In “Historical Picturesque: Adapting Great Expectations and Sense and Sensibility,” Susan Johnston provides something of a critical vocabulary, and disposition, for this issue overall. Considering two contemporary film adaptations of nineteenth-century novels, Johnston’s essay brings fiction and film together—but even as it does so, the essay argues against a settlement between the two genres. What is at stake, for Johnston, in the interdisciplinary and is translation, rather than replication, where “translation,” as Walter Benjamin understood it, always exceeds correspondence of one thing (one text, one time) to another. “For,” as Johnston puts it, “we are not immigrants to [the] past and can never be; it may inhabit us, but we do not inhabit it, and our every effort to adopt it, whether as refuge or homeland, is doomed to wither in endless appeals to a fidelity, which is, finally, inaccessible because of its inauthenticity.”

If, reading through the contents page of this issue, you are struck by the prevalence of the conjoining and in so many essay titles, be prepared for superfluity and disjunction of the sort that Johnston’s words suggest. For there are many “translations” posited in this issue between two, or more, distinct discursive states/sites—literary and architectural; word and image; performance and artifice; Byatt and van Gogh; Mexican and Jewish; systems therapy and literary criticism—but there are no standards of sameness. “Dynamism,” and “diversity,” two words Peta Mitchell uses in

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If the kinship of languages manifests itself in translations, this is not accomplished through a vague likeness between adaptation and original. It stands to reason that kinship does not necessarily involve likeness.—Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator”
the essay that opens this issue: these are hallmarks of the intersections explored in the following pages.

WORKS CITED