

Why Are You (We) Here?



W E L L E S L E Y

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Dear First-Year,

Besides being a booklet and essay title, “Why Are You (We) Here?” refers to an event in Orientation. Faculty, staff and first-year students gather to discuss this booklet and that question.

“Why Are You (We) Here?” attends to matters of purpose, identity and place. “Why” signals the purpose(s) of a liberal arts education. “You/We” introduces issues of personal, social and institutional identity(ies). “Here” indicates the elusive, yet pervasive presence of educational intent and impact that is Wellesley College.

“Why Are You (We) Here?” offers the promise of a good conversation. In good conversation, a person is often surprised by what she has to say. Good conversations characteristically leave more to be said, leave us wanting to say more.

We look forward to entering upon such conversations with you in late August!

Sincerely,

Donald Leach

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Why Are You (We) Here?

Timothy W. Peltason

William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of English

The following remarks are excerpted from the Distinguished Faculty Lecture delivered at Orientation in September of 1999.

F. Scott Fitzgerald said that “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.” I want to give your intelligences a bit of a workout by making some propositions to you that won’t be opposed, exactly, to what you’ve heard before, but that may push against what you’ve heard before and that may thus ask you to conceive somewhat differently of the tasks and the new life before you.

I’m going to take a wild guess, for instance, that somebody has said to you, “It’s important to remember that there’s a lot more to college than just academics,” or maybe, “You really need to get involved in a lot of activities here and not just spend all your time on schoolwork.” And what I want to say first in response to such bits of wisdom is a resounding “yes and no.”

Yes, of course, life is filled with both opportunities and obligations that don’t fall under the heading of work, with obligations that sometimes must trump your work, or with opportunities for pleasure or growth or renewal that it’s right and necessary to make time for. There are times for all of us when it’s right to lay aside work, even rather pressing work, to meet the demands of family or friendship; times when it’s right to squeeze work just a little bit to make space for other kinds of valuable, life-enhancing activities; or times when you just need to take a break so that you can return to work refreshed another hour or another day.

But no: There’s no more important reason for being here – really no other truly important reason for being here – than to become absorbed in intellectual work. To the truism, “There’s more to life than work,” let me add an opposing or complicating truth that’s equally crucial for you to grasp and that’s much

closer to the heart of our collective enterprise here. There's more to life than work, sure, but there's also a lot more life in work – and especially in intellectual work – than you may realize. And it's the life of intellectual work, the life of the mind, that has called this institution into being and that sustains it and that calls all of us here as we begin this new year.

Everywhere you go for all of your lives you will be faced with both the opportunities and the obligations of love and friendship, of social and political action, of personal and spiritual growth. When it comes to facing and managing these obligations and opportunities, your life at Wellesley is of a piece with the rest of your life; your lives – like mine and those of all your teachers – are worried and enriched by all of these other claims on your time and attention.

But there's also something quite special and distinctive about Wellesley, or about any college or university, a sense in which your time here is set apart from the other times of your life; and a sense in which this place is set apart from the world as well as connected to it. This is the place, and this is the time of your life, in which your first obligation, and your great opportunity, is to open yourself to the extraordinary pleasures of learning and intellectual inquiry. What you learn may well have an impact on the decisions you make and on the power you wield in those other areas of your life – in fact, we certainly hope it will. There's no sharp, bright line that separates intellectual inquiry from other areas of our social and moral and emotional lives. But even if there are no sharp, bright lines, there are rough, practical, lived distinctions to make – and this is the place and the time of your lives when learning comes first.

So let's get back to that odd compound word, "schoolwork," and to the assertion that there's much more to life than it. Well, of course, and it is indeed one secret of survival here to remember that. But the more important secret – and the better kept one – is that work itself, and especially intellectual work, can be a deeply pleasurable part of life. And if you can unlock that secret, it can help you not just to survive here but to flourish. The students who flourish at Wellesley or at any other institution are those who discover not only a happy balance between work and play, but who discover an important source of happiness in their work. It's good to take a break at the end of a long, hard day, but it's even better if you have been so challenged and genuinely engaged by your work that the day doesn't seem to have been all that long or hard.

I don't mean to say that there's no difference between work and play, or to recommend to you an unattainably utopian life in which you whistle your way through every task. Intellectual work can be tedious like any other work; it can be frustrating, and anxiety producing in a variety of ways that are especially its

own. But it can also be extraordinarily gratifying and absorbing; it's work that you can lose yourself in, to use a figure of speech that's worth pondering. It's quite true that there's often a price of entry. You can't expect just to fall right into the pleasures of every new task of learning, any more than you can fall right into the pleasure of playing a musical instrument, or fall right into the pleasure of playing competition-level tennis, or fall right into the pleasure of any activity that requires significant learning and skill. But that doesn't mean that you don't ultimately pursue those activities for pleasure.

Indeed, difficult pleasures can be the most gratifying – and there is no subject or course here at Wellesley that does not have great pleasure to offer if you can do the hard work necessary to open yourself to it. You'll like some subjects more than others, of course, you'll find some pleasures more readily available to you than others, of course; but you should look for the pleasure in every field of study. In every field of study, there are the pleasures of discovery, the excitement of encountering genuinely new information and new ways of looking at the world; and there are the pleasure of understanding, of figuring something out for yourself and, however suddenly or gradually, replacing the pain of incomprehension with the gratification of a perceived order.

With all the talk of pleasure, however, it's time for me to reverse field a bit and to ask you to perform again that F. Scott Fitzgerald trick of holding two opposing thoughts in your mind at the same time. I have said that you should seek pleasure in your studies, and I meant it. At the same time, however, you should not just study what already pleases you. Follow your passions by all means, but don't make the limiting mistake of assuming that you know already the nature and the range of those passions. Don't make the mistake either of thinking that when a book or a subject fails to please you that it's the book or the subject that's been found wanting. The pleasure is there, all right, and you only cheat yourself and make your own life harder if you fail to discover it. Many of your teachers will be immensely skilled at helping you to find the excitement, and to reach the understanding, of their chosen subjects. But don't hold out for that. Don't think of it as somebody else's job to make you interested, to come and find you and coax you out. Some books, some subjects – and most of your teachers here – will meet you more than halfway; but some won't, and you can dramatically enhance both the chance and the character of your success at Wellesley if you will step out and pursue your studies eagerly and open-mindedly.

None of this means that you won't or shouldn't have preferences – you will and you should – or that you won't ultimately make your own independent judgments about what you study – indeed, you will and you must. You can't possibly

agree with everything that you read or hear or find every subject of equal interest and value. But it's both strategically advisable and morally requisite for you to render your judgments cautiously and with a due and humble acknowledgment of all of those other inquirers who may differ from you in taste or in judgment. The longer and the more sincerely that you can consider the possibility that a particular course or subject might have great riches to offer – even if you haven't found them quite yet – the greater your chances of discovering the intellectual pleasure that both leads to success and that is already, in and of itself, a form of success. The longer and the more sincerely that you can consider the possibility that you may be mistaken in an intellectual or moral or political judgment, the better grounded and informed and defended your judgments will be.

I'd like now to extend these arguments by reconsidering and complicating a couple of other familiar ways of thinking and talking about what you're going to do here. You might have heard it said that you are here at Wellesley in order to grow into the best and fullest versions of yourselves that you can be. I've even been known to say such a thing myself, and I need first to acknowledge the force and the reasonableness of this way of conceiving of the process of education. Growth is a nearly irresistible metaphor, and the self is a nearly unavoidable category, when we turn to the subject of education. But I'd like you now to look more closely and critically at all this growth talk and self-development talk, to consider some of its implications, and also to consider some alternative ways of talking and thinking.

First, growth. What about this word that we hear so often and usually in such swoony tones? "I just want to keep learning and growing." "You have to keep growing, or you die." Well, yes. But if growth is an irresistible metaphor, it's also an imperfect and misleading one for the total experience that Wellesley, or any college or university, invites you to have. To say that your time in college stands out from the rest of your life as a time of growth is both to say too much and too little. Too much, because you've all been growing for a while now, and you surely won't stop growing when you leave here. It isn't the fact of growth that sets college apart. But too little, because growth really isn't a sufficient word for what you will do here. To speak of growth is to suggest that what will happen to you here will be somehow effortless and organic, and to suggest, furthermore, that you already contain within your seedling selves the condensed form and substance of all that you will become. But is that how the process of human development really works – and in particular, the focused and specialized part of that process that we call education? Surely there's something more energized and effortful that is required of us, an activity more human and less plantlike, a

process of gathering and building and making. And this process can go forward only when you've made the crucial recognition that the raw materials are not all within you, that you have to seek them out – and seek them without – in the active process of learning.

And now, the self: One hears a lot about self-development in discussions of education, and also about self-esteem, which is commended to us most often as the antidote or at least the alternative to a corrosive, life-inhibiting self-dissatisfaction. And to the extent that those are the two choices – self-esteem or self-dissatisfaction – I'm a big fan of self-esteem. I'm not against self-development, either, of course, any more than I'm against growth. But once again, I want to ask you to think about the implications of these familiar ways of talking, and, in particular, the implications of locating the self so centrally in our conception of education. What happens if we try to push the self aside a little bit?

I spoke a few minutes ago about the central importance of finding work in which you could lose yourself. A figure of speech worth pondering, I said, and I'd like now to ponder it for a moment. I was speaking then about a desirable technique or study skill, about the handy and happy ability to be deeply absorbed in your work. I want to return now to that image of losing yourself, and to the buried metaphor in "absorbed," to discover a larger significance for them in the proper conception of education.

When we speak of losing ourselves in work, we are first describing a local and temporary experience in which we lose track of time, perhaps, and in which we feel the pleasure that comes from having our minds totally and unselfconsciously engaged. But the phrase suggests more than that and can refer to more than just an intense afternoon or evening of study. When we experience the excitement of learning, we lose ourselves in another larger sense, too. For the process of education invites us to do an end run around the false dilemma of self-esteem vs. self-doubt. In pursuing intellectual work, we pursue moods and moments in which we are neither esteeming nor dis-esteeming ourselves, but instead have our minds really and truly on something else. Although our studies may and should lead to our self-development, among other things, the study habit that we need to develop – the best means to our ends – is the habit of self-forgetfulness. This self-forgetfulness, moreover, needn't be experienced as painful or laborious. Indeed, it can come to us as a relief and a liberation. These selves we inhabit can be so hungry and demanding; they can require such constant labor of maintenance and anxiety-management. "What am I doing?" "How am I doing?" "How do I look while doing it?" We wear ourselves out with these questions, and our constant attention to them not only depletes our spirits but distorts our vision and inhibits our ethical and moral growth.

