

## Where Can Wonder Take Us?

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GREETING TO ALL. ALOHA MAI KĀKOU. SALVE.

Thanks to Veronica Schanoes for her over-the-top introduction. I treasure her as a scholar, writer, and friend. Thanks to the IAFA Board for the invitation; to Terri Windling, Ellen Kushner, Delia Sherman, and Holly Black for inspiration. And my gratitude to so many of you here from whom I continue to learn.

Where can wonder take us? Everywhere and nowhere, of course. The theme-park version of wonder invites us into such spaces, not places, to purchase rides and thrills. Thanks to the economic trends that sociologist Alan Bryman claims have resulted in the “Disneyization” of society,<sup>1</sup> this kind of theme-park lure extends to other aspects of everyday culture today, and not only in the USA. Here are two recent examples of fairy-tale theming: the Taiwanese government built a gigantic church in the shape of a Cinderella glass slipper, specifically for wedding ceremonies and photo shoots in a scenic coastal area (Chen and Tsoi). And Arabian Nights-themed shimmering flats are part of a prize package in a “magical giveaway” that seals the partnership of an American company of designer shoes and Disney’s *Aladdin* on Broadway.<sup>2</sup> In its suggestive—and Orientalist—power, this Arabian-Nights themed luxury combination exemplifies yet another aspect of Disneyization, that is, hybrid or de-differentiated consumption, whereby products that are conventionally in distinct spheres of the market (apparel and entertainment) become associated with one another. Women in both of these examples are romanced as target consumers, based on the assumption that their/our desires will be sparked by dazzling fairy-tale footwear and lead to experiences of wish fulfillment in the form of luxury weddings and expensive shows.

All too often, then, fairy-tale wonders in our society today promote a heteronormative and capitalist promise of happiness. Countering this, the “bemusement park” Dismaland opened in August 2015 in Somerset, Eng-

land, as “a family attraction that acknowledges inequality and impending catastrophe” (Banksy and Mills).<sup>3</sup> How Dismaland could avoid colluding with corporate wonder as entertainment was to remain a temporary art installation or event. Dismaland had announced itself by calling out Disney as its model experience,<sup>4</sup> one that it emulated, parodied and criticized, as seen in its YouTube preview. Apparently, the ideological and economic irony of this contradiction was not lost on British artist Banksy, the artistic creator of Dismaland. After only six weeks and 150,000 visitors, the park closed, and its structures were donated to a refugee camp near Calais (Thompson; Chester).

It struck me when I heard about Banksy’s action that earlier in 2015 Marina Warner, fairy-tale scholar and winner of the Holberg Prize, had decided to use some of this award to help “create communal cultural spaces in refugee camps” that otherwise provide “only ‘food, shelter and water, the basic necessities, in a minimal way’” (Reisz). In doing so, as a cultural critic increasingly interested in forced migration,<sup>5</sup> Warner was upholding the humanistic promise of on-site storytelling practices as a resource for survival, a weapon against propaganda. Refugee camps become places in part because of the stories—personal, historical, fictional—that haunt and enliven them, the “invisible luggage” (xiv) as Angela Carter referred to it, migrants bring along, exchange, and adapt. Not all stories move across borders freely, but nonrealistic ones have an easier time doing so, and about fairy tales in particular, Warner writes, they “migrate on soft feet, for borders are invisible to them, no matter how ferociously they are policed by cultural purists” (2014, xv). The question “Where Can Wonder Take Us?” acknowledges the moving force that the experience of wonder exerts on us humans, but elides its narrative and situated aspects, and so does not take into account how wonder *tales* speak to *locating* ourselves in an always already animated world.

In September last year, at the University of Hawai’i-Mānoa we held a small symposium called “Creating Futures Rooted in Wonder: Bridges between Indigenous, Science Fiction, and Fairy Tale Studies.” At the opening roundtable I had the honor of presenting with Nisi Shawl, Grace Dillon, Andrea Hairston, Director of Social Enterprise at MA’O Organic Farms Kamuela Joseph Nui Enos, and professor of Hawaiian Studies Jon Kamakawiwo’ole Osorio who is also a Hawaiian composer and singer. Co-organizers Aiko Yamashiro and Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada had asked us to reflect on the following questions:

- \*How does “wonder” help us imagine and create more just and sustainable futures?
- \*What is a specific story/issue/context that grounds your thinking?
- \*What is the value of bridging indigenous, science fiction, and fairy tale studies?

