



## Controversial Dimensions of Children's Literature

International conference organized by the CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON CHILDREN'S  
AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

19-20 March, 2020  
University of Wrocław

Literature for children offers an ongoing challenge for creators, publishers, readers (of whatever age), educators, and researchers. Its functioning is inseparably connected with the historically changing system of social expectations towards children and childhood. The instability of these postulates and concepts remains a source of numerous controversies. It is these polemics and inconsistencies that we wish to make the subject of our conference.

Controversy seems to be the essence of literature for children, as reflected in its perception, for example, as a projection of the fantasies, fears, and desires of adults (Rose 1984), a form of child oppression and colonization of childhood (Nodelman 1992), an element of the aetnonormative world ruled by adults (Nikolajeva 2010), or as a part of the pedagogical project of childhood that attempts to control the future (Beauvais 2015). Simultaneously, the importance of children's literature as a bridge between childhood and adulthood (Waller 2019, Wróblewski 2019) or as a platform for the development of symmetrical relations between child and adult (e.g. Gubar 2016, Joosen 2018, Chawar et al. 2018) is being increasingly emphasized. These and other postulates remain open and worthy of further reflection. The research on children's literature itself also invites reflective interest: what are its premises, goals, and expectations?

This conference aims to encourage joint identification and analysis of controversial decisions, practices, and attitudes concerning the cultural, social, and political significance of children's literature, its place in the public, publishing, and academic spaces, as well as its involvement in the exploration of and dealing with contemporary problems. With what challenges of the modern world does it confront children and adults?

We invite you to submit papers on controversial issues related to children's literature in terms of creativity, reception, publishing, and research:

### THE CREATIVE DIMENSION

- controversial authors of children's literature;
- controversial topics as a reflection of historically changing social norms and concepts of children's literature;
- cross-over literature and the aestheticization of children's literature;
- children's literature authored by children (also in the context of new media);
- controversial choices and attitudes of translators of children's literature;
- the phenomenon of polemical translation and children's literature;

## THE RECEPTIVE DIMENSION

- the reception of controversial works and their social impact;
- translation as an object of controversy in the target culture;
- criteria and norms against which works for children become controversial; children's literature and censorship;
- the role of literature in modeling policies of sensitivity and management of ethical, social, and political responsibility in the field of children's culture;
- the child as a prosumer;
- the controversial role of mediators between the text and the child audience;
- controversy over the educational role of children's literature

## THE PUBLISHING DIMENSION

- controversial editorial projects;
- the role of publishing houses in promoting difficult/controversial topics in children's literature and culture;
- controversial transformations of adult novels into children's novels - adaptation or distortion?
- controversial decisions made by publishers of translations of literature for children;
- controversy in advertising and promotion of children's literature and in prizing children's books

## THE SCHOLARLY DIMENSION

- controversial theories of translation in the context of children's literature;
- controversial methodologies in children's literature studies;
- research on children's literature as a scholarly discipline.

## References:

- Beauvais, Clémentine. *The Mighty Child: Time and Power in Children's Literature*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015.
- Chawar, Ewa et al. Children's Voices in the Polish Canon Wars: Participatory Research in Action. *International Research in Children's Literature* 11.2 (2018): 111-13.
- Gubar, Marah. The Hermeneutics of Recuperation: What a Kinship-Model Approach to Children's Agency Could Do for Children's Literature and Childhood Studies. *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 8. 1 (2016): 291-310.
- Joosen, Vanessa. *Adulthood in Children's Literature*. London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2018.
- Nikolajeva, Maria. *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Nodelman, Perry. The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 17.1 (1992): 29-35.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1984.
- Waller, Alison. *Rereading Childhood Books: A Poetics*. London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi and Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2019.
- Wróblewski, Maciej. *Doświadczenie dzieciństwa. Studium z antropologii literatury*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2019.

## Organization matters

Keynote lectures will be delivered by:

**Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel**, Jagiellonian University, Cracow

**Kimberley Reynolds**, Newcastle University, Newcastle

**Junko Yokota**, National Louis University, Chicago

Languages of the conference: English and Polish. Applications together with abstracts (up to 300 words, in English) are expected **by October 31, 2019**. Please send them by e-mail to [cbldm@uwr.edu.pl](mailto:cbldm@uwr.edu.pl). In your abstract please indicate to which of the above-mentioned dimensions of the controversy your presentation will refer. Acceptance of notifications will be sent by November 20, 2019.

A peer-reviewed monograph is planned to be published in English after the conference.

The conference fee is 450 PLN and includes conference materials, coffee breaks, and two lunches. Other costs are covered by the conference participants.

Organizer: CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE, University of Wrocław

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