



CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND EUROPEAN IDENTITIES
ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY, POZNAŃ, POLAND
24–26TH OCTOBER 2024

The concept of identity in children's literature constitutes a multi-faceted phenomenon. Even if it is not explicitly thematised, it often determines the construction of the literary text and its impact on the child reader. It manifests itself in a wide range of aspects, from ideological message through narrative strategies to the choice of language (e.g. hegemonic vs. minority). The identity-forming role of children's literature is unquestionable: the books people read as children shape them as adults.

The concept of Europe is equally complex, as it has been shaped by geopolitical, ideological, social and cultural changes. The rise and disintegration of empires, the East-West division by the Iron Curtain, and finally, the emergence and transformations of the European Union fostered the coexistence of different projects of transnational thinking. From this perspective, children's literature can be read as a vehicle for a two-way identity—on the one hand, promoting national identifications; on the other, striving to establish a shared repository of motifs, patterns, and schemes developed through international literary circulation, resulting in more general, European identification.

The theme of identity in children's literature has already been the subject of scholarly reflection in various European countries (Blažić 2011; Doughty and Thompson 2011; Kelen and Sundmark 2013; Knuth 2012; Krawatzek and Friess 2022, Kümmerling-Meibauer and Schulz 2023; Nordenstam and Widhe 2021; Sheeky Bird 2014; Truglio 2018, etc.). However, research in this field, especially regarding the concept of Europe, needs to be constantly updated and expanded in light of rapidly changing sociological, geopolitical, and cultural realities.

Children's Literature and European Identities is a pilot conference of the European Children's Literature Research Network, organised by Children's Literature & Culture Research Team at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. It is designed as a platform for exploring how different European identities reflect one another, interfere, and interrelate. On the other hand, it will also allow to highlight common patterns and similar elements, and ultimately ask the question about shared European identity.

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Shared European cultural heritage, its continuations, iterations, and transformations in children's literature;
- How was/is Europe depicted or represented in children's literature (geographically, politically, ideologically);
- From the centre to the periphery—the history of European children's literature in the context of the formation of national identities;
- The canon of children's literature and shared European identity;

- The impact of translation and translated literature on the construction of local and “shared” identities;
- Postcolonial and post-independence heritage as a “difficult” component of European identities in children’s literature;
- The minority turn—ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities in literature and book market;
- Identity-forming strategies as a form of emancipation in the field of European children’s literature;
- Migration as an experience triggering the emergence of “identity in motion/process”;
- Representations of Otherness in European children’s literature.

Selected bibliography:

Blažić, Milena Mileva. 2011. *Children's Literature in South-East Europe*. Comparative Literature and Culture vol. 13.1

Doughty, Terri and Dawn Thompson (eds). 2011. *Knowing Their Place? Identity and Space in Children's Literature*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Kelen, Keith and Björn Sundmark (eds). 2013. *The Nation in Children's Literature. Nations of Childhood*. New York: Routledge.

Knuth, Rebecca. 2012. *Children's Literature and British Identity: Imagining a People and a Nation*. Lanham-Toronto-Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press.

Krawatzek, Felix and Nina Friess (eds). 2022. *Youth and Memory in Europe. Defining the Past, Shaping the Future*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, Bettina and Fariba Schulz (eds). 2023. *Political Changes and Transformations in Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Children's Literature*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.

Nordenstam, Anna and Olle Widhe (eds). 2021. *The Uses of Children's Literature in Political Contexts: Bridging the Pedagogical/Aesthetic Divide*. Special Issue of “Children’s Literature” 49.

Sheeky Bird, Hazel. 2014. *Class, Leisure and National Identity in British Children's Literature 1918–1950*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Truglio, Maria. 2018. *Italian Children's Literature and National Identity: Childhood, Melancholy, Modernity*. New York: Routledge.



CONFERENCE MODE

The conference will be held in hybrid mode: on-site in the Collegium Maius of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland and on the online platform (MS Teams).

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Please submit **panel proposals (3 papers)** or **proposals for individual papers** using the attached submission forms to europeanidentities@amu.edu.pl (subject line *ChildLit & European Identities Submission*) by **15th April 2024**.

All abstracts and papers presented at the conference must be in English.

IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for submission: **15th April 2024**

Notification of acceptance: **end of May 2024**

Deadline for the conference fee payment: **14th June 2024**

Provisional programme: **beginning of July 2024**

CONFERENCE FEES

100 EUR – in-person participation, regular rate

80 EUR – in-person participation, reduced rate (students, PhD students, Precariously Employed)

50 EUR – online participation

CO-CONVENORS:

Magdalena Bednarek

Anna Czernow

Ewa Rajewska

Michalina Wesołowska

Aleksandra Wieczorkiewicz

Children's Literature & Culture Research Team: <https://www.facebook.com/zespoldzieciocy>

Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology: <https://wfpik.amu.edu.pl/en>

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland: <https://amu.edu.pl/en>



Wydział Filologii
Polskiej i Klasycznej
UAM w Poznaniu

