

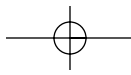
Introduction

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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”

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



the essay that opens this issue: these are hallmarks of the intersections explored in the following pages.

WORKS CITED

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Trans. Harry Zohn. Ed. and intro. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken, 1968. 69–82.

