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**THE TRANSFORMATION OF ARCHETYPES
OF THE CHILD AND HOME
IN THE NOVEL *NUTSHELL* BY IAN MCEWAN**

Abstract

The article deals with the transformation of archetypes of the child and home in the novel *Nutshell* by I. McEwan. The purpose of the article is to consider the transformation of archetypes of the child and home in the novel *Nutshell* by I. McEwan with a focus on the individual author's interpretation. 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. Poststructuralist approaches are taken into account, as well as the "close reading" technique. The article traces the trends in the literature of the 21st century, filling the archetypes of the child and home with new characteristics. The image of the child under consideration is an embryo; besides, the foetus is the narrator. The reinterpretation of the archetype of the father, whose image is associated with the motif of mentorship and wisdom and is an extremely important figure in the mythopoetic locus of the house, is analyzed. It should be emphasized that although during the main plot time the child is still in the mother's womb, it asks questions about its identity, reflects on personal responsibility for what is happening in the outside world. The author's original methods of metaphorizing the house are analyzed. It has been determined that the mother's womb is a closed space that is, to some extent, a home for the baby for nine months. The narrator has many epithets for his temporary home: "a confinement", "a castle", "a nutshell", "a grave", "a sea", "an ocean". Another image of the house is

considered – “a family nest”, inherited by the father of the embryo. It is especially worth noting that this image also has a great innovative significance, as it is the symbol not of unity, but of the family destruction; at the same time, it creates an atmosphere where events take place. At the beginning of the 21st century, using the example of the novel *Nutshell*, we observe a certain transformation of home: this is no longer a building familiar to understanding, but it is a mother’s womb. The author’s intentions are aimed at revealing the tragic side of modernity, when not even immediately after the birth, but even right in the state of the embryo.

Keywords: Ian McEwan, archetype, child, home, motif, image, existential, metaphor.

Анотація

Стаття присвячена трансформації архетипів дитини та будинку в романі І. Мак’юена «Горіхова шкарлупа». Мета статті – розглянути трансформацію архетипів дитини та будинку в цьому романі в індивідуально-авторському трактуванні. У роботі використано комплексну дослідницьку методологію: синтез порівняльно-історичного методу, цілісного аналізу, елементів міфопоетичного та герменевтичного методів. Враховувалися постструктуралістські підходи, а також техніка “close reading”. У статті простежено одну з тенденцій літератури ХХІ століття: наповнення архетипів дитини та дома новими характеристиками. Розглядається образ дитини – це ембріон, до того ж він є оповідачем. Проаналізовано переосмислення архетипу батька, образ якого пов’язаний з мотивом наставництва, мудрості і є надзвичайно важливою фігурою у міфопоетичному локусі будинку. Слід підкреслити, що хоча протягом основного сюжетного часу дитина перебуває ще в утробі матері, вона ставить питання про свою ідентичність, розмірковує про особисту відповідальність за те, що

відбувається у зовнішньому світі. Аналізуються оригінальні прийоми автора метафоризації будинку. Визначено, що утроба матері – це замкнутий простір, який протягом дев'яти місяців є, певною мірою, будинком для немовляти. У оповідача є безліч епітетів для свого тимчасового притулку: «темниця», «замок», «шкарлупа», «похоронний пагорб», «море», «океан». Розглядається ще один образ будинку – родове гніздо, яке дісталось у спадок батьку ембріона. Особливо варто зазначити, що цей образ також має величезне новаторське значення у романі, оскільки стає символом не згуртування, а руйнації сім'ї; одночасно він створює атмосферу, де відбуваються події. На початку XXI століття на прикладі роману «У шкарлупі» ми спостерігаємо певну трансформацію будинку: це вже не звична будівля, а материнське лоно. Авторські інтенції спрямовані на розкриття трагічного боку сучасності, коли трагедія буття відчувається людиною навіть не відразу після народження, а ще в стані зародка.

Ключові слова: Ієн Мак'юен, архетип, дитина, будинок, мотив, образ, екзистенція, метафора.