Let me quote George Eliot, an English novelist of the nineteenth century who, in one of the greatest of all novels, called *Middlemarch*, has the smartest and best things I know of to say about the warping, and pervasive effects of self-regard. “Will not a tiny speck very close to our vision,” asks Eliot, “blot out the glory of the world, and leave only a margin by which we see the blot? I know no speck so troublesome as self.” *Middlemarch* is a truly absorbing story, an extraordinary novel about the complex process by which human beings can emerge from their self-enclosure – can emerge from what Eliot calls “moral stupidity” into a fuller and clearer relationship with the world. I invite you to the English department to find out more about George Eliot – and maybe also to the history or the women’s studies departments to find out why she felt obliged to sign her writings – her real name was Marian Evans – with a man’s name. For now, I just want to name her as the inspiration and the authority behind this argument about self-forgetfulness – and in particular, behind the assertion that there is a crucial ethical and moral dimension to the discovery and exercise of intellectual passion.

Sometimes this ethical dimension is easy to recognize. When the something else we have our minds on is actually somebody else, another person, living or dead, or a whole other way of life, then we are quite clearly engaged in the morally enlarging activity of recognizing the reality of other persons. But often, in the course of intense study, we forget ourselves not just in contemplation of another person or persons, but in contemplation of an impersonal process or order or set of propositions about the world, a something that interests and engages us for itself and that we simply want to understand or just to know more about. And in those cases, too, I would argue, even when it is an impersonal task or subject that we have turned outward to and not another person, this act of turning outward has both an ethical and a practical value. For whenever we can go out of ourselves into our work, we reap the practical benefits of clarified vision and increased efficiency – and we also implicitly reaffirm the ethical proposition that there is a world of concerns and contingencies beyond us, a world not of our own making, a world that was there before us and will be there after us, and that is vastly larger than we are.

You may hear it said sometimes – and human nature being what it is, you’ll probably like to hear it said – that the real reason that Wellesley College is here is for you. You may even say that yourself when you get to feeling a little irked about one or another form of institutional nonperformance. It won’t be unreasonable of you to feel that way or even to say it – though you don’t want to say it too loudly or too often – and that familiar remark, “Wellesley College is here for

you,” like all the others that I’ve cited expresses an important truth. But like those other important truths, it’s really just a half truth – or maybe rather less than half.

So let’s look at things a bit differently. Let’s try again the experiment that I described a few moments ago – the experiment of putting to one side your selves and mine and considering again, from the new perspective, the question of why Wellesley College is here. Because there’s a deep sense in which I’m not here just for you, and Wellesley isn’t either – and you’re certainly not here just for me, or even for me and all of my colleagues, or even just for each other. We all of us, teachers and students alike, have very important jobs to do – and we are all of us, like all human beings, entitled in some ways to be considered as ends in ourselves. But we are agents as well as ends, and we have responsibilities that go beyond ourselves. Let me try out on you this answer to the question of my title. Maybe the real reason that you’re here – even though you don’t know it – and the reason that I’m here – even though I often forget it – and the reason that Wellesley College is here – all of your teachers and all of the people who administer and support this institution – is to take care of the library, the library and the laboratories, and all of the accumulated human understanding that they represent.

After all, the books are bigger than we are in some important senses. They were here before us, and they’ll be here after us, and they embody a range of experience far wider and more various than ours. We need them. But at the same time, they need us. This caretaking job is a job that should humble us, but it isn’t a humble job. The books need to be read and understood and challenged and extended and added to, and they live on only in the lives and minds of those who engage and value them. So that’s why you’re here: You’re here to join in a great tradition of learning and inquiry and also to challenge it and to contribute to it and keep it alive. You’re here to learn from your teachers, but also to help and fulfill them because they can’t fulfill themselves or play their own role in this great enterprise without the challenge and the opportunity that you offer them with your own eagerness to learn. You’re here because learning and understanding are goods in themselves, because learning and understanding are better than ignorance and incomprehension in just the same way that health is better than sickness and kindness is better than cruelty.

The complete text of this speech is available upon request.

Visual Literacy in the Liberal Arts

Patricia G. Berman

Professor of Art

What role does the study of art, art history, or, broadly defined, visual studies, play in a liberal arts curriculum? How does the investigation of the arts enhance your awareness of the world or deepen your understanding of other disciplines?

In addition to its obvious encouragement of your imagination and creativity, the study of the arts fosters the development of your visual literacy. Within a liberal arts education, the teaching of visual literacy is the critically rigorous examination of visual images, including all aspects of graphic and digital production. The term “visual literacy” refers to your ability to decode visual artifacts, to “see” what you “view.” You likely view thousands of visual representations every day from newspaper and magazine illustrations, advertisements, internet sites, television and video images, t-shirt designs, posters, cash machine diagrams, textbook illustrations and footwear logos, to the typography on your toothpaste dispenser. Each of these objects and representations was made purposefully. How aware are you of the ways in which these images crystallize and convey ideas, or of the effect that

they may have on your own thinking or identity? Have you ever considered why a company might use a *sans-serif typeface* or *italicized script* to label a product? Typography is as embedded with cultural codes as other forms of visual representation, conveying nostalgic or progressive attitudes, or even gendered or class or geographically specific identities.

The purpose of cultivating your visual literacy is to enable you to understand that thought can be both enacted and affected by visual media, that visuality is a primary mode of expression and understanding. Through the rigorous and critical study of images, how they are made, and how they articulate ideas, you will better navigate your education and your environment.

Accompanying this essay is a series of paired photographs representing Wellesley College in the past and present. How do you interpret these images? Take a close look at the “Then and Now” pairing of field hockey players from 1909 and 1999, for example. If you are accustomed to looking at photographs as transparent

objects, which is to say as neutral windows onto scenes containing people, places, and things, you will likely see a quaint picture of women in ungainly clothing juxtaposed against a familiar modern sporting scene. However, if you view the photographs as opaque, as constructed images that communicate information through their formal components, you might read these ideologically, as the modern promotion of competition over camaraderie.

In either reading, why does there seem to be such a large gulf, temporally and socially, between these two images? Fashion plays a large role: In the 1999 image, the women wear open-collared shirts and short skirts that do not hamper their movement. In contrast, ankle-length skirts, starched long-sleeved white cotton shirts, and ties adorn the bodies of the 1909 field hockey players, and their hair is pinned into chignons. These ensembles narrate the relative stasis of the women in comparison with their fast-moving sisters of 1999.

To your eyes, do the women of 1909 even look like athletes?

Their collective postures might mitigate against such a reading. The 1909 image represents a cluster of women moving in different directions: The woman in the extreme foreground advances laterally toward our left. The women behind and to the right of her traces a diagonal to the right, in contrast with the other women in the photograph who are all erect. Indeed, their verticality is reinforced by the presence of the thin upright element that runs to the

top of the photograph toward the left. Formally, these varying postures suggest an informality, a lack of organization. In contrast, the 1999 players run in parallel paths toward the camera, their gestures mirroring one another. The contours created by the exterior arm and leg of the dark-shirted woman on our left, and by the shoulder, back, and left leg of the light-shirted woman on our right, form a triangle that nearly converges at their heads. These two

women consequently form a perfect unit, and are, significantly, in sharp focus in contrast to the vertically oriented women in the background. The differential focus, a kind of “stop-action” aesthetic arising from the fast and sensitive camera and film of 1999, narrates the speed and athleticism of the foreground figures compared to their 1909 sisters. Even the positions of the hockey sticks narrate social difference. The 1999 players’ sticks are

Field hockey players, 1909



aligned, poised to get off that winning shot. In contrast, the clustered, converging sticks of the 1909 players suggest “play,” a state reinforced by the smiles that grace their faces. The unsmiling faces of the 1999 players articulate concentration and “work.” Finally, the media of the two photographs embed differing identities in the two groups of women. The 1909 sepia-toned black-and-white image speaks of the distant and archival, while the color photograph articulates contemporane-

ity. Even the differing disclosures of light sources encode the women with oppositional identities: The 1909 image reveals few strong shadows while in the image from 90 years later, the bright sun not only casts strong shadows but creates dramatic shimmering effects in the hair of the two competitors. In the 1909 photograph, the smiling, murky, distanced, heavily dressed women engage in genteel collective play; in 1999, the competitors rush across the field, expressing freedom and individuality in the open

air. Needless to say, the woman in the Wellesley jersey dominates her competitor in height and dynamism.

In such images, and in their juxtaposition, representation conveys values and identities. To understand that visual artifacts affect interpretation, and are not merely illustrations after the fact, is to learn to read deeply into your daily environment, to learn not just what images mean, but how they make meaning.

Field hockey players, 1999



Banjo and mandolin club, 1892



Performance, 2003



In the lab, 1939



In the lab, 2003



Relaxing, 1965



Three friends, 2003



Living room tea in Tower Court, 1966



Dorm meeting, 1998







Untitled

Yiwen (Karyn) Lu '01

DAVIS PRIZE SUBMISSION

Written for WRIT 225: Non-Fiction Writing
Fall 1999

There is a silence that lingers in the space between me and my parents. It is a silence most familiar to me; I grew up with it. But despite its very familiarity, it has been perhaps the most incomprehensible part of my life thus far. I have noticed its presence always: it is in the way my parents discuss my future at length; it is in the way they glance at one another when I ask for more spending money, or a later curfew; it is in the way they lapse into silence when we pass a homeless man in the street. Even in our most heated arguments, the silence persists; perhaps it is even then that I feel its presence most strongly. There is only one thing about it that I know with absolute certainty: this silence stems from my parents' own past, before I was born, and long before our 1989 emigration to the United States from Mainland China. Beyond that, my knowledge is severely limited, my understanding even more so.

I stumbled upon the breakthrough quite suddenly and completely by accident. A journalism course I was taking required me to cover a Wellesley College event for an assignment, and at the same time, a friend had just informed me of a new photo exhibition opening at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center on campus. Although I knew little about this exhibit titled "Village Works: Photography by Women in China's Yunnan Province," I decided to cover it. For some reason the word "Yunnan" had struck a chord of familiarity within me. Throughout the days preceding the exhibition's opening, it stuck persistently in my mind. It was a word that I had heard my parents say, time and again, when they would converse with a faraway look in their eyes, or when they believed I was not listening.

