
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:

I am one who came to Franklin Merrell-Wolff's work only through his books, and their impact on me was significant. I can only imagine the impact that personal contact with the man would have had on me.

Bruce Raden, to whom this issue of our newsletter is dedicated, did have such personal contact. He is one of a declining list of such individuals. We value our time with Bruce for this reason, and even more, for the intellect and humanity which Bruce brought to our efforts.

I am led to wonder about the gifts each of us brings to the world, and more important, what gifts we might leave to the world upon our departure. Bruce's gift can in part be measured in the hundreds of audio and written transcripts of Franklin's work, now available on the Fellowship's website. But of course, these cannot fully capture this man.

I am left to ponder what I, too, might leave behind. I hope it might be at least a portion of Bruce Raden's example.

In this Issue

Robert Holland

With this issue of our newsletter we honor the life of Bruce Raden. As you will read within, Bruce dedicated the last forty-five years to preserving the legacy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff; and, for the past four years, he served as an important member of the Fellowship's archive committee.

Although I only knew Bruce for four years, I came to know him fairly well. Indeed, except for one or two occasions, we talked at least once a week, and often two or three days a week. We worked together getting the archive of Wolff published on the Fellowship's website, discussed Wolff's philosophy as well as that of other thinkers, shared our life histories, and talked on many other topics. Based on these conversations, it is apparent to me that the two most important things in Bruce's life were his family—Pam, Erin, and Katie—and Franklin Merrell-Wolff.

Bruce regretted that did not have the time to complete his work on Wolff's Archive, but I hope that he felt assured that the Fellowship will strive to complete his efforts. I know that both of us thought that we had more time to iron out the details. And although we didn't discuss the alternative, Bruce and I did have many conversations about his illness and about death in general. Bruce approached both in a rational and scholarly manner, which is not to say that he did not also have to confront the emotional aspects of both. In a number of audio recordings Wolff expressed his own battles with the emotional side of death, and I hope that Bruce took some solace in this. I do know that both he and Wolff shared a disarming openness and honesty about their inner states, and that this is something I admired in both of these men.

It seemed to me that Bruce's words and deeds never really came from a place of self-interest, but always from a concern for others. In other words, Bruce was not in this world for his own sake, but for the sake of others. This made his life a truly exceptional one, and I believe that we are all better off for having had Bruce in our world.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1	A Message from the Chair
1	A Note from the Executive Director
2	In Memoriam: Bruce C. Raden
4	Preface to Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object by Bruce Raden
4	2014 Fellowship Activities
5	An Untitled Poem by Franklin Merrell-Wolff
7	Donation Form



In Memoriam: Bruce C. Raden

December 14, 1946 – April 24, 2014

The Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship—and indeed, all students of Franklin Merrell-Wolff—lost a brilliant light last month. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Bruce Raden, who for the last forty-five years dedicated himself to the lifework of Franklin Merrell-Wolff.

Bruce was first introduced to the work of Franklin Merrell-Wolff while he was a philosophy major at Arizona State University. He met Wolff in 1969, and at some point thereafter, determined to make it (quoting from a 1994 letter of Bruce's) "my self-imposed mission to preserve, transcribe and disseminate Franklin's written and spoken word." Bruce noted in this same letter that "whatever time and energy I have is dedicated to this purpose." As we will see, Bruce was true to his mission.

Wolff's wife Gertrude was one of the first to recognize Bruce's devotion, and inquired whether he would be

interested in continuing the publication of a bulletin dedicated to the philosophy of Franklin Merrell-Wolff. (Gertrude had been editor of *The Bulletin of the Assembly of Man*, later named *The Seeker*, from 1960 to 1968, but no longer felt up to the task of its production). In the 1970s, Bruce, Joan Price, Karen Bretz, Katherine Bretz, Bob Alvarado, Doroethy Young, Chuck Legge and several others formed a Franklin Merrell-Wolff study group in Phoenix. In 1970, the group published an edition of Wolff's book, *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*; as the group was centered in Phoenix, Bruce suggested that they publish it under the name, *Phoenix Philosophical Press*. Later that decade, the group published the first edition of *The Sangha*, a newsletter for those "interested in what Franklin Merrell-Wolff and other spiritual leaders are saying." Phoenix Philosophical Press would also publish (in 1980) *Introceptualism*, which contained parts III and IV of *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*.

Bruce played an important role in the publication of the SUNY Press edition of *Introceptualism*, correcting thousands of errors in the copy and writing a preface for the work. It was another part of Wolff's archive, however, that took up most of Bruce's time and energy.

In the early 1950s, Wolff stopped writing and began to experiment with a new format of expression—namely, the recording of his words on magnetic tape using a reel-to-reel recorder. From that point until his death, Wolff made at least 433 audio recordings covering topics that include philosophy, psychology, religion, politics, yoga, and more. Much of this material is published on the Fellowship's website, thanks to Bruce, who was singlehandedly responsible for its preservation and production. Bruce worked tirelessly to catalog these recordings and to refine their sound quality; he also outlined all the recordings, and transcribed all but fifty-six of the 433 recordings.

