

Editorial

Peter Whitehead is the quintessence of eclecticism. Though best known as a filmmaker whose body of work from the second half of the sixties is a vital documentation of the era's countercultural expression in London and New York, Whitehead has also worked as an artist, publisher, and—most spectacularly, in Saudi Arabia for nearly a decade—a royal falconer. He is currently most active as a novelist and potter. This scope is clearly evident in his film work, which ranges from pop promos to long-form narrative cinema. He has produced documentaries, fiction films, and projects that blur the line between the two.

Despite this seemingly restless variation, the work produced in each of these different contexts and media exhibits comparable themes, ideas, and motivations. If to be eclectic is to develop a philosophy that is broad, not exclusive, then Whitehead's work perhaps points to the reverse position. It is broad *and* exclusive insofar as its material diversity masks a deeper attempt to investigate a recurrent set of obsessions and archetypes. Taken as a whole, Whitehead's work—film, fictions, falconry—is indicative of what he would term “the working out of a myth.”

In light of this sweeping range, we are fortunate to have an unprecedented full volume year of *Framework* dedicated to describing, exploring, and basking in Whitehead's many and varied achievements, travels, and beliefs. Anything less would be inadequate and superficial.

Both issues are organized chronologically. *Framework* 52.1 considers Whitehead's career through the release of his 1969 film *The Fall*. *Framework* 52.2 begins with his 1970s film work *Daddy* and *Fire in the Water* and ends with the completion of his latest film, *Terrorism Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (UK, 2009). This issue also examines his work as a novelist, falconer, and potter. The issues are structured by parts of a long text entitled “The Wanderer,” a detailed interview about Whitehead's life, conducted by

Robert F. Paul for his 2007 book *Voices from the R-Field* on Whitehead's work as a novelist, which was recorded after Whitehead's near-fatal heart attack in 1996.

The overall intention of these issues is to consolidate and expand upon the range of attention that has been directed at Whitehead's oeuvre in the wake of his 2007 worldwide film retrospective and the completion of *Terrorism Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (UK, 2009). We present a selection of essays in conjunction with an extensive series of documents from Whitehead's personal archive, many published here for the first time, each with its own brief introduction and, where necessary, explanatory notes. The aim is for the archival material to elaborate upon and enter a productive dialogue with the critical discourse as the discussion as a whole progresses through each phase of Whitehead's creative career.

When handling a figure like Whitehead, it is always the case that a book-length collection of *other* material is left out. For every piece in this volume written by Whitehead, there is a box of similar material—drafts, fragments, photographs, and manuscripts—that remains in his archive, an hour north of London.

It would be counterproductive to pigeonhole Whitehead. His work is indicative of an anarchic creative stance and an interdisciplinary scope that often problematizes attempts at formal or stylistic categorization. We therefore offer this collection of articles and archival material as a starting point for those anxious to explore his life and work in more detail.

Things Fall Apart, the title of *Framework 52*, represents Whitehead's concept of separation and coherence, in which, though elements fall apart, they also cohere in their constant relationship to one another. This theme, central to his work, is found in many details. It is visible in the large interface L shapes of the Lorrimer logo where building blocks holistically interact and it is visible in the images from *The Fall* on the cover of *Framework 52.1*, showing Whitehead's love-hate struggle with the static media frame. The repetition in the pages of these issues similarly reflects Whitehead's sense of coherence, dispersion, and relativity. Some of the repetition has been edited, but some has been retained in order to allow each essay, image, or archival piece its own rhythm, its own relationship with what it accompanies. Each part should be read or seen to stand on its own, as well as perceived as a piece of a greater whole.

— Paul Cronin, James Riley, and Drake Stutesman

For more about Peter Whitehead, visit these websites:

www.peterwhitehead.net
www.nohzone.com
www.onceoutofnature.com

Paul Cronin's current projects include a historical documentary about the student protests at Columbia University in 1968 and a book about Haskell Wexler's 1969 film Medium Cool. He edited Herzog on Herzog and Alexander Mackendrick's On Film-Making: An Introduction to the Craft of the Director.

James Riley is Junior Research Fellow in English at Wolfson College, Cambridge. He is also curator of the Nohzone Archive, which holds all of the primary texts and documents pertaining to Peter Whitehead's life and work. Current projects include the forthcoming collection Library of the Lost: A Peter Whitehead Reader.

Drake Stutesman is the editor of Framework. Her work has appeared in publications by the Museum of Modern Art, the British Film Institute, Reaktion Books, Indiana University Press, Koenig Books, and Bookforum, among others. She is an adjunct professor at New York University. She co-chairs the Women's Film Preservation Fund.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Paul Cronin and James Riley for their hard work in contributing to this issue, and Peter Whitehead for his great generosity and effort throughout this project. Thanks also to Michel Ciment, André de la Cruz, Giandomenico Curi, Gareth Evans, Robert F. Paul, and Kevin Gough-Yates for their kind permissions to reprint work and to Stacey Knecht and Presley Parks for their translations. All pictures are courtesy of Peter Whitehead, except where otherwise noted.

—Drake Stutesman

Dedication

FRAMEWORK 52

is dedicated, by Peter Whitehead, to Robin Jwaher Whitehead.