On the evening of the opening ceremonies, I stood in the courtyard of the Davis Museum bathed in the glow of red paper lanterns swaying gently overhead. All around me, people milled about, murmuring their silent approval of the beautiful oriental décor. Their plates were adorned with moon cakes, a traditional

Chinese pastry, nestled among other Chinese delicacies. Chinese folk music washed softly over the setting. It was one of those instances when the beauty of the scene made me immensely proud of my Chinese heritage, though my own concept of that heritage is as warped as a dish served in Chinatown, so altered and defined as it has been over the years by Western tastes.

I do not know exactly what it was that I expected to see when I finally came face to face with the photographs in the Village Works exhibit. I have been told time and again that my own memories of China, already over ten years old, are no longer valid. An older cousin, who had called my suburban home town “boring” when she visited us two years ago, had proudly informed me that China today is quite cosmopolitan, like “New York City.” So perhaps I was expecting to see skyscrapers, glass buildings, masses of people rushing about with a perpetually hurried look in their eyes.

What I saw that evening in the truth of those photographs profoundly and vehemently defied the very images of China I had been proudly carrying with me since my cousin’s visit. Nowhere did I see the glass towers I was expecting; instead, I saw huts composed of dried mud and windows of cracking wood. I did not see automobiles; instead I saw women carrying babies on their backs in cloth slings. I did not see even wheel-barrows; instead, I saw people tying giant tins to the ends of a bamboo stalk, then hoisting the weight onto their shoulders. I saw adults and children alike toiling in fields of tobacco and rice, I saw children celebrating the New Year by playing in the snow, I saw women cooking on dirt floors. A caption to one of the photographs read “in the villages of the mountain area, pine needles are collected and twisted into ropes. The ropes are then used as fuel for cooking.” As my eyes took in the vivid images before me, my mind was reeling from disbelief. The very basic facts of life in Yunnan were unfathomable to me, and the slow realization of that was like a series of blows to the body itself. The intricate

design of the exhibit and the brightly lit gallery rooms could not in any way hope to relieve my alarm, the sense of panic building up in my throat. The nameless faces in the photographs appeared to me ancient, no matter what the age of the subject. I could not help but think that Yunnan was no more than a step ahead of most third-world countries. Again and again I found myself thinking, “could my parents have been here?”

The article I finally churned out for my journalism class turned out stiffly, too matter-of-factly. Forced to report the event as a straight news article, I found it impossible to convey the essence of the photographs, the expressions that so startled me on the subjects’ faces. Most importantly, I could not adequately express the exhibit’s unsettling effect on me. I felt a pervading sense of uneasiness for days after I had seen the photographs. Finally, I phoned home to talk with my parents. In the back of my mind, I had a vague notion that for the first time in my life I was tentatively tapping into the silence that stretches between us.

“So what do you know about Yunnan?” I asked my father that day, casually, following a great deal of inane conversation. To my great surprise, he began to tell me about the province in great detail. “Kunming,” he told me, “is Yunnan’s capital. It is nicknamed “spring city” because its temperature is so spring-like all year long...the climate is what you call ‘sub-tropical’...there are lots of mountains in Yunnan...rice paddies form terraces around those mountains...” For a long time thereafter, like a skillful geographer, my father readily rattled off facts about the weather, the crops, and the landscape in Yunnan while I became progressively more confused, and worse, aggravated. The poverty of the province obviously did not escape him, and yet his account irritated me; it was far too impersonal, too incongruous with the photographs that I had seen at Village Works.

I ventured another question, this time far more hesitantly.
“So...have you been there?”

My father wavered for a moment. I heard him. But then, in a voice much softer than his previous tone, he said to me, “Well, of course. I was there for eight years.”

I find it difficult to recount now what happened after that moment in great detail. But somehow, my astounded mind must have begun to piece together a greater picture, a staggering realization based upon all the bits and fragments of conversations I had picked up from my parents over the years. I realized the truth even before the words left my father’s mouth: “That’s where I was sent to during the Cultural Revolution. That is history.” I knew the rest. My father had been my age when the Communist government in China shut down the universities and sent the youth of the nation away to work in the countryside. He had been able to return to his family, and to college eventually, but only after having lost the eight “best” years of his life. Somehow, I have always known all this, and yet in my entire lifetime I had never been able to make the distinct connection between Yunnan and those eight lost years. It seemed almost absurd that an exhibition on my college campus should make this connection for me. That the exhibit, so impersonal to so many, should at the same time so vividly display the most saddening place of my father’s life. My mind, and my heart, struggled with this. I could feel the difficulty and pain in my father’s voice.

But then, extraordinarily, he said, “your mother and I met there.” And so I came to learn that Yunnan is also the source of my mother’s secret pain, that she also lost ten years of her life in a place I know only through a myriad of colored images on paper.

Although the knowledge is intensely jarring, at the same time, I also can’t help but feel overwhelmingly relieved not that I finally know my parents’ secret, now that part of the silence which stretches between us is forever broken. And yet what remains now is for me to disclose my own; for I have come to realize that the silence persisting between us has been shrouded by a double layer of secrets; subconsciously, I too have been playing a part in building this voiceless space. My own secret is that I have never once questioned the silence because I have been content growing up with the Western idea of Asian-Americanism. I have been quick to delight when friends and strangers implored me to say something, “anything at all,” in Chinese. I have been eager in signing up for cultural events, desiring to demonstrate my appreciation for my heritage through some stilted dance or by serving Chinese dumplings with a smile. I have been thoughtless in my rebellions against my parents, too often falling to the argument “but my American friends’ parents...” I have even written essays, full of cliché, accounting for my “struggles” to reconcile the two cultures existing in my world. I have been content to be exotic, to be nameless in that exoticism, to fight for balance admirably, and to be a heroine pathetically.

Once I had made this knowledge concrete, however, and armed with a new determination to confront all I had uncovered since the Village Works exhibition, I took a weekend off and went home, this time to speak with my parents in person. I did not have to ask the difficult questions this time. Instead, my parents had gently set before me two black and white photographs that were, despite their apparent age, immaculately preserved. I recognized Yunnan. I recognized the terraces running up and down the mountainside, I recognized the landscape and the earth; I knew what they held now. Most importantly, I recognized the faces in the photographs. Though they had a much older demeanor about them, the young faces were not unlike my own.

They were my parents. For a long time, the three of us – my parents and me – stood there over the pictures, immobile and silent in our thoughts. (When my father did finally speak, it was only to point at the background to one of the photographs and say, “look, the rice paddies, like I told you before...”) It seemed to me that our wordless and yet mutual sense of wonder stretched beyond what we all must have felt as we looked at the photographs. Rather, it encompassed in that moment of stillness an intense release and a sense of relief at the inaudible shattering of the silence that has divided us from one another all these years. My stay at home was far too short. But on the trip back to Wellesley, I felt as though I had unshaken myself from a standstill and taken a giant step forward.

I am reminded now of a family trip that we took to Pennsylvania Dutch country last summer. While driving through endless fields of tobacco, corn, and other crops I could not name, I had read through countless brochures describing the Amish lifestyle. “Some choose not to use electricity...tobacco is a main cash crop...the horse and buggy is the main mode of transportation.” They were nothing more than interesting facts to me, but my mother had been fascinated. She had insisted on probing deeper, on taking tours of Amish houses, or lingered by the roadside long after I began to complain of an empty stomach or swollen feet. I think I understand now my mother’s fascination with the Amish. They speak to her through their simple lifestyles; being there must have reminded her of her own years in the Yunnan countryside. After all, there must have been the moments of playfulness, of laughter, of connection – even love – among a group of young people forced into the same hardships in Yunnan. To survive, she must have held on to those moments; to survive, she must have had to make the memory of those ten long years bearable in her mind.

In the research that I have begun to do in light of what has happened in the past few weeks, I have discovered countless stories like my parents’. In a book appropriately titled *Ten Years of Madness*¹, a man recalls being sent to a similar “Agricultural company”...we were in the Northern Wilderness, and no one paid any more attention to our crying than they would to the sound of the wind and water. We were only sixteen and seventeen years old!” Another book, one that describes the government’s reasoning, read “educated young people [the majority of the senior and junior high school graduates of the past three years]...had to leave home...everyone had to leave without protest...[they] were cast to the villages like garbage. The reason was, on the one hand, to disperse them in the vast countryside, so that they could make no more trouble in the cities. More importantly, the failing economy could not solve the problem of their employment... Thus the unfortunate younger generation of China began their long and tragic life in the villages.”² In the midst of my research, I have often looked up to find my face flushed, my heart pounding. It seems to me that the more I read, the deeper the roots lie. My emotions are mixed: horror for what my parents and their peers had to endure, anger at the forces (they are still vague to me) which drove them to such misery. Sorrow prevails too. I revel in my emotions now because they are genuine. At the same time, I know that I am only scratching the surface of history, of my vow to finally pursue the truth wholly and unabashedly. For the time being, I am already able to see my parents more clearly; I can look them straight in the eyes, I hold on a bit longer when I hug them. Their past, their silence no more, is part of me too.

¹ Feng, Jicai. *Ten Years of Madness: Oral Histories of China's Cultural Revolution*. San Francisco: China Books & Periodicals, Inc., 1996.

² Liu, Guokai. *A Brief Analysis of the Cultural Revolution*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1987.

Over the course of my teaching career at Wellesley College and in my research and writing on controversial political topics, I have often found myself in heated debates. One thing I've learned is that debate very often can be uncomfortable, since the issues we discuss are so obviously meaningful and important to us. Otherwise why would we debate at all? Debate is the source of knowledge, and we shy away from it at our peril. Our willingness to debate ideas is what makes our lives intellectually meaningful. Learning is not so much, then, about amassing a body of knowledge – although that is an important part of it – but learning the virtue of

what Sir Karl Popper calls “critical pluralism”, that is, how to talk to each other with passion and power, with civility and productively about matters that are fundamentally important to us as persons and to the world as a whole.

I have found no better guidelines for how to do this than the lecture by Sir Karl Popper, one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. Popper is aware that in our passion to know, we sometimes become intolerant of others' ideas, convinced of our own certainty, and, thus, closed-minded. He offers here a discussion of the importance of self-criticism and humility, which for him are the source of all true advancement in

knowledge and intellectual development. He articulates some simple, yet powerful rules which offer us some guidelines for how to talk to each other when we disagree. In the heat of intellectual debate, in which we all sometimes lose ourselves, I return often to Popper's advice as a guide. As with any body of ethical principles, we all come up short sometimes. Yet, when we do, it is nice to have some guidance as to how we can be better. Popper's ideas offer us some guidance as to how to be intellectually tough and tolerant at the same time.

