

В образі Айка Маккасліна закладено магнетизм цієї ідеї. “Її суть він збагнув у ті дні, коли вичитав із плантаційних гробсбуків свого діда, батька і дядька прикру історію власного роду (IV розділ “Ведмеда”) Нетерпляче і стривожено торує Аїк дорогу до істини, збагнути яку йому дуже важко, саме тому хід його думок заплутаний, у чомусь навіть утаємничений, висловлюється важко, подекуди нелогічно. Його мучить проблема: “...скільки це чинників треба, щоб сформувалася людина?” [1, 235]. У свідомості Айка на багато з того, що відбулося і відбувається, нема пояснення. Він не може передати словами те, що відчуває, але до кінця не усвідомлює. Свої думки у матеріальному вираженні Аїк пов’язує з біблійними асоціаціями та християнською символікою. Герой, як і автор, переконаний, що це надає думкам більшої вагомості, логічності, послідовності, створює філософські узагальнення.

Проведено компаративне дослідження названих творів. Формою вони нагадують побудову вінка сонетів або ж стилістичну фігуру епанастрофу: останній акцент попереднього твору започатковує тему наступного.

Проникнення в глибину “простої”, на перший погляд, прози Фолкнера ускладнюється тим, що її символічний пласт не піддається тлумаченню поза контекстом, а водночас має загальнолюдське значення.

Проза українського автора також незвична й багатоаспектна. Для неї характерна строката колажність у поєднанні умовності, фантастичності з реалістичною достовірністю; філософська суперечка між героєм і оповідачем; шляхетна шевчуківська іронія, яка не принижує людину.

Типологічно близькими й водночас художньо оригінальними постають ситуації, в центрі яких – чекання, що визначає життя персонажів. Саме чекання героїв стає сенсом їхнього буття. Осягнення подібності та своєрідності таких ситуацій (ностальгія за минулим; життя, що нагадує броунівський рух, взаємопереплетення доль персонажів і водночас їх самотність), змістове наповнення сцен і внутрішня викінченість епізодів роблять ці сцени порівнюваними.

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THE POWER OF THE WORD- THE IMAGERY OF SHAMROCK TEA (CIARAN CARSON, *SHAMROCK TEA*)

The report is an attempt of interpretation of ambiguity of meaning of the title trope in *Shamrock Tea* by Ciaran Carson from Bealfast. *Shamrock Tea* —nominated

for the 2001 Booker Prize and winner of a Los Angeles Times Best Book of 2001— invites readers with the help of rich imagery to enter another world. The title metaphor helps them to puzzle over a Chinese puzzle of a text. It has a few meanings, the main are: 1) shamrock tea as the mythic hallucinogen promises a vision of a world in which everything is linked together, 2) shamrock tea as metaphor of Irish identity, 3) shamrock tea as metaphor of peace.

I am standing in an alcove of the library, scanning a book by the light of a mullioned window. (...) When I find the magic word I've been looking for, I utter it and close the book with a bang. A puff of dust hangs for a moment in the air and, as it sifts lazily downwards in the golden light, I realize the power of the word has already begun to take effect. [Carson;2001,169]

With this citation of *Shamrock Tea* (2001) by Ciaran Carson (1948) I begin my analysis and interpretation of this wonderful prose about the magic power of a word, the power of its meanings and functions. It is not quite accidentally that the author introduced a real figure, a well known Austrian-born British philosopher of language Ludwig Wittgenstein as a character into the textual world of his novel. Real Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein (26 April 1889 – 29 April 1951) was *one of the most original and challenging philosophical writers of the twentieth century* [Audi, 855], Bertrand Russell's brilliant student in 1911-1912, later on he held the professorship in philosophy at the same University of Cambridge from 1939 until 1947. In 1925 he worked as a gardener's assistant in the Hüsseldorf monastery near Vienna, living in the tool-shed for three months. In 1947 he retired, left Cambridge and moved to an isolated cottage on the west coast of Ireland, which now has become a place of Wittgenstein, visited by pilgrims /tourists from different countries. Fictional Wittgenstein worked as under-gardener at imaginative Jesuit Loyola House with The Ancient Order of Hibernians' traditions in the spring of 1949. With the passion of the real one he waged the war of words with Bertrand Russell on the item of the verbal and present rhinoceroses and unicorns, carried on a conversation with Irish narrators on the relationship of language to the world, the language and free will, putting emphasis on the fact that the meaning of a word is its use governed by rules, and a precise logical structure *may, however be hidden beneath the clothing of the grammatical appearance of the sentence* [Audi, 856]. Under the fictional agreement the narrator enters philosopher's consciousness apart from himself, muses on the traps of words and their hidden meanings, on business of truth and lies in order to come together with the character to a following conclusion: *Only in language could free will be exercised* [because] *By thy word thou shalt be justified, says Mark's Gospel* [Carson; 2001, 153]. He could leave his interlocutor with enigmatic and aphorismic maxim: *On the other hand, everything that can be said can be said clearly* [Carson; 2001, 81]¹. Wittgenstein's conclusion in above mentioned philosophical war of words and his idea of *language games* [Audi, 857] have become an artistic strategy of the author of *Shamrock Tea*: present and verbal rhinoceros,