These questions have stayed with me, both as a folklore and fairy-tale studies scholar and as a settler in Hawai'i who seeks to be an active ally for Hawaiian sovereignty, social justice, and sustainability. Here I will develop my answers starting from what changes when we choose to focus on fairy tales as wonder tales. Where can this approach take us? I'll point to four paths and a few stories that ground my taking them. I will close with some thoughts on how this approach may help scholars to recognize an emerging poetics of wonder in today's activist fairy-tale adaptations and also to reimagine and decolonize the relationship of fairy-tale studies with indigenous studies.

So about wonder and fairy tales. The ICFA call for papers for this year's conference asserted the connection of fairy tale with wonder as prime, which definitely works when we think of fairy tale in comparison with other genres in the spectrum of the fantastic. However, wonder today is not the dominant approach to the fairy-tale genre, which is more prevalently associated in popular and critical contexts with specific kinds of "magic"—the happily-ever-after attainment of love, power, and fashionable clothes that in Disney fairy tales instantly results from a fairy's wand waving—and "enchantment"—the daydreaming lull often claimed to be the effect of fairy tales.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to the instant gratification of such consumer romance, the experience of wonder springs from awe and inspires curiosity; compounds fear and desire; it is unsettling and thus transformative (Warner 2004). Wonder in fairy tales invites us to be moved by what in the everyday appears extraordinary; to wander off socially sanctioned paths and to imagine what might be; to explore alternate possibilities and futures. As a state of being and an action, wonder is both the trigger and the product of transformation, ours and the world's (Bacchilega 2013). Its connective power invites humans to be and act humbly in a world that is continuously transforming itself and us, to become more attuned to the world's and our aliveness. Wonder in relation to fairy tales, then, has a quality that, in Raymond Williams's terms, is more residual, formed in the past and out of beliefs we tend to associate with the past, but should *not*, I argue, be confined to the past only.

### Take #1:

The world of fairy tales, when we approach it with an eye to wonder, is fully animated, its fauna and flora living out a fluid and complex relation with humans. Read as wonder tales, these tales' storyworld is transbiological.

I think of stories where transformation depends not only on a fairy's wand or a witch's spells, but on the connection and communication of human, ancestor, fruit, flower, frog, and transgenic bodies. Cinderella's helper in most cultures is not a fairy, but an animal or a tree symbolically related to her dead mother: cow, fish, doves, date or hazelnut tree. In a well-known tale from the

Mediterranean region, a Prince is searching for a bride with skin as white as ricotta and lips as red as his own blood; he meets an ogress who gives him fruit—citrons in Giambattista Basile's version, pomegranates, watermelons, oranges in others; the Prince cuts the fruit open and from it emerges the woman he wished for. Another woman in Basile's fairy-tale collection gives birth to a myrtle branch that is also a lovely fairy. A man's wife becomes a flower during the day, and he must recognize which flower she is. At the start of the Grimms' "Briar Rose," a frog announces to the queen who is taking a bath that she will have a much longed-for child.<sup>7</sup>

Examples of transgenic interactions and bodies abound beyond "Red Riding Hood" and "Puss in Boots." A seemingly unpromising hero becomes king because, thanks to his ability to understand the language of animals, he helps birds, fish, and ants, and is helped in turn by them. A young man transforms into a deer when he drinks from a certain stream. The princess's brothers turn into ravens or swans, but retain their family connection with her.<sup>8</sup> When Cesarino, the dragon slayer in Giovan Francesco Straparola's early collection, is murdered by his envious mother and sisters, the three loyal animals who grew up with him—a lion, a wolf, and a bear—restore him to life by extracting the poisoned weapon from his body. And Basile's heroine flees her father's illicit desire not by covering herself in a donkey's hide but actually taking on the body of a she-bear until she feels fully safe.<sup>9</sup> In every case, the wondrous transgenic transformation or bond is also the catalyst of further desires, knowledge, and transformations.

Challenging traditional tools of folklore studies such as the Aarne-Thompson-Uther tale-type system that adopted human-centered categories to describe these stories (Uther), Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill recently focused on "animal trans" (2012)—"nonhuman animals turning into people and/or people becoming nonhuman animals"—and Greenhill, with Leah Claire Allen, is developing work to show that "fairy tales are *already* species-queer, posthuman, and transbiological; their stories and characters destabilize and upend normative species relations" (forthcoming).