Introduction

The work of the modern British writer Ian McEwan attracts the attention of many literary critics (Drozdovskyi, 2012; 2013; Kushnirova, 2017; Maikovska, Malyshevska, 2020; Shuba, 2009, Finney, 2004, Miller, 2016). Ian McEwan is the winner of several literary awards, the author of fifteen novels, many short stories, oratorios and screenplays. His innovation in style, new forms in the description of problems of love and friendship, family and children, existential motifs could not fail to attract the attention of researchers. The novel *Nutshell* tells us about treacherous betrayal of John's wife and brother, about an insidious plan of murder and its implementation. The narrator is a nine-month-old foetus who hears everything from his mother's womb and realizes what is happening. It is not surprising that in literary circles this

novel has not gone unnoticed (Ishimbaeva, 2019; Mars-Jones, 2016; Lushnikova, Osadchaia, 2018, Svetlovich, 2019). G. Ishimbaeva's article is devoted to the study of the transformation of Shakespeare's story about Hamlet in the novel *Nutshell* (Ishimbaeva, 2019). In the article "The Ironic Mode in the Modern Existentialist Novel", G. Lushnikova and T. Osadchaia analyze a number of novels by English-speaking authors, including the novel *Nutshell* by I. McEwan, and note that an ironic mode of the narration is skillfully used by the author to pose existential problems. (Lushnikova, Osadchaia, 2018). According to Y. Svetlovich ("I. McEwan's novel *Nutshell*: Intertextuality as a Content Resource of the Work"), the novel is an excellent example of a postmodern experiment with narrative and intertext (Svetlovich, 2019). However, despite the fact that a fairly wide range of researchers have analyzed various aspects of the novel *Nutshell*, the transformation of archetypes of the child and home has not been previously considered in it. The motifs of the child and home are fundamental archetypes both at the psychological and general cultural levels. In Ian McEwan's novel, these images are associated with an unusual interpretation: the child has not yet been born, and the locus that performs the function of home is his mother's womb.

The purpose of the article is to consider the transformation of archetypes of the child and home in the novel *Nutshell* by I. McEwan with a focus on in the individual author's interpretation.

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. Poststructuralist approaches are taken into account, as well as the "close reading" technique.

Results and Discussions

The child and home in the world literary and artistic practice, as a rule, are in a correlative connection. The concept of

home at an implicit level is closely related to the child, since “home” implies domesticity, the presence of family ties between parents and children. The archetype of a child in the world culture presupposes the features of sacredness (the “baby-god”, “baby Jesus”); this symbol is the focus of purity, and hopes for the future are associated with it. The main symbolic levels of realization of the child archetype in a literary work become a divine child, child-hero, an orphan child, a person with childish facial features or behavior, and in the 20th century, the image of “a monstrous child” appears. McEwan’s main character is an unborn child. As G. Ishimbayeva rightly notes, this is not a new character in literature, but earlier, infancy was only a plot exposition of the main plot about a maturing person who judges civilization (Ishimbaeva, 2019). In an interview with Michael W. Miller, Ian McEwan explains how the idea for an unusual narrator has come about, “The idea for the extremely unusual narrator of Ian McEwan’s new novel “Nutshell” first came to him while he was chatting with his pregnant daughter-in-law. “We were talking about the baby, and I was very much aware of the baby as a presence in the room,” he recalls. He jotted down a few notes, and soon afterward, while he was daydreaming during a long meeting, the first sentence of the novel popped into his head, “So here I am, upside down in a woman” (Miller, 2016). Thus, the author believes that the embryo has a number of advantages, “He can get into the most intimate spaces, overhears everything, sees nothing, has to infer a great deal and can abandon himself to speculation about the world he or she is about to join” (Miller, 2016).

