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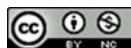
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**THE PECULIARITIES OF THE ARCHETYPE OF
HOME-GARDEN IN THE PUBLICISTIC WORK *THE
GARDEN AGAINST TIME: IN SEARCH OF A COMMON
PARADISE* BY O. LAING**

Abstract

As the title implies, the article examines the features of the archetype of home in the publicistic work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* by O. Laing. The purpose of the article is to identify the archetype of home-garden and determine its interpretation, to explore the individual-authorial content of this archetype and the use of artistic means to embody it in the publicistic work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* by O. Laing. This object of research has been chosen because it is through it that one can comprehend the philosophical aspect of the work, understand the writer's worldview, consider the correlation of the metaphors "home-garden", "home-garden-world", "garden-Eden-home" and determine their meaning in the work. The comprehensive research methodology has been used in the work: the synthesis of the comparative historical method, holistic analysis, elements of mythopoetic and hermeneutic methods. The "close reading" technique is taken into account. It is proved that despite the fact that the work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* by O. Laing is a publicistic work, the archetype of home does not lose its significance in it, but on the contrary, its general cultural and universal character is emphasized. The article analyzes the new content of the archetype of home and, its model, such as "home-

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garden”, “home-garden-world”, and “garden-Eden-home”. It is revealed that for the author the garden is primarily a symbol of home. The home-garden is a place where a person feels protected, a place where one can retire, reflect, dream, work. It is especially worth noting that, revealing utopias and dreams of Eden, the author proves the idea that through creative work and a humane attitude to the world, which is his great home, a person can realize these dreams; hence, the metaphor “garden-Eden-home” appears. The metaphor “home-garden-world” is analyzed, which in a philosophical sense implies a harmonious unity of external protection and mutual understanding of its inhabitants. It is worth emphasizing that Laing, using the archetype of the home-garden, touched on the most painful points of modernity (the Second World War, the war in Ukraine, coronavirus pandemic, environmental pollution). It is proven that the archetype of home, which the author associates with the garden, in a broad sense personifies Cosmos, that is, a concept opposed to Chaos. And this meaning in the analyzed publicistic work is unchanged in comparison with the interpretation of the archetype of home in fiction. And the artistic means used by the author are one of the proofs that O. Laing’s work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* is an example of literary journalism and at the same time they work for a deeper disclosure of the archetypes reflected in the text.

Keywords: *archetype, motif, image, home, garden, Eden, metaphor, existential plan, myth.*

Н. Бондар. ОСОБЛИВОСТІ АРХЕТИПУ ДОМУ-САДУ В ПУБЛІЦИСТИЧНОМУ ТВОРІ О. ЛЕНГ “САД ПРОТИ ЧАСУ. У ПОШУКАХ РАЮ ДЛЯ ВСІХ”

Анотація

Згідно з назвою, у статті розглядаються особливості архетипу дому-саду в публіцистичному творі О. Ленг “Сад проти часу. У пошуках раю для всіх”. Мета статті – виявити архетип дому-саду та визначити його інтерпретацію, дослідити індивідуально-авторський зміст цього архетипу та використання художніх засобів для його втілення у публіцистичному творі Олівії Ленг “Сад проти часу. У пошуках раю для всіх”. Цей об’єкт дослідження обраний тому, що саме через нього можна досягнути філософський аспект твору, зрозуміти світогляд письменника, розглянути співвідношення метафор “дім-сад”, “дім-сад-світ”, “сад-Едем-дім” та визначити їхнє значення у творі. У роботі використано комплексну дослідницьку методологію: синтез порівняльно-історичного методу, цілісного аналізу, елементи герменевтичного методу. Враховувалася також техніка “close reading”. Доведено, що попри те, що твір О. Ленг “Сад проти часу. У пошуках раю для всіх” публіцистичний, архетип будинку не втрачає своєї значущості у ньому, а навпаки, автором підкреслюється його загальнокультурний та загальнолюдський характер. У статті аналізується нове наповнення архетипу дому та його моделі: “дім-сад”, “дім-сад-світ”, “сад-Едем-дім”. Виявлено, що для автора сад – це, насамперед, символ дому. Дім-сад – це місце, де людина почувається захищеною, місце, де можна усамітнитися, розмірковувати, мріяти, працювати. Особливо варто зазначити, що розкриваючи утопії та мрії про Едем, автор доводить думку, що творчою працею і гуманним ставленням до світу, який є його великим домом, людина може втілити в реальність ці мрії; звідси виникає метафора “сад-Едем-дім”. Проаналізовано метафора “дім-сад-світ”, яка у філософському сенсі

передбачає гармонійну єдність зовнішньої захищеності та взаємного розуміння його мешканців. Варто підкреслити, що Ленг за допомогою архетипу дому-саду торкнулася найбільш чутливих точок сучасності (Друга світова війна, війна в Україні, пандемія коронавірусу, забруднення навколишнього середовища). Доведено, що архетип дому, що асоціюється у автора з садом, у широкому сенсі уособлює Космос, тобто поняття, протиставлене Хаосу. А застосовувані автором художні засоби є одним із доказів того, що твір О. Ленг “Сад проти часу. У пошуках раю для всіх” є прикладом художньої публіцистики та водночас вони працюють на більш глибоке розкриття відображених в тексті архетипів.

Ключові слова: архетип, мотив, образ, дім, сад, Едем, метафора, екзистенціальний план, міф.