### Take #2:

Wonder names a marvel to behold as well as the emotional response and action that it engenders. Fairy tales do not simply represent marvelous objects, but also put wondrous feelings and actions in motion within the storyworld, feelings and actions that may bolster the ability of tales' recipients to imagine and pursue what seems impossible. By responding narratively to the question: "How should things happen in the world?" the folk/fairy tale—and here I am, via Jack Zipes (2012) channeling André Jolles (1930)—sustains hope in a counterworld that, unlike the real world, functions according to what he

called “naïve morality,” and I would call justice. When read as wonder tales, fairy tales are speculative fictions that activate personal and social transformation.

Having lost her prince to an impostor, the royal protagonist of Giambattista Basile’s *Tale of Tales*’ frame story turns to the seemingly insignificant gifts, three nuts, the fairies had given her at the start of her quest; the hazelnut she cracks open contains an “object amazing beyond all imagination” (40), a doll that spins gold. Seeing this marvel, the impostor demands that the prince acquire it for her at all cost. The princess gives it to him for free, and when the impostor holds it, the doll activates in her “a burning desire to hear tales” (41). This leads to a five-day storytelling event, featuring quite a range of fairy tales and discussion about them among the tellers and audience. It is only at the end of the fifth day, that the 49<sup>th</sup> tale, “Three Citrons,” focuses on an ordeal that closely resembles the one suffered by the princess at the hands of the impostor. The audience in the frame tale is now ready for truth telling: justice will be done, and the prince will have his rightful bride. To say it with Neil Gaiman, “The road between dreams and reality is one that must be negotiated, not walked” (61). I take this in part to mean that wonder is an emotional and active process we negotiate through storied experiences, one that demands change in us *and* the world.

Aimee Bender’s adaptation of the tale “Donkeyskin” helped me realize this by narratively amplifying a detail in ways that brought home to me the power of wonder as embodied knowledge. In Charles Perrault’s 17<sup>th</sup>-century “Donkeyskin,” the princess, frightened and saddened by her father’s request to marry her, takes her godmother’s advice and sets conditions to the marriage by making requests of the king they believe cannot be humanly met. She asks for a dress the color of the sky, and the king sends for the best tailors and threatens them with death if they cannot produce such a marvel. When surprisingly they do, the princess asks for a dress the color of the moon, and then another the color of the sun.... You know the story.<sup>10</sup>

Now, Bender’s “The Color Master” is all about the making of these wonderful dresses in an expensive shop for royalty who request “clothing in the colors of natural elements” (161). There, the Color Master and her team have been working to accommodate requests for a “handbag the perfect pink of a rose” (166) and shoes not gray, but “the color of rock” (161). This making of marvels is their trade and art. Usually, they succeed at these impossible tasks thanks to “hunting for color everywhere” (164), conducting visualization seminars, mixing different color dusts from their fifty some bins, grinding particles of this or that natural element into their dyes, and following the instructions of the talented Color Master. However, when the king’s requests come (first for a dress the color of the moon, then the sun, and last the sky), she is ailing and takes on a member of her team as the special apprentice who will

replace her after her death. Part of the training has to do with mixing colors, as “color is nothing unless next to other colors” (171), but the real challenge for the apprentice is the Color Master’s consistent plea: “put anger in the dress” (169), a request that is fulfilled only when it comes to the third dress, the color of sky. By then, the Color Master is dead, and the anger that goes into the dress is both her outrage at the king’s wrongful desire and her successor’s rage from grief.<sup>11</sup>

In the new Color Master’s words:

I picked the right colors to mix with blue, a little of so many other colors and then so many different kinds of blue and gray and more blue and blue. And in it all, the sensation of shaking my fists at the sky, shaking my fists high up to the sky, because that is what we do when someone dies too early, too beautiful, too undervalued by the world, or sometimes just at all—we shake our fists at the big blue beautiful indifferent sky, and the anger is righteous and strong and helpless and huge. I shook and I shook, and I put all of it into the dress. (179)

This dress is a marvel to behold but, more than that, it is the outcome of a material and *affective* alchemy. As such it carries the energy of embodied knowledge and “righteous anger,” and it perhaps will play a part in enabling the princess to leave her father’s palace, and journey away to make her own future. Bender’s new Color Master only knows that “soon after the princess got the dress, she left town” (180). I know that her story allowed me to see how in the earlier tales too, the moon, sun, and sky dresses were talismans, wondrous catalysts of rebellion against the powers that be.

### Take #3:

Fairy tales place us in a landscape where everything is animated (Warner 2014), that is living and conscious. Not only do their protagonists have the capacity to forge relationships with all beings, but fairy tales dramatize the interdependence of human and non-human life, the life of the land. Read as wonder tales, fairy tales articulate a hopeful stance towards this interconnection.

