
THE FRANKLIN MERRELL-WOLFF FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

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The Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship is a publicly supported, non-profit corporation whose mission is to educate the public about the twentieth-century American philosopher Franklin Merrell-Wolff through his writings, audio recordings, teachings, and life. Our activities include publishing and distributing his works, and the sponsorship of forums and events to study and discuss the life and work of Franklin Merrell-Wolff, as well as to explore the connection between Wolff's teachings and those of other traditions.

A Message from the Chair

Charles C. Post

Dear Fellows:

As members of the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship, you are indeed our Fellows. Some may feel there is a "load" to this word, restrictive either in gender or in academic status. But it is a beautiful word if freed from these strictures; moreover, 'fellow' has a greater meaning in the notion of fellowship. I believe this Fellowship is broader than our organization, and if I am right, you are part of the accelerating evolution in consciousness that is afoot in the world today.

In this issue of the Fellowship's newsletter, you will find an interview by one of our Directors that highlights the linkage between a respected modern scientist and the issue of consciousness that is at the heart of Franklin Merrell-Wolff's work. Who knows how many people working in the sciences today would find agreement with Franklin's insights, if they but knew about Wolff's work? Read Jeff Baker's interview with Larry Horstman, PhD, and let us know of other scientists who would like to join us in the conversation.

Franklin's words, concepts, and insights are seeds in the soil of today. Thanks for your participation in the unfolding awareness.

The Year in Review

Robert Holland

The last year has seen the evolution of the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship into an independent organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the legacy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff. Five of our eight Board members have been serving for less than eighteen months (Edward Sisson, William Stow, Jeffrey Baker, Robert Majhi, and me); in addition, I accepted the position of Executive Director, a title I held when the Fellowship was first organized as a nonprofit corporation.

Our principal accomplishment in the last year has been the launch of a new website that contains a portal to the Wolff Archives. We are diligently working to post as much of the archives as we can, both written and audio. The latter has involved the time-consuming (and expensive) task of digitizing Wolff's audio recordings, as well as the transcription of these recordings. Thus far we have posted 175 recordings with transcriptions, and we have a similar number "in the queue."

Although access to the Wolff Archives is restricted to members of the Fellowship, last year the Board resolved to make membership in the Fellowship free to all. This, we believe, is in accord with Wolff's precept that one should not charge for spiritual services; and, we hope that the provision of his archives qualifies as such. Thus far we have had over 800 people join the Fellowship, and we are adding more people on a daily basis.

We have also inaugurated an annual forum that focuses on the practical side of Wolff's philosophy. Wolff's noetic thesis will play a central role in these forums, the purpose of which will be to both explicate this tenet of Wolff's philosophy and to show how it may be applied to various fields of interest. We are currently soliciting essays for our first forum, "On Government: The Political Philosophy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff." This is a topic that Wolff thought seriously about, and indeed, one that he thought should be "a concern to all of us."

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Wolff as a Stanford University Professor

Revolution in Life Science: An Interview with Lawrence L. Horstman

By Jeffrey P. Baker

A central tenet of the philosophy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff is the claim that consciousness is original, self-existent and constitutive of all things. Lawrence L. Horstman, a biomedical researcher at the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine, concurs with Wolff's assertion.

Horstman, who has authored over sixty peer-reviewed publications in the field of hematology, is a man of science with a philosopher's heart, and has spent his adult life searching to understand man's place in nature, the source of mind, the essence of language and the basis of evolution both biological and cultural.

In the early 1970s, he came across *Elements of Physical Biology* by Alfred J. Lotka, a pioneer in the study of population dynamics who also conducted research on the mathematical theory of evolution and the mathematical analysis of populations. As a biologist, Horstman was intrigued with the thesis of Lotka's book, which he has integrated into a theory that he calls the "Psychogenic Hypothesis." This hypothesis holds that all living beings have minds, and that mentality is the real driver of all evolution.

Horstman has published three books that explicate the Psychogenic Hypothesis, and has two manuscripts yet to be published. These works integrate Lotka's ideas with recent discoveries in science and verge on what the

physicists have been seeking for some time now—"a theory of everything."