¹ This is the first part of Wittgenstein's narration from the *Preface* to his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. The whole thought is as follows: *Its [language]whole meaning could be summed up somewhat as follows: What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent.* [Wittgenstein, 27]

unicorns, real and Carson's Wittgensteins, van Eycks, Wildes, Doyles in plural form—both from each pair *can be imagined, and described through language, which has the power of creating worlds beyond that of empirical observations* [Carson; 2001, 155]. Carson perfectly used this creative power of the word, continued Wittgenstein's ideas derived from both the Anglo-Saxon and Continental European tradition and with visionary clarity created vividly colorful, wonderful, wise, very catholic and very Irish world, which I attempt to understand and comment.

Ciaran Carson, the Irish poet, novelist, translator and musician, was born in 1948 in Belfast, Ireland, where he lives, to Gaelic-speaking, Catholic parents, fostering the traditions of the Irish language (He used to speak only Irish until he was four). He grew up in the troubled city of Belfast, and the city plays an important role in his work. As the editors of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* note: *His first language is Irish* [Seamus Dean, 1435]. Now he writes just about exclusively in English. He worked in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland from 1975 to 1998, in October 2003 he was appointed Professor of Poetry and Director of the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's University in Belfast. He is the author of eleven collections of poems, including *The Insular Celts* (1974), *The Irish for No* (1987), *Belfast Confetti* (1990), *The Twelfth of Never* (1998), *First Language* (1993), *Opera Et Cetera* (1996), *Breaking News* (2003), *For All We Know* (2008) (Poetry Book Society Choice; shortlisted for 2008 T.S. Eliot prize), *Collected Poems* (2008), *On the Night Watch* (2009) and *Until Before After* (2010)². His poetry is characterized by peculiar poetic energy and often explores the very nature of language, traditional Irish music and story-telling. His prose - *Last Night's Fun* (1996), *The Star Factory* (1997), *Fishing for Amber: A Long Story* (1999), *Shamrock Tea* (2001) *form a body of work unique in Irish literature* [Carson, cover]. The critic emphasizes: *The Star Factory evokes Belfast and memory, Last Night's Fun is an account of the world of Irish traditional music. Fishing for Amber is a poetic assembly of love and wisdom* (Welch, 57). A splendid disquisition on Irish history Carson presented in *The Pen Friend* (2010). He has been awarded the *Irish Times Literature Prize*, the *T.S. Eliot Prize* and *Yorkshire Post Prize*. *Shamrock Tea*, a novel, which was nominated for the 2001 *Booker Prize* and winner of a *Los Angeles Times Best Book of 2001*—invites readers to enter another world, the world of words and colours, books, paintings and their authors, Irish saints, which all together lead us into the very heart of the author's culture.

Carson is a master of a word: 101 chapters of the novel (may be an allusion to *One Thousand and One Nights*, often known in English as the *Arabian Nights*) have been titled mostly with the help of colorants, names of different shades of colours, from Paris Green and Dragon's Blood to Bible Black and Blank. The colours take turns in this multicoloured palette but the shades of the green (symbolizing Irish) and the red (symbolizing English)³ dominate. In this colourful world a young boy called

² The part of this information was taken from: <http://www.gallerypress.com/Authors/Ccarson/ccarson.html>, on line 27.03.2011.

³ I wrote about symbolism of these colours in: Oksana Weretiuk, „*The red and the green*” w *angielskiej i irlandzkiej powieści inicjacyjnej* [Weretiuk, 139-152].

