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# Abstracts

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# Abstracts

*Agnieszka  
Kaczmarek* **'Getting  
Nowhere. Going  
Home.'** Edward  
Abbey's Quest for  
Shelter

With a focus on selected writings by Edward Abbey, the article discusses the places which the travel writer designates as *home*. Showing how Abbey mythologizes his birthplace and how he sentimentalizes his boyhood nest, it also analyzes the fragments in which the author employs the word *home* with reference to various locations the self-described desert rat defines his home, which are not necessarily the spots in his cherished American West. **Keywords:** Edward Abbey, home, place, birthplace, American West, landscape.

*Justyna Fruzińska* **The Inverted  
Discourse of Wonder  
in Frances Trollope's  
Domestic Manners  
of the Americans**

The article discusses Frances Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, a famous account of the writer's travel in the United States undertaken in the 1820s, and focuses on the language it employs to describe the young republic. It compares Trollope's discursive strategies to those present in Christopher Columbus's *Diario*, and referred to by Stephen Greenblatt in his *Marvelous Possessions* as the "discourse of wonder." While the early modern accounts of the New World, including Columbus's, give voice to the travelers' amazement and enchantment, Trollope in many respects expresses a contrary sentiment, creating a vision of America as an unpleasantly uncivilized country, with

*Matgorzata  
Gajda-Łaszewska*  
**Securing Homes:  
Orphan Trains  
as a Way of Curing  
Ills of the Late 19<sup>th</sup>  
Century America**

people lacking in sophistication and nature being dangerous and chaotic. She achieves a similar degree of narrative intensity, employing tropes akin to those found in Columbus's *Diario*, but with the opposite intention in mind: making use of superlatives, familiarizing the unfamiliar, and hinting at the unbelievable, she creates an inverted version of the discourse of wonder. This strategy is visible particularly well in her descriptions of the Mississippi river, metonymically representing the whole of the United States.

**Keywords:** Frances Trollope, travel writing, 19<sup>th</sup>-century America, Stephen Greenblatt, discourse of wonder

Rapid changes in American society at the late 19<sup>th</sup> century bred social ills which required solving with the use of all available resources of the era. One of the tools, developed by the Children's Aid Society of New York, was the "Orphan Trains" program. It focused on the "street Arabs," poor kids of New York tenements who in large numbers were relocated to Midwestern farms to be Americanized, taught to work and saved from destitution. The scheme is viewed through its central metaphor of "home" which refers not only to the homes found for the orphans but also the homes of the emerging bourgeois class as well as the tenement dwellings. The work attempts to show that saving innocent victims tried in fact to ensure stability of American society at large as it addressed growing economic disproportions, grave shortage of labor on farms and a threat to American participatory democracy caused by influx of unskilled foreigners. Moreover, the scheme of relocation employed community based, self-help solutions which drew on the traditional American values of family, home and hard work and attempted to address new ills with well-established methods of indentured work. Simultaneously, it implemented modern ideas concerning childhood, child care or charity.

**Keywords:** Orphan Trains, Children's Aid Society, New York, home, tenement, immigration, orphan, labor shortage, Midwest.

## ***Brygida Gasztold* Domesticity and Immigrant Women's Labor in Julie Otsu- ka's *The Buddha* in the Attic**

Tracing the stories of Japanese picture brides, a generation of Japanese women who arrived in San Francisco in the early 1900's for arranged marriages, and their American lives, Julie Otsuka's novel *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011) combines a literary and historical focus. The experiences of dislocation, otherness, assimilation, and exclusion mark the protagonists' lives, illustrating the dominant narratives of race, ethnicity, and gender. Otsuka articulates the problems oscillating between national consciousness and ethnic particularity, providing a critique of U.S. structures of domination and oppression that regulate the immigrant labor market. My paper offers a discussion about Japanese American women protagonists who must constantly reinvent themselves in the play of difference. The female lens, which the author employs, allows her to demonstrate how they are subjected to the forces guided by discourse of culture, ethnicity, and gender. The subaltern woman's perspective on the domestic politics of U.S. is rendered through a collective narrator, and the absence of an identifiable individual voice stresses the characters' fragmentation. America as home is transvalued, revealing itself as the site of unhomeliness, insecurity, and violence.

**Keywords:** Japanese-Americans, women's labor, domesticity

## ***Agnieszka Gondor-Wierciuch* Ethnic and Feminist Homecoming in "Eyes of Zapata" by Sandra Cisneros**

In her short story published in 1991 collection *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros addresses the issue of reconstructing ethnic counter-history through feminist perspective of the main protagonist and narrator Inés Alfaro. This female character gradually moves from the margins of history into its center when it takes control of the powerful figure of her husband, historical Emiliano Zapata, who in Cisneros's re-writing of history is not a powerful leader of the well-known revolution, but a merciless macho with many lovers and children he pays no attention to. The story is a first-person account of Inés who becomes a powerful witch (*la bruja*) in order to avenge the injustice of the patriarchal culture. I want to prove that Cisneros wisely complicates the ethnic story of looking for one's history and identity

*Mirostaw  
Aleksander  
Miernik Whaddya  
Rebellin' Against?  
Youth Rebellion  
and Domesticity  
in The Wild One  
and Rebel Without  
a Cause*

proving that literary homecoming of Chicanas is far from reaching idealized Aztlán, but it is a feminist quest for the autonomy, not only visible on the level of content, but the form as well, which to some extent is a homage to oral tradition and to famous Mexican woman writers Rosario Castellanos, Elena Garro and Juan Rulfo.