There are some interesting parallels between the thought of Franklin Merrell-Wolff, Alfred Lotka, and Lawrence Horstman, some of which are explored in this interview.

JPB: "Revolution in Science" is a phrase used to describe your theory. How so?

LLH: It is not really "my theory." My work aims to set forth these principles in a clear and compelling way that anybody can understand. Others have reached the same conclusions. Once enough people learn about it, and recognize its inevitability, a complete reorganization of the conceptual basis of the sciences will unfold.

JPB: You've had a long and distinguished career in science in general, and the field of hematology in particular. When did you first see the significance of consciousness in the life sciences? What brought you to the insight that consciousness might be fundamental?

LLH: I first saw the significance walking down Broadway to home after a lecture at Columbia University on quantum mechanics. I had been reading a lot back then about the paradox of free will in a world governed by scientific determinism, and it dawned on me that quantum mechanics, which utterly violates scientific determinism, must hold the key to the solution.

JPB: How old were you at the time?

LLH: I was 21, but I had started thinking about free will earlier—in the wilds of Montana.

JPB: Montana? What took you to Montana?

LLH: The scenic beauty for one thing, the quality of education for another. I thought I wanted to be a writer. Montana State in Bozeman had some great professors in the English department. It was at Montana State where I was first exposed to free will as in the philosophy of existentialism.

JPB: How did existentialism influence your thinking?

LLH: Existentialism, which so influenced the Beat Generation, emerged in response to the horrors of World War II. The existentialists' conclusion was that the participants were unaware of their free will and of their responsibility as individuals to stand up to mob tyranny, false rationality and peer-pressure. I was fortunate to have a brilliant teacher from Poland, Professor Zygmunt Adamczewski, a war refugee who totally converted me. I was among the many that carried the message to San Francisco, with almost missionary zeal.

JPB: Funny, I don't think of the Beat Generation as being champions of personal responsibility.

LLH: Yes, there were inconsistencies; the intellectual message was soon diluted by riff-raff, bikers, and flower children. The beatniks were often chided for preaching individuality, while at the same time behaving very much like any other vaguely ideological mob. The long hair, beads, and sandals amounted to a uniform dress code. The intellectual side of it was swamped out because of the absence of a strong counter-argument.

JPB: So, you are saying existentialist ideas emerged as a noble way to correct problems in society but somewhere along the line got hijacked?

LLH: Not exactly hijacked, but blurred, diluted, dissipated. That was the beatnik era. There was a lot of excitement about “The Movement,” the Age of Aquarius, stopping war and fixing what was wrong in the world.

JPB: You mentioned “free will.” How are you using it?

LLH: Good question, because in the absence of clear definitions, constructive debate is not possible. Free will is freedom from ignorance. Kierkegaard, probably the most influential theologian of the twentieth century said proper understanding of free will is a compulsion to the right thing. In Lotka’s view, free will was to be in conformity to the Supreme Purpose of the Universe.

JPB: I understand there was excitement about free everything in those days. How did the California scene shape your thinking?

LLH: First of all, I was lucky to have in my circle of friends a number of elder intellectuals from the previous sub-culture, loosely known as “Bohemian.” They introduced me to a lot of good books whose authors I count among my dearest friends, even though I never met them. And yes, there was a lot of booze and all that.

I was mainly interested in the idea of free will, coupled with the notion of personal responsibility. I recall a specific epiphany. It happened outside the No-Name dive bar on Bridgeway Avenue in Sausalito, California, when I was twenty years old. It dawned on me that “The Movement” was deficient in one important way—it had no clear set of foundational principles, no philosophy, and no defined intellectual structure. It was one thing to smash bank windows and bash the military industrial complex, but quite another to explain the rationality of these things. It was a very youthful movement, with all the pros and cons of youth.

JPB: How did that California experience relate to your insight following the Columbia University lecture a year later?

LLH: From my California days, I had acquired a mission. I began to see a way to make existentialism into a much

clearer philosophy by giving specific definitions to things like free will. With new insights from quantum mechanics, I saw a direct connection between free will, the laws of the cosmos, and the structure of human behavior.

