

# Call for Papers: The Space Between Society Annual Conference

## INNOVATION AND RE-INVENTION IN THE SPACE BETWEEN JUNE 13-16, 2024 | DAYTON, OH, USA

The Space Between Society seeks proposals for its annual conference, which will be hosted by Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. The conference will explore the impacts of innovation and re-invention on cultures and societies between 1914 and 1945. The co-constructed concepts of innovation and re-invention encompass myriad aspects of interwar life. Of course, in light of World War II, innovation has a haunted legacy as a handmaiden to systematic violence and authoritarianism in the form of the Holocaust and new and more deadly weapons like the atomic bomb. But we also find, in the space between the wars, that utopian alternative schemes of renewal and reinvention developed across cultural and social spectrums. In this time, too, the modernist embrace of the new fueled many artists and writers. To reflect on the complex responses to the concepts of innovation and re-invention, The Space Between Society looks forward to papers and panels engaging with questions around invention and re-invention in the interwar period, including:

- How do artists, writers, and thinkers envision the distinctions between renewal and the new?
- How do technology and technical innovation transform literature and cultural practices in the space between?
- How do acts of innovation or invention reinforce systems of power or act in complicity with imperialism, authoritarianism, and local legal policies like Jim Crow?
- How did writers and thinkers foster innovative challenges (literary, psychological, geospatial, pragmatic, etc.) to modes of oppressive and/or authoritarian power?
- What do interwar discourses reveal about the relationship between invention and resource and labor expropriation?
- How have specific social contexts and environments (collectives or organizations) inspired innovation in the arts?
- How do structures of power define, produce, or limit innovation and invention across the humanities and social sciences?
- How can artistic or literary innovation respond to human atrocity and trauma (e.g. eugenics, the Holocaust, trench warfare, the Blitz, fire bombings)?
- How do factors such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and physical status impact the emergence of innovative literary, cultural, and social forms?
- How do cultural and social contexts inspire various innovations and inventions?
- Who is overlooked in our typical histories of interwar innovation or re-invention?

The conference theme is inspired by Dayton's self-defined legacy as the "Innovation Capital of the World" and the city's reconstruction after the flood of 1913. The birthplace of aviation at the turn of the century and home of the Wright Brothers and the home of Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Dayton's booming popularity in the 20th century made it a hub for innovation and self-invention; Dunbar even taught at the country's first college run by African Americans. But the city's interwar history necessitated continual invention as a key to renewal; for example, local statues continue to commemorate the local invention of the hydraulic jump, which enabled the city to avert the crisis of the 1913 floodwaters. But innovation extends beyond technology and engineering, nor is it neutral.

National Cash Register owner John Patterson re-envisioned labor itself, bringing art and beauty to workers with his Olmstead-designed workers' campus. And yet, this site would be re-invented itself when, during the Second World War, the visiting Alan Turing guided work on breaking Enigma at NCR; once the home of the "incorruptible cashier," the factory re-invented itself as the home of wartime counter-intelligence efforts.

To interrogate the theme of innovation and re-invention, we invite proposals for individual papers or other innovative presentation formats on innovation and re-innovation in the period 1914 to 1945. Topics include but are not limited to:

- Literature, art, and music
- Labor and work
- Politics and political movements
- Technology and media
- Agricultural work and culinary production
- Social planning
- Fashion and design
- Wartime and peacetime Industries
- Technologies and policies of war, oppression, suppression
- Racial discourse
- Immigration and migration
- Psychology
- Infrastructure and public works
- Health sciences (including disability and reproduction)
- Domestic spaces
- Gender and sexual identity
- Languages (constructed languages, language revitalization, language standardization...)

Email proposals to [spacebetween2024@gmail.com](mailto:spacebetween2024@gmail.com)

**Deadline:** December 20, 2023

Website of CFP: <https://spacebetweensociety.com/home/conference/2024-conference-cfp/>