Introduction

Olivia Lang is an English writer, critic, essayist, the winner of the Wyndham-Campbell Literary Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, the author of five works of nonfiction, the fiction novel *Crudo*, and a regular contributor to *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The New Statesman*, and *The New York Times*.

In 2024 her next publicistic work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a common Paradise* was published, which attracted the attention of many critics [Cammell, 2024; Cassidy, 2024; Cheshire, 2024; Cooke, 2024; Ferri, 2024; Hamya, 2024; Hollis, 2024; Hughes, 2024; Kadue, 2024; Kapur, 2024; Moorhouse, 2024; Norton, 2024; Rickards, 2024; Scott, 2024; Shulman, 2024; Torre, 2024]. In this book, as in the previous ones, Olivia Laing uses her favorite technique – starting from a personal situation, she reflects on history, literature and culture.

In the article “The Garden Against Time by Olivia Laing review – earthly paradise” Kathryn Hughes gives her assessment of this method: “In this book Laing perfects the methodology she deployed so skillfully in her much-loved *The Lonely City* and more recent *Everybody*, of embedding biographical detours to advance rather than merely illustrate her central argument. Concentrating on the life and work of the “peasant poet” John Clare, for instance, allows her to show the devastating psychological effects of being thrown off your ancestral lands. Reading *Paradise Lost* gives her clues as to the scale of early colonial looting (Milton’s Eden is full of jetsam from the West Indies as if “washed ashore after a shipwreck”)”. Another critic, Jessica Ferri, notes that “If all this sounds a little much, a constant flurry of references and digressions, it is. Laing is wonderfully free in her associations and does not cater to conventional expectations” [Ferri, 2024]. A lot of literary scholars define the genre of Laing’s work as a memoir: “First and foremost, this book is a memoir, in which she describes her restoration of the garden attached to the house in Suffolk to which she moved in 2020, as Covid-19 raged on ...” [Cooke, 2024], ““*The Garden Against Time*” is partly a memoir” [Scott, 2024], “Through quotation and thorough accounting of her work in the garden, the book becomes something like a florist’s memoir or a gardener’s companion rendered in gorgeous prose” [Cheshire, 2024], “This book – part memoir, part polemic, part garden history and part garden-making – is the outcome” [Shulman, 2024], “With *The Garden Against Time*, Olivia Laing has once again produced a work that is part memoir, part landscape history, part literary criticism and part physical journey” [Cammell, 2024]. But Olivia Laing’s book is not just a memoir, it is a multi-layered work, in the form of a stream of consciousness: Laing and her husband buy an abandoned garden

during the Covid; and while restoring it, she reflects on Paradise and Eden, freedom and exploitation, wealth and slavery, time and nature, war and peace. As noted in the article “Nonfiction Review: Olivia Laing’s *THE GARDEN AGAINST TIME: IN SEARCH OF A COMMON PARADISE*”, Laing joins her opinions and ideas with the reflections on the garden of “her gardener mentors and guides, Virgils to her Dante. She writes about Milton, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*, Sebald’s *Rings of Saturn* (Laing is eclectic, doesn’t feel compelled to tick the literary-survey boxes), John Clare, Andrew Marvell, Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, Morris’s *News From Nowhere*, Derek Jarman’s *Modern Nature*, and gardeners proper, from Capability Brown to Mark Romary, who designed her cottage’s garden, and her father who taught her about gardening as one of the givens of a life lived” [Norton, 2024]. Laing regards a garden as “a repository of natural beauty, as democratic ideal, as writerly inspiration” [Scott, 2024], “a refuge against capitalization and privatization, a place of pure wildness and erotic naturalness” [Ferri, 2024], “a space where we can experience a “helical” time, a place and space of imagination and the tangible, not eternal, but “other” to our technologically-saturated and -dominated time” [Norton, 2024], “a site of both destruction and hope” [Moorhouse, 2024], “a place of magical happenings” [Kapur, 2024], and at the same time “for Laing, a garden is a protective space, a place for making herself at home” [Ferri, 2024]. In *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a common Paradise* the garden acts as an archetype of home, an image of Eden, a model of the world. This is not a fiction work, but, nevertheless, archetypes do not lose their significance, which emphasizes their general cultural and universal character. The examination of the archetype of home,

embodied in the image of a garden, and its refraction in literary journalism determines the novelty of the article.

The purpose of the article is to identify the archetype of home-garden and determine its interpretation, to explore the individual-authorial content of this archetype and the use of artistic means to embody it in the publicistic work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* by O. Laing. This object of research has been chosen because it is through it that one can comprehend the philosophical aspect of the work, understand the writer's worldview, consider the correlation of the metaphors "home-garden", "home-garden-world", "garden-Eden-home" and determine their meaning in the work.

Methodology and Methods

The comprehensive research methodology has been used in the work: the synthesis of the comparative historical method, holistic analysis, elements of mythopoetic and hermeneutic methods. The "close reading" technique is taken into account.