Some of recordings were sold by Phoenix Philosophical Press as cassette tapes (all mastered by Bruce), then by the Fellowship as CDs; they are now all freely downloadable as mp3s, complete with Bruce's transcripts, on the Fellowship's website at www.merrell-wolff.org. (We will be posting all of the tapes—even those that are not transcribed—later this year).

Bruce's work on these recordings was meticulous: he spent hour upon hour processing the sound quality of the recordings, proofed and reproofed his transcriptions, and worked diligently to determine the proper order and names of the recordings. And, the results of his efforts are clearly evident. In fact, not two days before Bruce's passing, an editor of a journalistic website asked for permission to reproduce some material from the Fellowship's website, and noted in passing that he had listened to a few recordings from the archive and found the sound quality to be "wonderful." We were happy to pass this on to Bruce.

Bruce played an important role in the Fellowship's ongoing collection of the Wolff Archive, spending over six weeks of full-time effort organizing the first batch of archival material turned over to the Fellowship by Doroethy Leonard. Given that Bruce was in intense pain during throughout this endeavor, his work was nothing short of heroic.

As mentioned above, there are fifty-six audio recordings that Bruce did not transcribe. Bruce had hoped to complete this work, and these last few months regretted that he did not have the focus or energy to continue in these efforts. There are also two other projects that Bruce began that remain to be finished.

In 1970, Bruce asked Wolff to read and record

Meditations on Savitri, which is a four-volume collection of illustrated excerpts from Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri*. Wolff obliged, and Bruce set Wolff's readings to the illustrations in five different PowerPoint presentations. The Fellowship will be converting these presentations into video format, and plans to publish them on YouTube as well as on our own website. They are quite beautiful.

Another project that Bruce began is an illustrated children's book that uses Wolff's audio recording titled "The Pearl Beyond Price." Bruce formatted his transcription of this recording into book form, complete with placeholders for illustrations to accompany the text. The Fellowship is quite excited about this project, and we have engaged an artist (who is also a longtime student of Wolff) to provide the illustrations. And, of course, Bruce left specific instructions on the style of illustrations he wanted to see in the book.

Bruce also petitioned the Fellowship to make the Wolff Archive more accessible—that is, to allow access to this material to all interested people, and not just members of the Fellowship. At its last Board meeting, the Directors of the Fellowship agreed to this request, and it will be incorporated in changes that will soon be made to the Fellowship's website (see 2014 Fellowship Activities below).

Despite the obvious importance of his mission to "preserve, transcribe and disseminate" Wolff's work, Bruce did not want any credit for his efforts. This speaks volumes about Bruce: he was not engaged in this work for reasons of self-interest, but did so out of a love and devotion for Franklin Merrell-Wolff and his students. Although we are openly acknowledging Bruce's contributions in this newsletter, we will honor his wishes from here on out—you will not, for example, find any credits to Bruce on the Fellowship's website.

The Fellowship is pleased that it is able to provide a venue for Bruce's efforts; in turn, the Fellowship will forever be grateful for Bruce's work. Here is how one of our Board members put it:

Sorry to hear of Bruce's passing; I know it was more or less expected but the finality still hits home. What a remarkable person and remarkable service to the Fellowship! Every time I look at or hear Fellowship materials I'll give a heartfelt 'thank you' to Bruce for his manifest efforts on our behalf. I can't think of a better remembrance or legacy one could have.

This, we can assure you, is the sentiment of the

Fellowship's entire Board of Directors.

In the next section, we continue our celebration of Bruce Raden by presenting the preface that Bruce wrote for the SUNY Press publication of *Introceptualism* (that is, parts III and IV of *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*). In a letter to Bruce, the Director of SUNY Press expressed his personal disappointment that Bruce's preface would not be used in the SUNY edition. We are delighted to present it here.

A Preface to The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

In 1912, while at Harvard in the Graduate School of Philosophy, Franklin Wolff was impressed by a dissertation given by a fellow student in the seminar on Immanuel Kant. The door to metaphysical knowledge seemed to be forever shut by the critical analysis of Kant; but, this young student offered an approach to metaphysical knowledge in his paper on the Vedanta which he defended successfully in the face of the Kantian critique. Franklin felt that if metaphysical knowledge was indeed possible by a way of cognition other than sense perception and conceptual cognition alone, then no philosophical formulation would be complete without taking this way of cognition into account.

After teaching mathematics the following year at Stanford, he left the academic world and set out upon a search for this way of cognition that lasted twenty-two years. Ultimately, he was successful and in 1936 he wrote up his experiences in *Pathways Through to Space*, which was a journal kept during and after his Realization of this way of cognition.

Over the years that followed, Franklin worked on a more systematic formulation of his philosophy and presented it in *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*. This is a formal and rigorous attempt to establish within the context of Western philosophy, the noetic content and value Realized as a result of the immediate transformation of consciousness in 1936. It is written with the "professional" philosophic community in mind and I believe it is a genuine contribution to the history of Western philosophy.