In the novel under investigation, the image of the child is a nine-month-old embryo, and besides, he is a narrator. The novel begins with the words, “So here I am, upside down in a woman” (McEwan, 2016). Thus, a reader is immediately confronted with an unusual narrator. The unborn child, while in the womb, listens to the smallest details of the plan to kill his father. And the killers are his mother, Trudy, and his father’s brother, Claude. According to

G. Ishimbaeva, the Shakespeare Code is indicated from the very beginning, since the title of the novel uses a metaphor from the tragedy, taken as an epigraph, “Oh God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space – were it not that I have bad dreams” (Ishimbaeva, 2019). She comes to the conclusion that the novel *Nutshell* is an original author’s text, through which separate storylines and images of Hamlet shine through (Ishimbaeva, 2019).

The reader learns from the narrator learns that the action takes place in London in a house on Hamilton Terrace, which was inherited by child’s father, John Cairncross. His wife, Trudy, thinks he is a failed poet, and he “runs an impoverished publishing house” (McEwan, 2016). The narrator, analyzing what they say about his father, perceives him as a large man (“a big man”, “a large, large-hearted man”, “a giant with thick black hair on mighty arms”), and a magnanimous person: “Born under an obliging star, eager to please, too kind, too earnest, he has nothing of the ambitious poet’s quiet greed”. At the same time, he emphasizes his father’s defenselessness in front of circumstances, fate and people: “My father by nature is defenceless” (McEwan, 2016). John does not live with Trudy at her request to sort out their relationships, so he rents rooms in Shoreditch. The reader will also learn from the conclusions of the foetus how his mother looks like: “her hair is ‘straw fair’, that it tumbles in ‘coins of wild curls’ to her ‘shoulders the white of apple flesh’, because my father has read aloud to her his poem about it in my presence”, “my mother’s eyes are green, that her nose is a ‘pearly button’”, “her skin is damply pink, fine hairs have sprung free of her braids and are backlit into brilliant filaments by the ceiling lights” (McEwan, 2016). Trudy does not love John for a long time; she has a lover, and this is her husband’s younger brother, Claude. He is a property developer by profession, and although he seems to have more money than his brother, he decides to kill John because of the house that his older brother has inherited. The child-narrator is indignant when his uncle comes to

his mother; he considers the man as a stupid and an insignificant person: “*the dull-brained yokel*”, “dull to the point of brilliance, vapid beyond invention, his banality as finely wrought as the arabesques of the Blue Mosque”, “that stale, uncertain voice” (McEwan, 2016). G. Ishimbaeva is absolutely right noting that comparative description of brothers John and Claude is based on the Shakespearean principle of opposing the nobility of one to the meanness of the other (Ishimbaeva, 2019).

In her article, G. Ishimbayeva mentions that the narrator is marvelously educated; the names of Joyce and Eliot, Donne and Hobbes, Virgil and Montaigne, Plato and Kant, Beethoven and Schubert, Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Einstein and Barth emerge in his stream of consciousness. He knows French and Latin; understands wines like a sommelier; masterfully uses musicological terms glissando, vibrato, andante; invents exquisite definitions (Ishimbaeva, 2019). The narrator himself explains his erudition by the fact that, together with his mother, he listens to news, analytics and disputes, Internet podcasts and audio CDs: “*Know Your Wine*, in fifteen parts, biographies of seventeenth-century playwrights, and various world classics” (McEwan, 2016). Even in the middle of the night, the foetus can wake up his mother for information, and she turns on the radio, and “we are both better informed by the morning” (McEwan, 2016). Thus, the narrator listens, analyzes, reflects and, as he himself expresses it, “makes mental notes”.

As it mentioned above, home implies the existence of family ties between parents and their child. For the foetus, the most important thing is a family; although he has not yet been born, he realizes that he needs the love of two parents: “And I love and admire you both. What I’m saying is, I’m fearful of rejection” (McEwan, 2016). The narrator loves his mother very much, despite the fact that she is plotting the murder of another person close to him: “And I love her – how could I not?”, “and mine is to a mother’s love and is absolute”, “Still love her? If not, then you

