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Mermaid

cont'd from pg 5

by white men.

2. Monique Roffey's "The Mermaid of Black Conch" (2020)

This gorgeous and complex work of Caribbean literature dips into magical realism but is deeply grounded in the reality of today – specifically, the effects of colonialism and exploitative tourism.

Like "The Deep," "The Mermaid of Black Conch" explores lost ancestries and imagines alternative futures. The novel highlights the continued impact of white settlement on a fictional Caribbean island called Black Conch.

One day, a mermaid named Aycayia is caught in the net of a fisherman. She is ancient and Indigenous – "red-skinned, not black, not African" – and carries the weight of history. David, the fisherman who finds her and falls in love with her, recalls his first sighting of her: "She looking like a woman from long ago, like old-time Taino people I saw in a history book at school."

Similar to Solomon's historian in "The Deep," this mermaid is depicted as an embodied archive; her hair is a home for sea creatures, and her face is a history book.

However, Roffey's mermaid is an anomaly, singular and isolated, not a member of a tribe. The ocean keeps this ancient beast safe, hiding her from the destructive forces of Western capitalism, embodied in the father-son duo of American tourists who seek to capture and capitalize on what they see as an aquatic trophy.

3. Nnedi Okorafor's "Lagoon" (2014)

"A star falls from the sky. A woman rises from the sea. The world will never be the same." The publisher's summary describes a science fiction novel that combines the alien-encounter genre with African mythology to create a vast narrative network of characters, human and nonhuman, that stretches across Nigeria.

The arrival of aliens off the coast of Lagos transforms the area and the people, miraculously remedying centuries of oceanic destruction caused by industrial and colonial exploitation. It also turns Adaora, a female marine biologist caught in a bad marriage, into a mermaid.

"Lagoon" is far more than an allegory of ecological repair. But I want to point out how literature explores the global ecological crisis and, specifically, how ecocriticism plays a key role in the emergent genre of Black mermaid literature.

As ecocritic and Caribbean literature scholar Elizabeth DeLoughrey writes, rising sea levels caused by global warming are spurring a planetary future that is "more oceanic."

Many contemporary mermaid tales share an acute sense of environmental concern.

Mermaids serve as signals, in both senses of the word – as an emergency alert and as a medium for transmitting a message about humanity's increasingly oceanic planetary future.

In "Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals" (2020), Black feminist theorist Alexis Pauline Gumbs points to "several practices of marine mammals that resonate with Black freedom movement strategies and tendencies." Racial justice and environmental activism are aligned – and, as many Black mermaid novels teach readers, inseparable.

There are many more works I could have included in this roundup – Natasha Bowen's "Skin of the Sea" (2021), which grounds its narrative in the West African myths of Mami Wata and the goddess Yemoja, or Bethany C. Morrow's "A Song Below Water" (2020), a young adult novel that tells the coming-of-age story of a Black girl who becomes a mermaid.

None of these texts are outliers because they feature Black mermaids.

Instead, they are part of a broader cultural movement – a contemporary mermaid craze deserving of critical attention and appreciation.

Newspapers

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(D-Texas), Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.), Rep. Stacey Plaskett (D-V.I.), and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), also did not return messages.

"Instead of supporting local broadcasters and improving our access to the news, the JCPA favors big broadcasters and threatens our ability to find factual information online," ACLU officials said.

Officials at the nonprofit Public Knowledge argued that the legislation would do nothing to help preserve local journalism.

They further claimed that it could compound some of the biggest problems in the information landscape today, including consolidation and declining quality of information.

"While the JCPA has undergone extensive rewrites, it is still an anti-trust exemption, a legal maneuver that has a history of failing to achieve beneficial goals," said Lisa Macpherson, Senior Policy Analyst at Public Knowledge.

"Allowing the largest media conglomerates – like Alden Global Capital, Gannett, Sinclair Broadcast Group, and News Corp – to collude on the terms of access

and value of their content will hurt competition and make our news landscape worse, not better."

Macpherson continued:

"In a bill that is supposedly meant to encourage local journalism, there is no accountability for how the money is spent. Facebook and Google will fund more stock buybacks and executive bonuses than journalists' salaries. It also introduces a precedent of payment for simply linking to information on the internet.

"This bill is also a threat to content moderation. The JCPA allows publishers to sue Facebook or Google for taking down content that the platforms find offensive or

contrary to their community standards.

"And with the most recent amendment, proposed by Sen. Cruz (R-Texas), harmful misinformation, networked disinformation, and hate speech will be even harder to police under

this bill – and that is by design.

"The JCPA will not save local journalism. Instead, it will make a few billionaires even wealthier at the expense of a healthy and open internet and information environment for all of us."



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12-21-22

SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER JOB AD

Worksystems is an award-winning nonprofit organization serving Multnomah and Washington Counties and the City of Portland. Join Worksystems and make a difference in your community!

One function of this role will be to oversee coordination and management of a WorkSource-based Rapid Response Team. The Rapid Response Team engages with businesses that are undergoing staff reductions to inform impacted workers of WorkSource services, unemployment insurance information, and additional resources to support their transition into new employment.

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12-14,21-22

INVITATION TO BID

2022-74 Invitation to Bid for Fourth Plain and Andresen Fiber Repair

Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area (dba C-TRAN) has issued an Invitation to Bid (ITB) for the 2022-74 Fourth Plain and Andresen Fiber Repair. This ITB may be found at <https://www.c-tran.com/about-c-tran/business/procurement/bid-and-proposal-opportunities>. Bids will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. on Monday, January 12, 2023.

12-14,21-22

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