Rather than referring to multiple tales, I offer one grounding example here, *Il topo e la montagna* (The Mouse and the Mountain,) recently published in Italy as a colorfully illustrated children’s book.<sup>12</sup> Antonio Gramsci, who wrote it for his children in a June 1931 letter from prison addressed to his wife, ascribed it to the oral traditions of his homeland, Sardegna. Here it goes in my translation:<sup>13</sup>

My dearest Giulia,  
 [. . .] I'd like to tell Delio a tale from my land that seems interesting to me. I'll summarize it and you can develop and perform it for him and Giuliano. A boy child is asleep. There is a jug of milk ready for when we awakes. A mouse drinks the milk. Having no milk, the child cries and the mother yells. Desperate, the mouse hits his head against the wall . . . but he realizes this is of no use and runs off to the goat to get some milk. The goat will give the mouse milk if she has grass to eat. The mouse goes to the fields to fetch grass, and the arid soil wants water. The mouse goes to a fountain. It is in ruins because of the war, and its scattered waters are dissipating: the fountain wants a construction worker to rebuild it. The mouse goes to the construction worker: he needs rocks. The mouse goes to the mountain and a sublime dialog takes place between the mouse and the mountain, which has been deforested by land speculators and her bones are showing all over without soil. The mouse tells the whole story and promises that the child will, once he is grown, replant pine, oak, and chestnut trees. So the mountain gives rocks. (The fountain fills with water. The fields turn green. The goat has grass to eat) and the boy has so much milk he can wash himself in it. He grows, plants trees, everything changes; the mountain's bones disappear under the new humus, rainfall becomes regular again because the trees hold the moisture and the streams no longer devastate the plains. In other words, the mouse has conceived of an actual *piatiliyetca*.<sup>14</sup> This is a tale proper to a land ruined by deforestation. Dearest Giulia, you really must tell this story and tell me then the children's reactions. I hug you tenderly,  
 Antonio

Narratives of wonder speak to realities that are larger than us, but also situated, and what some call the “supernatural” is a way of grasping history and our place in it.<sup>15</sup>

#### Take #4:

Read as wonder tales, fairy tales place us in a landscape where everything is living, and they envision a sustainable future that builds not on greed, but on interdependence. Thus, fairy tales are wonder tales that, while surely distinct from indigenous literatures and oratures, inhabit an affinity with their ways of knowing and being in the world, their interconnectedness of human bodies, land, nature, spirit, and art forms. Fairy tales when read as wonder tales have decolonial potential.

In colonial contexts, we know, the label of fairy tale has been imposed on non-Euro-American traditional stories with damaging results. Fairy tales within the mutually supportive frameworks of capitalism and colonialism put and keep Natives in their place. But shifting our focus from commodified magic to wonder can help to undo the hegemony of the Euro-American fairy tale over other wonder genres.

Furthermore, in spite of Albert Einstein saying “if you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales,” these tales, like non-Euro-American wonder genres, are easily dismissed as narratives “of no real account”<sup>16</sup> that demand suspension of disbelief on the part of adults who know better; tales that, as the narrative of progress in our skeptical age goes, should be eventually discarded. But countering this social sentence, indigenous and non-indigenous artists are deploying wonder across cultures and genres for activist projects. I think of artists in this very room. In my own experience, reading Nalo Hopkinson was transformative. I think of how what Cherokee writer and scholar Daniel Heath Justice recently called “indigenous wonderworks” conjure wonder in their social critiques and visions for the future.<sup>17</sup> And also of indigenous artists in different media Karlo Mila, Dan Taulapapa McMullin, Lianne Charlie, Elisabeth La Pensée, and non-indigenous artists like Emma Donoghue, Sara Maitland, and Guillermo del Toro—each of whom has been rethinking the canonical fairy tale starting from situated knowledges, decolonial and queer desires, ecological and social struggles.