never did. But I did, I did. I do”, “the mystery of how love for my mother swells in proportion to my hatred” (McEwan, 2016). The foetus feels joy when his father comes to them: “My father comes by the house from time to time and I’m overjoyed” (McEwan, 2016). Undoubtedly, “father” is associated with the motif of mentorship, wisdom, and it is an extremely important figure in the mythopoetic locus of home, where he largely provides positively marked codes (stability, confidence in the future, etc.) (Bondar, 2021). Unlike his uncle, the narrator perceives his father as a clever person: “He knows by heart a thousand poems”, “Many of the poems my father knows are long, like those famed creations of bank employees *The Cremation of Sam McGee* and *The Waste Land*” (McEwan, 2016). Like any child, the embryo wants to have a complete family: “I also blend John and Trudy in my daydreams – like every child of estranged parents, I long to remarry them, this base pair, and so unite my circumstances to my genome”; “the sacred, imagined duty of the child of separated parents is to unite them” (McEwan, 2016). And now he realizes that his enemy is his own uncle, who, for the sake of his greedy plans, destroys his family: “Who is this Claude, this fraud who’s wormed in between my family and my hopes?”; “His existence denies my rightful claims to a happy life in the care of both parents” (McEwan, 2016). The narrator urgently needs to come up with an idea on how to destroy the criminal plans of his mother and uncle.

As the story progresses, the reader learns that John, the embryo’s birth father, is not interested in the unborn child: “He paid tribute to honest memory and he forgot me. In a rush towards his own rebirth, he discarded mine”, and when a man comes with a young poetess to Trudy with a request to leave the house, the narrator’s hopes for life with his father collapse if the mother stays with her uncle: “if I failed to unite my parents, I might live with my father, at least for a while. Until I got on my feet. But I don’t think this poet would take me on – tight black jeans and leather jacket is not maternity wear” (McEwan, 2016). In addition,

according to the narrator, there is a double threat of the family destruction: “The lovers, if Elodie is one, the two parties external to the marriage, are the dual charge that will blast this household apart” (McEwan, 2016). Knowing about the planned murder and trying to mentally influence the situation, the foetus turns to his father, advises him to refuse a fruit drink and declares his love for his parents: “And I love and admire you both”, “accept your son, hold me in your arms, claim me for your own” (McEwan, 2016). However, the child does not feel special love even of his mother for himself: there are no preparations for maternity, and he even hears how she is going to hand him over somewhere: “My father and I are joined in hopeless love” (McEwan, 2016). Only sometimes he feels some care for himself. Refusing the third glass, Trudy says: “I have to think of baby”, so the embryo decides that he is loved: “she restrains herself for love of me” (McEwan, 2016). Once she even calls him affectionately “a little mole”, but it just happens at the moment when she persuades John to drink a smoothie with poison (glycol), and the child wants to stop the crime in any way and pushes her in the abdomen. However, it did not work out, the father drank the beverage. In a cruel irony, Cairncross loves smoothies and believes that they influence on the extension of life: “Sometimes he brings her smoothies from his favourite place on Judd Street. He has a weakness for these glutinous confections that are supposed to extend his life” (McEwan, 2016). Unfortunately, the drink became a murder weapon. John’s surname is also associated with death. Adam Mars-Jones in his article “In the Body Bag” mentions about it: “The surname has a noble ring, though it is made up of two things that can mark a grave” (Mars-Jones, 2016). First part of the surname is cairn – “a pile of rough stones built to mark a special place, eg a mountain top or sb’s grave” (Hornby, 1995). One more meaning of the word “cross” is a tombstone in the form of a cross. So the reader on a subconscious level understands that death is waiting for John.

The image of a child at a metaphorical level is an expression of purity and innocence. The embryo is a priori innocent, and the narrator defines himself: "I'm still a creature of the sea, not a human like the others" (McEwan, 2016). However, the narrator is tormented by doubts whether he is really innocent, because he is aware of the upcoming crime. At first, he denies the possibility of his guilt: "an innocent, unburdened by allegiances and obligations, a free spirit, despite my meagre living room", "I speak as an innocent", "I'm virtuous too" (McEwan, 2016). But then he decides that maybe he is not as innocent as he seems: "I count myself an innocent, but it seems I'm party to a plot", "My mother is involved in a plot, and therefore I am too, even if my role might be to foil it", "Knowing everything, almost everything, I'm party to the crime, safe, obviously, from questioning, but fearful", "What sickening complicity that I should wish them success" (McEwan, 2016).