History of the Research

According to Glushko O.K., the term and in general such a phenomenon as literary journalism should be comprehensively studied by both literary theorists and practitioners [Glushko, 2008]. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon is also interesting to literary scholars, since "the term "literary journalism" suggests ties to fiction and journalism" [Nordquist, 2020]. Richard Nordquist gives the following definition of this term: "Literary journalism is a form of nonfiction that combines factual reporting with narrative techniques and stylistic strategies traditionally associated with fiction. This form of writing can also be called narrative journalism or new journalism" [Nordquist, 2020]. He also adds that sometimes another name is encountered: "creative nonfiction". Unlike fiction, in literary journalism the people and events are real, and the focus of the

narrative is on specific socio-political and philosophical issues of a given time and society. In literary journalism, expressively colored vocabulary and artistic means such as epithets, metaphors, comparisons, hyperboles, etc. are used. The work of *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* by O. Laing is an example of literary journalism.

Many researchers (literary scholars, philosophers, psychologists) have studied and continue to study archetypes. Undoubtedly, literary archetypes come first, as they are the “fundamental “building blocks” of storytelling” [“Literary Archetypes”]. They are also found in literary journalism. Home and garden are fundamental archetypes on both the psychological and general cultural levels. Home as a factor of protection and of settled life is associated with the idea of creation and stability. When considering the archetype of home, it is important to take into account certain national characteristics. The English traditionally considered their home a fortress, which gave them a sense of stability and confidence. The archetype of home in English-language literature was filled with new meaning at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when Victorian values were destroyed, including the traditional idea of the English home-fortress (J. Meredith, B. Shaw, J. Galsworthy, E.M. Forster, etc.). For B. Shaw (*Heartbreak House*), for example, it is important that it is not just Shotover’s private English house that is collapsing, but the imperial home of England – at the state and axiological levels. Of particular interest is the literary journalism of the 21st century, when the author consciously uses archetypal structures as a source of new, quite relevant meanings. It is important to note O. Laing’s aspiration to outline the problems of the widest range (philosophical, socio-political, etc.), and to include such archetypes as home and garden in the complex context of

existence. It is this approach that gives the author the opportunity to reflect the entire complexity of socio-political processes and ethical issues of modern times. The image of home-garden in O. Laing's work is "fed" by archetypal motifs and provides interesting approaches to its metaphorization. According to J. E. Cirlot, "mystics have always traditionally considered the feminine aspect of the universe as a chest, a house or a wall, as well as an enclosed garden" [Cirlot, 1971, p. 153-154]. Thus, both home and a garden are closed spaces and can be considered as a universe. As P. Yamchuk asserts, in the Ukrainian worldview, the garden and gardening have been treated as a model of the Universe since the times of myth-making [Yamchuk, 2013]. However, there is also a connection with Paradise (the first home of people), therefore the article examines the "home-garden-world" model. J. E. Cirlot considers that "the garden is the place where Nature is subdued, ordered, selected and enclosed" [Cirlot, 1971, p. 115]. The article "Literary Archetypes" offers the following definition of a garden: "The Garden – In ancient times, across many cultures (Sumeria, Greece, Rome) the garden was seen as a place of earthly delights. Often stories about young love had couples meeting in gardens. Gardens came to symbolize love, fertility and the female body – until the spread of Christianity. With increased teachings of the Bible the "garden" (Eden) became a symbol of an eternal, forbidden paradise" ["Literary Archetypes"]. Therefore, the garden can be considered as both a paradise and home.

Results and Discussions

In *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* Olivia Laing tells the story of buying an old house with a garden in Suffolk during the coronavirus pandemic. It was a difficult time to move around, socialize and live according to

one's habits, and many people turned to gardening as a way to escape a stressful situation. At first glance, it may seem that Laing's work is "an account of restoring the garden to its glory days" [Hughes, 2024], and indeed, "the restoration of that garden provides the structure for the book" [Ferri, 2024], however, the author, restoring her garden, reflects on many topics: about Paradise – Eden, the connection of gardens with history and culture, with politics and exploitation. She quotes a lot of prose writers and poets (John Milton, Rose Macaulay, Andrew Marvell, John Clare and others), enters into polemics with them. The author opposes the garden to war, time, destruction, and even death. But above all, for Olivia Laing, the garden is a symbol of home. Some critics have noted this: "For Laing, a garden is a protective space, a place for making herself at home" [Ferri, 2024], "Gardens are personal; a place to find a sense of home" [Cassidy, 2024], "Honestly, they take your breath away when you realize that she is correct and humans are made to cultivate their gardens as part of their home, their health and their structure – rooting them in the ground in a way" [Kapur, 2024].

So, for Laing, the garden is an organic part of home, serving as a place of power, protection and life. It is not without reason that the author has associations with the Garden of Eden which was home to Adam and Eve before the Fall.

The author starts her story by describing a dream: "I dream that I am in a house, and discover a door I didn't know was there. It opens into an unexpected garden, and for a weightless moment I find myself inhabiting new territory, flush with potential" [Laing, 2024, p.9]. Already at Laing's subconscious level, home and garden act as one indivisible whole. She often sees this dream, dreaming of having her own home-garden, and wherever she rented a house, she always