So that was my initial big idea. Years later, I discovered at the Cornell University Library that somebody else had written up much the same idea, namely, Alfred J. Lotka. I decided that it would be more seemly to write it up as Lotka’s hypothesis, not my own, since he was already well-reputed.

JPB: What is Lotka’s hypothesis in a nutshell?

LLH: Lotka’s hypothesis says that behind all so-called laws of nature lies will. Laws in physical sciences and life sciences are expressions of the passions of life. Lotka saw biology as a special case of the unfolding of the universe. Underlying the unfolding of the universe is will, passion, and all the human psychological elements reflected in a Shakespeare play—or an episode of “Desperate Housewives.”

JPB: What do you mean “Desperate Housewives”—how can a TV drama be related to the unfolding of the universe?

LLH: The main point of the Lotka work is that consciousness as we know it in ourselves (meaning will, passion, greed, attraction, repulsion, and intention) is closely bound up with life processes—even on the level of bacteria, or in an episode of “Desperate Housewives.”

Consciousness is all there is. Ultimately everything we see and feel are fluctuations in consciousness. Separating consciousness from everything else is a conceptual tool, a matter of convenience.

JPB: Can these aspects of consciousness be applied to the non-living world as well as to life processes?

LLH: Yes, we can associate consciousness with certain states of chemical strain in molecules, physical strain generally, and even the very human strain in assimilating a new conception or to solve a problem in philosophy. Chemical strain, and strain in intellectual understanding may seem far separated from one another but they are just two rungs on the same ladder of consciousness.

JPB: It’s hard to imagine human consciousness as the same as chemical strain in molecules.

LLH: Perhaps, but as Lotka said, anthropomorphism in some sense may be legitimate. A soap bubble tending to contract under surface tension, or trying to contract, may not be so fundamentally different a thing from the straining of an amoeba to engulf a food particle, or the straining of a Newton to assimilate a new conception or to solve a problem in philosophy. The two phenomena may be far separated, on the scale of evolution, yet they may be

two rungs upon the same scale.

JPB: Rungs? Can you explain the ladder analogy a little more?

LLH: In Lotka's analogy the ladder as a whole is consciousness, the fundamental root of existence. The rungs are also consciousness, but different levels on the scale of evolution.

The laws of nature are ultimately consciousness and can be thought of as being on a vertical scale. The "rungs of the ladder" extend from the physiosphere, to the biosphere, to the noosphere, and to the theosphere—the entire cosmos. A similar analogy is that of Jacob's ladder in the Bible—the metaphorical ladder from Earth to Heaven.

JPB: Your brother, Lee, is named as a co-author of your first book, *The Lotka Hypothesis*. How is it that the collaboration came about?

LLH: That goes way back, around the time I was at Columbia. Lee was studying architecture and the social sciences at Rice University in Houston, when I was first formulating what later became my book, *The Lotka Hypothesis*. He was taking a creative writing course from Larry McMurtry.

JPB: Larry McMurtry? Of *Lonesome Dove* fame?

LLH: Yes, and *The Last Picture Show*. He was a professor at Rice from 1963 to 1969. Lee met Ken Kesey of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, as he was a guest author in one of McMurtry's classes. Kesey and McMurtry were friends from a graduate writing program at Stanford. McMurtry married Kesey's widow last year, but that's getting off the subject. Anyway, I needed someone to proof read my manuscripts and Lee offered to help.

JPB: Hmmm . . . lots of coincidences . . . Did Lee share your view in consciousness being a fundamental?

LLH: Not at that time. Lee was interested in Lotka's all-is-alive thesis and we had many discussions in that vein, but otherwise he was a fairly typical college student of the 1960's—an atheistic, God-is-dead type, materialistic, and thinking of religion as a silly relic of the past. His personal epiphany came several years later. He tells the story of how the experience was triggered by a recording of Zia Mohyeddin reading from the 1947 Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

JPB: What was the insight?

