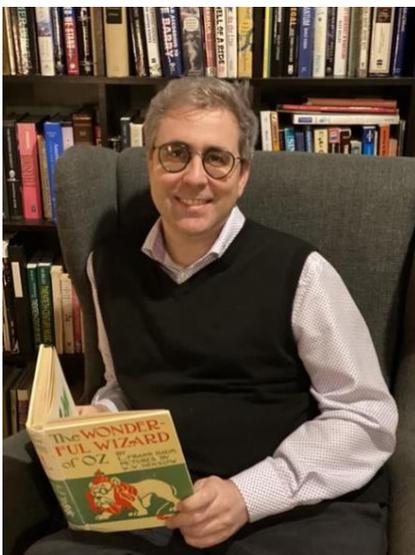




The Centre for Research on Children's and Young Adult Literature at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Wrocław has the honor to invite you to the 21st lecture in the series "International Voices in Children's Literature Studies"

Dr. Ryan Bunch

**Performing the American Fairy Tale: Musicals, Childhood,
and *The Wizard of Oz***



DATE: 14 March 2024

TIME: 18.00 (CET)

VENUE: MS Teams

If you are interested in taking part in the lecture, please [Register here](#) by 12 March.



The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900) by L. Frank Baum has been called the "American fairy tale." However, it is more commonly experienced in popular stage and screen musical adaptations than in the "original" book. These musical productions highlight the participatory performance of American childhood and national identity through embodied singing, dancing, and acting. Make-believe, rooted in childhood, becomes a national creed. The contributions of children to this process highlights their participation in their literary cultures, the performance of childhood, and the making of national mythology. In the theater and in everyday play, unstable performances of childhood, race, gender, and class allow children to take active roles. The character of Dorothy is often played by a young woman in childish dress with big vocals, destabilizing the categories of adult and child and implying a good deal of agency for children. Such is the case with Judy Garland in the 1939 MGM film, as well as for Stephanie Mills who staked a claim on the American fairy tale for Black girls in the 1975 production of *The Wiz*. More recently, the Broadway musical *Wicked* (2003) addresses the concerns of young women while inverting the concepts of good and evil. In home, school, and community performances, young people revise the musical and choreographic scripts of the repertoire in their own negotiations of childhood and nationhood, raising the tantalizing possibility of change, not only of the "original" literary text but also of the structures of childhood and nation embedded within it.

Ryan Bunch is the author of *Oz and the Musical: Performing the American Fairy Tale* (Oxford University Press, 2023). He is a graduate of the Ph.D. program in Childhood Studies at Rutgers University-Camden, where he teaches courses in childhood studies and children's literacies. He teaches children's music and popular music history at Temple University and is the president of the International Wizard of Oz Club.