May 2010, Mānoa
Ke welina a ke aloha, noa‘ia, salve, and greetings to our readers,

While all the above salutations convey our collective welcome to you as readers of this publication, they are not literal but cultural translations of one another that exemplify our different perspectives and standpoints as editors.

We have all heard how in the nineteenth century, folktales became associated with the pre-modern past and fairy tales with the nursery. But we also know that these “traditional” narratives continue to exercise their powers on contemporary culture in ways that escape those confines, as such very different but globally popular films as Whale Rider and Pan’s Labyrinth exemplify.

The purpose of gathering and publishing the talks and responses from the symposium “Folktales and Fairy Tales: Translation, Colonialism, and Cinema” is to continue its fruitful and thoughtful discussions, and we are fortunate that many contributors to the symposium agreed to include their presentations, which have been revised into the essays for this e-collection. As ku‘ualoha writes in her response essay to Waziyatawin and Zipes, “Mo‘olelo as Social and Political Action,” we find the papers “illuminating, inspirational, and also disturbing”—disturbing because the effects of colonialism and colonial translation pervade popular media and popular perceptions of vernacular subaltern cultures today. This collection brings together scholars from different disciplines and different parts of the world who are addressing this same concern.

For some of us Native scholars, the symposium was an opportunity to bring a native perspective to the field, engaging mainstream scholars in folklore and fairy-tale studies to think about our stories and indigenous oral traditions in new and different ways. The Hawaiian concept of makawalu (multiple perspectives) is vital to appreciate different ways of looking at the same traditions and to realize that different concerns and perhaps disciplinary and cultural outcomes are in play. Engaging in this symposium experience allowed for an intervention in the field of folktales and fairy-tales studies, resulting in a productive conversation between scholars and disciplines we thought would be of interest and use to others as well. In addition, we Native scholars were delighted to learn that some scholars in the field of folktale and fairy-tale studies shared our concerns about contemporary colonial attitudes about our stories, and that many of them are actively directing their research towards contesting these attitudes. We also learned new theoretical tools to help us in our research projects.

We chose ScholarSpace as a publishing venue because it allows for wide accessibility to scholars across disciplines and because its reduced production timeline enables us to make the collection available in a more timely manner. We thank UHM librarian Beth Tillighast for her support.

Is the translation of oral stories and literature—folktales, fairy tales, and beyond—into film compromising or empowering, especially for native peoples? Only time—and continued discussion will reveal the answer as the story continues.

Pipi holo ka‘ao, Ma ta’ ma maria ma of sia, la novella non è bella se sopra non ci si rappella, and they lived happily ever after. . . .