So, the narrator knows that his mother and his uncle are planning to kill his own father, and he tries to make plans to thwart the conspirators. At first, he has a plan to kill himself, but then, after thinking, he refuses this plan, since it will not solve anything. And the foetus moves from thoughts of death to the question of revenge: "Revenge may be exacted a hundred times over in one sleepless night" (McEwan, 2016). However, the narrator, talking about revenge, recalls the words of Confucius: "Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves" (McEwan, 2016), and understands that this will not lead to anything and he still will not return his father in this way. Therefore, he refuses from revenge: "I've absolved myself, not of thoughts, but of actions, of avenging his death in this life or in the post-natal next. And I'm absolving myself of cowardice. Claude's elimination won't restore my father"; "And cowardly me, self-absolved of revenge, of everything but thought" (McEwan, 2016). When the threat of the arrest hangs over the killers, they decide to leave, and in order to destroy Claude, the embryo decides to come out two weeks early:

“A forefinger is my own special tool to remove my mother from the frame. Two weeks early and fingernails so long. I make my first attempt at an incision” (McEwan, 2016). Having been born, the child prevents Claude from escaping punishment, however, his mother, unfortunately, will not escape it either. The narrator imagines the prison cell that awaits him with his mother: “And I’m thinking about our prison cell – I hope it’s not too small – and beyond its heavy door, worn steps ascending: first sorrow, then justice, then meaning. The rest is chaos” (McEwan, 2016).

The reflections of the foetus about its identity are also worth noticing. He himself thinks about who he is, whether a boy or a girl, thinks about “pink” and “blue”, and he is disappointed that the choice is so limited, although then he remembers that a social network offers “seventy-one gender options – neutrois, two spirit, bigender... any colour you like” (McEwan, 2016). The narrator claims his right and the value of his identity: “I declare my undeniable feeling for who I am”, “My identity will be my precious, my only true possession, my access to the only truth. The world must love, nourish and protect it as I do” (McEwan, 2016). The time has come for the embryo to come out, and he is again tormented by the question of who he is, “a man without his papers who should be on the run”, “Surely, pink or blue!” (McEwan, 2016). Finally, here he is on a blue towel! The child calms down: now he knows exactly he is a boy: “I’m looking down, with what wonder and surmise, at the napped surface of a blue bath towel. Blue. I’ve always known, verbally at least, I’ve always been able to infer what’s blue – sea, sky, lapis lazuli, gentians – mere abstractions” (McEwan, 2016). So at the end of the novel, the reader also learns about the gender of the narrator.

Since the archetypal system is associated with a magical principle, it is characterized not only by “wonderful”, but also paradoxically inexplicable, internally contradictory. The motive of a child in a literary and artistic work can carry the property of future, as a child is a potential future (Jung, 1997). Despite the

tragic events in the novel *Nutshell*, the birth of a child is symbolic – it gives hope. G. Lushnikova and T. Osadchaia come to the conclusion that the writer, in spite of everything, looks at the world with optimism: for humanity, not everything is lost, a person always has the opportunity to look at the world and himself in a new way, break the shell and get out of the vicious circle of alienation and suffering (Lushnikova, Osadchaia, 2018).

The image of home in the literature of the postmodern period is not least “fueled” by archetypal motifs and it provides interesting approaches to its metaphorization. In the novel, the narrator is in the mother’s womb. The womb is a closed space that for nine months is, in some way, a home for the baby. The narrator describes his dwelling in this way: “My amniotic sac is the translucent silk purse, fine and strong, that contains me. It also holds the fluid that protects me from the world and its bad dreams” (McEwan, 2016). The narrator has many epithets for his temporary home: “a confinement”, “a castle”, “a nutshell”, “a grave”, “a sea”, “an ocean”. In his mind, the house is both an ocean and a castle at the same time: “turning and tumbling across my secret sea, reeling off the walls of my castle, the bouncy castle that is my home” (McEwan, 2016). We also learn about the size of the embryo’s dwelling from his story: “For a long time I’ve been almost too big for this place. Now I’m too big. My limbs are folded hard against my chest, my head is wedged into my only exit” (McEwan, 2016).