LLH: As I understand it, he launched into an intense two-year period of self-exploration. We parted ways for a time when Lee moved off in the direction of Far Eastern mysticism, and I to science, in the conviction that science

is now the ruling authority of our cultural beliefs, and that real change can be effected only in the terms of that institution.

Lee largely repudiated worldly affairs and adopted an ascetic lifestyle. He has travelled extensively in India, has amassed a collection of rare books, and is today an independent scholar in California.

Lee is named as a co-author of *The Lotka Hypothesis* because of the many inspirational discussions over the years that helped to shape the ideas in the book. We find common ground in our understanding of consciousness.

JPB: It is interesting that such different paths could lead to similar understanding.

LLH: Lee uses the metaphor that we are both building the same bridge from opposite sides of the river.

JPB: Might your collaboration on *The Lotka Hypothesis* be a metaphor for the complementary nature of some classic dichotomies, such as the Platonists versus Aristotelian perspectives, the clash of worldviews between religion and science, or revelation versus reason?

LLH: That is quite a metaphorical stretch!

But, the epistemology of science today is a shambles. Much of the blame for this stems from the divorce of philosophy from science. The Platonic and Aristotelian views are indeed polar opposites, *but must coexist*. One is not better or worse, they are complementary, one addressing the subjective side of existence, the other the objective. The Psychogenic Theory and Lotka's Hypothesis do not advocate the overthrow of any of the facts of science, or any of its logical structures (mathematics, physics, and chemistry) but teaches that behind all of these things—the cause and source of them—is consciousness.

JPB: Do you and Lee share a common definition of 'consciousness'?

LLH: We agree consciousness is the essence of our lives. Consciousness cannot be defined independently of the experience of it. It is like the color blue, which cannot be defined without seeing it—without experiencing it. The scientific definition is a wavelength of light, but that is the objective manifestation of the color blue.

Everybody has consciousness and everybody knows what it is. We purposely avoid going into all the nuances. Whole books have been written about the various states or components of consciousness, including intention, willing, remembering, suffering, joy, thinking, and all sorts of qualia. We prefer to keep things simple, and define it as the totality of personal experience. It is the essence of our existence. It is how we know that we are alive.

JPB: Your definition is strikingly similar to what Franklin Merrell-Wolff said about consciousness being original, self-existent, and constitutive of all things. You say it is the essence of our existence.

LLH: Yes, and it is not unique to humanity, or to the “higher animals,” but extends all the way down to the simplest organisms. Not only that, the origin of consciousness must be in *matter itself*, meaning the atoms of which we are composed.

And that’s not all. The “laws of physics and chemistry” are manifestations of consciousness (or “willing,” as Lotka called it). Lotka himself, writing in the early days of quantum mechanics, was already aware that quantum mechanics had precisely this implication. Physicists are now widely aware of this fact of reality, but the biologists have yet to assimilate it.

Thus, in a nutshell, Lotka’s hypothesis holds that consciousness is the essence of the entire cosmos, and is the source and cause of all things.

JPB: You say in *The Lotka Hypothesis* that “the most important unsolved problem in theoretical biology today is the problem of consciousness.” What is the nature of the problem?

LLH: The problem of consciousness is the problem of accounting for how we got it, when we got it, and why we got it. Consciousness is a problem because there is no scientific explanation for it—not yet. This signals a need for a radical revision of thinking.

JPB: But why do you speak of it as the most important unsolved problem?

Its importance goes well beyond scientific epistemology. I think most people would agree that “the most important problem” to each of us, personally, is having a better understanding of our own minds. After all, we are speaking of the very essence of our everyday lives—the constant streaming of consciousness through us, how and why we make the decisions we do, all the urges and motives and passions that beset us.

JPB: Could it be said that there is no “objective” scientific explanation because primordial consciousness is “prior to” subject and object? Science seems to have put the cart before the horse—that is, thinking that the “mental realm” (or subjective pole of consciousness) is derivative of the human brain (epiphenomenalism), rather than the other way around.

LLH: Yes, I agree. And let me predict that when this hypothesis is fully developed, there will be a great rush of personal illuminations equal to, or far superior to, the highest forms of religious experience.