Looking to the future, why does pursuing a conversation between indigenous, fairy-tale and other studies of the fantastic matter? As the co-organizers of the 2015 symposium and guest editors of *Marvels & Tales* “Rooted in Wonder” put it:

Historically, Indigenous wisdom and wonder have had a fraught relationship with the fields of folklore and fairy-tale studies, cultural anthropology, and ethnography, with Indigenous knowledges being relegated to folk wisdom or fairy tales as a way to undermine their authority in colonial knowledge systems, to make way for colonial projects of modernization or development on Indigenous lands. Critical folklore and fairy-tale scholars, however, have also worked to map the global circuits and world making of these colonial traditions (Naithani) and to repoliticize the power of wonder—a potentially transgressive power of questioning, curiosity, amazement, and awe that call forth active and activist responses in the process of storytelling. (Kuwada and Yamashiro 18)

And visual artist Lianne Charlie—whose beautiful “Sók Neyni'ın | it's good to see you” (25) I shared with my audience on PowerPoint and you can view in

the *Marvels & Tales* special issue—imbues her response to her ancestors' tales of wonder with moving urgency and hope:

Every day Indigenous peoples—like my family and others, everywhere—are fighting to protect and occupy our homelands, and every day the state is finding new and coercive means of removing us. This struggle compels us to tell different kinds of stories: stories that are severed from their lands, like us. Stories *about* our ancestors' stories—tales of wonder—that awaken our inherent curiosity and a deep-seated ancestral desire to be back out on the land. These tales also challenge us to move through the fear and estrangement caused by growing up disconnected from our homelands. (22)

Overall, I feel that as scholars in different disciplines it is our responsibility and privilege to attend to this insistent and emerging poetics and politics of wonder, one that questions established lines between history, fiction, and science, between the natural and the supernatural; one that embodies counter-hegemonic perspectives; and does so to help us imagine and act together to bring about better futures. Part of our attending to wonder, then, demands us to restore situated and interrelated histories to the fantastic or “visionary” in its many forms.

This means, more specifically, for those of us in fairy-tale studies, that we have a lot to learn from indigenous studies and indigenous wonderworks. “Fairy tale” when applied to the folk narratives of the rest of the world is a colonial concept; it is time to focus on what makes a fairy tale, past or present, and fairy-tale adaptations not only activist, but potentially decolonial. Doing so may change our definition of a genre that should not, as I have argued elsewhere (2013), be discussed as *the* wonder tale, but as one among many culturally-situated wondrous genres.

Is the fairy tale, when understood as wonder tale, foremost an activator of transformations, deploying heroic optimism to make what seemed impossible possible, especially for so-called unpromising heroes who often succeed by choosing reciprocity over greed? In bringing about wonder as their effect and affect, inviting us to know and feel the power of the world's continuous transformations as well as the power of human desire for change and a better life, today's wonder tales by queer, indigenous, and other activist artists push powerfully against equating that better life with “consumer romance,” the unsustainability and injustice of which we experience every day. All the more, then, it matters to attend to and be moved by narratives that make counter-hegemonic futures rooted in wonder desirable and compelling.

### Call.

I sketched four interrelated paths, but only four—there are many more if we take seriously the situatedness of our calls for and responses to stories. So let me end by asking you to help sketch more paths: would you e-mail me, in no more than a paragraph, a sketch of where, from your situated experiences, a specific wonder tale takes you? With Brian Attebery's permission, we'll include at least some of these responses in the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*. Ready? Take it from here, if you please, and thank you....

PS about call & responses. I consider myself fortunate that in addition to many informal comments I did receive a few responses to my call, which are included below. They are not each contained in a paragraph—well, that is not surprising! And I particularly appreciate that the paths these responses take are variedly situated, creative, and generative.

### Notes

1. For Bryman, Disneyization is “the process by which the principles of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sections of American society as well as the rest of the world” (1). Bryman distinguishes this globalizing force from Disneyfication (Giroux), and it encompasses much more than the Disneyfied fairy tale (Zipes).
2. “We've partnered with Disney's ALADDIN on Broadway to grant three wishes! Three lucky winners will be the first to own a pair of limited edition Arabian Nights Tiekies as part of a prize package including” 2 tickets to the Broadway show, 2 round-trip tickets and 2 nights in a hotel suite in NYC <<http://tiekies.com/magicalgiveaway>>.
3. Disclosure: I speak of Dismaland only based on what I know about it from the media.
4. See Jobson; Anderson. While Banksy instituted a “site-wide ban on images of Mickey Mouse” (Banksy and Pricco), a distressed Ariel and an accident-victim Cinderella in the pumpkin coach made an appearance in Dismaland.
5. Marina Warner has since continued her scholarly activism with the linked creative writing and translation workshops “The Bearer-Beings': Portable Stories in Dislocated Times” (St Anne's College, Oxford, May 14 2016) and “Stories in Transit: Telling the Tale in Times of Conflict/Storie in transito: Raccontare e [rac]conti in tempi di conflitto” (Museo Internazionale delle Marionette G. Pasqualino, Palermo, September 26-28 2016). See <<http://www.marinawarner.com/diary.html>> for the questions concerning tales, displacement, shelter, and testimony that the Palermo workshop explores, and her report on these projects and workshops in *Marvels & Tales* 31.1 (2017). Web. <<http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/marvels/vol31/iss1/9>>