Despite the reliability and security of his home, the foetus sometimes gives it some names with a negative connotation; this is mainly due to his inability to influence the situation, to prevent the crime. At the beginning of the novel, he writes about his home as “the ocean”, but at the same time it is a dungeon: “I remember how I once drifted in my translucent body bag, floated dreamily in the bubble of my thoughts through my private ocean in slow-motion somersaults, colliding gently against the transparent bounds of my confinement, the confiding membrane that vibrated with, even as it muffled, the voices of conspirators in a vile enterprise” (McEwan,

2016). Although, in fact, the narrator is in prison, he has the opportunity to learn about the world through conversations, radio programs etc., and he can even dream: “And I squat here sealed in my private life, in a lingering, sultry dusk, impatiently dreaming” (McEwan, 2016). The embryo states the following fact: “In my confinement I’ve become a connoisseur of collective dreams” (McEwan, 2016). The narrator, thinking about the art, compares some artists, painters and graphic artists because of their limited plots with children in the womb. He comes to the conclusion that all literature and painting is a crumb in the universe: “To be bound in a nutshell, see the world in two inches of ivory, in a grain of sand. Why not, when all of literature, all of art, of human endeavour, is just a speck in the universe of possible things. And even this universe may be a speck in a multitude of actual and possible universes” (McEwan, 2016). However, the embryonic confinement offers a number of advantages: “In here, I dream of my entitlement – security, weightless peace, no tasks, no crime or guilt. I’m thinking about what should have been mine in my confinement” (McEwan, 2016). After all, the narrator comes to the conclusion that his dwelling should not be considered as a prison: “The condition of the modern foetus. Just think: nothing to do but be and grow, where growing is hardly a conscious act. The joy of pure existence, the tedium of undifferentiated days. Extended bliss is boredom of the existential kind. This confinement shouldn’t be a prison. In here I’m owed the privilege and luxury of solitude” (McEwan, 2016). However, despite the seeming calmness and charm of existence, the foetus encounters a number of problems: “Besides, in my confinement I had other concerns: my drink problem, family worries, an uncertain future in which I faced a possible jail sentence or a life in ‘care’ in the careless lap of Leviathan, fostered up to the thirteenth floor” (McEwan, 2016). The narrator even compares his dwelling with a grave: “The womb, or this womb, isn’t such a bad place, a little like the grave, ‘fine and private’ in one of my father’s favourite poems”

(McEwan, 2016). Thus, in a postmodern literature, a new image of home appears – the mother's womb, with all its contradictory functions.

The image of home is also remarkable – as “a family nest” inherited by John Cairncross. This image is also of great importance in the novel, as it is a symbol of the destruction of family ties, although, in the novel, Trudy twice calls it “the marital home”. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator describes the house in this way: “the house my mother lives in and I in her, the house where Claude visits nightly, is a Georgian pile on boastful Hamilton Terrace and was my father's childhood home. In his late twenties, just as he was growing his first beard, and not long after he married my mother, he inherited the family mansion. All the sources agree, the house is filthy... peeling, crumbling, dilapidated. Frost has sometimes glazed and stiffened the curtains in winter; in heavy rains the drains, like dependable banks, return their deposit with interest; in summer, like bad banks, they stink” (McEwan, 2016). However, Claude is going to sell it for seven million pounds. The description of the devastation of the house and the presence of garbage occurs many times in the novel: “Some floor tiles have gone, others are cracked – Georgian, in a once colourful diamond pattern, impossible to replace”; “Spilling underfoot, these are the very emblems of household squalor: the detritus of ashtrays, paper plates with loathsome wounds of ketchup, teetering teabags like tiny sacks of grain that mice or elves might hoard”; “We reach the echoey bathroom, a large and filthy shambles, from what I've heard” (McEwan, 2016). The cleaner resigns, and the pregnant woman does not want to take out the rubbish; she could ask her husband about it, but she is afraid that he will return home: “Household duties might confer household rights” (McEwan, 2016). The embryo is indignant that his father “ousted from his family home, his grandfather's purchase, for a philosophy of ‘personal growth’” (McEwan, 2016). John Cairncross reminds Trudy of their love in this house: “Our love was so fine and