**Keywords:** contemporary Latina fiction, herstory, transculturation, Mexican literary heritage

The article focuses on the conflict between youth and domestic values in 1950s America on the example of the movies *The Wild One* and *Rebel Without a Cause*. Using elements of subcultural studies, the films are discussed as didactic in purpose, conveying a sense of fear of youth culture, then a new development, and reinforcing the patriarchal structure of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century US society. This was achieved by depicting troubled young people who manage to overcome various difficulties with the help of a strong masculine father-figure. However, as a result of this, some young people sought for characters who in their opinions embodied a non-conformist stance to a much greater extent than the protagonists. These characters, Chino in *The Wild One* and Plato in *Rebel Without a Cause*, became subcultural icons in their own right, and illustrate the impact that such cinematic portrayals may have on the development of a subculture.

**Keywords:** "Rebel without a Cause," "Wild One" youth culture, subcultures, nonconformity, bikers, family, cinema, 1950s.

***Daria Anna  
Urbańska  
Bohemians,  
Vagabonds,  
and Wanderers  
of the “Ragged  
Promised Land”  
in Jack Kerouac’s  
On the Road***

The article focuses on the journey into the “ragged promised land” (80) in *On the Road*. It can be seen as an escape of the main protagonist Sal Paradise from his roots and from the conformity of American society. Kerouac, having a Franco-Canadian heritage, presents a marginal possibility of heterogeneity in a homogenous postwar America. The author depicts additional mentors and heroes met along the way. They are, among others, tramps and hoboes, ragged wanderers and the Fellahin of Mexico, as well as Sal’s travel companion Dean Moriarty. Sal experiences something true and meaningful among those living on the margin of society. He travels considerable distances: from coast to coast across the United States, from boarder to boarder and to Mexico. The real journey, though, is inward, a passage through the wilderness of the self, the true “ragged promised land”.

Keywords: post-World War II United States, journey, vagabondage, movement, nomads, hoboes

***Parwet Stachura  
Thoreau’s  
Surreal Imagery  
of Homemaking:  
A Comparative  
Perspective  
on Thoreau, Adalbert  
Stifter, and More  
Recent Cultural  
Phenomena***

The article discusses Henry David Thoreau’s domestic spatial imagery in *Walden*, in terms of Bachelard’s poetics of space, as a set of angles, nests, crusts, and shells. The analysis identifies uncanny similarities between Thoreau’s imagery and descriptions of megamachines, as defined by Lewis Mumford. The descriptions of megamachines come from a variety of more recent sources from the 20th century, which suggests that the seemingly unrelated, technocratic texts have been inspired by Thoreau.

Keywords: reception studies, Neuromancer, retrofuturism

*Anna Oleszczuk*  
**Technology  
of Control  
and Control  
of Technology  
in Brian K. Vaughan's  
*Ex Machina***

In the classic era of American comics, the overwhelming majority of superhero stories focused on the straightforward struggle between good and evil, with superheroes embodying the positive values such as justice, order, or patriotism. However, with time both the stories and the characters started to transform. By the end of the 1980s, new, darker series expressing distrust of political governance and all forms of authority started to emerge. In the aftermath of 9/11, this skepticism has found new fuel in a range of policies and actions collectively known as the War on Terror. The paper analyzes Brian K. Vaughan's *Ex Machina* (2004–2010) focusing especially on the series' exploration of domestic security in the post-9/11 United States. The author links the protagonist's superpower, the ability to communicate with the machines, to the developments in surveillance and drone warfare and investigates the comic's reflections of such major concerns related to America's surveillance and security as the constraints on civil liberties.

**Keywords:** superhero, comics, security, 9/11, surveillance

*Patrycja Antoszek*  
**The Uncanny Tapestry  
of Shirley Jackson's  
"The Lovely House"**

The essay discusses Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lovely House" (1952), in which uncanny architecture and supernatural elements combine to express the writer's concerns about very real horrors of domesticity and femininity in mid-century America. In Jackson's story it is the idealization of domesticity, its power to entrap as well as the idea of selfhood established by domestic fictions, which are the greatest sources of anxiety experienced by many American housewives, ideally immobilized and isolated in their lovely suburban homes. The paper argues that Jackson's story not only continues the tradition of the Female Gothic but also complicates the idea of patriarchal domination by showing women as prisoners of domestic fictions woven by themselves.

**Keywords:** domesticity, entrapment, gothic, Shirley Jackson, uncanny