planted a small garden, which made her not only “feel permanent”, but also became, as she claims, “a way of making myself at home” [Laing, 2024, p.10]. The absence of a garden does not allow the author to feel coziness, comfort and fullness of existence. Laing’s entire life was associated with housing problems, but her permanent home remained her father’s house, surrounded by a garden that he created “from scratch” and which was his world. It was her father who inculcated in his daughter a love of gardening. The author tells us that she acquired her own house very late. Together with her husband, she bought a house with a garden that once belonged to the famous landscape architect Mark Rumary. Restoring the garden, Laing reflects on well-kept and neglected gardens. She compares a neglected garden to an uninhabited and frightening house: “a garden that’s too neglected can be uncanny, disturbing in the same way that an abandoned house is disturbing” [Laing, 2024, p.24]. In order to reinforce the negative connotation of a neglected garden, Laing uses such epithets as “uncanny”, “abandoned”, “untended”. The author ponders over the image of the abandoned garden in literature, linking it to a metaphor of a larger scale of desolation, the unkempt garden-England, that it is possible, considering the association “home – garden”, can also be considered as home-England. Laing recalls a servant from “*Richard II* who refuses to bind up the ‘dangling apricocks’ in the Duke of York’s garden, asking why he should weed an enclosed plot when the garden of England is so unkempt” [Laing, 2024, p.24]. Therefore, the image of a garden in which everything is rotten and infected reflects the condition of the state. She also finds a similar atmosphere of anxiety in Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*: “it can turn on an instant into something more desolate, even deathly. ‘One feather, and the house, sinking, falling, would have turned and pitched

downwards to the depths of darkness.’ Then the house itself would shatter, its broken parts buried beneath a coverlet of hemlock and briars. Those lines came back to me often in the early weeks. It was all so in” [Laing, 2024, p.24]. Thus, Laing gradually moves to a more global metaphor – a garden-world, or home-world, which is now in danger, and one wrong action (or inaction of the gardener) can lead to its destruction. Home has always been the space of a person’s life, to which he constantly returned, without leaving it, at least mentally, until death, and it is a sign of earthly existence. Home-world in the broad, philosophical sense of the word presupposes a harmonious unity of external security and mutual understanding of its inhabitants. However, the metaphor “the world is home” is complicated by the inclusion of historical and existential plans. As a result of social upheavals (the Second World War, the war in Ukraine, coronavirus pandemic, environmental pollution), the stable mythological signs of the archetype of home are eroded (protection, patronage of higher domestic beings, etc. disappear). Home-world is on the verge of destruction, and its condition depends only on the people themselves.

Literary journalism is full of expressive vocabulary and tropes. Thus, reflecting on the coronavirus pandemic, Laing describes the state of people and the world in general as follows: “And so the world, which had lately moved so fast, simply stopped on its heels” [Laing, 2024, p.12]. The author uses personification here, comparing the world to a person and applying a well-known phraseological unit to it. The world “stopped on its heels,” coming close to an epidemic catastrophe, came to its senses in the face of the threat of extinction. It is not without reason that the author recalls the words of Milton, who writes: “the Earth hanging suspended from a chain” [Laing, 2024, p.12]. In the second chapter, Olivia Laing again returns to

the theme of the fragility of the Earth and the real threat to its existence: “At last Satan glimpses the Earth, in that loveliest of all Milton’s images, fast by Heaven like a pendant in a golden chain, as large as the smallest star glimpsed beside the Moon” [Laing, 2024, p.36]. Here she compares the Earth to a “pendant”, the “smallest star”, using, in addition to metaphor and comparison, litotes (the whole planet is a small pendant) to emphasize the fragility of our planet, which can be destroyed by people themselves. And only people can save our world if they treat it with care, decorating it with flowers and turning it into a real home-garden-paradise, where you can truly enjoy life in peace. It is not surprising that the author returns to this topic all the time: she is concerned about the future of the planet. And she tries to convey to the reader the idea that people are responsible not only for themselves personally, but also for their home – the universe that they leave as an inheritance to many generations. Thus, Laing through the archetype of home-garden illuminates the most painful and topical issues of life, she connects it with her thoughts on socio-political events in England and in the world.

The garden that Laing bought is configured like a house, with walls and arches, and the author seems to lead the reader from one room to another: “The entire plot was just under a third of an acre, but it felt much larger because it had been so cunningly divided with hedges, one of beech and one of yew, so that you could never see the entirety at once, but continually passed through doorways and arches into secretive new spaces” [Laing, 2024, p.11]. And most importantly, in the wall there is that mysterious door from her dreams about the garden: “There was a curved door in this wall too, padlocked and painted a peeling duck-egg blue. ... though to me it echoed the enigmatic door in my garden dreams” [Laing, 2024, p.11-12]. Reflecting

on the life of the “peasant poet” John Clare, the author mentions that by “knowledge” he means familiar soil, the ground, and that it, in its turn, is home: “knowledge is itself a function of place, in which one’s capacity to make sense of things, to generate understanding, is a product of being in some way rooted and at home, and that, even more strikingly, this sense of home is reciprocal: that one doesn’t just know, but is known” [Laing, 2024, p.70]. His thoughts resonate in her soul, and while working in the garden, she finds unity with this place: even when going to bed, Laing mentally wanders around the garden, thinking about what tree or flower she will plant in this or that place. Thus, the garden becomes home in which the author spends all his time, restoring it and even mentally not parting with it.