The three fundamental principles of this philosophy are:

1. Consciousness is original, self-existent, and constitutive of all things.
2. The Subject to consciousness transcends the

object of consciousness.

3. There are three and not two organs, faculties or functions of cognition. (He has called this third function of cognition Introception and defines it as "the power whereby the light of consciousness turns upon itself toward its source.")

The first two parts of *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object* have been published along with *Pathways Through to Space* by SUNY Press under the title *Franklin Merrell Wolff's Experience and Philosophy*. Parts III and IV are contained in this volume and may be read independently, although the author has recommended reading Part II after Part III "as that appears to be the logical order and is, indeed, the order in which they were written."

Many there may be who find it unnecessary and tedious to read technical philosophy such as this, but I think that if you will "pitch up" your concentration and work your way through this book, you will be rewarded beyond measure; for it is both by thought and feeling that the Door to the Transcendent is opened.

Bruce Raden

July 11, 1994

2014 Fellowship Activities

The Board of Directors of the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship held its annual meeting on March 23, 2014 in Phoenix. At this meeting it was agreed that the Fellowship's current efforts should focus on the Wolff Archive. This includes the collection of the Wolff Archive, the publishing of the Wolff Archive (for now, on the Fellowship's website), and placing the Wolff Archive in a special collection at Stanford University.

This last task cannot take place until we have collected the complete Wolff Archive, and the Fellowship continues in its legal efforts to secure this material. In the meantime, we are working to post the material that we thus far collected on the Fellowship's website. As mentioned above, the Wolff Archive will no longer be restricted to members of the Fellowship. In practical terms, this means that one will no longer be required to login in order to access material from the archive. We have almost 11,000 pages of material to post, and we are coordinating our posting of this material with the redesign of our website. We will also post all 433 of Wolff's audio recordings, of which—as mentioned above—fifty-six remain to be

transcribed. If you might be interested in transcribing some of these tapes, please contact the Fellowship.

Concurrent with the launch of our redesigned website, we will begin publishing Wolff's readings of *Savitri*, both on YouTube and on our website. We think that you will enjoy them. Lastly, we will be posting a video that depicts the construction of Wolff's mandala; this construction will be narrated by Wolff himself, and for the first time, will illustrate a three-dimensional model of the mandala (the two-dimensional form is represented in the right-hand column at the bottom of this page).

An Untitled Poem by Franklin Merrell-Wolff

We close this issue of our newsletter with an untitled poem written by Wolff. This poem was written on back of the last page of his essay "Reflections on the High Indifference" These reflections were written a few weeks after Wolff had finished his journal, *From Point-I to Space-I*, and the essay is marked as "Chapter XC" and dated December 9, 1936. This essay was not included in the published version of this journal, which most of you know as "Pathways Through to Space."

If we assume that Wolff penned this poem at approximately the same time period, we may date it as circa late-1936. Below is the transcribed version; on the next page you will find the poem in Wolff's own hand.

Down through the ages I came,
Out of the deeps of Space I came
Gathering about me enfolding encasement
Losing Freedom ever more and more,
As down that long descent I came.
Out of an all-enveloping Joy was I born,
But a Joy it was that I knew not at all,
All conscious I was, yet not-knowing,
Like into the unconscious dead I seemed.
So I swung me down, driven on and on
By the strange and inscrutable urge,
Until the growing pinch of hardening form
Pained me to wakefulness—all so strange.
All this—the beginning of Knowledge.



Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship

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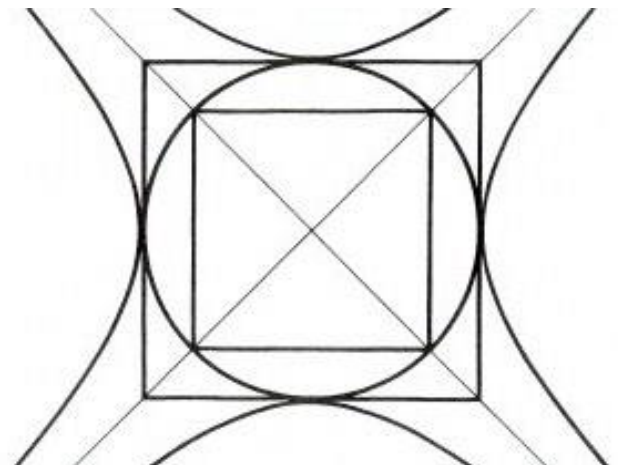
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An Untitled Poem

Franklin Merrell-Wolff

Down through the ages I came,
Out of the deeps of space I came,
Gathering about me enfolding encasement
Losing Freedom ever more and more,
As down that ^{long} descent I come,
Out of an all-enveloping joy was I born,
But a joy it was that I knew not at all,
All conscious I was, yet not-knowing,
As like into the unconscious dead I seemed,
So I saw my me down, driven on and on,
By the stranger and ~~unconscious~~ ^{inscrutable} urge,
Until the growing pinch of hardening form,
Pained me to wakefulness, ^{all so strange} ~~the beginning of knowledge~~
At this - the ~~beginning~~ ^{growing} of knowledge.

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A Convention Photo of the Assembly of Man