Thomas Cushman
Professor of Sociology

Toleration and Intellectual Responsibility

Sir Karl Popper¹

I

I have been asked here today to repeat a lecture which I gave in Tübingen, on the theme “Tolerant and Intellectual Responsibility.” The lecture is dedicated to the memory of Leopold Lucas, a scholar, a historian, a man of toleration and humanity who became a victim of intolerance and inhumanity.

At the age of seventy, in December 1942, Dr. Leopold Lucas and his wife were imprisoned in the Theresienstadt concentration camp, where he worked as a rabbi: an immensely difficult task. He died there ten months later. Dora Lucas, his wife, was kept in Theresienstadt for another thirteen months, but she was able to work as a nurse. In October 1944 she was deported to Poland, together with 18,000 other prisoners. There she was put to death.

It was a terrible fate. It was the fate of countless human beings; people who loved other people, who tried to help other people; who were loved by other people and whom other people tried to help. They belonged to families which were torn apart, destroyed, exterminated.

I do not intend, here, to talk about these dreadful events. Whatever one may try to say – or even to think – it always seems like an attempt to belittle events that defy the imagination.

But the horror continues. The refugees from Vietnam; the victims of Pol Pot in Cambodia; the victims of the revolution in Iran; the refugees from Afghanistan and the Arab refugees from Israel: time and time again, children, women and men become the victims of crazed fanatics.

What can we do to prevent these monstrous events? Can we do anything at all?

My answer is: yes. I believe that there is a great deal that we can do. When I say “we,” I mean the intellectuals, that is, human beings who are interested in ideas; especially those who read and, perhaps, write.

Why do I think that we, the intellectuals, are able to help? Simply because we, the intellectuals, have done the most terrible harm for thousands of years. Mass

¹ Sir Karl Raimund Popper (1902–1994), was one of the most influential twentieth century philosophers of science. He was noted, as well, for his work in social and political philosophy, which focused on a strong defense of liberal democracy. He was an outspoken opponent of authoritarianism, dogmatism, intolerance. One of his most important works in this regard was *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, first published in 1945. This book was guided by two principles: “Minimize avoidable suffering” and “Maximize the freedom of individuals to live as they wish.” Popper’s views on science, philosophy, and the nature of truth and knowledge are by no means accepted by all contemporary thinkers. Indeed, this essay merely presents his point of view, which he would expect to be challenged in the most rigorous ways by those with other points of view.

This is an abridged version of a lecture delivered at the University of Tübingen on May 26, 1981 and repeated in Vienna in Spring 1982. This lecture is taken from Karl Popper, *In Search of a Better World* (Routledge: London and New York, 1984), pp. 188–203.

murder in the name of an idea, a doctrine, a theory, a religion – that is all our doing, our invention: the invention of the intellectuals. If only we would stop setting man against man – often with the best intentions – much would be gained. Nobody can say that it is impossible for us to stop doing this.

The most important of the Ten Commandments is: Thou shalt not kill! It contains nearly the whole of ethics. The way in which Schopenhauer, for example, formulates ethics is merely an extension of this most important commandment. Schopenhauer's ethics are simple, direct and clear. He says: *Hurt no one, but help all, as well as you can!*

But what happened when Moses came down for the first time with the stone tablets from Mount Sinai, before he could even announce the Ten Commandments? He witnessed a horrible heresy, the heresy of the golden calf. At this he forgot all about the commandment "Thou shalt not kill!" and he shouted (Exodus 32):

Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me... And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side,... and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour...

And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

That was, perhaps, the beginning. But what is certain is that things continued to go on in this way; in the Holy Land, and later here in the West. And in the West especially, after Christianity attained the status of an official religion. It became a terrible story of religious persecution, persecution for the sake of orthodoxy. Later – above all in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – still other ideologies competed in justifying persecution, cruelty and terror: nationalism, race, political orthodoxy and other religions.

Behind the ideas of orthodoxy and of heresy the pettiest of vices lie hidden; those vices to which the intellectuals are particularly prone: arrogance, smugness verging on dogmatism, intellectual vanity. All these are petty vices – not major vices like cruelty.

II

The title of my lecture, "Toleration and Intellectual Responsibility," alludes to an argument of Voltaire, the father of the Enlightenment; an argument in defence of toleration.² Voltaire asks, "What is toleration?" and he answers:

Toleration is the necessary consequence of realizing our human fallibility: to err is human, and we do it all the time. So let us pardon each other's follies. This is the first principle of natural right.

² Voltaire, was the *nom de plume* of François Marie Arouet (1694–1778). Voltaire is considered one of the greatest of French philosophers of the Enlightenment, known for his celebration of free-thinking and social reform based on the principles of reason.

Here Voltaire is appealing to our intellectual honesty: we should admit our mistakes, our fallibility, our ignorance. Voltaire knows full well that utterly convinced fanatics do exist. But is their conviction truly honest? Have they honestly examined themselves, their beliefs and their reasons for holding those beliefs? And is not a self-critical attitude part of all intellectual honesty? Is not fanaticism often an attempt to drown our own unadmitted disbelief that we have suppressed and are therefore only half conscious of?

Voltaire's appeal to our intellectual modesty and above all his appeal to our intellectual honesty made a great impression on the intellectuals of his time. I should like to restate this appeal here.

The reason given by Voltaire in support of tolerance is that we should pardon each other's follies. But a common folly, that of intolerance, Voltaire finds, quite rightly, is difficult to tolerate. Indeed, it is here that tolerance has its limits. If we concede to intolerance the right to be tolerated, then we destroy tolerance, and the constitutional state. That was the fate of the Weimar Republic.³

But apart from intolerance there are still other follies that we should not tolerate; above all that folly which makes intellectuals follow the latest fashion; a folly which has caused many a writer to adopt an obscure, impressive [and cryptic] style. This style, the style of big and obscure words, of words bombastic and incomprehensible, this manner of writing should no longer be admired, nor even tolerated by intellectuals. It is intellectually irresponsible. It destroys healthy common sense; it destroys reason. It makes possible the philosophy that has been described as *relativism*; a philosophy that amounts to the thesis that *all* theses are intellectually more or less equally defensible. Anything goes! So the thesis of relativism leads to anarchy, to unlawfulness; and to the rule of violence.

My theme, toleration and intellectual responsibility, has thus led me to the question of relativism.

At this point I would like to compare relativism with a position which is almost always confused with relativism, yet is in fact entirely different from it. I have often described this position as *pluralism*; but this has simply led to these misunderstandings. I will therefore characterize it here as *critical pluralism*. Whilst relativism, arising from a lax form of toleration, leads to the rule of violence, critical pluralism can contribute to the taming of violence.

In order to distinguish relativism from critical pluralism, the idea of *truth* is of crucial importance.

³ The Weimar Republic was the turbulent period of German history between 1919 and 1933, the first attempt to establish a liberal democracy. It ended with the rise of Adolf Hitler to power, an event which deeply influenced Popper's thinking and is reflected in this lecture. Popper, like many German and Austrian intellectuals of Jewish origin, was forced to flee Germany and he spent most of his career in England.

Relativism is the position that everything can be asserted, or practically everything, and therefore nothing. Everything is true, or nothing. Truth is therefore a meaningless concept.

Critical pluralism is the position that in *the interest of the search for truth*, all theories – the more, the better – should be allowed to compete with all other theories. This competition consists in the rational discussion of theories and in their critical elimination. The discussion should be rational – and that means that it should be concerned with the truth of the competing theories: the theory that seems to come closer to the truth in the course of the critical discussion is the better one; and the better theory replaces the inferior theories. It is therefore the question of truth which is at stake.

III

The idea of objective truth and the idea of the search for truth are of decisive importance here.

The first thinker to develop a theory of truth, and to link the idea of objective truth with the idea of our basic human fallibility, was the Presocratic Xenophanes.⁴ Born in 571 BCE in Ionia, Asia Minor, he was the first Greek to write literary criticism; the first moral philosopher; the first to develop a critical theory of human knowledge; and the first speculative monotheist.

Xenophanes was the founder of a tradition, of a way of thinking, to which have belonged, among others, Socrates, Erasmus, Montaigne, Locke, Hume, Voltaire and Lessing.

This tradition is sometimes called the sceptical school. Such a description, however, can easily lead to misunderstandings. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, for example, says: “Sceptic...person who doubts truth of...religious doctrines, agnostic,...atheist;...or who takes cynical views.” But the Greek word from which the word is derived means (as the Oxford Dictionary tells us) “to look out,” “to inquire,” “to reflect,” “to search.”

The sceptics Xenophanes, Socrates, Erasmus, Montaigne, Locke, Voltaire and Lessing were all theists or deists. What all the members of this sceptical tradition have in common...and what I also share with this tradition is that we stress our human ignorance. From this we can point to important ethical consequences: toleration, but not toleration of intolerance, of violence or cruelty.

...Xenophanes stated, clearly and honestly, that his theory was no more than conjecture. This was a victory of self-criticism without equal, a victory of his intellectual honesty and of his modesty.

Xenophanes generalized this self-criticism in a manner which, I think, was characteristic of him: it was clear to him that what he had discovered about his own theory – that it was nothing more than conjecture in spite of its intuitive power of persuasion – must be true of all human theories: everything is only conjecture. This seems to me to reveal that it had not been easy for him to view his own theory as conjecture.

Xenophanes formulated his critical theory of knowledge – everything is conjecture – in six beautiful lines of verse:

*But as for certain truth, no man has known it,
Nor will he know it; neither of the gods,
Nor yet of all the things of which I speak.
And even if by chance he were to utter
The perfect truth, he would himself not know it:
For all is but a woven web of guesses.*

These six lines contain more than a theory of the uncertainty of human knowledge. They contain *a theory of objective knowledge*. For Xenophanes tells us here that, whilst something I say may be true, neither I nor anybody else *will* know that it is true. This means, however, that truth is objective: truth is the correspondence of what I say with the facts; *whether or not I actually know* that the correspondence exists.

In addition, these six lines contain another very important theory. They contain a clue to the difference between objective *truth* and the subjective *certainty* of knowledge. For the six lines affirm that, even when I proclaim the most perfect truth, I cannot know this with certainty. For there is no infallible criterion of truth: we can never, or almost never, be quite sure that we have not been mistaken.

But Xenophanes was not an epistemological pessimist. He was a searcher; and during the course of his long life he was able, by way of critical reexamination, to improve many of his conjectures, and more especially his scientific theories. These are his words:

*The gods did not reveal, from the beginning,
All things to us; but in the course of time,
Through seeking, we may learn, and know things better.*

Xenophanes also explains what he means by “to know things better”: he means the approximation to objective truth: closeness to truth, similarity to truth. For he says of one of his conjectures:

These things, we may well conjecture, resemble the truth....