The first level of the idea of home itself, which is absorbed into the whole archetypal “domestic” complex, is protection from external intrusions. Laing insists that gardens should be accessible to all, but at the same time she also affirms that a garden is a place where a person feels protected, a place where one can retire, reflect, dream and work: “We were poised on the hinge of history, living in the era of mass extinction, the catastrophic endgame of humanity’s relationship with the natural world. The garden could be a refuge from that, a place of change...” [Laing, 2024, p.18-19]. The garden protects her from the panic associated with the pandemic and becomes a place of consolation: “As the terrors of the plague year grew, this half-imaginary, half-real garden became a place of solace to me, a zone apart that I could enter at will, even though I’d only seen it once”, “But the lockdown also made it painfully apparent that the garden, that supposed sanctuary from the world” [Laing, 2024, p.15]. In her reflections, she comes to the conclusion that the garden always was a refuge from the outside world in

difficult times: “It’s also a place of rebel outposts and dreams of a communal paradise, like that of the Diggers, the breakaway sect of the English Civil War, who made the still-radical assertion that the earth is a ‘common treasury’, imagine, for everyone to share” [Laing, 2024, p.18]. Reflecting further on this topic, the author believes that during war, the garden provides moral support and literally becomes a refuge: “it is enough in wartime for a garden simply to exist”, “A war garden provides a kind of sustenance even when it is not given over to cabbages and carrots, to allotment plots and Dig for Victory. And sometimes a garden can be a literal refuge, too. Its gates can be opened; it can turn from a private to a shared sanctuary” [Laing, 2024, p.169-170]. Laing recalls the remarkable aristocratic garden of Iris and Antonio Origo in Italy, which she once visited. She read a diary that was buried in the same garden, which describes the tragic wartime events that shook the area during the Second World War, as well as the use of the garden as a hiding place for escaped prisoners, which is “a testament to the many different purposes a garden can serve” [Laing, 2024, p. 170]. In telling the story of the garden, Laing describes the war years in detail when the Origos hid British prisoners of war in the garden. It was dangerous, because according to German orders, anyone who helped to hide members of the enemy troops faced death. But the Origos and other mezzadri farmers were able to save about a thousand people.: “By the end of the year a thousand people were living in the chestnut woods around La Foce, depending for their survival on the Origos and the mezzadri farmers” [Laing, 2024, p. 178]. Thus, home-garden becomes a refuge, fulfilling its protective function.

Olivia Laing emphasizes that the garden is always connected not only with life, but also with death: “The garden

was always engaged in a dance with death” [Laing, 2024, p. 194]. The garden is presented here not only as a biologically living organism, but it is humanized. In this way, the author conveys her attitude to the garden as the greatest value and achieves maximum understanding and empathy from the reader. But the garden is involved in a dance with death – this is tragic, because the leader in such a dance, by definition, will be death. Hence the maximum drama of the narrative and the non-declarative reminder of humanity’s responsibility for the fate of its garden, the assertion of the need not just to worry, but to take certain actions in order to tear the living and beautiful garden from the deadly embrace.

Undoubtedly, the word “garden” immediately evokes associations with the “Garden of Eden”, the place where people first lived, where they led a carefree life before the Fall. And, therefore, the first home for man. The second chapter of Laing’s work is called “Paradise”. In it, the author talks about the beginning of her restoration work in the garden and reflects on the emergence of the first paradise gardens, the meaning of the word “Paradise”, and the myth of the creation of the world. She comes to the conclusion that the garden is primary, and then the heavens arose: “I’d once heard it called the English heresy, that paradise can be located in a garden, but actually it was where the rumour of paradise was founded” [Laing, 2024, p. 29]. In addition, according to Laing, her first encounter with the idea of Paradise was connected with an actual garden. In childhood, she was brought up in a monastery in Buckinghamshire, which was located in extensive gardens, including an orchard: “There was an orchard behind the tennis courts, and here and there you’d come across statues of Jesus and Francis of Assisi, their concrete palms upturned” [Laing, 2024, p. 29]. Young Olivia disliked Bible stories because of their moralizing and cruelty, but she

loved the second chapter of the creation of the world from the Book of Genesis, which tells how plants are initially underground, God creates man, and then plants a garden. The Garden of Eden can have many aspects: “Hell below, paradise above, and somewhere off to the side the Garden of Eden, which seemed to exist in many forms, including the convent garden itself, secluded and ruled over by a mysterious hierarchy of spiritual beings, as well as every transformational garden of my childhood reading, from Greene Knowe and Misselthwaite Manor to the midnight garden where Tom sports in the tall trees” [Laing, 2024, p. 30]. Adam and Eve broke God’s covenant; they tasted the forbidden fruit and were driven out of their home-garden. Olivia Laing found herself in the same situation, living next to the monastery garden only because of the sin of her mother, who began to live with another woman. They had to leave the garden forever and move several hundred miles to another city. Several decades later, Laing and her friend, Tom, visit this monastery and garden. But even after such a long time, one nun recognizes her. The author thinks that maybe the knowledge was in human sexuality: “The apple of knowledge had been plucked, and maybe the knowledge was sexuality, or maybe it was the knowledge of how cruel the policing of sexuality can be. Either way, the garden gates were barred. Many people have lost a paradise, and even if they haven’t the story” [Laing, 2024, p. 31-32]. However, it was not the last “abandoned paradise”. Olivia Laing, her mother and sister had to move from place to place. She remembers the last garden of her childhood: “my mother magicked a beautiful garden out of thin topsoil over builders’ rubble” [Laing, 2024, p. 138]. Nevertheless, it did not become the necessary shelter: at that time, homosexual families were not accepted by society. They were like a black sheep, and they had to hide all the time, hide from condemnation, constantly

feeling danger. Therefore, from childhood, Laing has a dream of having home-garden, in which she will be sure of her safety: “The particular childhood I had left me with a craving, a permanent, nagging need for a place that was safe, wild, messy, bountiful and above all private. I wanted a home, absolutely, but it was a garden that I needed” [Laing, 2024, p. 139]. The author comes to the conclusion that many people have lost paradise, and even if not, the story of the lost paradise resonates in every human soul, because they have forgotten “the paradise of a child’s perception” [Laing, 2024, p. 32]. Perhaps this is why the author’s reasoning contains so many stories related to Eden.