6. I want to acknowledge that not all “magic” is reducible to Disney magic and that there is more to be said for how “enchantment” works. In my book (2013), I contrast fairy tales’ politics of wonder to those of magic and enchantment, but their poetics—as Warner’s title *Wonder Tales: Six French Stories of Enchantment* implies—are more intertwined historically than I can do justice here.

7. See Vaz da Silva for a discussion of this symbolism in “Cinderella” tales. I am referring to “The Three Citrons” and “The Myrtle” in Basile’s *Tale of Tales* (Basile in Canepa’s translation); and to “A Tale with a Riddle” and “Briar Rose” from the Grimms’ *Children’s and Household Tales* (translated in Zipes 2014). I chose tales in the European tradition, but these transbiological motifs are more widespread geographically.

8. These are stories in the Grimms’ collection as well: “The White Snake,” “Little Brother and Little Sister,” “The Twelve Brothers” (Zipes 2014).

9. See “Cesarino, the Dragon Slayer” in *The Pleasant Nights* and “The She-Bear” in Basile’s collection.

10. This is actually not a popular fairy tale, an ignored stepsister of the “Cinderella” tales. But you may know it from the musical French film by Jacques Demy, *Peau d’Âne* (1970) or Terri Windling’s adaptation, “Donkeyskin.” See Anne Duggan’s discussion of Demy’s queer enchantments and Helen Pilinovsky’s and Jeana Jorgensen’s essays on “Donkeyskin” versions and adaptations.

11. To my knowledge, this short story was first published in Kate Bernheimer 2010 anthology of “new fairy tales.” In her afterword to the story Bender states, “I read ‘Donkeyskin’ many times as a kid, and what I loved most were those dresses. Inside an unsettling, provocative story—the king marrying his daughter?—was the universe revealed in fabric.... Who were these tailors and seamstresses? I didn’t think about any of this directly, but the pull to read and reread the story often had to do with the breathlessness I felt, imagining a dress the color of the sky. Which sky?...” (384). In the 2010 version, the one who will become the new Color Master has a name, Patty, but in the 2013 short story (from which I quote) all gender identifiers are gone; I have avoided gendered qualifiers in my comments as well.

12. Dated June 1, 1931, this letter was printed for the first time in the 1948 *L’albero del riccio*, a collection of tales Gramsci had included in his letters while imprisoned for anti-fascist and communist activism. This collection was intended for children and illustrated with black-and-white drawings.

13. My translation of “Il topo e la montagna” is published here with the permission of the Fondazione Gramsci Onlus, the official Gramsci institute in Rome, Italy. I am grateful to the Fondazione Gramsci Onlus for allowing me to publish this translation and to Luisa Righi, especially, Arianna Pizzi, and Dario Massimi for their guidance and generosity as I continue to research the tales Gramsci included in his letters. An increasingly large selection of Gramsci’s letters has been made available in Italian by various publishers starting in 1947 through the 1990s; the Fondazione Gramsci Onlus plans to publish 9 volumes of Gramsci’s letters, and so far 2 are available, including epistolary exchanges from the 1906-1923 period.

14. Gramsci is referring to the 5-year economic plan in the USSR.

15. For important discussions of “situated” fantasies in relation to histories and knowledges see Attebery; Dillon; and the 30.1 special issue of *Marvels & Tales*.

16. I allude here to Kuwada’s “fantasy-ish” (his label) short story “Of No Real Account”—such a good read!

17. Justice, who had been using this term “indigenous wonderworks” in oral presentations, has recently published “Indigenous Wonderworks and the Settler-Colonial Imaginary” and develops this concept in *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018).

In this last part of my presentation, I draw on my opening remarks at the September 2015 symposium in Honolulu. Talks, performances, and handouts from “Creating Futures Rooted in Wonder: Bridges between Indigenous, Science Fiction, and Fairy-Tale Studies” are available online as of April 2016. The symposium emerged from work on two journals’ special issues—“Rooted in Wonder: Tales of Indigenous Activism and Community Organizing” *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 30.1 (2016) and “Indigenous Futurism” *Extrapolation* 57.1-2 (2016). Thanks to Haley Kaliehu for her original artwork, and to Donovan Kūhiō Colleps and Kanai’a Nakamura for designing the conference flyer.