In Xenophanes' theory of truth and of human knowledge we may find the following points:

1. Our knowledge consists of statements.
2. Statements are either true or false.
3. Truth is objective. It is the correspondence of the content of a statement with the facts.
4. Even when we express the most perfect truth, we cannot know this – that is, we cannot know it with certainty.
5. Since “knowledge” in the usual sense of the word is “certain knowledge,” there can be no knowledge. There can only be *conjectural knowledge*: “For all is but a woven web of guesses.”
6. But in our conjectural knowledge there can be progress to something better.
7. Better knowledge is a better approximation to the truth.
8. But it always remains conjectural knowledge – a web of guesses.

For an understanding of Xenophanes' theory of truth it is important to stress that Xenophanes differentiates clearly between objective *truth* and subjective *certainty*. Objective truth is the correspondence of a statement with the facts, whether we know this – know it for certain – or not. Thus, *truth must not be confused with certainty or with certain knowledge*. He who knows something for certain is he who knows the truth. But it often happens that someone conjectures something without knowing it for certain; and that his conjecture is actually true since it corresponds to the facts. Xenophanes implies quite correctly that there are many truths – and important truths – which nobody knows for certain; and that there are many truths which nobody can know, even though they may be conjectured by some. And he further implies that there are truths which nobody can even conjecture.

Indeed, in any of the languages in which we are able to speak of the infinite sequence of natural numbers, there exists an infinite variety of clear and unambiguous statements (for instance: $17^2 = 627 + 2$). Each of these statements is either true or, if it is false, its negation is true. There are, therefore, infinitely many different true propositions. And from this it follows that there exist infinitely many true propositions which we shall never be able to know – there are infinitely many unknowable truths.

Even today there are many philosophers who think that truth can be of significance for us only if we possess it; that is, know it with certainty. Yet the knowledge of the existence of conjectural knowledge is of great importance. There are truths which we can only approach by laborious searching. Our path, nearly always, winds its way through error. And without truth there can be no error (and without error there is no fallibility).

IV

Some of the views which I have just described were more or less clear to me, even before I read Xenophanes' fragments; perhaps I would not have understood them otherwise. It had become clear to me through Einstein that our best knowledge was conjectural, that it was a woven web of guesses. For he pointed out that Newton's theory of gravity – just like Einstein's own gravitational theory – is conjectural knowledge, despite its immense success; and, just like Newton's theory, Einstein's own theory appears to be only an approximation to the truth.

I do not believe that the significance of conjectural knowledge would ever have become clear to me without the work of Newton and Einstein; and so I asked myself how it could have become clear to Xenophanes 2,500 years ago. Perhaps the answer to this question is this: Xenophanes first accepted Homer's picture of the universe, just as I accepted Newton's picture of the universe. His first belief was shattered for him just as it was for me: for him through his own criticism of Homer, for me by Einstein's criticism of Newton. Xenophanes, just like Einstein, replaced the criticized picture of the universe with another; and both were aware that their new picture of the universe was merely conjecture.

The realization that Xenophanes had anticipated my theory of conjectural knowledge by 2,500 years taught me to be modest. But the idea of intellectual modesty was likewise anticipated for nearly as long. It comes from Socrates.⁵

Socrates was the second, and much more influential, founder of the sceptical tradition. He taught: only he is wise who knows that he is not.

Socrates and, at about the same time, Democritus made the same ethical discovery quite independently of each other. Both said, in very similar words: "It is better to suffer injustice than to commit an injustice."

One can claim that this insight – at least if combined with the knowledge of how little we know – leads, as Voltaire taught much later, to toleration.

V

I shall now turn to the contemporary significance of this self-critical philosophy of knowledge.

First, we must discuss the following important objection. It is true, somebody may say, that Xenophanes, Democritus and Socrates did not know anything; and it was indeed wise that they recognized their own lack of knowledge; and perhaps even wiser that they adopted the attitude of seeking or searching for knowledge. We – or more precisely our scientists – are still searchers, researchers. But today scientists are not only seeking but also finding. And they

have found a great deal; so much indeed that the very volume of our scientific knowledge has become a problem. Is it right, therefore, that we should continue even now in all sincerity to build up our philosophy of knowledge upon the Socratic thesis of lack of knowledge?

The objection is correct, but only in the light of four very important additional points.

First, when it is suggested that science knows a great deal, this is correct, but the word “knowledge” is used here, apparently unconsciously, in a sense which is completely different from that intended by Xenophanes and Socrates, and also from the meaning given to the word “knowledge” in current everyday usage. For by “knowledge” we usually mean “certain knowledge.” If someone says “I know that today is Tuesday but I am not sure that today is Tuesday,” he is contradicting himself, or retracting in the second half of his statement what he is saying in the first half.

But our scientific knowledge is still not certain knowledge. It is open to revision. It consists of testable conjectures, of hypotheses – at best, of conjectures that have been subjected to the most stringent tests, yet, still, of conjectures only. This is the first point, and it is in itself a complete justification of Socrates’ emphasis on our lack of knowledge, and of Xenophanes’ comment that, even when we speak the perfect truth, we could not know that what we have said is true.

The second point, which must be added to the objection that we know so much nowadays, is this: with almost every new scientific achievement, with every hypothetical solution of a scientific problem, both the number of the unsolved problems and the degree of their difficulty increase. In fact, they increase much faster than the solutions. One might well say that whilst our hypothetical knowledge is finite, our ignorance is infinite. But not only that, for the genuine scientist with a feeling for unsolved problems, the world is becoming, in a very concrete sense, more and more of a riddle.

My third point is this: when we say that today we know more than Xenophanes or Socrates did, it is probably incorrect if we take “know” in a subjective sense. Presumably none of us know more; we simply know *different* things. We have replaced particular theories, particular hypotheses, particular conjectures by others; admittedly, in most cases by better ones: better in the sense of being a better approximation to the truth.

The *content* of these theories, hypotheses, conjectures may be called *knowledge in the objective sense*, as opposed to subjective or personal knowledge. For example, the content of an encyclopaedia of physics is impersonal or objective – and

of course hypothetical – knowledge: it far exceeds what the most learned physicist can possibly know. What a physicist knows – or, more exactly, conjectures – may be called his personal or subjective knowledge. Both – the impersonal and personal knowledge – are mainly hypothetical and capable of improvement. Yet not only does the impersonal or objective knowledge currently go far beyond the personal knowledge of any human being, it also advances so rapidly that personal or subjective knowledge can only keep up with it in small areas and for short periods of time and is, in the main, constantly becoming outdated.

This is the fourth reason why Socrates is still right. For this outdated knowledge consists of theories which have been found to be false: outdated knowledge is not knowledge, at least not in the ordinary sense of the word.

VI

So we have four reasons that show even today that the Socratic insight, “I know that I know almost nothing, and hardly this,” is still highly relevant – possibly even more so than in Socrates time. And we have good reason, in the defence of toleration, to derive from this insight those ethical consequences which Erasmus, Montaigne, Voltaire and later Lessing derived from it. But there are still other consequences.

The principles that form the basis of every rational discussion, that is, of every discussion undertaken in the search for truth, are in the main *ethical* principles. I should like to state three such principles.

1. **The principle of fallibility:** perhaps I am wrong and perhaps you are right.
But we could easily both be wrong.
2. **The principle of rational discussion:** we want to try, as impersonally as possible, to weigh up our reasons for and against a theory: a theory that is definite and criticizable.
3. **The principle of approximation to the truth:** we can nearly always come closer to the truth in a discussion which avoids personal attacks. It can help us to achieve a better understanding; even in those cases where we do not reach an agreement.

⁶ By epistemological, Popper means that these guidelines are useful in our search for knowledge, in addition to how we interact with one another in that search for knowledge. In philosophy, epistemology is the study of the nature, extent, sources, and the legitimacy of knowledge.

It is worth noting that these three principles are both epistemological⁶ and ethical principles. For they imply, among other things, toleration: if I hope to learn from you, and if I want to learn in the interest of truth, then I have not only to tolerate you but also to recognize you as a potential equal; the potential unity and equality of all men somehow constitute a prerequisite of our willingness to

discuss matters rationally. Of importance also is the principle that we can learn much from a discussion, even when it does not lead to agreement: a discussion can help us by shedding light upon some of our errors.

Thus ethical principles form the basis of science. The idea of truth as the fundamental regulative principle – the principle that guides our search – can be regarded as an ethical principle.

The search for truth and the idea of approximation to the truth are also ethical principles; as are the ideas of intellectual integrity and of fallibility, which lead us to a self-critical attitude and to toleration.

It is also very important that we can *learn* in the field of ethics.

VII

I should like to demonstrate this by looking at the example of an ethics for the intellectuals, especially for the intellectual professions: an ethics for scientists, for doctors, lawyers, engineers, and for architects; for civil servants and, most importantly, for politicians.

I should like to put before you some principles for *a new professional ethics*, principles closely connected with the concepts of toleration and intellectual honesty.

For this purpose I will first characterize the old professional ethics, perhaps even drawing a bit of a caricature, in order to compare it with the new professional ethics I am proposing.

Both the *old* and the *new* professional ethics are based, admittedly, upon the concepts of truth, of rationality and of intellectual responsibility. But the old ethics was based upon the idea of personal knowledge and of certain knowledge and, therefore, upon the idea of *authority*; whereas the new ethics is based upon the idea of objective knowledge and of uncertain knowledge. This signifies a fundamental change in the underlying way of thinking and, consequently, in the way that the ideas of truth, of rationality and of intellectual honesty and responsibility function.

The old ideal was to possess truth – certain truth – and, if possible, to guarantee truth by means of a logical proof.

This ideal, widely accepted to this day, is the idea of wisdom in person, the sage; not of “wisdom” in the Socratic sense, of course, but in the Platonic sense: the sage who is an authority; the learned philosopher who claims power: the philosopher king.

The old imperative for the intellectuals is: Be an authority! Know everything in your field!

Once you are recognized as an authority, your authority will be protected by your colleagues; and you must of course protect the authority of your colleagues.

The old ethics I am describing leaves no room for mistakes. Mistakes are simply not allowed. Consequently, mistakes must not be acknowledged. I do not need to stress that this old professional ethics is intolerant. Moreover, it always has been intellectually dishonest: it leads (especially in medicine and in politics) to the covering up of mistakes for the sake of protecting authority.

