Editor’s Column

Ink and electricity are necessary to *The Space Between* at every stage of production. This twenty-first century reality is why each issue is simultaneously available in print and online formats. However, if some autocratic dictator intervened and demanded a world magically and perpetually condemned to exclusive use of one or the other, ink or electricity, I’d pick ink in a heartbeat. Paper, print, and three-dimensional pages give scholarship weight and in my mind are inseparable from weighty scholarship. Journals and books that we hold in our hands and move with our fingers give reading a physical posture and motion that is distinct from tablet holding, scrolling, and clicking. Call it nostalgia, bias, or old fogyism, but such feelings shape my continuing support of ink and the kinds of experience and knowledge that emerge from our encounters with it.

I recognize the immense advantages of instant accessibility, communication, and weightless transportation that electricity provides to scholarship. But it’s naïve to imagine, as many users do, that electronic media are free media. Certainly electronic publication avoids the cost of paper and ink and postage. But as many editors of learned journals have pointed out, the cost of learning is the same for print and electronic media and open access as an ideology of free access is a myth. Barring private patronage, researchers depend on the vast resources of academic institutions and foundations to create even one piece of original scholarship. Libraries, climate-controlled archives, the people who manage them; salaries, course releases, sabbaticals, travel funding, conference funding; even office space, faculty computers, email service, library subscriptions to databases: all these things require money that electricity can’t replace. And this before a single document has been submitted via electronic means to a scholarly editor for possible publication, months down the line, as a reviewed, edited, copyedited, perhaps illustrated, always digitally manipulated and transformed artifact capable of influencing scholarly debate (not to mention scholarly careers).

The most important benefit offered by print publication of *The Space Between* and other scholarly journals is the logic that organizes discrete articles into an issue. Regarded as a conversation, a journal issue does more than bundle content; it also prompts readers to contemplate how they are moving from one article to another, how they are bridging or leaping into the space between individually authored titles. This mode of reading, perhaps accompanied by plenty of skimming and skipping of pages, is par-
particularly important to an interdisciplinary journal which assumes its readers as well as its contributors are interested in associations created beyond the borders of primary fields of expertise. By way of contrast, online scholarship tends to come to our attention through specific searches, narrowed to results generated by keywords. It is targeted, individualized, efficient. It is also scholarship without a context, suspended in time, artificially separated from the history of its own production, including the history of association that journal editors want to promote when they decide to put article A before article B and end an issue with article F.

Pacifism is the dominant association or theme that emerges upon reading the spaces between articles of this general topics issue of The Space Between. Not through artful planning but through happy coincidence, all of the articles appearing in the following pages examine cultural expressions of resistance to the violent actions, rhetoric, experience, and politics of either Allied or Central Powers. Approaching Samantha Kavky’s “Max Ernst’s Post-World War I Studies in Hysteria” through the framework provided by Susan McCabe’s “Close Up and Wars They Saw: From Visual Erotics to a Transferential Politics of Film,” we see parallels between the German artist, Max Ernst’s, use of Freudian psychoanalysis in his anti-war Dada collages and English writer, actress, and film maker, Bryher’s, use of psychoanalysis in her film criticism in the avant-garde journal Close Up. Kavky traces ways that Ernst used the bits and scraps of found materials—things like anatomical illustrations or images of birds and biplanes—to protest the trauma of combat and confront the institutional and oedipal structures that caused them. Her reading invites us to see traces of Ernst’s protest in Bryher’s film theories, which, as McCabe demonstrates, reflected her passionate belief that psychoanalysis could mediate and structure spectators’ relations to avant-garde film and explain avant-garde film’s stimulus to anti-war activism. Bryher was especially taken with G.W. Pabst’s Westfront 1918, a film that convinced her that sound cinema could accentuate psychic disturbance and thus more effectively warn against war. Certainly Max Ernst’s Dada collages aimed at psychic disturbance and were equally committed to warning spectators against war. The discussions of these arts and artists prepare us for the third article in this issue, Laurel Harris’s analysis of Vernon Lee’s virtually unknown pacifist protest play, Satan the Waster. In “Aestheticizing Politics and Politicizing Art,” Harris deepens our understanding of the political role cinema played in interwar culture, tracing ways Lee’s experiments with the sounds of the “magic apparatus” of cinema resisted the sanctioned violence of World War I.

Debra Rae Cohen’s article, “Getting the Frame into the Picture: Wells, West, and the Mid-War Novel,” extends the conversation about cinematic, visual, or dramatic responses to World War I into exploration of the English novel. Framing her own article with a discussion of the famous
recruitment poster, “Women of Britain Say—‘GO’!” Cohen, like McCabe and Kavky, turns to visual text to help us understand cultural resistance to the violence and coercion of war; like Harris, she analyzes gender to understand the formal choices of politically engaged writers, in this case rivals and lovers H. G. Wells and Rebecca West. Cohen argues that West’s Return of the Soldier puts up a more effective, sophisticated, and much darker resistance to “integration propaganda” than Wells’s novel, Mr. Britling Sees It Through. We come to see how and why West puts the frame into her picture, exposing the very media structures by which Wells, the great protester, remained enthralled.

Charles Andrews’s “Pledging Peace in Aldous Huxley’s Eyeless in Gaza” extends readers’ examination of the novel into the interwar period, focusing on 1936 as a pivotal year for the British peace movement and for Huxley, who became one of the movement’s leading spokespersons. Andrews makes sense of the notoriously difficult Eyeless, in which Huxley tried to present six phases of his protagonist’s life simultaneously, demonstrating how the novel’s formal experiments influenced and were influenced by Huxley’s work on behalf of the Peace Pledge Union and his continuing search for a coherent and totalizing system for good living. Andrews’s attention to Huxley’s pacifist activism and its impact on his literary practice prepares us for Nick Hubble’s examination of the English Communist John Sommerfield’s transformation from sailor into fully-fledged “proletarian” activist-writer. Hubble argues that Sommerfield’s documentary writing for Mass-Observation, a collective and social writing project, helped him arrive at a triumphant solution to the philosophical and political problem of how to relate “I” to “we” in his experimental 1936 proletarian novel May Day. Reminding us of Cohen’s argument in “Getting the Frame into the Picture,” Hubble concludes that Sommerfield made advances on his interwar fictional practice in the wartime Mass-Observation study, The Pub and the People, by subtly breaking the frame of objective documentary with representations or pictures of his observing middle-class self.

Getting the frame into the picture or the context into the consumption is exactly what this editorial column attempts to do. It is also something that I believe ink does better than electricity. Tangible, even at times transferable, ink asks us to attend to mediating materials and thus mediating histories of scholarly publication. Unlike articles accessed online, which typically arrive on our screens as though they were autonomous and transparent, print articles let us see the structures that frame them, including structures of meaning that only emerge once a given article is read in terms of the articles around it. Rather than leading readers directly to anticipated outcomes and leaving them there, ink more obviously pushes them into the space beyond or space between disciplinary and authorial limits, where, as in these pages, ideas about film criticism, psychoanalysis, war trauma,
pacifism, avant-garde drama, feminism, anthropology, and English pubs can clash and conspire in productive ways.

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