grand”; “Our love was for the good of the world”; “here in my house, the love went on, months then years. It seemed that nothing could ever get in its way” (McEwan, 2016). However, love has passed and family ties are crumbling along with the house to the horror of the unborn child. Even the house feels the approach of its death: “It will end badly, and the house feels the ruin too. In high summer, the February gale twists and breaks the icicles hanging from the gutters, scours the unpointed brickwork of the gable ends, rips the slates – those blank slates – from the pitching roofs” (McEwan, 2016). John asks Trudy and Claude to move out, he is determined to restore his right to his home. But, unfortunately, this was not destined to happen: he was poisoned. When law enforcement becomes suspicious of Trudy and Claude, they realize it is time for an arrest and decide to leave town quickly. The foetus distresses about the loss of the ancestral home: “This is the end; we aren’t coming back. The house, my grandfather’s house I should have grown up in, is about to fade” (McEwan, 2016). The image of the house in this novel is of great importance, it creates the atmosphere in which all the events take place. The native house becomes “non-home” for the main character of the novel and his mother. A distinguishing feature of “non-home” is its gradual destruction and rubbish in it, the family breakdown, as well as the disappearance of the highest protective power (the Wise Mentor, the Father). In the realistic art system, in the second part of the 19th century – early the 20th century the archetypal core of home was formed, as a rule, by a direct positive modality. For the English culture of the Victorian period, the concept of home was one of the central and most positive ones. At the beginning of the 21st century, using the example of the novel *Nutshell*, we observe a certain transformation of home, this is no longer a building familiar to understanding, but it is a mother’s womb. And the protagonist of the novel loses his ancestral home in its traditional concept, and what awaits him in the future is unknown.

Consequently, the archetypes of the child and home, while

basically remaining the main, primary, most general image-symbols, undergo numerous changes in their endless development. These changes occur under the influence of historical and social alterations and, as a result, a different general perception of the world. But, despite the fact that archetypal images are rethought over time, they themselves do not change in essence, and they are passed down from generation to generation.

Conclusions

Thus, on the example of one work, the article traces one of the trends in the literature of the 21st century – filling the archetypes of the child and home with new characteristics. In the novel *Nutshell*, the narrator of the story is an embryo. The child is undoubtedly connected with his parents, but his mother and her lover (also an older relative!) deprive him of his father. This image is associated with the motive of mentoring and wisdom, and it is an extremely important figure in the mythopoetic locus of home. Unfortunately, the narrator cannot prevent the crime, but he does not escape punishment: he is born at the time when his mother and his uncle wanted to move to another city. Although during the main story time the child is still in the womb, he is quite clever because of listening to radio broadcasts and audio books. He wonders about his identity, which he only learns at birth. In addition, the foetus thinks about whether he is guilty or not. After all, he is aware of the criminal plan of the conspirators and, even worrying about his mother, sometimes wishes her success. The image of home in the literature of the postmodern period is not least “fueled” by archetypal motives and it provides interesting approaches to its metaphorization. In the novel the narrator is in his mother’s womb. The womb is a closed space that for nine months is, in some way, home for the baby. The narrator has many epithets for his temporary home: “a confinement”, “a castle”, “a nutshell”,

“a grave”, “a sea”, “an ocean”. Another image of the house is “a family nest”, inherited by John Cairncross. This image also has great innovative significance in the novel, as it is a symbol not of unity, but of the family destruction. At the same time it creates the atmosphere in which events take place. The native house becomes “non-home” for the protagonist and his mother: this house is destroyed and full of rubbish; family ties and the highest protective power (father) are lost.

Thus, according to the author’s idea, the tragedy of being is felt by a person not even immediately after the birth, but even in the state of the embryo.

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