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## RESPONSES

1.  
"Gardens of the Galaxy" by Sandra J. Lindow

My first job,  
Gardens of the Galaxy,  
climbing pylons,  
polishing stars above  
hydroponic pumpkins  
growing into star ships,  
eggplant handbags with clasps of pearl  
prestdigital seeming  
genetic engineering.

Alien agronomies,  
the intricate architecture  
of nucleic acids never seen in nature:  
rising spirals like spangled coral,  
fingers of soft glass tickling the breeze,  
wands containing nebulae,  
lady's slippers, size six, grown to order,  
tree taps to collect a fabric of dreams.

At night these stars are growlights,  
and at the end of my shift,  
I'll climb down and choose  
my pay from bushels of seconds,  
perfect for the right person.  
A carriage, not quite perfect  
but FTL crystal intact,  
to propel me to the stars.

2.

"Where Can Wonder Take Us?" by Veronica Schanoes

I have never before considered the question of where wonder takes me, but it has resonated in my head, along with "Why are you people so hungry for marvels?" asked by Sofia Samatar's narrator in her story "Mahliya and Mauhub and the White-Footed Gazelle." Indeed, I have lived to see many of the marvels and wonders that fired my fantastic imagination as a child outstripped by everyday technologies—iPhones provide pictures that move through their live photo feature, and smartphones put to shame the wrist communicators that were staples of science fiction shows when I was young. But these do not generate the kind of wonder in me that fairy tales do.

Why am I so hungry for marvels? Where does wonder take me?

In my particular case, I believe it takes me back home, back to my most essential home, my mother. As a child, she made the world magic for me and gave me an animistic approach to everything around me. I read her childhood copies of the Andrew Lang fairy books and the first 32 Oz books. The wonder and empathy created by these tales informs and strengthens the bond I share with her, my first and best and fiercest advocate. And now that I have my own children, I further appreciate that her love for me is a wonder, and that she sees me as a wonder. The wonder of transformation and growth and connection that is embodied in these tales is the same wonder I feel at my young son's transformation from kicking, stretching being in my body to an infant to a chubby, jolly, opinionated baby. The same wonder my mother feels for me. For me, wonder tales are imbued with the love of mother for child, and the connection of daughter to mother. And for me, unlike for my mother, that connection and that love are only positive. My mother's own mother was imaginative and fun to play with when my mother was little, but when she was an older child and then a young woman, her mother became a nightmare, mentally ill and abusive. Wonder tales to me speak of the wonder of my mother's trauma and resilience, how as a girl and young woman she faced miseries she kept me safe from and kept from me, and emerged loving and fierce. How I hope to keep my son safe from my own experiences of depression.

That's as a reader. As a writer, I look and I see that many of my most evocative pieces have been those that recreate European fairy tales with Jewish protagonists. This started as almost a lark—a way to add a bit of individuality, a bit of myself to the protagonists of "Lily Glass" and "Rats." But it became intensely historical research into Jewish life in various periods in "Burning Girls" and "Among the Thorns." Well, what does it mean to be European? We talk about European tales and, politically, European settlers—but some of those tales, for instance "The Jew in the Thornbush," are, like European society historically speaking, deeply, disturbingly anti-Semitic. Are Ashkenazi Jewish wonder tales European? Do the familiar European tales reflect me? And

when we look at the world through a postcolonial lens, through the relationship between imperialist settlers and indigenous peoples, where do Ashkenazi Jews fall? Certainly in the US we reap the benefits of being settlers...but we've never been accepted as natives wherever we have lived. My ancestors could, I suppose, have stayed in Ukraine, in Hungary, in Poland. And then they would have been murdered, if not by their neighbors during pogroms, by the Nazis. I have to think that's a different situation from European gentiles who were not persecuted at home, who had a home that accepted their existence, and who settled other places anyway.

One fairy tale that sits at the crossroads of my experience of wonder as a reader and a writer is "Snow White and Rose Red." The only tale written entirely by the Brothers Grimm (though based in part on "The Ungrateful Dwarf" by Caroline Stahl), my mother once told me it was her favorite, for the love between the two sisters in a genre in which sisters are often at daggers drawn. As a child, I loved it too, and I agree with my mother, it is wonderful to see the two girls so tender of each other. But when I re-read it as an adult, I couldn't escape the antagonist: an ugly, rude dwarf with a long beard who curses comically when the happy little German girls cut off pieces of it, and who always has a sack of gold or jewels easily to hand. A dwarf whose coat is eventually torn all to shreds, just as the Jew's coat in "The Jew in the Thornbush" is also shredded. And I have to ask again, whose story is this?