Carson lives at the turn of 50s and 60s of the previous century. His uncle Celestine (named after St Celestine V, the pope of Rome, patron of book-binders), his cousin Berenice, his school friend Maeterlinck, the nephew of Maurice Maeterlinck, famous Belgian writer, accompany him. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Father Brown, Jan van Eyck, Maurice Maeterlinck, Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle with Sherlock Holmes, Gerard Manley Hopkins, a dozen of Irish saints⁴ with St Dymrna (the Irish patron saint of those who suffer from mental illnesses and neurological disorders, mental health professionals, runaways) in the front of them, are fellow citizens of this half-real and half-fantastic, kind and cruel, but wonderful, colourful world. Including a lot of references to real places, people and events, *Shamrock Tea* depicts imaginary characters and situations. The last sometimes are believable, very close to historical reality, but sometimes very different from it. Like a fairy Queen Scheherazade from Islamic Golden Age, the narrators (the first-person and the third-person as well) tell their delightful stories about real things and the things which we can only imagine. A magical herb, which *cleanses the doors of perception* [92] of both of them is shamrock, an ingredient of the titled Shamrock Tea.

It was as if the world till then had been marginally blurred, and now shimmered into focus. Every thing beheld its proper, self-sufficient space. I new I had never looked at anything properly before [94-95] – one of the first-person narrators, the above mentioned philosopher Wittgenstein, retells a story about the effect of a magic herbal mix he smoke and drunk. Shamrock Tea has many magical capacities, for example, it reaches its greatest level of activity, the capacity of torpedo of time, but only in cooperation with great European painting: another world can only be found by passing through the famous van Eyck painting *The Arnolfini Marriage* (see illustration 1) after a use of Shamrock Tea. The characters who bear this knowledge include a young boy named Carson, his uncle Celestine, his cousin Berenice, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Maurice Maeterlinck's nephew. A magical substance and the painting take them to van Eyck's epoch and even more previous epochs. Moreover, this magical substance allows the characters of this book to experience the world with visionary clarity and, to connect everything in this world.

The title *Shamrock Tea*, in its literal, denotative meaning, is a kind of tea, an aromatic beverage prepared from various plants somewhat resembling tea in properties (a descriptive epithet shows shamrock –why not?) by infusion with boiling water. The author with the help of narrators and characters repeatedly teases the reader with the recipe.

One formula involves Parsley, Poplar leaves and soot; another, Water Parsnip, Deadly Nightshade, Cinquefoil and bat's blood. The Thorn-apple, Datura stramonium, also known as Angels' Trumpets, or Devils' Trumpets, features largely in some recipes, [34]

⁴ Such selected very Irish 'company' of characters is explained by authentic Irish source, which said *on account of Ireland being that kind of country – long ago 'twas known as the Island of Saints and Scholars* [Lenihan Eddie & Green Carolyn Eve, 39].

the narrator notes. Other ingredients include Henbane, Aconite, Cocaine and Nicotine, Belladonna, Coltsfoot and *Sweet Flag* [216;229]. But the precise formula has been lost. The necessary quantity of the precious ingredients exists only in the past. Fortunately, the Catholic priests know where it can be found: in three oranges that make a still life in the Flemish masterpiece *The Arnolfini Portrait*. The first reference to the title phrase that constitutes the distinctive designation of the beverage comes from uncle Celestin. In Chapter 5, titled *Gallager's Blue*⁵ the narrator (and the hero, young Carson, at the same time) comments: *When he was not smoking 'Blues', Celestine would resort to similar herbal mix, which he jokingly referred to as 'Shamrock Tea'* [14] and presents the ingredients of the first: *Coltsfoot (White Rhubarb, which leaves are the basis of the British Herb Tobacco), Buckbean, Eyebright, Betony, Rosemary, Thyme, Lavender and Camomile flowers*. Just the first mention about it of a slightly ironic character, opens two additional contextual connotations, not devoid of emotion, attitude of the narrator. Firstly: it may be a herbal mix for smoking as well⁶, which already heralds its narcotic, hallucinogenic properties. Secondly: *sham rock* forms an opposition to *similar* but another, British *Gallaher's*, and in this way gently announces about its subjective cultural, Irish association and imagery function.

In mental sense, *An image is the reproduction in the mind of a sensation produced by a physical perception. Thus, if a man's eye perceives a certain colour, he will register an image of that colour in his mind – 'image'* [Preminger, Warnke, Hardison, 92]. The first colour of the main narrator's perception (Carson junior) is green. He transfers this image of green to his listener/reader. A modest shamrock and a delightful dress of Mrs Arnolfini from the famous van Eyck painting from London National Gallery, which is the next component, that creates the contents of the novel, beside Shamrock Tea, are of the same colour – green, and both create the image, even the imagery of greenness in reader's mind. But my interest concentrates not so much on psychomental side of perception of the images, as on their literary usage, so called *the imagery-bearing language itself and its significations*⁷. It is not accidental that Chapter 1 was titled *Paris Green. Green is ambiguous*, the narrator explains. *–It is a colour of aliens, or of creatures dwell in the underworld...[2]*. The greenness of the portrait in literary usage will serve the three characters as the door

⁵ Maybe, it is an allusion, a brief indirect homonym reference, to Rory Gallagher's, generous musical collection *A Blue Day For The Blues* (1995). Rory Gallagher (1948 -1995) was a well known Irish guitarist, blues-rock multi-instrumentalist, songwriter, and bandleader, distinguished by his charismatic performances and dedication to his craft. Ciaran Carson, a gifted musician and specialist on Irish music, presents one of the narrators, uncle Celestin, an Irish nationalist, in the context of blue colour.

