprising that the sea occupies the central place in their works. Their protagonists are seamen who travel on their ships to unknown lands where they discover the world’s mysteries. What unites them is the love for wide-open space and the touch of salty breeze on their faces.

Key words: naturalistic prose, fairy tale, inner journey, psychical growth, the sea, freedom, light and darkness, evil, ‘the other’