Thus, the connection between paradise and the garden, and the garden and home can be traced. Home-garden is an archetypal motif, which can also be found in Ukrainian mythology, which is mentioned by V. Voitovych, speaking about the motif of paradise as home-garden [Voitovych, 2002, p. 417].

As Olivia Laing restores her garden, creating new flower beds and planting her favorite flowers and plants, she reflects that this work can be called another kind of paradise: “It was another kind of paradise altogether, to be working physically, hours every day, at something so immersive and all-encompassing” [Laing, 2024, p. 32]. At this time, Laing reads John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* for the first time, and she has interesting associations: she is immured in her garden now because of a pandemic, and in Milton’s time, the plague was spreading through London. But her home-garden gives her a sense of being protected. In relaying the plot of Milton’s poem, the author emphasizes that Eve puts herself in danger in the garden because she wanted to work alone, “the only possible way to dissolve back into relation with the vegetal world” [Laing, 2024, p. 38], and at the same time the author draws a

parallel that the worst arguments she had with her husband took place in the garden, as she wanted privacy and immersion in silence. Although home-garden is also an emotional center, and not just a place of privacy, so Olivia Laing restores the garden in order to open it for charitable purposes. She emphasizes that the garden in Milton is presented as “a place of mutual support and interconnection, so delicately balanced that a single missing prop spells disaster” [Laing, 2024, p. 38]. While gardening, Laing tries to create her own Eden, where she will always feel protected. And to feel more comfortable in home-garden, the author decides that it needs a guardian; and she settles on a sculpture of the god of love Eros, so that home-garden will always be filled with love, joy and happiness.

For Laing, there is no doubt that the garden is a symbol of home. In the chapter “Garden State”, she describes William Morris’s garden in detail and quotes his opinion that the garden should feel like part of home: “The garden as a succession of living rooms in which to live is almost the defining feature of some of the twentieth century’s most beautiful Arts and Crafts gardens, from Hidcote to Sissinghurst to Great Dixter, but it was Morris the medievalist who first planted out the idea.” [Laing, 2024, p. 118]. The author feels exactly the same about her garden. Annie Kapur, in her review of O. Laing’s book, fully agrees that “humans are made to cultivate their gardens as part of their home, their health and their structure - rooting them in the ground in a way” [Kapur, 2024]. After a year of restoring the garden, Olivia Laing is planning to organize a party there. She is interested in opening the garden, to see how friends will gather on the lawn. And so the party took place: “I was just as satisfied. People of all ages were bubbling and spilling over, flopping on blankets and benches, their arms entwined. There was a makeshift bar, with buckets of champagne on ice, and great

armfuls of flowers from Paula's roadside stall at the top of the hill. Ian had produced a feast, singing to himself as he went. No cherry pie, but the kitchen table was laden with sausages and hams, buttered rolls, warm madeleines and chocolate cake" [Laing, 2024, p. 137]. Thus, the home-garden becomes the center of the author's emotional life, connected with the image of food, which emphasizes the hospitality, warmth, and cordiality of the hostess, and emphasizes the coziness of an unusual home.

Reflecting on the concept of the garden, Laing comes to the conclusion that it has always existed not for everyone, but only for the chosen ones. The garden from the very beginning, from Eden, was a place from which someone was expelled. Not everyone can have a garden – it is a luxury, a privilege, and with the practice of enclosure, it becomes a paradise only for certain people. The author traces the connection with colonialism and slavery: "Slavery also provided the capital for a concerted beautification of the landscape, as the grotesque profits from sugar plantations were used to found lavish houses and gardens back in England" [Laing, 2024, p. 16]. She tells the story of the Middleton family, who built their house and garden using slave labor. Olivia wonders what drives these billionaires in their pursuit of capital, if it is only the desire to "build an impregnable paradise" for themselves and their family. William Middleton built a house and surrounded it with the first landscape garden in America with money obtained from slave labor "in the most repellent way" [Laing, 2024, p. 86]. His brother, Henry, seizes the chance to create a luxurious garden on a rice plantation set aside for "idleness and pleasure," a kind of paradise on earth based on exploitation: "It's been estimated that the earth and water works needed to make the gardens at Middleton Place took one hundred slaves a decade to complete" [Laing, 2024, p. 87].