⁶ Tea. 4a. Alcoholic liquor, slang; b. marijuana, spec. marijuana brewed in hot water to make a drink, slang [Brown, 3231].

⁷ In opinion of the editors of *The Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms*, various definitions of imagery can be reduced essentially to three: ("mental i."), (2)i. as "figures of speech", and (3) i. and image patterns as the embodiment of "symbolic vision" or of "nondiscursive truth". Interest in the first is focused on what happens in the reader's mind (effect), while in the second and third it is focused on the imagery-bearing language itself and its significations (cause) [Preminger, 93].

opened to other worlds. The narrator (Carson junior) does not develop its another, subjective connotative meaning, but Paris Green or Emerald Green (a shade of green) predicts it: it's obvious though, Ireland is sometimes referred to as the *Emerald Isle* due to its lush greenery.

The content of Shamrock Tea is very Irish: Oscar Wilde's Irish mother had a recipe (whose precise formula after her death has been lost) – *for an infusion of herbs, given to her by an old woman of the North, which would make anyone who drank it see the world through rose-tinted glasses, or rather green-tinted glasses, for it was called Shamrock Tea [221]*. The elder narrator (the voice of the narrator is clearly that of Ciaran Carson himself) with the help of shamrock substance emphasizes the Irish identity of Author Conan Doyle and Oscar Wilde and more strictly – the Irish identity of their works: *Cocaine and nicotine (...) are merely substitutes for Shamrock Tea, whose use was known to both authors: indeed, it inspired much of their finest work. [216]*. 'Real' Arthur Conan Doyle was born on 22 May 1859 in Edinburg, Scotland. His father was of Irish descent, and his mother, born Mary Foley was Irish⁸. Conan Doyle was sent to the Roman Catholic Jesuit preparatory school Hodder Place, Stonyhurst at the age of nine, a few years younger than the hero and the narrator of *Shamrock Tea* to Loyola House. 'Real' Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, an Irish writer and poet, was born on 16 October 1854 in Dublin from Irish parents. His mother, Jane Wilde, wrote poetry for the revolutionary Young Irelands in 1848 and was a life-long Irish nationalist. She read the Young Irelanders' poetry to Oscar Wilde, inculcating a love of these poets, and Irish spirit in her son – that is why her lost recipe of Shamrock Tea has a function of allusion to Irish nationalist idea. The first of these two "greatnesses", Scottish writer of Irish descent and Catholic education Arthur Conan Doyle, to whose style Carson's work is a gentle parody, drank a cup of *A greenish substance boiled by Br [brother] Yates, one of the under-gardeners in fictitious Loyola. The elder narrator, uncle Carson observes: Doyle sipped gingerly at first: the taste was faintly acerbic, the scent like that of burning hay[224]*. Furthermore, after tasting

Doyle attempted to isolate its ingredients. He had supposed the appellation of 'shamrock' to be purely metaphorical and was therefore surprised to find traces of that herb in the mix. (...) Also present in Shamrock Tea were Aconite, Belladonna, as well as elements that Doyle was unable to identify. [229]

Thus, Doyle sensed and smelled the literal and figurative sense of Shamrock Tea like everybody from this fictional Irish community (including an English poet, a master of imagery, and Jesuit Priest Gerard Manley Hopkins) and not only they did so – everybody who keeps shamrock spirit, the Irishness, since **shamrock** (♣) is a symbol of Ireland⁹. That is why, a Polish translator of this book, Maciej Świerkocki, changed the title in Polish version into *Irish Tea* [Carson; 2007], emphasizing its patriotic metaphorical meaning. In my opinion he brought closer, and at the same

⁸ In English literature encyclopedias the information about Doyle's Irish roots is absent. See for example: *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. by Margaret Drabble, Oxford University Press 1995, p. 292.