This is why I suggest that we need a *new* professional ethics, mainly, but not exclusively, for scientists. I suggest that it be based upon the following twelve principles, with which I shall conclude this lecture.

1. Our objective conjectural knowledge goes further and further beyond what any one person can master. So there simply cannot be any “authorities.” This holds true also within specialized subjects.
2. *It is impossible to avoid all mistakes*, or even all those mistakes that are, in themselves, avoidable. All scientists are continually making mistakes. The old idea that one can avoid mistakes and is therefore duty bound to avoid them, must be revised: it is itself mistaken.
3. *Of course it remains our duty to avoid mistakes whenever possible*. But it is precisely so that we can avoid them, that we must be aware, above all, of how difficult it is to avoid them and that nobody succeeds completely. Not even the most creative scientists who are guided by intuition succeed: intuition may mislead us.
4. Mistakes may be hidden even in those theories which are very well corroborated; and it is the specific task of the scientist to search for such mistakes. The observation that a well corroborated theory or a technique that has been used successfully is mistaken may be an important discovery.
5. *We must therefore revise our attitude to mistakes*. It is here that our practical ethical reform must begin. For the attitude of the old professional ethics leads us to cover up our mistakes, to keep them secret and to forget them as soon as possible.
6. The new basic principle is that in order to learn to avoid making mistakes *we must learn from our mistakes*. To cover up mistakes is, therefore, the greatest intellectual sin.

7. We must be constantly on the look-out for mistakes. When we find them we must be sure to remember them; we must analyse them thoroughly to get to the bottom of things.
8. The maintenance of a self-critical attitude and of personal integrity thus becomes a matter of duty.
9. Since we must learn from our mistakes, we must also learn to accept, indeed accept *gratefully*, when others draw our attention to our mistakes. When in turn we draw other people's attention to their mistakes, we should always remember that we have made similar mistakes ourselves. And we should remember that the greatest scientists have made mistakes. I certainly do not want to say that our mistakes are, usually, forgivable: we must never let our attention slacken. But it is humanly impossible to avoid making mistakes time and again.
10. We must be clear in our own minds that *we need other people to discover and correct our mistakes (as they need us)*; especially those people who have grown up with different ideas in a different environment. This too leads to toleration.
11. We must learn that self-criticism is the best criticism; but that *criticism by others is a necessity*. It is nearly as good as self-criticism.
12. Rational criticism must always be specific: it must give specific reasons why specific statements, specific hypotheses, appear to be false, or specific arguments invalid. It must be guided by the idea of getting nearer to objective truth. In this sense it must be impersonal.

I ask you to regard these points as suggestions. They are meant to demonstrate that, in the field of ethics, too, one can put forward suggestions which are open to discussion and improvement.

The complete article is available upon request.

Identity and Difference: Learning in a Residential College

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...The Wellesley College community that you are joining is a very diverse one, probably more diverse than most communities in the United States. You are probably aware already of the ethnic diversity of your class as well as the proportion that are international students. There is also a wide range of social class backgrounds among the entering class. A group of continuing education students adds age diversity. Some of you have feminist politics, some have conservative views, and some are radicals. This is actually an unusual kind of community for the United States. People tend to move into neighborhoods that are homogeneous in terms of social class and ethnicity. They often attend relatively homogeneous schools and religious organizations. They certainly join socially homogeneous clubs. Despite significant efforts to integrate American communities, residential integration remains relatively low. People of different social classes are more likely to meet one another in unequal than equal social interactions. Thus, the Wellesley College community is very special. It has overcome the inevitable racial and class separation that characterizes social and work environments from neighborhoods to schools to religious organizations.

Wellesley's diversity provides you an unusual opportunity to live together and to learn from each other.... There is a tendency to think of student life and academic life as separate domains; to see the problems they pose and the learning they stimulate as fundamentally different. But I want you to see that each builds on the other; that life offers you problems and challenges and that scholarship provides theories and information that address these challenges. These two domains of your life can be seen as a partnership, not as separate and distinct. Both offer you ways to learn about the world that you live in. This is experiential learning: your life contributes to the classroom and your academic learning enriches your ability to act in the world. Understanding this partnership is the basis for life-long learning which is increasingly fundamental to the world of work as well as personal fulfillment. I like to think of this interaction as complementary education.

Let me give you an example of how I came to see the importance of this interaction. The summer before I was to enter Wellesley College, I was 17, spending a month at a Quaker work camp in the South. I worked in a part of Missouri that borders the Mississippi River. This was cotton plantation country, steeped in the social mores of the deep South and the Jim Crow laws which

rigidly separated the social and schooling lives of African Americans and whites. It was 1962, in the early years of the civil rights movement. There were still separate lunch counters for blacks and whites in restaurants, separate waiting rooms in bus stations, separate drinking fountains. My life growing up in a small, homogeneous white town outside of Philadelphia did not prepare me for the intensity of the division between whites and blacks in the rural South. My sporadic trips to Philadelphia that included Quaker weekend work camps to help people living in substandard housing indicated substantial inequalities in the way African Americans and whites lived, but I did not see this poverty as part of any broader system of racial inequality. As a person growing up white in the United States, I had not experienced the racism which is part of the everyday life of many people of color, whether African American, Asian American, Native American, Latina/Latino. My ignorance was a product of my white privilege.

The group traveling to Missouri was white and black, young men and women, largely from the East Coast. We lived together in the community center. A circle of small houses for the white cotton workers surrounded the small white clapboard building of the center. Nearby was a separate but similar community where the African-American cotton workers lived. We spent each day chopping down trees and clearing a drainage ditch between two fields. I was surprised by the blatant inequalities I saw in this region: the juxtaposition of the white-pillared great houses of the plantation managers and the row of decrepit small shacks in the back reminiscent of slave quarters.

In the middle of the summer, a group of young men who were active with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC, visited our group. SNCC was then in the forefront of the civil rights movement. These students had started sit-ins at lunch counters. I couldn't understand why they cared about sitting in at lunch counters since I had no idea that these lunch counters were racially segregated. But I knew they were interest-

ing and committed people. After a sociable dinner, one of the members of my group, a white woman from New York, kissed one of the African-American young men visiting us. Although they thought they were in a secluded spot, a member of the surrounding community saw them and quickly spread the word. The response was astonishing. The white community was furious. Some wanted us to leave immediately, others simply refused to talk to us. Here we were, thinking we were trying to help the community, and they hated us. I was amazed and puzzled at the intensity of the reaction. It was particularly strange since there was a very similar African-American community nearby with people working the same jobs in the cotton fields and attending the same kind of small, vibrant churches. We had attended both the white and the black churches so we knew they were similar but also that they were separate. Unfortunately, I have no idea what this African-American community thought of the incident, but they might have feared retaliation had it become widely known.

My surprise at the intensity of the reaction showed my deep ignorance about the explosive combination of race, sex, and violence in the South. I did not know that alleged threats to white women were commonly used as the excuse for lynching black men throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I assumed, in typical liberal fashion, that the community's reaction was just a misunderstanding. All we had to do was to explain that this was just an innocent kiss, that the boy and girl simply liked each other, that they meant no harm. After going door to door to many houses to talk to those of the residents who would let us in, I discovered that no one was persuaded. They still felt that this was a terrible violation and wanted no more contact with us. It didn't make sense, but I slowly realized that they held deep antagonisms and fears that were not easily assuaged. Gradually some members of the community began to thaw enough to talk to us, but they never accepted the idea of a sexual relationship between a white woman and a black man. I was appalled.

I became much more interested in the civil rights movement as a result of my experiences that summer. In Cairo, Illinois later that summer, I joined an early march through the town protesting racial segregation and I saw the anger and the hate on the faces of the white people as they watched African Americans and a scattering of whites marching through the streets singing “We Shall Overcome.” There was so much to understand about the dynamics of race in the South, and I needed to learn more. Of course, I knew nothing of the dynamics of race in the North either. There is no way that I will ever be able to understand the experience of racism felt by people of color in the United States, but I can understand racism analytically as a system of oppression, as a form of economic and social inequality maintained by powerful institutional forces. In that sense, racism, like other forms of difference, is open to rational analysis and understanding.

Wellesley College offered a course on racial and ethnic minorities in the Anthropology Department that exposed me to the history of race in the United States. I studied the post-civil war emergence of a system of legally enforced segregation, the constant undercurrent of white male appropriation of African-American women for sex but not marriage, and the violence engendered by the slightest hint of African-American male interest in white women. I was fortunate to form friendships with African-American students on campus. I started tutoring African-American children in Boston, campaigning for an African-American candidate for the all-white Boston School Committee, participating in voter registration drives for disenfranchised African Americans in Virginia, and leading the Civil Rights Group on campus. The classroom helped me to understand the dynamics of race in the U.S. and my political activities showed vividly how these dynamics operated.

The Anthropology course and other courses in sociology, anthropology, and economics taught me that racism was not just an American problem: I studied the apartheid system in South Africa, where race again served as the basis for sharp social divi-

sions determining where people lived, what jobs they could hold, and how much money they earned. Race determined their entire quality of life. I examined Nazism, noting that its ideology of racial purity and extermination of the Jews, defined as a race, paralleled similar racial purification movements in the U.S. at the same time, although these movements never received the same level of support as they did in Germany. I discovered racism in the history of Boston’s reception of the thousands of destitute peasants fleeing starvation and displacement in Ireland in the middle of the nineteenth century. These peasants moved into the worst housing and took the most oppressive and menial jobs in order to survive. The English-ancestry Bostonians of the 1840s viewed the Irish as a separate race. Their labor fueled the industrial development of Boston, yet the dominant Anglo-Saxon Protestants constantly feared a Catholic takeover. They even worried that their Irish domestic servants were plotting a revolution master-minded by the Pope. Irish job applicants frequently encountered signs saying “No Irish need apply.” In 1960, John F. Kennedy fought this legacy as he tried to be the first Catholic elected president. His campaign was dogged by concerns about whether his loyalty to the pope was stronger than to the nation. I remember teaching a class on racial and ethnic minorities and talking about the famous, boisterous Irish politicians of Boston as grass-roots leaders. I discovered that one of my students was a descendant of one of these politicians and had always been taught in school they were corrupt and self-serving, the perspective of Boston elites. She had never heard them described as strong advocates for the working class. She learned new respect for her ancestor from her study in this course.

Yet, there were curious omissions in my education as well. There was no discussion of the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War nor of the American imperialist takeovers of Hawai’i and the Philippines in 1898. I never studied the anti-Chinese violence in nineteenth-century California that drove Chinese farmers and miners into Chinatowns for safety....