In general, reflecting on the colonization of America, Laing compares the continent to a pristine, wild Eden, which the colonialists invaded, plundered and desecrated, and draws parallels with Milton's Eden, the description of which, in her opinion, is taken from the stories of "Paradise America". Her reflections lead to a comparison of Satan with a rebel who was expelled and sent to the colony: "He is expelled from Heaven by way of a succession of fairly unadorned intestinal metaphors, until with great groaning he and the other rebel angels are shat into the sewage system of Hell, an image much in circulation in seventeenth-century arguments for colonies as a place to house the unwanted human refuse of the home nation" [Laing, 2024, p. 89]. The author expresses his contempt and indignation using emotionally expressive vocabulary: "unadorned intestinal", "the sewage system", "unwanted human refuse". In fact, Satan betrays the innocent indigenous people, and now "Sin and Death" will settle there. However, Laing notes that, judging by the conclusions that follow in the work *Milton's Imperial Epic* by J. Martin Evans, God gives people the opportunity to work hard in the new land, and as a reward for their diligence and obedience, they can one day receive Heaven. Thus, the author shows the hidden connection of the garden with colonialism and slavery, the inaccessibility of gardens to the poor and comes to the conclusion that "in short, Eden is a place of infinite abundance and possibility, where someone else owns the land, where adventurers plunder and dispossess, where labour is ordained and never-ending, where there are bosses and enforcers, where eviction is an omnipresent threat and at the last a tragic reality. It sounds a lot like Earth" [Laing, 2024, p. 90]. Gradually we approach the model "home – garden – world". Laing thinks about how to arrange everything so that gardens are accessible to everyone, because every person deserves to live in

a beautiful place, and therefore, in home-garden, in a world-garden. Laing thinks about Goodwin Barmby, who was influenced by the ideas of Robert Owen, and wanted to restore paradise; he proposed “the establishment of a radical new model of organisation: self-sufficient, land-based communities where both work and child-care were shared endeavours” [Laing, 2024, p. 107]. The concept of an ideal society is inseparably linked with the dream of paradise, of a garden, and Laing comes to the conclusion that “the dominant image of this new society, if the word dominant can be used for such a gentle civilization, is that of a garden, ‘where nothing is wasted and nothing is spoilt’” [Laing, 2024, p. 112]. The author mentions William Morris, who imagines a better and more beautiful world where there is no division between the rich and the poor, and the garden becomes a model of this world and at the same time a metaphor for its richness: “People work because they want to, as gardeners do, out of the sheer love of making something” [Laing, 2024, p. 124]. Morris radically altered the gardens and continually invited “the garden inside, obsessively filling his buildings and furniture and fabrics and books with a non-stop proliferation of plant life, an unceasing, shape shifting, tidal wave of flowers, by turns innocent, sensual, erotic, and downright disturbing” [Laing, 2024, p. 118]. Olivia Laing is aspiring to make the garden open to people; once she has restored it well enough, she opens it “for the NGS on 11 June”. And although she notes that there is still some unfinished business, basically everything has been planted and replanted: “Even unfinished it was magical to be in, especially alone. It was so quiet and enclosed, constantly visited by birds, the scent of the wisteria ghosting through” [Laing, 2024, p. 186]. Laing points out that toads, field mice and bees appear after a drought, and they are the invisible helpers of the garden. Thus, she creates a sacred place, a paradise corner,

where she will be glad to welcome everyone who wants to come to its opening. Laing emphasizes that “the centrepiece of the NGS garden is the tea” [Laing, 2024, p. 187]. Once again, an attribute of home comes first – in this case, it’s food: “Ian made fifteen cakes and forty-eight fairy cakes and insisted on icing them all himself” [Laing, 2024, p. 187]. Olivia and Ian’s garden is ready for opening: “The garden looked immaculate, which is to say wild and abundant with colour and scent” [Laing, 2024, p. 188]. Laing considers the opening day of her garden to be the best day of her life. Lots of people came to the opening. She watches them and notes that they feel comfortable here: “... the garden so full of people, talking to each other, making themselves at home. It was like a party all day” [Laing, 2024, p. 188]. Laing and her husband were able to create a comfortable corner, a real home-garden, not without reason visitors feel at home – “making themselves at home”. Thus, home-garden becomes both a place for privacy, where you can think and dream, and a place for meeting friends with whom you can discuss what is happening in the world and family; it can also be a place open to strangers at strictly defined hours.

Home-garden is very vulnerable and fragile not only because of the weeds, but also because of the impact of climate change in the form of drought, which is a consequence of human intervention in nature. Olivia Laing is horrified when a real drought comes in August and plants begin to die. She explains that it happens due to improper use of water, so the rivers dry up and everything alive dies. Laing finds a dead toad and a jackdaw in the garden. At this time, a ban on watering with a hose comes: “I couldn’t bear to water my garden, to make my piece of land more important than any other, and I also couldn’t bear to see the plants I’d cherished die” [Laing, 2024, p. 190]. The author understands that she will have to start all over again because the

drought has killed many of the plants, but now she needs to plant drought-resistant flowers. The cool weather and rain have returned, and the plants have come back to life, and the toads, bats, bees and voles, jackdaws and swifts have reappeared. And Laing gets good news from her father: everything is getting better, home-garden is returning to life. She still wants to perfect her garden, where she can deal with her worries, but at the same time she understands that a little disorder is more useful than borders: “But I’d finally understood that a little untidiness was far more fertile than perfect borders. I could see that the skin of dead leaves and sticks under the hazel had its own loveliness, protecting the soil from drying out, nourishing microbial activity, feeding the new green snouts of the day lilies. Death generating life, evidence of our fallen state” [Laing, 2024, p. 199]. Laing believes that Eden should not be looked for on a map because it is a utopian dream of a garden full of eternal abundance. In reality, in a garden, as in life, some things die, some are reborn and some flourish.