But if there is one thing wonder tales teach, in my opinion, it is empathy. Empathy for the poor, gnarled old woman asking for food by the roadside. Empathy for the downtrodden kitchen servant smeared with dirt and hidden by a donkey-skin. Empathy for beasts who may be human, for humans who may be fairies, for plants that may be souls of the dead, even for objects that may be more than they appear. So surely it is possible to twist and turn this story until I can find empathy for the Jews, for the dwarf as well? That is part of my current creative project. I'll see where it takes me.

3.

"The Woodsman's Daughter" by Marge Simon  
(Inspirational Story: "The Werewolf" by Angela Carter)

*Born of two weres, the child will appear human. Those that survive, that is. Should the moon be full, the bitch will eat both afterbirth and child. Weres are never born as wolf cubs and do not have the same smell. But the Change will come to the offspring as well.*

She is seventeen, small and sleek in her scarlet cloak with lips sweet as strudel. This day, she follows his trail through trees thick as weeds. She shot him around noon. The bullet just grazed his skin, nothing vital – just enough for

her to track him back to his newest cabin – his Man Cave, he'd call it. She wants to have him to herself on Father's Day Eve. When she was a little girl, he had promised her they would hunt together, but many a full moon has come and gone. Her mother gave up on him years ago. "He's a Lobo," she said. "Can't and won't be settling down with us. That's how it is, dear, so deal with it." There comes a time when a were-gal has to pin her daddy down for a definite father & daughter night out.

4.

"Owl in the Oak Tree" Isiah Lavender III

Call me crazy if you want. But I've been keeping company with an Owl in the deep dark of night in Baton Rouge, near Bluebonnet Swamp. You see, I often work on my scholarship after midnight when my two boys and wife are asleep because the rental house is quiet and the neighborhood is quiet too. There is a hundred-year-old live oak tree in the front yard, its roots have cracked the pavement of the sidewalk and driveway. It's so large that we, my family of four, have to hold hands with extended arms to encircle it. But I digress. This owl has visited me several times in the past three years, always at night, always in the early morning. You would think that its hoot, hoot, hooting would disturb my thoughts, but you would be wrong. I recognize that it talks to me, shows an interest in my work, and comforts me in the pauses between knowledge production. The owl throws its voice on me even though I do not speak its language and cannot cross the species boundary to further communicate with it. On several occasions, I've gone outside my front door to speak further with the owl, but the owl remains unseen and probably prefers it that way. I never know when the owl chooses to grace me with its presence, but it often stops by in the tree. Perhaps, the owl is a kindred spirit. Beyond doubt, I know for a certainty that my scholarly production has increased since the owl entered my life. I consider my expanding scholarly output and rate of article acceptances in the past three years weighed against the entirety of my previous nine years of academic life in Conway, Arkansas and know this fact as true. So call me crazy, but this owl encourages me and I dare name it friend.

5.

“Remember Wonder” by Sara Cleto and Brittany Warman  
(inspiration: “The Twelve Dancing Princesses”)

Under the harsh florescent lights,  
In offices without windows,  
Our toes pinched in ill-fitting shoes,  
Wonder is contraband.

Stacks of papers, books, ungraded quizzes,  
A perpetual guilt: I do not do enough,  
I am not enough.  
I am not really supposed to be here.

But at night, when the spotlight fades,  
I search for my secret in the dark.  
(A worn pair of slippers, a book, a hand around mine...)  
I remember to wonder, to dance.

This secret is fragile, evasive.  
It is the light in the corner of my eye  
That leads me again to my path  
Of needles and pins, riddles and wishes.

Beyond the walls of W-2s, reviews,  
Interrogations of our minds and bodies,  
There are worlds of curiosity, of desire.  
Our tales thrum through voices, pages, and back into us.

Know that walls can be moved,  
That any attire is suitable for spinning.  
Know that papers burn but stories remain,  
That magic might be right in front of you.

Remember wonder—  
And that every room longs for dancing.

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# CREATING FUTURES ROOTED IN WONDER:

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Haley Kaliehu

Thanks to Haley Kaliehu for her original artwork, and to Donovan Kūhiō Colleps and Kanai'a Nakamura for designing the conference flyer