



The Centre for Research on Children's and Young Adult Literature at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Wrocław has the honor to invite you to the third lecture in the series "Controversial Dimensions of Children's Literature"

**Prof. Kimberley Reynolds**

**Beneath the Big Top: controversial dimensions of circus stories**



Circuses, with their ethnic, social and sexual diversity, eroticism, exoticism and hybridity, are always crossing the boundary between innocent fascination and transgression. Circus folk are often cultural outliers, accepted briefly for the entertainment they provide, but soon required to move on. The challenging conditions for long endured by juvenile performers are well documented and now subject to stringent controls. Together these make circuses controversial cultural spaces, yet for more than two centuries, the dominant mythos of the circus in children's books has constructed it largely in terms of glamour, spectacle, and magical transformations.

As this lecture will show with reference to a range of circus stories from the nineteenth century to the present, while circuses themselves have changed significantly in recent decades, there is considerable continuity in the kinds of controversies raised in circus stories. Currently there is a new flourishing of circus fiction for all ages that is modernising the settings, but the strange and mesmerising delights of the circus still frequently encourage readers to consider controversial aspects of culture, not least as it relates to the position and wellbeing of the young.

**DATE:** November 4, 2020

**TIME:** 18.00 (CET)

**VENUE:** MS Teams

Those who have registered for the previous lectures, which took place on September 23 and October 14, can simply join the next lecture at Teams. If you have not, please contact us by email by November 3 at: [barbara.kalla@uwr.edu.pl](mailto:barbara.kalla@uwr.edu.pl)

Kimberley Reynolds is the Professor of Children's Literature in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University in the UK. In 2013 she received the International Brothers Grimm Award for her contributions to the field of children's literature research. Recent book-length publications include *Reading and Rebellion: an anthology of radical writing for children, 1900-1960* (co-edited with Jane Rosen and Michael Rosen, 2018); *Left Out: The Forgotten Tradition of Radical Publishing for Children in Britain, 1910-1949* (2016), and *Children's Literature* in the Oxford University series of Very Short Introductions (2012).