JPB: That’s an exciting possibility—theoretical biology being instrumental in spiritual transformation! Franklin Merrell-Wolff said this about mathematics, referring to it as the Royal Road, a pre-eminent power of western culture, and an instrument of consciousness-transformation on a very lofty level.

LLH: Kudos! Yes, math is a Royal Road. Alfred J. Lotka was known as the father of mathematical biology. It is not widely appreciated that nearly all of the classical western philosophers were initially inspired by mathematics, most basically, by Euclid’s *Elements* (of geometry), and I fancy that Lotka’s book, *Elements of Mathematical Biology*, deliberately intended that comparison. Galileo’s vision was to extend Euclid’s *Elements* to the physical world, later accomplished by Newton.

JPB: Our readers are attracted to the experiential aspects of Franklin Merrell-Wolff’s practice. He called it “profound introversion” and “noetic meditation.” This goes to the question of future education in science. What would a new paradigm look like that would combine the best in traditional science with the best in contemplative inquiry?

LLH: That’s a big issue, very close to my heart, but I see my contribution as analogous to that of Copernicus—merely helping to set the stage, plant the seeds, for far greater glories to come. I have written a series of basic science texts, and some not-so-basic, that I hope to post somewhere (see the link at the end of this interview), but the biggest hope is to pass the baton to younger minds who want to develop the ideas further.

The first big thing I hope to see unfold is a new science of psychology, based on the reality of free will as defended in *The Lotka Hypothesis*. My work is complementary to contemplative explorations. It leaves to others the experiential discovery into the ultimate nature of the self and to the cosmic source.

By the way, did you know that Isaac Newton abandoned math and science in his later life, having solved the interesting problems, and devoted himself to alchemy?

JPB: Yes, I understand Newton’s explorations outside of science were attempts to find coherence and unity between scientific knowledge and religious belief. This sounds like Lotka’s hypothesis in which you say “seeks to unite such laws of inanimate matter with our lives of personal experience.”

LLH: Newton united heaven and earth with his laws. In identifying such natural laws as coextensive with our own mental drives, we enter into dialogue with the cosmos—between the subjective and the objective, between cosmic

and personal—until at last all the pieces fall into place. Epiphany!

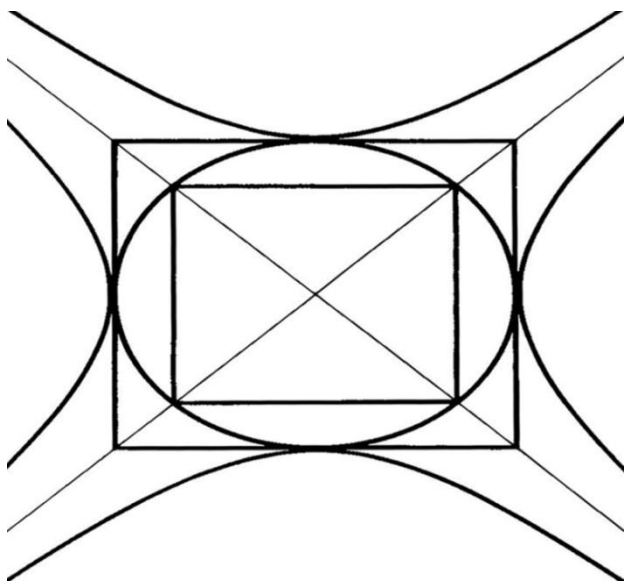
JPB: Epiphany. Would this refer to the great rush of personal illuminations you mentioned earlier?

LLH: Yes, but better left to nimble young minds to explore. I wish to find such adventurers to carry on my work that they might be propelled to such illuminations. Let me add that during the writing of *The Lotka Hypothesis*, I often found myself shivering with excitement. We are all waiting for the ultimate truth about ourselves, our mission, our origin, the nature of creation and creator. I do not pretend to have all the answers. I am just trying to point the way and pass the baton to others. They will emerge. And we will be saved.

JPB: With that hopeful note we will close. Thank you.

