

The fifth part of the volume shifts the focus to the reception of mythical creatures in works rich in images, such as comic books, animated movies, and television programmes like *Doctor Who*. Elżbieta Olechowska identifies the use of classical mythology in the comic books of Joann Sfar and Christophe Blain, especially their use of hybrid creatures. Hanna Paulouskaya examines how Greek myths were adopted for Soviet animated movies in the 1970s. Amanda Potter discusses the portrayal of classical monsters in the BBC series *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, *Atlantis*, and *Doctor Who*. Konrad Dominas extends investigations of mythical creatures to the Internet, showing “the reception of mythical creatures in the context of multimedia and interactive materials for children on the Internet” (540). In the closing chapter, Katarzyna Marciniak points to the intriguing link between mythological creatures and the Muppets.

As evident from this brief overview of *Chasing Mythical Beasts: The Reception of Ancient Monsters in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture*, the volume succeeds in its aim of investigating “the reception of the mythical creatures in the evolving youth culture” (38) while including studies of not only literary works but also movies, TV series, comic books, and other forms. The authors included in this collection of essays successfully prove that “the all-ages culture that flourishes in our times is particularly accommodating for the mythical creatures” (38): instead of languishing in the past, forgotten and unused, mythical beasts continue their fictional lives in contemporary texts that reflect the vibrant and enduring legacy of antiquity.

New Ideologies and Young Adult Fiction

Deborah Lindsay Williams. 2023. *The Necessity of Young Adult Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 160 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-284897-0.

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As Deborah Lindsay Williams points out in the introduction to her book, children’s literature is often seen as peripheral, “not as important as literature written for grown-ups” (1) despite its increasingly strong representation in academia as a focus of scholarship. The introduction also introduces the problem of defining not only young adult literature as a category of study determined by its content, but also the audience for this category, since, as the author stresses, YA books attract both teenagers and adult readers. However, the author focuses much more on the specific nature of young readers, and in particular their potential for what she terms a “cosmopolitan reading practice, which necessitates a willingness to engage, to move away from what is comfortable or familiar” and to conceive of “difference as an opportunity rather than a threat” (5). Williams views YA fiction as intended for a “readership of potential citizens” (6) who may embrace what she calls “cosmopolitan” practices and therefore reject ideas of fundamentalism, binary thinking, and cultural purity, which represent a reaction to an encounter with difference that Williams claims is embodied by the novels she selects for discussion. These speculative YA novels (all by female authors) are therefore chosen because they address what Williams terms “some of the most pressing issues of the past quarter-century: xenophobia, racism, nationalism, and the climate crisis”

(8) by “offering imaginative reconceptualizations of relationships, from what it means to be a family to the ways in which humans relate to the earth itself” (12).

Chapter one, “Children of the Book”, explores how G. Willow Wilson’s *Alif the Unseen* (2012) and Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998) emphasise the importance of books and of becoming a better reader, which for Williams means resisting nationalism and xenophobia, as well as enabling “a more cosmopolitan, nonhierarchical relationship to the planet” (21). The novels selected by Williams all involve marginalised figures whose engagement with reading opens avenues of thinking about community engagement and “alternative ways of planetary connection” (ibid.), which, according to Williams, constitute, at least in part, the practice of cosmopolitanism, and therefore work against tyranny and climate crisis.

In the second chapter, “Loving the Monsters”, Williams identifies a way of engaging with monstrosity and monstrous characters that replaces revulsion and abjection with kinship, as depicted in Nancy Farmer’s *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) and *The Lord of Opium* (2013) and Rebecca Roanhorse’s *Trail of Lightning* (2018) and *Storm of Locusts* (2019). Williams argues that these novels “dramatize a cosmopolitan critique of US identity politics” while seeking a new, more expansive cosmopolitan theory that embraces feminism and nonhuman agency (49). Interestingly, Williams here supports the idea that YA fiction can “engender and perpetuate new ideologies”, and indeed shows how the selected novels offer such new ideologies “through sustained engagements with questions about female agency, environmental stewardship, and the nature of home” (ibid.).

In chapter three, “Making Bridges”, Nalo Hopkinson’s *Brown Girl in the Ring* (1998) and Nnedi Okorafor’s “Nsibidi Scripts” trilogy (*Akata Witch* (2011), *Akata Warrior* (2017), and *Akata Woman* (2022)) are examined as examples of Afrofuturism, or speculative fiction concerned with African American themes and concerns within the context of technoculture that challenges dominant ideologies. Williams reads these novels as depictions of the struggle between the local and the dominant, environmentally destructive systems, whereby the individualist ethos of capitalism is opposed by “ideas like compassion, fluidity, self-love without narcissism, and cosmopolitanism” (80).

