This volume marks the first publication of *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945* by Monmouth University. Those readers with a propensity towards mysticism might think some cosmic power had a role in the change of institutional affiliation. It seems more than fitting that this journal, devoted to study of the interwar and wartime periods, is now housed in Monmouth’s Wilson Hall, a 130-room Depression-era mansion built by F.W. Woolworth Company president Hubert Templeton Parson and his wife Maysie in the fateful year of 1929. Knowing this, other readers of a materialist bent may become jealous, imagining the journal’s editors enjoying inappropriately deluxe and daily inspiration from the Hall’s Tiffany ceiling, or padding too gently to computers perched over a piece of the Hall’s original 60,000 square feet of carpeting loomed overseas to Maysie’s specifications. Alas, both mystics and materialists would be wrong. The change of institutional affiliation came about for the usual practical reasons involving money and control. The carpets are gone, along with the Parsons, who lost everything in the Crash only months after completion of their dream house. The Tiffany ceiling still exists, but one has to leave the journal’s home in the English Department and one-time servants’ hall to appreciate it.

I begin with this bit of local history to remind readers that even in a digital age, local forms and figures still matter. Of course the structures of Wilson Hall have little to do with the character of this and future issues of *The Space Between*, but I’d like to think that a university whose very existence is owed to the social, economic, and material effects of the Great Depression will be more likely than other institutions to continue hosting this journal. There’s precedence for such support. In 1990, Monmouth University acquired the private research library of artist, writer, philosopher, urban planner, and architectural critic Lewis Mumford, a space between figure if there ever was one. Mumford’s private library, housed in Monmouth’s Guggenheim Library, contains volumes on technology, architecture, cities, history, literature, and philosophy, and represents the kind of interdisciplinary interests that define the scope of this journal and the kinds of materials
that I aim to publish in it. Mumford, one-time associate editor of *The Dial*, would have been the perfect editor for *The Space Between*, which is defined on the inside back cover of this issue as “a refereed, interdisciplinary journal on literature and culture that emphasizes research on lesser-known writers and understudied issues of the years between 1914-1945, including literary and cultural responses to the First and Second World Wars.”

But what does it mean to say that *The Space Between* is an interdisciplinary journal? In part, it means that the core members of the Monmouth editorial and production team represent diverse disciplines—English, Art and Design, and Nursing. It also means that I strive to acquire interdisciplinary content for each issue of *The Space Between*. First, I try to publish articles written by scholars in different disciplines. For example, the leading article in this issue is written by Michael Saler, a historian who explores the workings of enchantment in the fantastic realism of the American science fiction-writer and socially liminal figure, H. P. Lovecraft; the closing article is written by J. J. Butts, a scholar in American Studies who examines the relations between New Deal policies, Federal Writers Guidebooks, and public housing projects in New York City. The other articles are by scholars of English and American literature. Research with a literary emphasis dominates, not due to any bias on my part, but because submissions from literary scholars still outnumber those from all other fields combined. As a result, I try to uphold the interdisciplinary aims of the journal in a second way. Each article I accept must draw from and appeal to more than one disciplinary context. In this 2006 volume, for example, Christina Hauck’s essay on the relationship between the poetry of the homophobic birth-control advocate Marie Carmichael Stopes and the staunchly Catholic, one-time boy-lover of Oscar Wilde, Lord Alfred Douglas, discusses materials of interest to scholars in literary, gay, and feminist studies. The two articles on war poetry might appear at first glance to be more narrowly literary, but Dawn Bellamy’s essay examines the role of visual art and modes of perception in establishing relations between the work of two generations of soldier-poets and Janine Utell’s essay frames a discussion of Osbert Sitwell’s little-known poetry of the Great War within cultural theories of ritual, performance, and mourning. Finally, Cheryl Hindrichs’s article situates a study of a lesser-known prose text by the well-known modernist poet H. D. within the contexts of the new science of psychoanalysis and new technology of the cinematograph.

The second kind of interdisciplinary work that I describe above, that which is initiated by individual authors rather than editors, is without doubt the most difficult to research, write, and evaluate. It is not surprising that it is also the kind of work that inspired the most debate at a panel on interdisciplinary publishing sponsored by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals held at the December 2005 MLA conference in Washington,
D. C. Based on my observations of that panel, it appears that many editors of interdisciplinary journals have given up on expecting individual authors to strive for interdisciplinarity within their articles. These reduced editorial expectations may be due to the chronic dissatisfaction of expert readers who cannot bring themselves to approve of work written by scholars outside their fields or the reluctance of many authors to undertake the kinds of revisions these dissatisfied expert readers demand. Such editors strive to establish interdisciplinarity only in the first way I describe above, implicitly asking readers, rather than contributors, to make connections across disciplines by reading one article against or in terms of another in a different field. But this strikes me as achieving interdisciplinarity in theory only, because in practice most of us read our scholarly journals selectively, skimming the book reviews first, dipping into articles, reading from start to finish perhaps one or two articles of special interest.

I continue to believe that the best interdisciplinary journals will be those which offer readers the most opportunities for making connections in the spaces between disciplines, striving to publish authors who undertake cross-disciplinary conversation and thus encourage readers to do the same. I hope this 2006 volume of *The Space Between* models the best practices possible in interdisciplinary publishing in the humanities. It extends a publishing project begun one year ago with the first special topics volume of *The Space Between* on “The Work of Art/The Art of Work” and gestures toward another special topics volume in 2007 on “Media, Technology, and Culture.” If you can’t wait until fall 2007 to sample more *Space Between* interdisciplinary work, please join the members of The Space Between Society in June 2007 for a conference on “The Experience of War in the Space Between, 1914-1945” hosted by the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. It will be an exciting gathering, with this volume’s representative historian, Michael Saler, delivering the keynote address.

Kristin Bluemel
30 September 2006