My experiences continually led me to wonder, what was this phenomenon of race, and why was it so pervasive and powerful? Why did it create such persistent and emotionally entrenched inequalities? Have humans always divided each other up on the basis of race? How did race intersect with social class and gender? I have spent the rest of my academic career grappling with these questions in a variety of ways. I explored the fear of crime in a multiethnic low-income housing development in Boston of black, white, Chinese, and Puerto Rican residents and found that here, fear was related to anxiety about strangers. Looking at the way white working-class residents of some Boston area towns handled their conflicts, I discovered many people with limited educations who felt entitled to use the law for their everyday problems. The courts often discouraged them from adopting this sense of legal consciousness. American colonialism intrigued me as well, along with the kinds of racial and gender identities used to legitimate the U.S. colonization of Hawai'i. I am now working on understanding how the international human rights system deals with violence against women. Here again, I find that around the world, not all women experience violence equally. It is particularly a problem for poor women and women from racial minorities. Such women are disproportionately likely to face violence from armed conflict, from life in refugee camps, or from being trafficked for prostitution....

What does race mean? Anthropology and sociology show that race is a social phenomenon, not a biological one. Humans are biologically very similar, differing only in minute features, many of which are invisible and irrelevant to racial categories as we know them. Blood type or lactose tolerance vary among populations of humans for example. Only a few of the physical differences among humans become the basis for racial classifications. Skin color, eye shape, and nose size seem to be most important. Some of these differences are adaptive: dark skin provides better

protection from the sun; long thin bodies are better for the heat and short round ones for the cold. Humans evolved in Africa, so that they probably initially had dark skins. Those who migrated into more sunless climes became paler.

Although it is clear that humans do have these minor physical variations, they do not fall neatly into types, or “races.” Instead, physical variations vary incrementally over geographical space. And of course humans move around, mate with people from other areas, and mix their physical characteristics. African Americans are a mixture of peoples of African, European, and Native American descent; Latinos/Latinas have a combination of European, Indian, and African ancestry. There are variations among peoples from Africa and Europe as well. Some physical variations are socially significant as the basis for designating distinct races while some are not. Height, weight, foot size, and hair color are irrelevant to racial distinctions, for example. The creation of a racial category is a socio-cultural process that requires developing distinct categories that can be visually identified. It is actually very difficult to determine what race many people belong to, so that some societies develop formal mechanisms for accomplishing this difficult task. The Nazis required Jews to wear identification, while in apartheid South Africa before the political change in 1994, population boards determined a person’s race if there was any ambiguity. As children grow up in a society organized around concepts of race, they are systematically taught by adults to identify races, to distinguish between a dark-skinned European and a light-skinned African American, for example. It doesn’t come naturally. Children see variation, but they are taught the categories.... Children may be taught not only to identify racial groups but also that these racial categories are connected to social characteristics such as intelligence, responsibility, and self-governance. This is one of the most pernicious features of the race concept: the idea that physical variations are connected to social and cultural characteristics. There is absolutely no

evidence that such a linkage exists. Social and cultural traits are acquired through learning and are not part of the biological makeup of humans.

Although race as a biological category is of minimal importance, race as a social designation powerfully shapes institutional practices. It often becomes the basis for unequal access to jobs, housing, and education. Racial differences affect life chances through a variety of institutions ranging from neighborhood exclusion to unequal incarceration. Race has a long history as a cultural category. It shaped the European global expansion of the eighteenth century, the imperial conquest of the world in the nineteenth, and the emergence of nation-states and patterns of conflict in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is fostering so-called ethnic conflicts around the world today. Even though humans invented the category of race, it has become an enduring feature of modern social life. Before the advent of the concept of race, humans clearly recognized similarities and differences among themselves, but they were most often based on culture – or as people said, customs – and religion. Indeed, there were innumerable wars fought over religious and customary differences. The difference between this notion of difference and that of race, however, is that customs and religion can be changed, while race is permanent....

Race appears to be a modern invention, developed during the Enlightenment and acquiring scientific window dressing during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its development was part of the eighteenth century project of constructing an order for the world by classifying all the plants and animals around the globe into a single scheme.... As the nineteenth century wore on, European imperialism in South Asia, Africa, and the Pacific was increasingly framed in terms of race. Colonialism was described as the duty of the white race to help those whose race made them less capable of governing themselves and exploiting their resources effectively. The colonized peoples of the world were progressively infantilized, treated as children by the colonizing

nations. In Rudyard Kipling's famous poem, "The White Man's Burden," he refers to the objects of colonizing efforts as "half-devil, half-child," the "fluttered folk and wild" who were also sullen, unappreciative, and uncooperative. In Hawai'i as well, the whites defined the indigenous inhabitants of the islands as child-like and irresponsible, unable to govern themselves despite their developed system of chiefdoms. This helped to justify the actions of a group of American settlers in Hawai'i who ousted the Hawaiian queen in 1893 with American military support, over her strong protest, and the subsequent annexation of the islands by the U.S. in 1898. This was about the same time that Kipling wrote his poem. The powerful ideology of race legitimated seizing Hawai'i and its tempting resources such as Pearl Harbor. Although it was rich in Native Hawaiian fish ponds, American military representatives saw Pearl Harbor as an ideal military base strategically located in the middle of the Pacific.

Racial thinking intensified in early twentieth century America. Racial restrictions on immigration were passed in 1924 and the Jim Crow laws expanded. The science of racial classification reached new heights. Learned treatises detailed hundreds of different racial types around the world while scientists rushed to measure heads, face angles, nose profiles, earlobe shapes, distances between the eyes, in order to provide the scientific basis for these racial categories. They even developed biological indices of criminality. Among these projects was the measurement of cranial capacities of separate races in order to make arguments about differential intelligence of racial groups. These efforts ignored the lack of a biological basis to the concept of race. The science of eugenics developed to put racial theory into practice: only the best should breed. An article written in 1915 castigates Wellesley College for insisting on educating its students in fields other than domestic science since it reduced their birth rate. The author felt that their academic education made them undesirable as wives. Therefore, they were failing in their duty as superior persons to reproduce prolifically.

The rise of racism in the early twentieth century was a global movement. This was the period when the apartheid system in South Africa was being established which designated separate living spaces, schools, jobs, and autonomy to people on the basis of their racial identification. Indeed, it was Gandhi's experience in South Africa of being thrown out of a white-only train car despite his British education and European clothes that galvanized him into political activism, first in South Africa and then in India. The rise of Nazism in the 1930s with its ideology of Aryan racial supremacy and the racial inferiority of Jews drew on similar concepts of race. If you visit the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., you will find a table of racial types that is strikingly similar to those used in the United States at the same time.

Indeed, only in the 1950s did the U.S. turn away from this racially based policy and seek to dismantle the genie of race. By the middle of the twentieth century, anthropologists were energetically arguing that race and culture were separate and that the old scheme of linking physical features with cultural tendencies was wrong. We are still in the midst of this struggle and I believe we are making progress, but there is a long history to this concept and it is deeply rooted in economic and political institutions. Much as a ship turns, progress is slow and frustratingly limited. But the direction is clearly positive. We live at an exciting time, when there has been an effort to shift from a racially divided society toward a world where racial variation is not connected to differential opportunity and discrimination. There is, of course, a great deal more to be done by all communities....

What does this excursion into anthropological and sociological theory about race and history mean for you as you move into this wonderfully diverse community? It means that you bring with you substantial cultural baggage about racial...identities. These are ideas that you have acquired as a member of the society you

grew up in, whether or not you wanted them. Images of race have flashed across your screens on a daily basis, along with associated assumptions about characteristics, tendencies, and capacities, whether or not you knew or noticed it. Wherever you grew up, you could not avoid them. Thus, you are in some ways part of a cultural world you did not choose and for which you are not responsible. On the other hand, you are responsible for what you do with this legacy you have inherited. Just because you have learned certain cultural categories and modes of thinking does not mean you have to accept them. You now have the opportunity to think about them, consider them, and accept or reject them. The troublesome legacy of race and ethnicity and its connections to nationalism and social class are open to rational inquiry and critical thinking. This is the opportunity Wellesley offers. And it does so both in the classroom and in the rich array of student life activities in front of you. It means constant questioning of yourself: why do I react this way? Where did this mode of thinking come from? Is there another way to think about my behavior and that of other people? And it requires study and learning – about history, art, literature, social science, biology, peace and justice. You will find that questions of racism and exclusion run throughout all these disciplines. These are also questions that you will be able to explore in your social life and in your inner exploration of yourself as a person. You will inevitably make mistakes, but this is inherent in learning. Not to make mistakes is not to act....

Wellesley offers special opportunities to learn and grow because it is a residential college. It gives you the opportunity for complementary education: for learning from your residence life as well as from the classroom, library, laboratory, and lecture hall. These activities are not in competition with each other but complement one another. Your life experiences will pose questions that your courses will help to answer, and the courses will challenge you with new questions. Harnessing these two forms of learning is the key to making the most of your college education. Your

involvement in campus organizations, your everyday life in the dorm, your engagement with issues of identity and difference in class and in your reading, are all critical contributions to your own learning and to the Wellesley College community.

And what did I learn about the situation in Missouri, the incident that started my intellectual journey into questions of race, gender, and class? Historically, the poor whites of the South were excluded from landownership and economic advancement just as the blacks were, but the white elites offered them the privilege of color in order to prevent an alliance between the poor blacks and poor whites. Even though they were poor, white race privilege made them better than the African Americans. This divide-and-rule strategy is a very widespread feature of systems of racial inequality. There were structures of economic and political power supported by this racial division in which poor whites were encouraged to see their differences from poor blacks. These racial distinction reinforced class hierarchies.

I also discovered, from my comparative research, that sexuality is critical in systems of racial inequality. Racially dominant males, such as British colonial officers or white Southern plantation owners, commonly form sexual relationships with subordinate women, although they rarely marry them. At the same time, they portray racially subordinated males as sexual predators that threaten racially dominant women. There is a complex language of the erotic in these hierarchies, with the subordinate woman portrayed as sexually active and eager in contrast to the frigid dominant woman, while the subordinate man is imagined as sexually powerful and dangerous and a threat to the purity of the dominant woman. This alleged threat often leads to violent suppression of the subordinate man. For example, the threat that black men would rape white women in the South justified much of the lynching. It also justified controlling the activities of white women in order to protect them and the honor of their husbands

from the alleged sexually predatory black men. Black men, watching white men appropriate black women for sexual encounters with impunity, were understandably angry in many cases. One legacy of this history is the image of the sexualized African-American man. When the poor whites in Missouri saw a black man kissing a white woman, I think it awakened this complex set of fears and anxieties. It challenged the foundations of their white privilege, the way they distanced themselves from the poor African-American community next door. Identities founded on these distinctions do not change easily.

