

Preface to Franklin Merrell-Wolff's
The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

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In 1912, while at Harvard in the Graduate School of Philosophy, Franklin Wolff was impressed by an exposition given by a fellow student in the seminar on Immanuel Kant. Wolff presumed that the door to metaphysical knowledge had been forever shut by the critical analysis of Kant, but this young student successfully defended an approach to metaphysical knowledge in his paper on the Vedanta against 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 philosophical community in mind and I believe it is a genuine contribution to the history of Western philosophy. In brief, Wolff advocates for three fundamental principles:

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 calls 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.