⁹ It is a three-leafed old white clover. The name *shamrock* is derived from Irish, Gael *seamróg*, which is the diminutive version of the Irish word for clover (*seamair*). *A plant with trifoliate leaves, said to have been used by St. Patrick to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity, and hence adopted as a national emblem of Ireland.* [Brown, 2810]

time, made a rich imagery palette of the title phrase narrower. Polysemic, contextual meanings of these title phrases have large scale, fulfill several functions. Shamrock Tea is both a symbol and a metaphor, and an allusion as well, the main constructive element, the keystone of the novel's imagery. By using the image of Shamrock Tea as a metaphor for the ways of passing on the spirit of Irishness, nationalism, the feeling of ethnic identity and aspiration for freedom to the Irish, the author appears to underscore the role of catholic fate, Irish writing and parents' word in upbringing these features in young generation. Shamrock Tea, thanks to its first component, becomes also a symbol of Irish identity – lost but only partially, but still wanted and rebuilt. It is not accidental that Irish nationalist, uncle Carson, hides some small amount of original Shamrock Tea in a special cubby-hole built into the wall behind *The Arnolfini Portrait*. Once his daughter found,

Inside was a clay pipe with a thimble-sizes bowl, and an emerald enamel snuff-box inlaid with a harp and shamrock motif. (...) The inside of the lid was engraved

A.O.H.

Shamrock Tea

A.M.D.G. [32]

The enigmatic initials mean the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), an Irish Catholic organization which in 1565 protected Roman Catholics against the religious persecution by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Thomas Radclyffe and in 19th and 20th centuries it became a vehicle for Irish nationalism¹⁰. In its turn the harp has been used as a political symbol of Ireland for centuries. The harp is in the Irish coins, in Irish history and Gaelic mythology. Kathleen Ni Houlihan (*Caitlín Ní Uallacháin*, literally, "Kathleen, daughter of Houlihan"), whose image is a mythical symbol and emblem of Irish nationalism found in literature and art, is often shown with harp, representing in this way Ireland as a personified woman. (See a portrait of **Lady Lavery**, 3).

Thus, the field of meanings of Shamrock Tea becomes wider, there is 'threading' of different contextual strata, sometimes presenting contrary meanings. Nationalism is the main ingredient of Shamrock Tea, but in its content it never becomes a chauvinism. The political situation in Northern Ireland needed such ideology,

a doctrine which holds that national identity ought to be accorded political recognition, that nations have rights (to autonomy, self-determination, and for sovereignty), and that the members of the nation ought to band together in defense of those rights. [Honderich, 603]

Nationalism can be distinguished from, though it is often in practice indistinct from, chauvinism, the authors of *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* define. The fictional priests wish to connect Irish nationalism, revival of Northern Ireland with freedom, liberty, brotherhood and peace, and of cause, with the unity of Catholics and Protestants [249]. They have a *beautiful* plan [236] to heal Northern Ireland's

¹⁰ (AOH), the largest Irish-American benevolent society, probably came from the Irish secret society tradition. (...) In Ireland and Great Britain it was small unit after 1900, Catholic and broadly nationalist, it shared with the Christian Brothers the slogan 'Fith and Fartherland'. [Connolly, 13]

religious divisions by spiking Belfast's water supply with Shamrock Tea. This great mission can fulfill the youngest generation – Carson, Berenice and Maeterlinck - only by sipping Shamrock Tea and slipping into the world of Jan van Eyck's double portrait. They are ready, with their free will, to win freedom for Ireland. *We are the Silent Three (...)* *Three is Christ between two thieves. We are three leaves of the trefoil. We three are Shamrock Tea.* [240] With these words, delivered by Berenice, the metaphorical meaning of the title phrase grows in strength, referring once more time (but not the last!) to another contextual shade of the green¹¹ – entirely in accordance with philosopher Wittgenstein's maxims: *Uttering a word is like striking a note on the keyboard of the imagination.* (§ 6); *One can read that in order to get to know how a particular word functions, we have to look closer at its usage.* (§ 340 DF); *Understanding is an ability, the mastery of the technique of using an expression.* [Honderich, 913-914] He claimed that there is no a mysterious being called “meaning” in a philosophical sense. Language is a technique, which gives us the possibility to communicate. To know what the words mean, we have to possess this technique and look at the context, in which they are placed. Rich contextual shades of Shamrock Tea disclose a magical power of the Word, the word told in his Green Book by Ciaran Carson.

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¹¹ Neal Alexander names Carson's Shamrock Tea 'Green book': Carson's interest in the clashing symbols, narratives, and myths of Unionist and Nationalist cultures in Ireland is pursued (...)in his prose texts, *Fishing for Amber* and *Shamrock Tea*, which might be thought of as his 'Orange' and 'Green' books respectively [Neal, 9].

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Jan van Eyck , *The Arnolfini Marriage* (1434)