The house protects a person from the threat of the outside world, resists external chaos. In the same way, the garden is opposed to war. The garden that Laing bought with her husband was full of infected trees and bushes. The author compares the garden to a battlefield where intruders have invaded, but she is afraid to use prohibited poisons, because after this, for three years, nothing will grow in this place. And Laing thinks about how to defeat the enemy without causing further damage. She also thinks a lot about the real war in Ukraine: “I’d been thinking so much about war and then on 24 February Russia invaded Ukraine, and the news was full of bombed cities and displaced people, walking to the Polish border laden with pushchairs and animal carriers. Overnight even the smallest Suffolk villages had Ukrainian flags, snapping blue and yellow in the breeze” [Laing,

2024, p. 168-169]. In her opinion, war is the opposite of a garden, its antithesis: “It is possible that a garden will emerge from a bombsite, but it is certain that a bomb will destroy a garden” [Laing, 2024, p. 169]. She recalls being struck by the film *The Last Gardener of Aleppo*, in which a gardener shows a tree that is still blooming despite being hit by shrapnel: “This planting was a statement of defiance, an act of construction amid the wasteland of ruined buildings and open craters in which they lived” [Laing, 2024, p. 169]. So Laing comes to the conclusion that it is enough that the garden exists during the war: “A war garden provides a kind of sustenance even when it is not given over to cabbages and carrots, to allotment plots and Dig for Victory. And sometimes a garden can be a literal refuge, too. Its gates can be opened, it can turn from a private to a shared sanctuary” [Laing, 2024, p. 170]. The garden is both home and a refuge, and it is an antithesis to war. The author remembers her father’s stories of London’s rapid destruction during the war. Reflecting on the ruins of post-World War II London, Olivia Laing compares the city to a garden: “In those days the bombsites were occupied by a profusion of flowering weeds, so that the ruined city resembled a garden, incongruously mantled in gold and imperial purple, the ripe smell of buddleia mixing with the sourness of brick dust and mould on the air,” “It was the presence of plants that turned the bombsites from a site of tragedy.” into something more fertile and seeing things with possibility” [Laing, 2024, p. 162-164]. The author emphasizes the unbridled power of nature, which can overcome the consequences of war: plants grow through the ruins and shell fragments, turning the destroyed city into a garden. But it is wild, “incongruously mantled in gold and imperial purple”, and the “ripe smell” mixes with a “sourness of brick dust and mould”. Epithets and metaphorical comparison enhance the reader's idea

of the power of a wild garden, which, in defiance of all the forces of evil, grows through the ruins and drowns out with its aroma the pungent smell of burning and decay – an integral attribute of war. In the same way, a person must fight for life and against any manifestations of Chaos. Thus, Laing asserts the power of nature in general and plants in particular over military destruction. We must treat our home-world with care, not destroy it, but create it. Only plants, trees and flowers can decorate our home and help us understand all the beauty of the world, and people should try to preserve all this.

The composition of this work by O. Laing is also interesting, as it also works to involve the reader in the sphere of “cultivating one’s own garden”. Reflections on home-garden, on the Garden of Eden, on the connection of the garden with war, colonialism and slavery are repeated in each chapter. Thus, the composition of the work is not clearly structured, but is similar to circles on the water that diverge from a thrown stone, and due to this, the main idea is not simply repeated, but expands, embracing new layers of the world and its understanding.

Conclusions

Thus, O. Laing’s work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* is artistic and publicistic, and the archetype of home does not lose its significance in it, but on the contrary, its general cultural and universal character is emphasized. The article analyzes the new content of the archetype of home and its models, such as “home-garden”, “home-garden-world”, and “garden-Eden-home”. Throughout the narrative, Laing confirms that the garden is an integral part of home, which is a comfortable place for a person, and at the same time it is a place of strength and protection from external threats. Undoubtedly, for the author the garden is primarily a symbol of home. A person cannot feel the beauty of the world,

comfort and well-being without a home-garden. Only plants as a part of nature can instill confidence about tomorrow in a person, even in ruins, after the bombing they bring hope for the future. Olivia Laing emphasizes the associations of the garden with Paradise, the first home of Adam and Eve, who were expelled for their sins. Revealing utopias and dreams of Eden, the author proves the idea that through creative work and a humane attitude to the world, which is his great home, a person can realize these dreams; hence, the metaphor “garden-Eden-home” appears.

Gradually, Laing moves from home-garden to a more complex metaphor of home-garden-world, which in a philosophical sense suggests a harmonious unity of external security and mutual understanding of its inhabitants. As a result of social upheavals (the Second World War, the war in Ukraine, coronavirus pandemic, environmental pollution), the stable mythological signs of the archetype of home are eroded (protection and patronage of higher domestic beings disappear). Olivia Laing, using the archetype of home-garden, touched on the most painful points of our time. Home-world is on the verge of destruction, and its condition depends only on the people themselves. Thus, the author emphasizes that the home-garden is not only home and a cozy area, but also a model of earthly existence. Even a party, tea at the opening of the garden is like a general family meal to unite people in the face of harsh life circumstances.

Home-garden is a place where a person feels protected, a place where one can retire, reflect, dream and work. For some people, the garden was the only consolation during the pandemic, for others – a refuge during the war. But at the same time, home-garden is an aesthetically attractive object, and a person, for complete harmony of external form and internal

content, must live in a beautiful place, and such a place must be accessible to everyone, regardless of social differences. It is proven that the archetype of home, which the author associates with the garden, in a broad sense personifies Cosmos, that is, a concept opposed to Chaos. And the artistic means used by the author are one of the proofs that O. Laing's work *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* is an example of literary journalism and at the same time they work for a deeper disclosure of the archetypes reflected in the text.

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