In the future, globalization will increase the need to understand and value diversity. People no longer live in small, homogeneous social worlds. We no longer have Jim Crow, apartheid, or Nazism, but racism is still powerful.... Increasing economic inequalities, both in the United States and around the globe, are fueling a range of devastating regional and internal conflicts that we call ethnic conflicts but which are usually driven by economic crises. Our challenge for the future is to learn to live together with respect for difference and to work toward peace with justice. There is much to learn, but complementary education in a residential college offers unique opportunities. Wellesley is a dynamic institution, changing all the time just as you are. It will make you different, and you will make it different by your presence and your actions. I hope you find it as exciting and challenging as I did and still do.

The complete text of this speech is available upon request.

A Statistical Snapshot of Wellesley College Then & Now

Statistics and Graphs by

Corrine Taylor

Director, Quantitative Reasoning Program

Assistant Professor of Economics

Figure 1

Geographic distribution of students entering the College in...

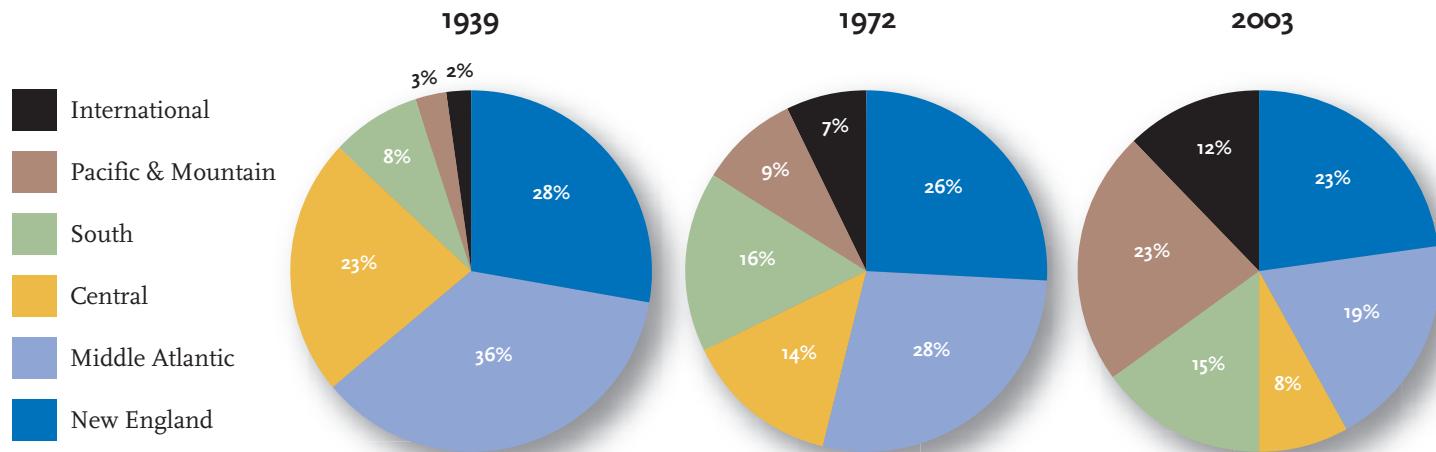


Table 1

Number of foreign countries of entering students

	Class entering the College in...		
	1939	1972	2003
Number of foreign countries	6	12	52

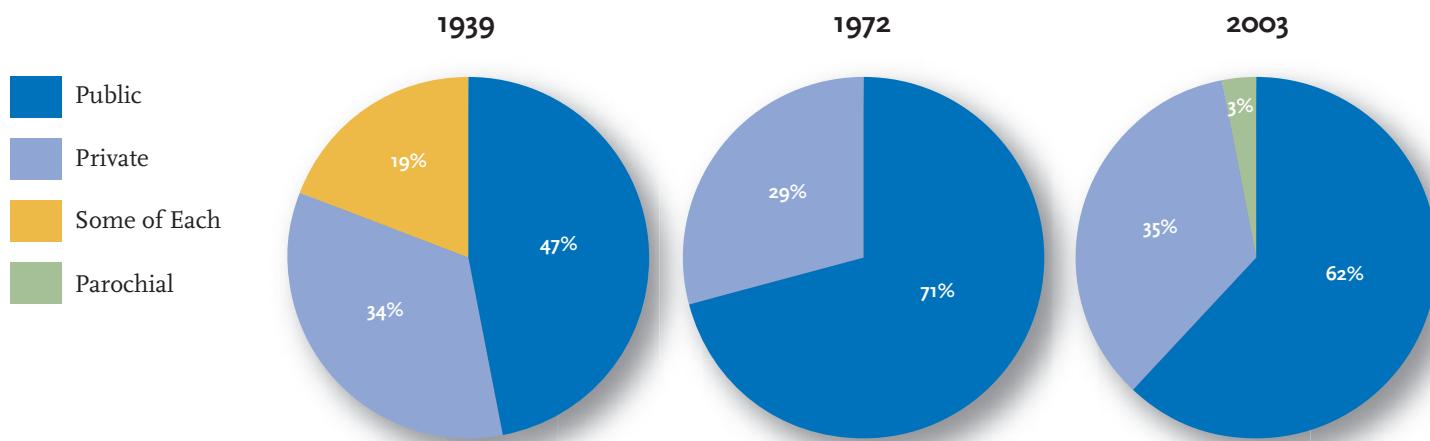
Table 2

SAT scores of students entering the College in...

1939	The median score on the SAT was in the 500–600 range.	
	Mean Score	
1972	SAT Verbal	655
	SAT Math	638
2003	SAT I Verbal	678
	SAT I Math	673

Figure 2

Type of secondary schooling for students entering the College in...

**Table 3**

Top five majors for the senior class in...

1939	
English	22.2%
Art	11.1%
Economics and Sociology	9.8%
Psychology	8.9%
History	7.9%

1972	
English	22.5%
Psychology	14.3%
Art	13.4%
History	11.3%
Political Science	10.6%

2003	
Economics	14.8%
English	11.0%
Political Science	9.8%
Psychology	9.8%
International Relations	9.2%

Table 4

Top job placement categories for seniors graduating in...

1939	
Teaching	
Department store marketing	
Secretarial	
Technical, research assistant	
Social work	

1972	
Teaching	
Secretarial	
Social science research	
Museum/art work	
Medical research	

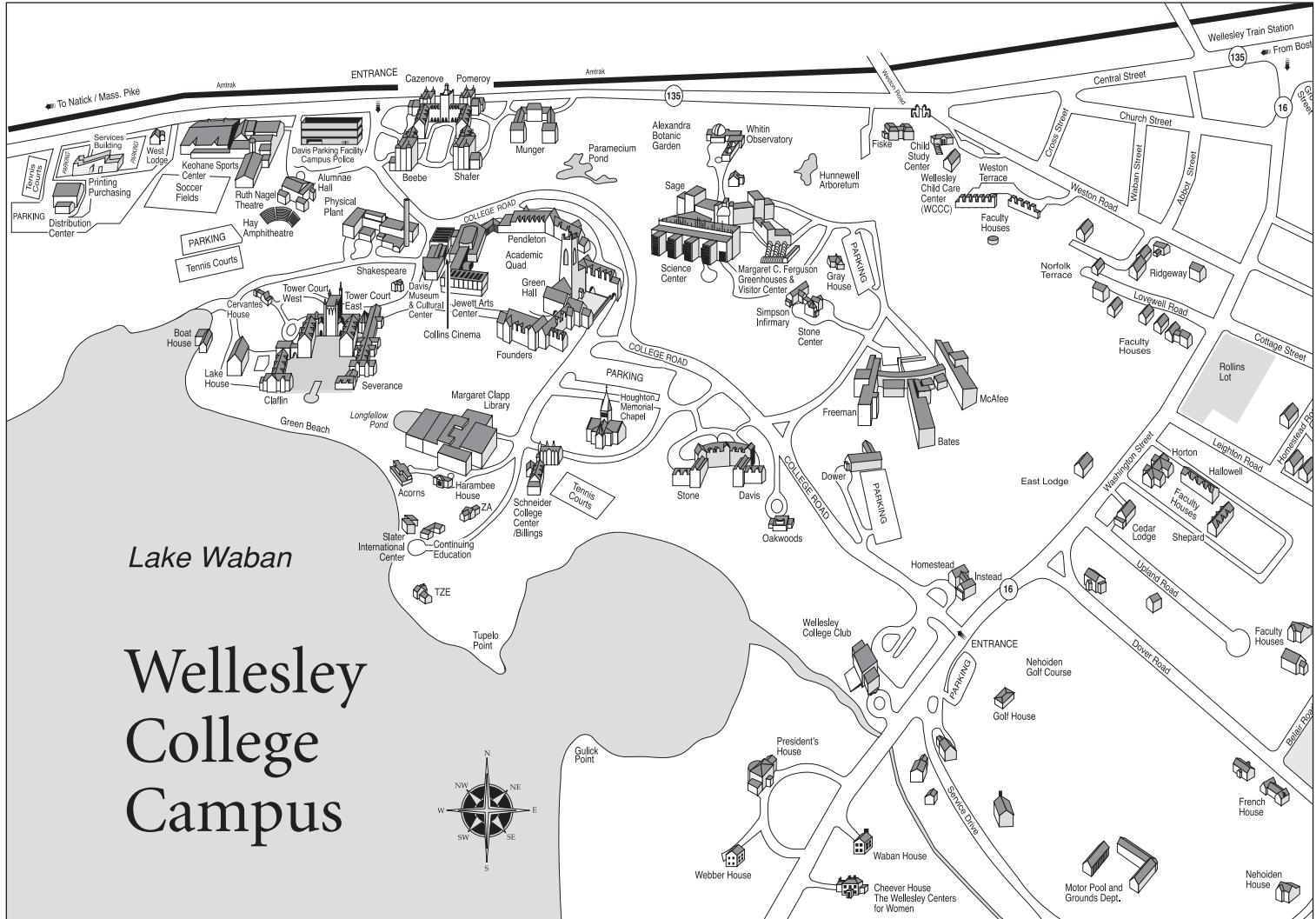
2003	
Finance/banking	
Teaching	
Consulting/economic research	
Other business	
Law/judiciary	

Wellesley College Then & Now

The campus, 1940–1941



The campus, 2004



Wellesley College Campus