LLH: My pleasure.

More information on Larry's work can be found at:
www.evolutionandconsciousness.wordpress.com.



The 2012 Annual Meeting of the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship Board of Directors

On March 11, the Board of Directors of the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship held its Annual Meeting in Santa Barbara, California. The first order of business was Board elections. Robert Holland and Robert Majhi were voted to three year terms as Directors of the corporation. In addition, the following slate of officers was selected to a one-year term: Charles Post, Chair; Dorene White, Vice Chair; Robert Holland: Executive Director, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Here are some highlights from various Committee reports:

Archives Committee: Approximately 175 audio tapes of Franklin Merrell-Wolff have been digitized, transcribed and posted to the website. About an equal number remain to be processed. The Archivist at Stanford University has reiterated the University's interest in having the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Archives housed in a permanent collection.

Website Committee: New audio material is being incrementally posted to the website, and email "blasts" sent to our contact list in conjunction with new postings. These postings are being done in a thematic style, so as to maximize interest in the recordings.

Forum Committee: The intent of the forums is to simulate an ongoing discussion of the practical side of Wolff's philosophy. The current forum will focus on the political philosophy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff and the question of how this philosophy may be applied to our current state of political affairs.

Membership & Donations Committee: We currently have over 800 members: 700 have joined via the website, with an additional 100 that were members before the launch of the website. A donation campaign is being planned for later in the year.

Education and Outreach Committee: The Committee is actively seeking group meetings and conferences that would welcome the addition of a session on Franklin Merrell-Wolff.

Forum on Government: The Political Philosophy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship is pleased to announce the inauguration of an annual series of forums on Franklin Merrell-Wolff and his work. The Fellowship's first forum is a reflection of current world affairs, in which we find ourselves questioning the role of government in our lives. Wolff thought that it was important to engage in the political world, and in 1940, he began to advance a political agenda known as the "Vertical Thought Movement." Does Wolff's agenda have any relevance to our current political scene? In particular, can this agenda help us chart the turbulent waters of today's political world? In order to answer these questions, we believe a number of viewpoints of Wolff's work should be explored—including the following:

1. Philosophical: What is Wolff's political agenda, and how is it rooted in his philosophy?
2. Historical: What was the political milieu of the period when Wolff began to advance his agenda, and how was his agenda a reaction to this scene?
3. Psychological: Wolff employs notions from Jungian psychology in his agenda—what are these notions and how does Wolff employ them?
4. Political: How would one categorize and analyze today's political situation in terms of Wolff's agenda?

The Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship invites interested parties to submit critical essays that address the above questions, or that address other topics that are relevant to the political philosophy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff. Essays should be submitted to the Fellowship for consideration of publication in this forum. If accepted, these papers will be published in both emailed and on-line editions of the Fellowship's annual series, *Proceedings of The Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship Forums*. Comments and responses to these essays will be posted with each on-line copy.

Those works in the Wolff Archives (both written and audio) that contain his ruminations on matters political are listed on the Fellowship's website at <http://www.merrell-wolff.org/node/37>.

If you are interested in submitting an essay for this forum, please contact the Forum Moderator at this email address: forum@merrell-wolff.org.

Deadline for Submission: September 15, 2012



Legal Relations with Our Founder

As many of you know, after much deliberation, the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship has initiated legal proceedings against its founder, Doroethy Leonard. The Board of Directors of the Fellowship would have preferred not to take this action, but as the details of our complaint make clear, this action was compelled by the need to act in accord with the laws that govern nonprofit corporations. Like many controversies that reach this stage, the facts can be complex and involve numerous issues not readily apparent on the surface.

The Fellowship does not want this action to tarnish the reputation of Franklin Merrell-Wolff, whose legacy we serve to preserve and promote. The Board carries no malice for Mrs. Leonard, and publicly acknowledges its gratitude for her promotion of the work of Franklin Merrell-Wolff for all these years. We understand her intention in founding this organization was to provide a permanent vehicle to preserve the legacy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff, and the Fellowship is working to fulfill this mission.



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