Chapter four, “Reading *Harry Potter* in Abu Dhabi”, focuses on J.K. Rowling’s famous series of novels in the context of Deborah Lindsay Williams’ teaching at NYU Abu Dhabi. Williams finds that the near universality of the *Harry Potter* series enables an exploration of a cosmopolitan reading that is both local and global, which then opens avenues of thinking about censorship, translation, and even cosmopolitanism in the *Harry Potter* books. The chapter explores a wide range of concepts, such as world literature, nationalism, cultural purity, and ethnicity, as well as the critical and scholarly reaction to Rowling’s work, the self-referentiality of Rowling’s novels (which Williams points out are so often *about* reading, and in particular illicit reading), and the issue of separating the author from the text in light of the public outrage that followed Rowling’s expression of opinions on transsexuals on Twitter.

The novels discussed by Williams over the four chapters outlined above are all selected for their ability to highlight why YA literature and children’s literature should be taught in universities and why the public in general should pay attention to these genres: “it’s in these books that we find strategies that might help us resist the forces that are arrayed against

the health of our societies and our planet” (15). Seeking new ways of thinking about the world in (political and environmental) crisis, Williams finds that the novels she selects offer new ideologies that have the power to unsettle fundamentalist attitudes towards people and the planet while teaching their readers about cosmopolitan reading practices grounded in embracing difference and questioning local allegiances.

Trajna i duboka upućenost majci: povjerljivo dijeljenje svakodnevice

Jasna Ažman, ur. 2020. *Sabrana djela Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić, sv. 7. Pisma majci.* Slavonski Brod: Ogranak Matice hrvatske Slavonski Brod. 797 str. ISBN 978-953-6842-50-6.

Andrijana Kos-Lajtman

Dana 18. travnja 2010., na sam autoričin rođendan, iz tiska je izišao prvi svezak kritičkoga izdanja *Sabranih djela Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić*, književnice koju ubrajamo u red najznačajnijih hrvatskih književnih autora uopće, svojevrsne ikone hrvatske dječje književnosti. Bio je to početak velikoga projekta Matice hrvatske, Ogranka u Slavanskom Brodu, koji kao autor i urednik vodi hrvatski književni povjesničar i profesor novije hrvatske književnosti Vinko Brešić, a cilj mu je obuhvatiti i kritički sagledati cjelokupnu pisanu ostavštinu Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić. Zamišljeno je da sve što je u svijetu zasigurno najpoznatija i najprevođenija hrvatska autorica napisala bude sabrano na jednom mjestu i to kao kritičko izdanje – dakle, onako kako je autorica napisala ili zadnje odobrila, uz obavezne popratne metodološke tekstove (analize, prikaze, pojašnjenja) renomiranih stručnjaka koji su radili na pojedinom svesku. Uključeni su stručnjaci različitih naraštaja koji su do sada iznjedrili sedam svezaka – *Pjesme i priče, Romani, Bajke i basne, Članci (1903. – 1938.), Bibliografija, Moji zapisci i Pisma majci (1892. – 1901.)*. Kao što saznajemo iz „Pogovora urednika“ na kraju sveska, time projekt nije još nipošto završen – samo što se pisama majci i ocu tiče „realno je očekivati još najmanje jednu knjigu sličnu ovoj“.

Sedmi svezak priredila je Brođanka Jasna Ažman, stručnoj javnosti otprije poznata kao stručnjakinja za život i djelo Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić kojima se višekratno bavila u svojim znanstvenim i stručnim člancima, kao i u knjizi *Brodski spomenari Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić* (2008.). U korpusu koji obuhvaća više od tisuću pisama majci i ocu, Ažman je do sada obradila prvih deset godina, točnije, sveukupno 579 pisama. Dopisivanje s roditeljima Brlić-Mažuranić započela je nekoliko dana nakon udaje za Vatroslava Brlića, u travnju 1891., i održavala ju je sve do majčine smrti 1919., odnosno očeve smrti 1928. Pisala im je odvojeno, a sedmi svezak donosi isključivo pisma majci napisana u razdoblju od 1892. do 1901. Autoričina korespondencija s ocem Vladimirom Mažuranićem posebice se intenzivirala nakon smrti majke Henriette Mažuranić, rođ. Bernath, a imat ćemo ju priliku vidjeti, pretpostavljamo, u nekom od sljedećih svezaka. Dakako, osim s roditeljima, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić tijekom života vodila je bogatu korespondenciju i s drugim osobama iz svojega privatnoga i javnoga djelokruga – sa sestrom i braćom, rodbinom, prijateljicama i prijateljima, vlastitom djecom, suprugom, kao i s brojnim izdavačima, urednicima, prevoditeljima, piscima i institucijama. Nadamo se da će i ta pisma ući u neke buduće sveske njezine sabrane ostavštine.